



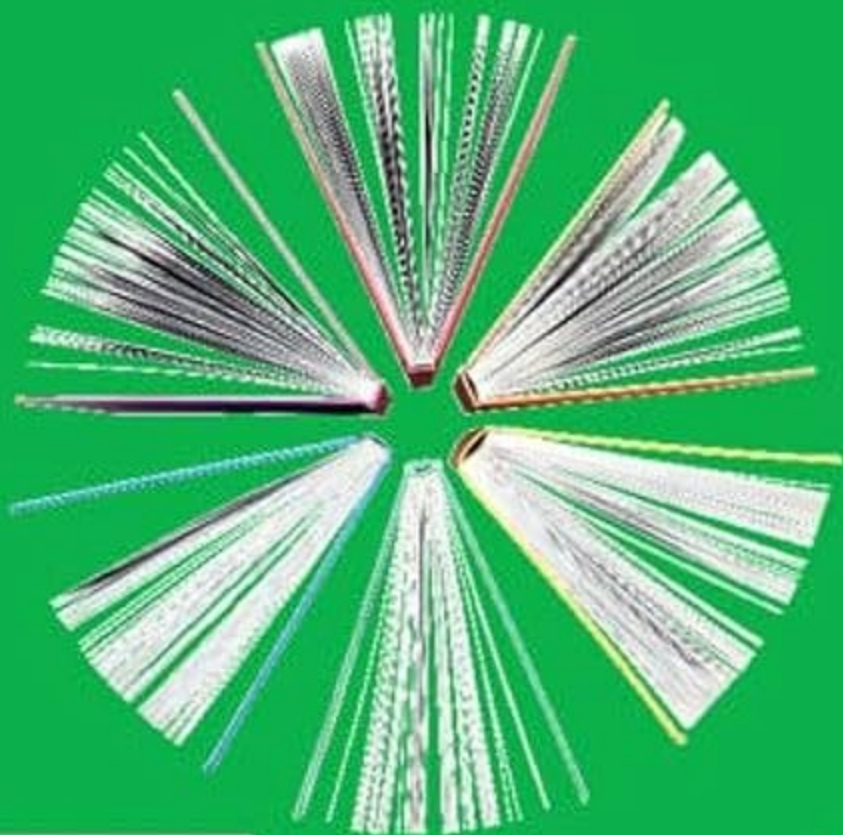
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English Language

for Cambridge O Level

COURSEBOOK

Graham Elsdon, Helen Rees-Bidder & Helen Toner



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› Part 1

Reading



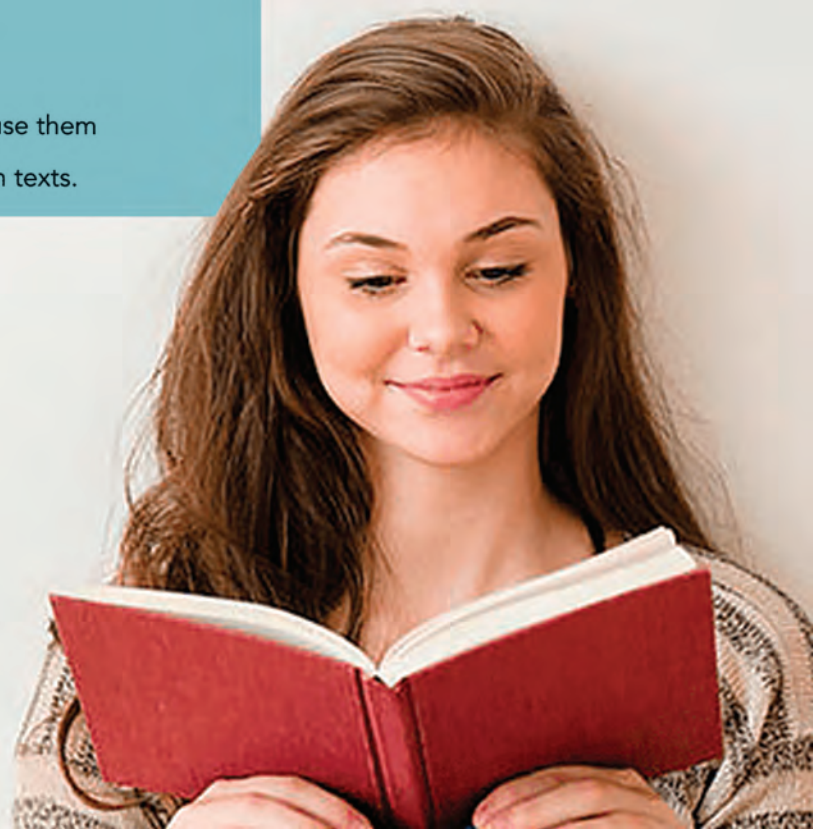
› Chapter 1

Reading skills and strategies

LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- identify how reading skills apply in everyday life
- read actively
- understand different reading strategies and when to use them
- identify the genres and types of fiction and non-fiction texts.



> Introduction

This chapter will introduce you to the key reading skills you will develop and use during your Cambridge O Level English Language course. Developing strong, independent reading skills will not only help you do well in your studies – you will also find that these skills are useful in many other subjects as well as in aspects of life outside school. People read for many different reasons: for pleasure or to stimulate the imagination, to gather information for a specific purpose or to learn something new, or to complete everyday tasks such as cooking and shopping. Whatever the reason, you will find that you use reading skills every day.

GETTING STARTED

Think about the different ways that you use reading skills in your everyday life. In pairs, look at this list and discuss how often you use reading skills in these situations. Score each situation out of 3, where 1 = daily, 2 = occasionally and 3 = rarely.

- checking ingredients in food
- using social media sites
- ordering food online
- deciding which programme to watch on television
- receiving emails and texts
- following an instruction manual to build or use equipment
- choosing school subjects
- browsing information on a noticeboard
- navigating somewhere
- buying items on the internet.

Now think of six other situations where you use reading skills in your daily life and add them to the list.



> 1.1 An introduction to reading skills

Each of the situations you explored in the Getting started activity requires you to read in a different way for different reasons. You may want to quickly read a text to get the **gist** of what it is about, for example, or you may glance at it to try and spot the information you are looking for. You may need to read other texts more actively to ensure that you absorb and understand the material. Some texts might be more challenging than others – perhaps containing unfamiliar words or phrases. In these cases you may have to look up words or use specific strategies to work out meanings in **context**. All this means you will need to develop certain reading skills. On this course, you will focus on the following skills:

- active reading
- reading strategies
- comprehension
- inference
- how writers use language for effect
- summarising reading texts.

KEY TERMS

gist: the general or overall meaning of a text

context: the situation within which something exists or happens

What is active reading?

Active reading is a process that uses a range of reading strategies in order to fully engage with texts. Active reading means reading critically by being aware of your own thought processes. To become a successful active reader, you should:

- adjust your reading rate according to the task you are doing or the purpose of your reading
- annotate and highlight the text to improve and deepen your understanding
- develop understanding of a text's purpose by considering the writer's intentions
- break a text down into chunks by being aware of how it is structured for effectiveness
- make connections between texts and your own prior knowledge or experience
- use texts to learn new vocabulary by finding out the meaning of unfamiliar words
- distinguish between the main ideas in a text and the supporting examples and details
- visualise images in your mind that represent ideas in the text.



- 1 Think about your reading skills. In pairs, look at the list opposite and discuss how many of the processes you already use when you read texts.

Give each active reading process a RAG rating (red = not at all; amber = occasionally; green = always) to see which aspects you need to improve to become a more active reader. Create a grid like this, with all the skills listed, to record your ratings. Keep a copy of your RAG rating, as you will repeat the task at the end of this chapter to see how your understanding has improved.

Active reading processes	RAG rating		
	Red	Amber	Green
adjust your reading rate according to the task you are doing or the purpose of your reading			
annotate and highlight the text to improve and deepen your understanding			

> 1.2 Reading strategies

It is useful to understand the range of different reading strategies you can use, and to identify which ones are most appropriate, depending on the purpose of your reading as well as the type of reading task you are planning to do.

Skimming

Skimming allows you to take in a whole passage of text quickly. It will give you a basic idea of the topic and a general understanding of the content, but you would need to re-read the text more carefully to gain a full understanding of it. Skimming is a bit like watching a film on fast forward – you can catch the general flow of the story, but you will miss the detail. You skim a text by allowing your eyes to quickly flick from one word to the next, focusing on key words rather than absorbing whole sentences.

Skimming is a useful strategy to apply when you come across an unseen text, or if you need to get a basic **overview** of a text before moving on to more detailed work, such as in summary writing.

Scanning is similar to skimming – it is another rapid-reading strategy. The difference is that when you scan a text, you actively search it for a key piece of information or a specific detail. The rest of the text is not relevant, only the information you have been asked to find. You do this by running your eyes quickly over the text, looking just for the information needed by searching for key words linked to the question.

KEY TERMS

skimming: reading a text quickly to get a general overview of the topic and content

overview: a brief explanation or summary of the topic or content of a text

scanning: reading quickly to locate specific information in a text

Scanning is useful when you are hoping to find a particular piece of information in a text or when responding to specific questions, such as comprehension questions. These usually ask you to find a word, phrase or piece of evidence in a text. You may find it useful to underline the text when you find what you are looking for.

Re-reading

Sometimes you need to read a text more than once to gain a full understanding of it. A second reading allows you to clarify anything that was unclear or confusing on your first reading. When you re-read a text, slow down your reading pace and take careful note of any punctuation to ensure that you pause in the right places. Listen to the inner voice in your head as you read. Re-reading to secure a deeper understanding is a skill you should practise as much as you can.

Making inferences

When you make inferences, you look closely at individual words and phrases in a text and work out what is suggested by them. You are looking beyond what the words say directly to consider what the writer *means* by them. When inferring from a text, it can help to highlight or make annotations on relevant parts of the text.

Close reading

Close reading is where you think hard as you read a section of text. You may read closely to consider the deeper meaning of a text and try to clarify your thoughts about it. It is also a useful strategy for analysing the language of a text to discuss connotations of words and how writers use language to deliberately shape the reader's response. As such, you may need to identify unfamiliar words and work out their meanings through the context of the text.

When you close read a text, you may find it useful to annotate it by underlining words and phrases and making notes in the margin. You may also find it useful to highlight words and phrases so you can trace how the ideas develop across the text.

Pre-reading

Pre-reading is a strategy you may need to apply before reading the text itself. For example, pre-reading may involve reading around the topic to improve your own knowledge before reading a text. Pre-reading is also about making sure you fully understand the task you have been asked to do – for example, by reading carefully a question, instructions or any important information you have been given before you start the reading activity itself. Notice if a question has more than one part and if the different parts build on each other in terms of your knowledge and understanding. If a reading text has an introduction, make sure you read this carefully as it will contain essential information for your understanding of the text.

- 1 Create a grid with space for each of the reading strategies: skimming, scanning, re-reading, making inferences, close reading and pre-reading. In your grid, note down when you may need to use these skills. You can include subjects other than English language as well as reading activities beyond the classroom.



READING TIP

How long should an answer be?

Different reading tasks will require different levels of response. To help you decide how detailed an answer should be, see if there is a number of marks allocated. This will give you an idea of how much detail you need to offer in your answer.

- 2 Read Text 1.1, then complete the tasks to practise the strategies you have just read about.

Text 1.1



Bali is one of the most popular holiday destinations in the world – and it's easy to see why! With its idyllic golden beaches, unrivalled and spectacular scenery and exotic sunsets, it has everything to offer the discerning tourist looking for an escape from the pressures of the modern world. For a tiny island in the Indian Ocean, Bali certainly packs a punch!

A holiday in Bali is the perfect getaway – there are activities to suit everyone. For the active tourist the surfing and trekking is unsurpassed. The incredible coastal waters offer fantastic diving and snorkelling opportunities across the majority of the island. For those looking for rest and relaxation, spas or yoga and meditation retreats are sure to set your mind free while the markets and galleries offer ample opportunity for absorbing the rich culture while supporting local people by shopping for local crafts. For anyone seeking fun, Bali's nightlife with its lively cafés and trendy restaurants will make your holiday one to remember.

And of course, if you really want to get away from it all, far from its picturesque beaches, Bali can offer tourists inland areas that have retained their remote rural charm and maintained their unique Balinese culture. These areas are characterised by a stunning region of rice terraces intricately carved into the hillsides with extensive views over the mesmerising valleys below.

To reach Bali, you can book flights from all major international airports. The best time to visit is during the island's dry season from May to October, although it is cheaper between November and April when you may experience short rainstorms. The main languages spoken on the island are Indonesian, Balinese and English. The currency is the Indonesian Rupiah.

Go on – book your holiday to beautiful Bali today!

READING TIP

Practise whenever you can

Practise using these strategies whenever you are given tasks to do that are based on reading texts. This may not only be in English language lessons but also across other subjects. Think about other subjects where pre-reading is important, or those where you use skimming and scanning strategies.



- a Scan the text, then describe what it is about in two sentences. Consider the text type, its purpose and audience.
- b Skim the text and highlight what Bali offers a tourist looking for rest, relaxation, shopping and good food.
- c Re-read the text and consider how the content is structured. Make a list of how the information is ordered for the reader.
- d What can you **infer** about the impact of the tourist industry on Bali from paragraph 3?
- e Closely read the text and explain why the following phrases are effective:

- i For a tiny island ... Bali certainly packs a punch!
- ii stunning region of rice terraces intricately carved into the hillsides

- f What pre-reading did you need to do to answer the questions above successfully?

KEY TERMS

infer: to work out a meaning by applying evidence and reasoning

fiction: stories about imaginary characters and events

non-fiction: writing that is about real events and facts

genre: a type, or category of story, such as comedy, tragedy or mystery

> 1.3 Types of texts

To develop strong skills in English, you need to read a wide variety of texts. The more experience you have of reading independently, the more you will develop the skills you need to succeed. The texts you read and write about will be both **fiction** and **non-fiction**, so you should be aware of the types of texts that fall into each category.

Fiction texts come in a variety of **genres**. For example:

- science fiction: usually set in the future when technology is more advanced than it is now
- human interest: narratives about people facing a range of challenging situations
- suspense: where the writer develops a tense atmosphere and withholds information from the reader
- adventure: featuring a group of people involved in dramatic events
- mystery: featuring unexplained happenings and giving the reader clues as well as distractions
- fantasy: set in strange worlds where anything can happen and featuring non-human characters
- history: featuring settings and people from the past.





- E** It was a terrifying sight all right. But at least, thought Ali, they would soon know the truth. It had been a long, hard battle, but the fantastical creatures had at last retreated as the last of their arrows had been fired at the woodland tower.

- F** He grew up as a poor kid in a slum in Brazil and lit up the world with his audacious and mesmerising football skills. Having dreamt of being spotted by a talent scout, his dream came true one ordinary day as he played with his friends on a dusty street. He laughs when he talks of it now.



- G** If you're looking for an exciting city break with a truly mesmerising combination of culture, relaxation and shopping, Colombo is definitely the choice for you!

- H** The men marched on, their eyes dimmed with fatigue, their feet blistered in their ill-fitting boots, the screams of falling shells behind them. How much longer could this war go on? How much more could they take?

- I** At the G7 conference today, government leaders agreed that collective action is needed to impede the growing tide of obesity affecting the health of citizens in many of the world's wealthiest countries. One of the proposals discussed was that foods containing high amounts of unsaturated fats or refined sugars should attract increased tariff and taxes.

- J** When I was not much more than a newborn child, my father was involved in a dispute that deprived him of his chieftainship at Mvezo and revealed a strain in his character I believe he passed on to his son. I maintain that nurture, rather than nature, is the primary moulder of personality, but my father possessed a proud sense of rebelliousness, a stubborn sense of fairness, that I recognise in myself. (From *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela)

- 2 In pairs, use the notes you made on each of the texts to create a table like this. Think about the features of each text that helped you decide on its type or genre. List the features in the table. The first two texts have been done for you as examples.

Text	Text type/genre	Fiction	Non-fiction
A	feature writing		• formal tone • clear theme – the destruction of coral reefs • sense of urgency in writing style • use of a statistic (60%) to give factual evidence
B	suspense or mystery	• an unnamed character • use of setting – a large house • use of shadows/darkness • use of a signal • the reader is kept in the dark	
C			

- 3 Choose three of the texts from Activity 1 and develop them further by adding at least three paragraphs. Make sure you maintain the correct style.

When you read a text, use this checklist to help you read independently.

Reading checklist

- ✓ Is the text fiction or non-fiction?
- ✓ If non-fiction, what is the text type, purpose and audience?
- ✓ If fiction, what is the genre?
- ✓ Am I familiar with the features of the text type or genre?
- ✓ Can I summarise what the text is about in one sentence?
- ✓ Can I work out the meaning of unfamiliar words using the context of the text?
- ✓ Can I use other strategies to work out the meaning of words?
- ✓ Do I understand how the text is structured for the benefit of the reader?
- ✓ Can I spot any inferred meanings in the text?
- ✓ Can I spot any examples of interesting language that deliberately shapes reader response?

REFLECTION

Think about the reading strategies you have explored in this chapter.

- Which strategies do you feel confident in using and which ones do you feel you need to develop further?
- Which genres of writing are your favourites, and why?
- Which genres of writing do you find most challenging, and why?

PROJECT

In groups, choose a topic and collect fragments of different texts about it, both fiction and non-fiction. Create a montage of your texts for a wall display, including images to go with them. Choose one of the following topics, or use an idea of your own:

- islands
- conservation
- sporting heroes
- famous landmarks
- great inventions.

REFLECTION

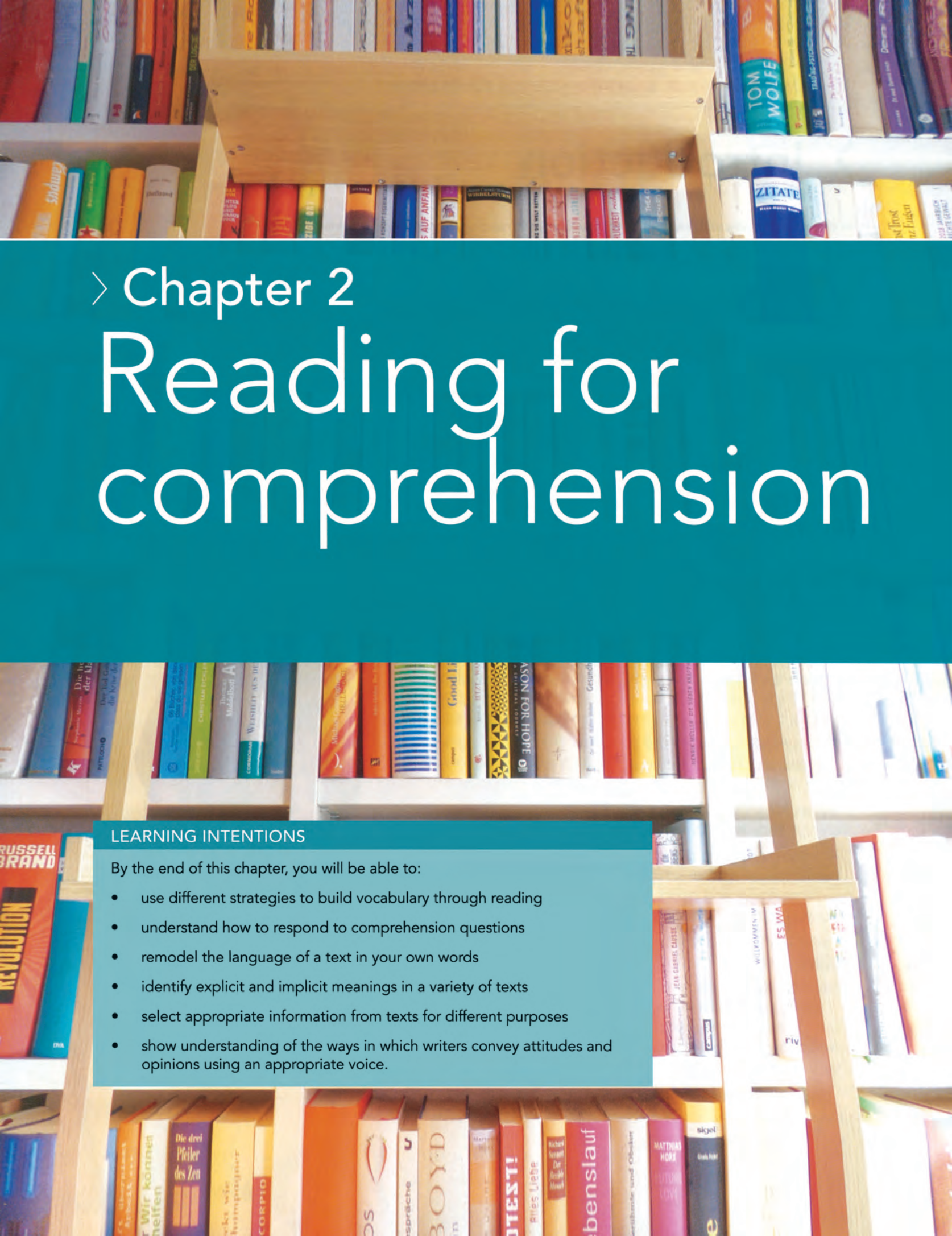
Revise the RAG rating you completed at the beginning of this chapter and see whether your confidence has developed.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How confident do you feel about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter?

Rate yourself from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident), then answer the question to prove it.

Now I can . . .	Confidence rating (1–5)	Prove it
identify how reading skills apply in everyday life		Make a list of five places or situations where you read different texts in your everyday life.
read actively		Note down five ways in which you can improve your active reading skills.
understand different reading strategies and when to use them		Describe to a partner when it would be appropriate to use the following reading strategies: skimming; scanning; close reading.
identify the genres and types of fiction and non-fiction texts		Write 50 words explaining what each of the terms 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' mean, giving examples of text types/genres for each.

A wooden bookshelf filled with various books, serving as the background for the slide. The books are of different colors and sizes, creating a textured, layered effect.

› Chapter 2

Reading for comprehension

LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- use different strategies to build vocabulary through reading
- understand how to respond to comprehension questions
- remodel the language of a text in your own words
- identify explicit and implicit meanings in a variety of texts
- select appropriate information from texts for different purposes
- show understanding of the ways in which writers convey attitudes and opinions using an appropriate voice.

> Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn ways to develop your reading comprehension skills, using the reading strategies you explored in Chapter 1. You will read and respond to a range of narrative texts, including fiction and **narrative non-fiction**.

GETTING STARTED

Read Text 2.1. The writer is reflecting on his early days at a British boarding school, when he was eight years old. In groups, discuss the surface meaning of the text, and then any deeper meanings that you think the writer is implying. In your discussion, consider:

- what the text says about his early experiences of boarding school
- what the text implies about his parents' decision to send him to boarding school at a young age
- what the text suggests about the writer's views of boarding schools as suitable environments for young children.

KEY TERM

narrative non-fiction:
a type of non-fiction text that is written in the style of a fiction story

Text 2.1

So I embarked on this mission called boarding school. And how do you prepare for that one?

In truth, I found it really hard; there were some great moments like building dens in the snow in the winter, or getting chosen for the tennis team, [. . .] but on the whole it was a survival exercise in learning how to cope.

Coping with fear was the big one. The fear of being left and the fear of being bullied – both of which were very real.

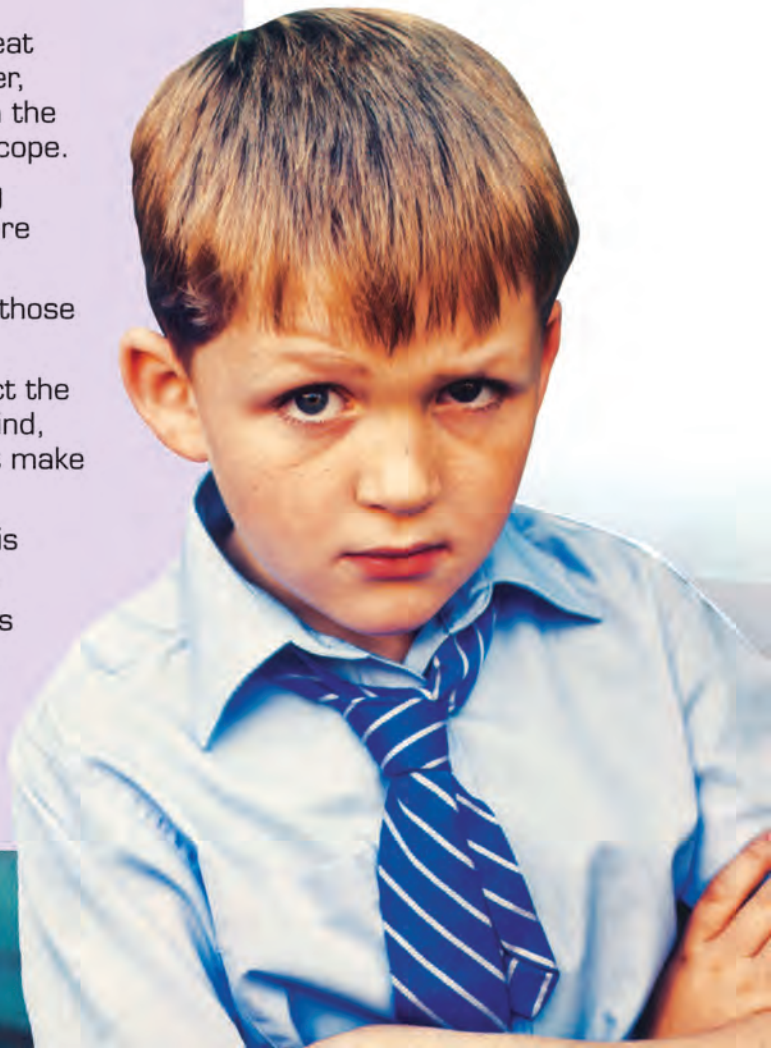
What I learnt was that I couldn't manage either of those things very well on my own.

It wasn't anything to do with the school itself, in fact the headmaster and teachers were almost invariably kind, well-meaning and good people, but that sadly didn't make surviving it much easier.

I was learning very young that if I was to survive this place then I had to find some coping mechanisms.

My way was to behave badly, and learn to scrap, as a way to avoid bullies wanting to target me. It was also a way to avoid thinking about home. But not thinking about home is hard when all you want is to be at home.

From *Mud, Sweat and Tears* by Bear Grylls



SKILLS FOCUS

Comprehension questions assess how well you understand a reading text. You will need to show understanding of both _____ and _____ :

- Identifying explicit meaning may mean understanding _____ meanings of words, or finding examples and evidence from the text to illustrate an idea.
- Identifying implicit meaning involves looking more deeply at a writer's intentions or explaining what the writer may be implying rather than explicitly stating.

KEY TERMS

explicit meaning: ideas and details that a writer states directly

implicit meaning: ideas and details that readers have to work out for themselves

literal: describing something in a straightforward way, using the original, direct meaning of words

> 2.1 Focusing on vocabulary

How well you understand an unseen text will depend on your ability to work out the meanings of words, so it is useful to develop your vocabulary as much as you can. Try to learn new vocabulary by looking up the meanings of words as they arise in your education and everyday life. Learning words naturally like this will help you to gain a secure understanding of correct usage and context.

There are many ways to improve your vocabulary.

- Develop a reading habit by ensuring that you always have a reading book and setting yourself a target to read a certain number of pages each day. People who read for pleasure improve their performance across a range of subjects.
- Develop strategies for checking the meaning of unfamiliar words that you come across when reading. This could be through making a note of the word to look up later or by checking words as you read (see Chapter 4).
- Use a thesaurus as you do your own writing. This will help you use the best vocabulary for your purpose, but it will also widen your word range by introducing you to **synonyms** with their varying **nuances** (see Chapter 3).
- Play word games such as Scrabble.
- Practise using new words in conversation.
- Keep a log of the new words you learn and watch the list grow.

You may find that you need to explain the meaning of words in different ways. For example, you may be presented with tasks that begin in the following ways:

- Identify a word that means the same as . . .
- Using your own words, explain what the text means by . . .
- Give two words that show . . .
- What does the writer mean by the phrase . . .

KEY TERMS

synonym: a word or phrase with the same or similar meaning to another word or phrase

nuance: a subtle difference or shade of meaning or expression

Read the following text about a married couple who leave the city for a day out in the countryside.

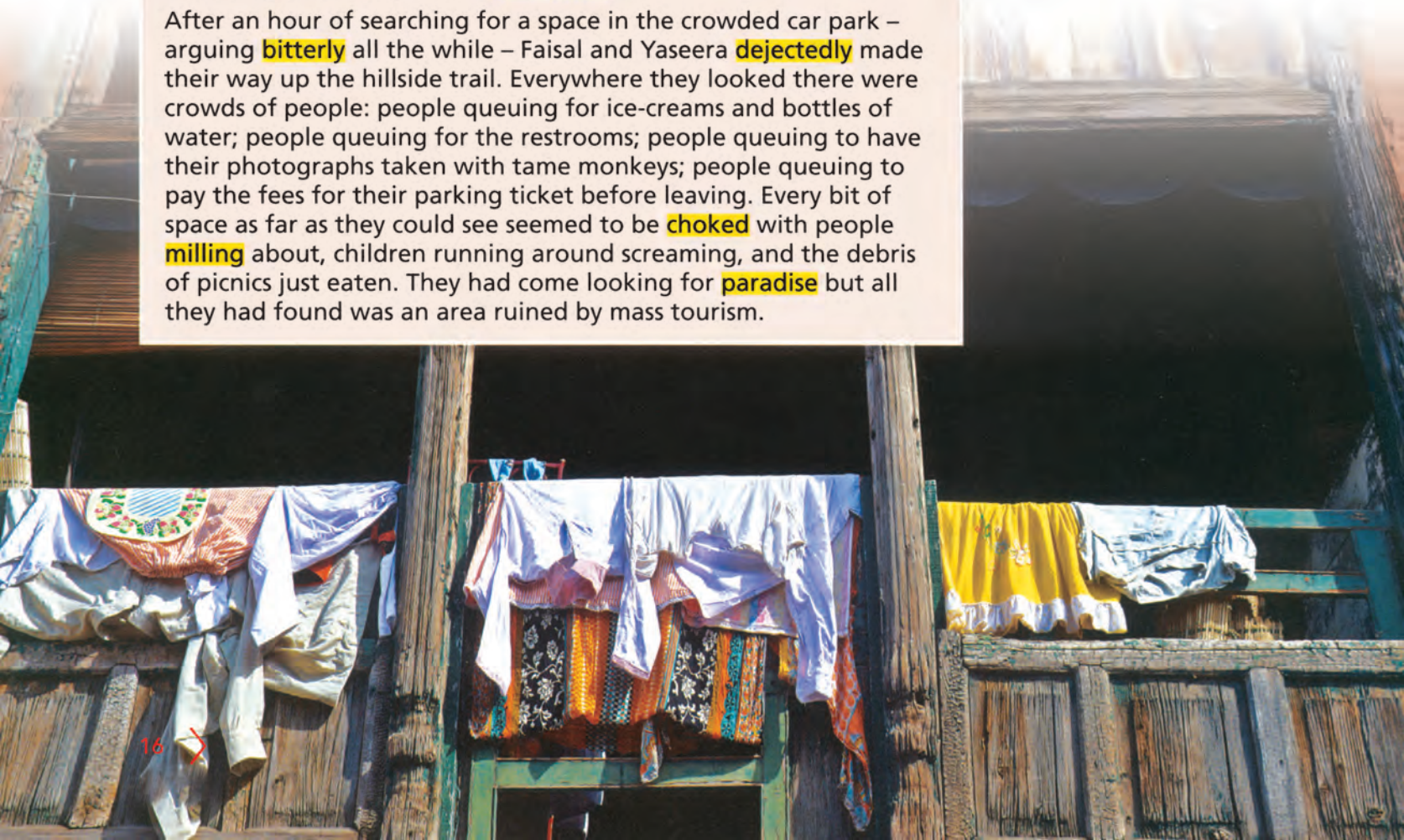
Text 2.2

It was a gloriously sunny day; perfect for relaxing in the hills with a picnic lunch. The two-hour drive in a **stifling** car with no air conditioning would seem like a **minor** inconvenience when they finally arrived at their destination, where the cooling breezes would **provide relief** from the oppressive heat of the city. They would also enjoy a sense of freedom that comes from being in a large open space. Yaseera secretly hoped it would help them break the **endless cycle of bickering** they seemed to be trapped in lately.

As Faisal drove them away from their tatty apartment block, the car was **dwarfed** by the tall buildings lining the highway on either side. Yaseera sighed at the peeling paintwork on the building exteriors and the lines of washed clothes hanging from every tiny balcony. Married life piled up on top of hundreds of other families in a tiny one-bedroomed box wasn't what she had dreamed of as a **rural** child longing for city life.

To Yaseera's surprise, the highway was moving **seamlessly** and their journey was smooth. They reached the foothills and began the **meandering** drive along the ribbon road that wound its way up the hills. She sighed with contentment, **luxuriating** in the **anticipation** of their arrival at the national park, famous for its stunning views and peaceful **ambience**.

After an hour of searching for a space in the crowded car park – arguing **bitterly** all the while – Faisal and Yaseera **dejectedly** made their way up the hillside trail. Everywhere they looked there were crowds of people: people queuing for ice-creams and bottles of water; people queuing for the restrooms; people queuing to have their photographs taken with tame monkeys; people queuing to pay the fees for their parking ticket before leaving. Every bit of space as far as they could see seemed to be **choked** with people **milling** about, children running around screaming, and the debris of picnics just eaten. They had come looking for **paradise** but all they had found was an area ruined by mass tourism.



Look at the first highlighted word: 'stifling'. Do you know what it means? If not, start to work it out by looking at the whole sentence.

The two-hour drive in a **stifling** car with no air conditioning would seem like a minor inconvenience when they finally arrived at their destination, where the cooling breezes would provide relief from the oppressive heat of the city.

The clue in the sentence is the phrase 'with no air conditioning'. You can probably work out that when there is no air conditioning and 'oppressive heat', a car is likely to be very hot and stuffy. So, in this context, 'stifling' is an adjective describing the suffocating heat in the car.

- 1 In pairs, look at the other highlighted words and phrases in the text. Work out their explicit meanings (how they are used in the context of the text) and what the writer is trying to **convey** with these word choices. Look for clues in the text. Record the meanings in a table like this. The first two have been done as examples.

Word	Meaning in context	Synonyms	What the writer is conveying
stifling	suffocating	airless, sweltering, choking	that the car journey is uncomfortably hot
minor	insignificant	unimportant, slight	that the destination will make the uncomfortable journey worth it

KEY TERM

convey: make known or reveal to the reader

- 2 Join with another pair and compare the meanings you have recorded in your table. If there are any variations, discuss them and try to agree which meaning you think is correct.
- 3 On your own, choose ten of the words from the text and write them in new sentences. Swap your sentences with a partner and offer each other feedback. Consider how clear the meaning of the word is from the way it is used in the sentence. If you think any of the sentences could be improved, make constructive suggestions.

REFLECTION

Think about the process that you went through to work out the meanings in the activities above.

- ✦ List the reading skills you used – for example, skimming or scanning (see Section 1.2).
- ✦ Note down any places where you used your prior knowledge or experience to work out possible meanings.
- ✦ Consider what strategies you could use for any words you still do not understand.
- ✦ In what ways are these strategies helpful? Why do you think this is?

> 2.2 Putting reading strategies into practice

Some comprehension activities require brief, factual answers to demonstrate explicit understanding of a text. You may need to select details or a quotation from the text, or explain the meaning of a word or phrase using your own words. To respond effectively, you will need to use some of the reading strategies explored in Chapter 1.

Studying the question

Remember that part of the pre-reading strategy is looking closely at the question in order to fully understand what you need to look out for when reading an unseen text. The question will also tell you how to frame your response – for example, whether you need to find a single word or phrase, write a longer explanation, use your own words or find quotations from the text. **Command words** can also help you understand what you need to do.

KEY TERM

command word:

a word, usually at the beginning of a sentence, that helps you understand how to answer the question (e.g. 'identify', 'give', 'explain', 'suggest')

READING TIP

A reading routine

When reading to understand an unseen text, do not rush the preparation. Time spent reading and re-reading the text is not time wasted. Here is a good routine to follow:

- Skim read the text to form an overview.
- Skim read the comprehension questions, noting which questions need more detailed or longer answers.
- Closely read the text to form a deeper understanding.
- Read each question closely, then scan the text to find the information needed to answer it.



Finding words and phrases in a text

Read this non-fiction text about exploring a cave.

Text 2.3

Exploring a cave can be an unpleasant experience: there is a damp, sometimes musty smell which is common to all caves. You can see nothing initially but, when your eyes adjust to your unfamiliar surroundings, the strange light casts eerie shadows on the walls. Sometimes you are aware of creatures such as mice scurrying across your path.

If you are exploring a low cave, at the start of the walk having to stoop seems like fun, but that wears off as soon as you have travelled a short distance. You not only have to crouch down all the time, you also have to keep your head up so that you can see the roof of the cave. You have, therefore, a constant pain in the neck – but this is nothing compared to the pain in your knees.

After about a kilometre it becomes an unbearable agony. You begin to worry whether you will ever get to the end – still more, how on earth you are going to get back. Your pace grows slower and slower in response to the difficulties.

Sometimes it is hard going underneath your feet too, with jagged pieces of rock littering the ground ready to pierce even the hardest boot. This is in addition to the frequent and deep pools of stagnant water often masking themselves as shallow puddles. You certainly need to tread very carefully.



1 Answer the following questions.

- a Give a phrase from paragraph 1 that shows that all caves have the same smell.
- b Give one word from paragraph 1 that means 'at first'.
- c Identify two features of exploring caves in paragraph 1 that may be frightening.
- d What is the worst pain caused by exploring a low cave according to paragraph 2?
- e What are the two main worries of someone walking in a low cave according to paragraph 3?
- f Give two pieces of evidence from paragraph 4 that show cave walkers need to be careful about where they tread.



Skim read the following fiction text, then describe what it is about in two sentences.

Text 2.4

A long hungry hot afternoon drive later, they reached their destination: the Lake View Hotel. Its plain white-washed walls, sloping gardens and perfectly symmetrical blue swimming pool would have made it the ultimate in modern holiday resorts of the early 1960s. But now even the blistering garden shrubs had a vintage look to them. There were boulders in the drive and the walls at the front had begun to crumble.

'Is this another ruin?' Hector muttered as he slowly climbed out.

'I thought you would like it, Hector. Old-world. Quiet. Very good for meditative types.' [. . .] 'Now where's the reception?' He marched inside and rang a desk bell.

The main foyer was spacious, with a view of the pool and then the lake in the distance beyond. It had excellent natural light.

'I think the staff might have died some time ago.' Hector sat down on a rickety wicker chair and contemplated a three-year-old calendar pinned to the wall.

Brendan rang the bell with extra vigour.

From *The Match* by
Romesh Gunasekera



- 3 In pairs, look at the following questions.
- a Give two details about how the men were feeling at the end of their journey from the first line.
 - b What does the name of the hotel tell you about its situation?
 - c Give one word from the first paragraph which means 'best'.
 - d Give two pieces of evidence that the outside of the hotel looks run down.
 - e What does the description 'meditative type' tell the reader about Hector?
 - f Why does Hector say, 'I think the staff might have died some time ago'?
 - g Give two positive details about the reception area and one negative detail.
 - h What does the phrase 'extra vigour' tell the reader about how Brendan rang the bell?

First, you should both discuss:

- whether the question requires you to answer in your own words
- how detailed your answer needs to be.

- 4 Now answer the questions. Compare your answers with a partner. Discuss any differences and try to agree on a final answer.
- 5 In pairs, rank the questions in order of difficulty. Look at the command words and see whether there is a clear pattern. Do you think that some command words make questions more challenging?

Now read a student's responses to the questions and then look at the feedback the student received:

- a The men were feeling tired and hungry.
- b It has a nice view.
- c Ultimate
- d The garden has shrubs in it and the front wall is in a poor state of repair.
- e It tells the reader that Hector likes to meditate.
- f Because they are taking so long to come to the reception so it's as if they no longer exist.
- g The reception area has lots of space and overlooks the lake, however, it has rickety furniture.
- h He rang the bell quite violently using more energy than needed.

Feedback

- a This answer is partially correct as it identifies that the men were hungry. However, although the first line of the text says that the journey was long, it does not specifically say that the men were tired so this does not answer the question. The full answer also needed the fact that the men were hot.
- b This answer is too vague. The question asks about the hotel's situation, so the response needs to mention that it is near or overlooking a lake to show full understanding.
- c Ultimate is correct and the response has followed the instruction to offer one word.
- d This answer is partially successful as it offers the evidence that 'the front wall is in a poor state of repair'. However, saying that 'the garden has shrubs in it' is too vague. The response needed to show understanding of 'the vintage look' of the shrubs - that they looked old-fashioned. It could also have offered the evidence that the drive had stones or rubble on it to answer this question fully.

- e This response is incorrect because the word 'meditate' is too close to 'meditative'. When asked to explain the meaning of a word, it is important not to use any other forms of that word in the explanation. Here the answer needed to show understanding by saying the phrase shows that Hector is very thoughtful or reflective or contemplative.
 - f This is correct and shows understanding of Hector's sarcasm.
 - g This is a full answer to the question. The response offers two correct positive features and one correct negative feature. The response could also have included the natural light as an alternative positive feature, or that there is an out-of-date calendar on the wall as an alternative negative feature.
 - h This is a full answer to the question, as it explains the meaning of vigour as used in the text as well as considering the impact of the word 'extra'.
- 6 Review your own answers. Would you change your answers to any of the questions based on the feedback here?

REFLECTION

Look back over the information in this section.

- Identify what you have learnt about answering short comprehension questions.
- Identify what you find difficult about this type of question.
- Plan what you could do to improve – for example, if you feel you need a wider vocabulary you could schedule time for reading each week, write down lists of new words you come across or complete online vocabulary exercises.

> 2.3 Using your own words

To demonstrate your understanding, you may need to explain longer sections of a text using your own words. To do this you will need to know how to **paraphrase** effectively.

Identifying key words and phrases

Sometimes a comprehension activity will incorporate the key words you need to locate the relevant part of the text. But at other times, you may need to identify and select the key words yourself before recasting them into your own words.

KEY TERM

paraphrase: to express the meaning of a text using different words

Look at this example based on Text 2.4.

Question: Using your own words, give two pieces of evidence that the outside of the hotel looks run down.

Relevant section of text: *But now even the blistering garden shrubs had a vintage look to them. There were boulders in the drive and the walls at the front had begun to crumble.*

Step 1: Identify the key words and phrases you are being asked to rewrite as words or expressions of your own. Careful reading of the question and the text should lead you to see that 'blistering garden shrubs had a vintage look to them', 'boulders in the drive' and 'the walls at the front had begun to crumble' are the key phrases you need to reword. As this question asks for 'two pieces of evidence', you only have to include *two* relevant points in your response.

Step 2: Write your response. Remember that you do not need to avoid using *every* word of the original text, but look for synonyms for the most relevant words to demonstrate your understanding. Try to reorder the words and replace any complex language. For example, the phrase 'blistering garden shrubs had a vintage look to them' reveals that the shrubs look dry or parched, as well as old-fashioned. You could rephrase this as: 'the plants looked parched and old-fashioned'. 'Boulders in the drive' could be rephrased as 'the entrance road was full of rocks', and 'the walls at the front had begun to crumble' could be rephrased as 'the front walls were in a poor state of repair'.

The question also tells you that it is language describing the hotel as 'run down' that needs to be changed, rather than any other words. The key words here are 'blistering', 'vintage', 'boulders' and 'crumble'. It is fine to use the words 'shrubs', 'drive' and 'walls' in your response.

Example answer: The hotel looks run down from the outside as the garden is full of dry, old-fashioned looking shrubs and the walls are in a poor state of repair.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: CHOOSING SYNONYMS

When choosing your own words, remember that not all synonyms have exactly the same meaning. Be sure that your choice of words accurately reflects what that writer says or means. Look at this example:

- Hector sat down on a rickety wicker chair . . .

If you were using your own words, you would need to make it clear that the meaning of 'rickety' is that the chair was unstable but not completely broken. Synonyms such as 'wobbly' or 'unsteady' would work, but words such as 'derelict' or 'ruinous' would not convey the exact meaning of the word in context despite being listed as synonyms of 'rickety'.



Now write a response to the following task, using the steps on the previous page as a guide and being careful to choose synonyms carefully.

Question: Using your own words, give two positive details about the reception area and one negative detail.

Relevant section of text: *The main foyer was spacious, with a view of the pool and then the lake in the distance beyond. It had excellent natural light.*

'I think the staff might have died some time ago.' Hector sat down on a rickety wicker chair and contemplated a three-year-old calendar pinned to the wall.

Compare answers with a partner and note any similarities in your responses. Give your partner constructive feedback on their response.

Now read another extract from *The Match*.

Text 2.5

Out by the pool, the wind was up. When Sunny came out he found the hotel manager and his waiter pouncing on wafting serviettes and sandwiches like a pair of cats. The teapot had half the tablecloth flapping over it, ready to sail.

The surface of the water in the pool broke in a woosh.

'What's up, men?' Brendan bellowed through the spray. He bobbed over to the climbing rail.

'Wind, sir.' The manager grabbed another piece of green garnish as it flew past. 'At this time it blows hard.'

'Can't you do something about it?'

'It is not in my power, sir. We have no climate control ...'

'Windbreaker, man. You know, use a screen.'

The waiter dived behind him and missed the catch; a scrap of lettuce flew over the boundary parapet.

'Sir, we have a good wall.' The manager swung around, arms flailing, propelled by the wind. 'Dining room, sir? Or I can put tea in the hall inside. Very nice sitting area there.'

Brendan hauled himself out of the water and picked up his towel. [...] 'Right. Do that then. How can you eat anything in this hurricane?'

Not a hurricane, sir. This is our cool breeze.

From *The Match* by Romesh Gunsekera



3 Answer these questions.

- a Using your own words, explain what Sunny found the manager and waiter doing by the pool.
- b What does the word 'bellowed' tell the reader about the way Brendan spoke?
- c Using your own words, explain why the manager is unable to solve the problem when Brendan says, 'Can't you do something about it?'
- d Using your own words, explain Brendan's proposed solution and why it would not work.
- e Using your own words, give two ways that the manager is affected by the wind in the sentence beginning, 'The manager swung . . . '.

Evaluating answers

Read Text 2.6, a short description of a boy riding his bike.

Text 2.6

Yusuf pedalled his new bicycle along the path, gathering speed as he went. He suppressed the thought that his mother had told him not to go further than the end of their street. He was proud of his new bicycle — its shiny wheels, its smart, red frame, its tinkling bell.

Perhaps if he cycled around the corner to the next street, he would see his school friend, Bilal. Bilal had a bicycle and might perhaps be playing with it in his own street. His mother would never find out that he had strayed into forbidden territory. Along he went, further and further.

Then he remembered his mother's anger the last time he had disobeyed her — it just wasn't worth it. He pulled on the brakes and reluctantly turned the bicycle back in the direction of his house.





- 4 Look at the question and the five sample answers below. In pairs, discuss which answers are good and which could be improved, and how. Make brief notes on what feedback you would give each student. In your discussion, focus on:
- whether the words that are most relevant to the question focus have been changed
 - whether the meaning is still the same
 - whether the answer offers the level of detail and development required in the question.

Using your own words, give two reasons why Yusuf decided not to go and see his friend on his bicycle.

A He decided not to go any further because his mother had told him not to go further than the end of their street.

B He decided not to go any further because his mother had told him not to go beyond their street ending and because he was proud of his shiny new bicycle.

C He decided not to go any further because his mother had told him to stay within the boundaries of their street and because he knew she would be furious if he didn't do as he was told.

D He decided not to go any further because he suppressed the thought that his mother had told him not to go further than the end of their street and because he remembered how angry she had been the last time he disobeyed her. It just wasn't worth it.

E He was frightened of his mother's anger and had been told not to go far on his bicycle, but Bilal lives in a different street.



- 5 Now look at the feedback below and compare it with your own notes from Activity 4. Did you identify the best answer correctly? Did you highlight similar issues in the other responses?

A is incorrect. It uses the relevant phrase 'his mother had told him not to go further than the end of their street' but it is lifted from the text so cannot be credited as 'own words'. The student has not offered a second point so presumably did not notice that the question asks for *two* reasons.

B is partially correct, as it says 'his mother had told him not to go beyond their street ending'. This has used own words for a relevant part of the text. The second point saying 'he was proud of his shiny new bicycle' is not relevant to the question. The student takes account of the fact that two points are needed but only offers one correct point. The fact that Yusuf was proud of his new bicycle is not a reason to turn back.

C is correct, and remodels the wording of the original text skilfully. It gives the reason that Yusuf decided to turn back as because 'his mother had told him to stay within the boundaries of their street'. It also offers a second point in the student's own words: 'he knew she would be furious if he didn't do as he was told'. Either fear of punishment, or fear of upsetting his mother, would be acceptable here.

D is incorrect – it copies from the text seemingly at random. The student fails to make the point that Yusuf went no further because his mother had forbidden it. In fact, by merely copying out 'he suppressed the thought that his mother had told him not to go beyond the end of their street', the response is stating the *opposite* of the correct answer.

E is correct. It is **concise** but changes the wording of the text sufficiently and offers two reasons.

KEY TERM

concise: brief or short

- 6 Write short responses to the following tasks.

- a** *In time, our early ancestors learnt to communicate knowledge to one another. This enabled them to find more food.*

Using your own words, say what our ancestors learnt that enabled them to find food.

- b** *The island's isolated location and hostile weather meant that the lighthouse took four years to complete.*

Using your own words, give two features of the island that made it challenging to build the lighthouse.



c *The rush-hour traffic crawled along the road, smoke billowing from exhaust pipes.*
Using your own words, describe the rush-hour traffic.

d *The creepers grew in profusion around the house, and even coiled around the window sills.*

Using your own words, explain what the writer tells us about the creepers with the phrases 'grew in profusion' and 'coiled around the window sills'.

e *Even today, coral reefs are essential to people living in the tropics, whether used to manufacture tools or simply to adorn their houses.*

Explain using your own words the uses made of coral by people living in the tropics.

REFLECTION

Look back at Activities 4 and 5, where you evaluated different answers to tasks requiring paraphrasing. Make a list of the key learning points to remember when responding to this type of activity – for example, avoiding lifting the words of the text. Note how each point will help you when tackling comprehension activities.

> 2.4 Explicit and implicit meaning

When you demonstrate understanding of *explicit* meaning in a text, you show that you have understood its surface meaning: what the writer states directly. This relies on your understanding and knowledge of vocabulary, the ways in which writers express ideas and opinions or how they narrate characters and events. When you demonstrate *implicit* understanding of a text, it means you have looked deeper and 'read between the lines' to infer what a writer is suggesting by their choice of language.

Distinguishing between explicit and implicit meaning

Read this short passage, then look at the questions and example responses that follow.

The rain lashed against the windscreen, causing rivers of water to cascade down its surface. The windscreen wipers were struggling to clear it. The traffic was moving more slowly than usual as they inched along the highway towards home.



Question 1: What was the weather like?

It was raining heavily.

Question 2: Where were they travelling?

They were travelling home.

The answers to both these questions can be found on the 'surface' of the text. The phrase 'rain lashed' explicitly means heavy rain, and the word 'home' tells you where they were travelling.

Question 3: From the evidence in the text, explain why the traffic was moving more slowly than usual.

A The traffic was moving more slowly than usual because the heavy rain made visibility poor.

B The traffic was travelling more slowly than usual because the heavy rain made driving conditions dangerous.

C The traffic was travelling more slowly than usual because there had been an accident.

A is correct. In the text it states that the windscreen wipers were 'struggling' to clear the rain, so it is reasonable to infer that visibility was poor for the driver.

B is correct, as it makes the deduction that the heavy rain running down the windscreen was making driving conditions dangerous. This inference is based on information given in the text.

C is incorrect as there is no suggestion in the text that there has been a traffic accident. It makes a deduction that accidents are more common in heavy rain, but this is not based on the information given in the text.

Note that these answers could be made more concise by leaving out the sentence stem:

- A** Because the heavy rain made visibility poor. ✓
- B** Because driving conditions were dangerous. ✓
- C** Because there had been an accident. ✗

READING TIP

Command words for explicit and implicit meaning

Command words in the question can help you recognise questions that require understanding of explicit or implicit meanings. 'Give', 'Identify', 'Find' or 'What' usually require explicit understanding. Words such as 'Explain', 'Suggest' or 'How' usually require implicit understanding.

- 1 In pairs, read Text 2.7 and the questions that follow. Decide whether each question is asking for explicit or implicit understanding of the text. Then write your answers to the questions.
 - a Find a word in the first line that means the same as 'read quickly'.
 - b What has caused the travel problems that Shahnawaz is facing?
 - c What does Shahnawaz learn about his flight and how does he feel about it?
 - d Using your own words, explain Shahnawaz's 'worst fear'?
 - e Using your own words, explain why Shahnawaz did not follow his mother's advice?
 - f Suggest what family occasion Shahnawaz is going to miss. Give one piece of evidence from the text to support your suggestion.
 - g Suggest two ways in which Shahnawaz may change his behaviour in the future from the lesson he has learnt.

Text 2.7

Shahnawaz sighed deeply as he scanned the departure board. All flights out of the terminal seemed to be delayed by at least two hours due to the monsoon rains. He located his flight number and his heart sank even more deeply in his chest: the word 'cancelled' loomed out at him. His worst fears had come true, and he knew that he had no hope of making it home on time. His family would be so disappointed, and he could hear his mother's words ringing in his ears: 'Don't think of travelling the day before – you know how much travel disruption is caused by the monsoon rains, so allow a few days just to be on the safe side.' He was going to miss the happiest and most important day of his sister's life because, however good his intentions, he always put work before his family. He knew he had to change.



- 2 Re-read Text 2.2 in Section 2.1, then answer these questions that require an understanding of explicit meaning.
- a Identify two reasons why the car journey is uncomfortable.
 - b Give two reasons for the couple's decision to visit the hills.
 - c Name two things about life in the city that Yaseera does not like.
 - d What surprised Yaseera about the traffic on the highway?
 - e Find two words in paragraph 3 which show that the road was not straight after reaching the foothills.
 - f Give two pieces of evidence that show that the couple's visit to the hills did not satisfy their desire for peace and quiet.
- 3 Now answer the following questions about Text 2.2. These require an understanding of implicit meaning.
- a What does the writer suggest about Yaseera's relationship with Faisal?
 - b How does the writer show Yaseera's optimism in paragraph 1?
 - c What impression does the writer give of Yaseera's feelings about her life in the city in paragraph 1? Name two things and give a supporting quotation for each one.
 - d Suggest two ways that the writer builds up Yaseera's anticipation in paragraph 3.
 - e What does the writer suggest about the impact of tourism on places of natural beauty in the final paragraph?
 - f Suggest two emotions that Yaseera may be feeling at the end of this trip. Support your answer with quotations from the text.



REFLECTION

Compare your answers to the two sets of questions in Activities 2 and 3.
Make notes on:

- the reading skills and strategies you used for each set of questions and why you chose them (think back to the information about active reading)
- how pre-reading helped you
- the ways in which the second set of questions made you think more deeply – what reading strategies did you use to develop your responses?

> 2.5 Exploring implicit meanings

Understanding implicit meaning in a text requires you to think more deeply and look beyond the information that the writer has stated directly. As a reader you infer (or deduce) what a writer is implying by their choice of language.

Identifying what is implied

Understanding implicit meaning allows you to draw conclusions about events and characters in a piece of writing, as well as understanding the writer's attitudes and opinions.

Look at this example:

The examinations had gone exactly as expected; his first-choice university beckoned.

Although the first part of the sentence does not explicitly state that the exams have gone *well*, the second part implies this, because the subject of the sentence seems confident that he has secured a place at his first choice of university. Implying information rather than stating it directly makes the writing more interesting.

Now look at this second example:

Ali saw his brother across the room and eagerly waved while hurrying towards him, but Mazhar turned away and busied himself in conversation with a friend.

In this sentence the writer implies that Ali is more enthusiastic about seeing Mazhar than Mazhar is to talk to Ali. This suggests that there is some tension, and keeps the reader interested because they do not know why.



- 1 In pairs, look at the following sentences and discuss what is implied rather than stated explicitly. Write a sentence for each one, explaining how the writer uses implicit meaning and the effect it has on the reader.
 - a She glanced up briefly, giving him a thin smile before quickly returning to her book.
 - b The back garden was a jungle of weeds; formerly it had been her father's pride and joy.
 - c Her heart sank as she scanned the kitchen and noticed the unwashed plates and dirty floor.
 - d The concrete tower blocks surrounded the desolate yard, blocking out the sun completely.
 - e Despite his obvious talent and the fact that the fans adore him, he has yet to prove that he can cope with the intense pressure of the world stage.
 - f Seeing her former friend slip repeatedly on the ice with absolutely no sense of dignity or decorum secretly filled her with glee.
- 2 Working in small groups, read Text 2.8, then discuss the following points. Link your discussion clearly to the implicit information the writer offers in the text.
 - a the impression of Tali's character given in the text
 - b Tali's feelings about the car journey and the driver
 - c her experience of searching for her family in the hospital
 - d the behaviour of the woman in the lift
 - e Tali's relationship with her mother
 - f what the emergency may be
 - g what Tali cannot be forgiven for.

Text 2.8

Tali's journey to the hospital had been horrendous: the heavy rain had caused flooding on several of the main roads, so her driver had taken her on a circuitous route down back alleys and across several patches of waste ground. Despite her initial fear and mistrust, she was grateful to him for getting her across the city despite all of the obstacles thrown in his way.

Things were no easier when she arrived, however, as the hospital was vast, with inadequate and unhelpful signage. She found herself lost in a labyrinth of pale cream corridors, each one identical to the one before as she dashed up and down, her heart racing furiously. At last she saw a sign to the emergency room and flung herself into a crowded lift just as the doors were closing. They juddered and reopened as she heard a woman standing on her right sigh loudly and mutter to herself. Tali gave her an icy glare and pressed the button for the ground floor.

As she crashed through the double doors into the waiting area, lined with rows of brown plastic chairs, she saw her mother at the far end of the room. The older woman shifted awkwardly in her seat as Tali approached, clearly avoiding direct eye contact. As Tali questioned her frantically, she simply mumbled something about waiting for her eldest son to arrive before speaking to the doctors. Tali was incensed; even in a family emergency, she could not be forgiven for wanting to lead an independent life where she could make her own decisions.



- 3 Now answer these questions.
 - a Explain why Tali experiences feelings of 'fear and mistrust' on her drive to the hospital.
 - b Suggest two emotions Tali is feeling as she tries to find her way through the hospital.
 - c What does the word 'flung' suggest about Tali's movement at this point?
 - d Explain why the woman in the lift behaves in the way that she does and why Tali responds with an 'icy glare'.
 - e Explain what the phrases 'shifted awkwardly' and 'avoiding direct eye contact' suggest about Tali's mother's response to seeing her?
 - f Suggest why Tali is 'incensed' that her mother is waiting for her eldest brother.
- 4 In pairs, predict what may happen next, creating a bullet-point plan to complete the story. Use your inferred understanding of the characters and situation to inform your plan.

How writers use implicit meanings for specific effects

Writers use implicit meanings in their texts for a number of reasons:

- to make subtle inferences about a character (positive or negative)
- to suggest how a character feels about something
- to suggest the nuances in relationships between characters
- to convey their own opinions or attitudes
- to create suspense, tension or humour.

Read Text 2.9. Jim, a ten-year-old boy, has become separated from his parents trying to leave Shanghai after it is invaded by the Japanese during World War II. He returns to their home to wait for them.

Text 2.9

Time had stopped in Amherst Avenue, as motionless as the wall of dust that hung across the rooms, briefly folding itself around Jim when he walked through the deserted house. Almost forgotten scents, a faint taste of carpet, reminded him of the period before the war. For three days he waited for his mother and father to return. Every morning he climbed on to the sloping roof above his bedroom window, and gazed over the residential streets in the western suburbs of Shanghai. [. . .]

Large numbers of aircraft flew overhead, and Jim passed the hours plane-spotting. Below him was the undisturbed lawn, a little darker each day now that the gardener no longer trimmed the hedges and cut the grass. Jim played there in the afternoons, crawling through the rockery and pretending to be one of the Japanese marines who had attacked *the Wake*. But the games in the garden had lost their magic, and he spent most of his time on the sofa in his mother's bedroom.

[. . .] Jim ambled about the empty house, and watched the water level almost imperceptibly falling in the swimming pool. The food in the refrigerator had begun to give off an ominous smell, but the pantry cupboards were filled with tinned fruit, cocktail biscuits and [. . .] meats, delicacies that Jim adored. He ate his meals at the dining room table, sitting in his usual place. In the evenings, when it seemed unlikely that his parents would come home that day, he went to sleep in his bedroom on the top floor of the house, one of his model aircraft on the bed beside him, something [. . .] always forbidden. [. . .]

the Wake: an American gunboat seized by the Japanese

On the fourth morning, when he came down to breakfast, Jim found that he had forgotten to turn off a kitchen tap and all the water had flowed from the storage tank. The pantry was amply stocked with siphons of soda water, but by now he had accepted that his mother and father would not be coming home. He stared through the veranda windows at the overgrown garden. It was not that war changed everything – in fact, Jim thrived on change – but that it left things the same in odd and unsettling ways. Even the house seemed sombre, as if it was withdrawing from him in a series of small and unfriendly acts.

Adapted from *Empire of the Sun* by J. G. Ballard

- 5 Answer these questions.
 - a What does the phrase 'Time had stopped' suggest about Jim's situation?
 - b Using your own words, explain why the lawn is 'a little darker each day' in paragraph 2.
 - c What does 'the games in the garden had lost their magic' suggest about Jim's feelings at this point?
 - d Using your own words, explain why Jim eats 'sitting in his usual place' and 'went to sleep in his bedroom' despite being alone in the house.
 - e What does 'something always forbidden' suggest about Jim's decision to put his model aircraft on his bed at night?
 - f What does the writer imply by saying that the house 'was withdrawing from him in a series of small and unfriendly acts'? Give two pieces of evidence from anywhere in the text to support the idea.
 - g Explain, using your own words, how being without his parents at home affects Jim emotionally. Support your answer with three details from anywhere in the text.
- 6 How does the use of implied meaning make a story more interesting for the reader? List as many points as you can from the information in this section about the effect of this technique.

> 2.6 Understanding a writer's opinions and attitudes

Implicit meaning does not only occur in descriptive and narrative texts. When reading **persuasive** or **informative texts**, you may be required to show understanding of a writer's opinions and attitudes, which could be expressed implicitly rather than stated directly. You may also need to identify any **bias** displayed by the writer.

Opinions and attitudes in non-fiction texts

Many non-fiction texts, such as speeches and articles, explore topics by offering a viewpoint and presenting the reader with evidence to support that viewpoint. A writer may express their opinion through a biased attitude or they may offer a more balanced approach. Either way, the writer's own opinions are implicit in the text.

Some non-fiction texts may be written in the third person, so the writer's attitude is less apparent. However, the text may imply opinions and attitudes that you will be asked to explore from the evidence offered. To do this, you need to be aware of the following aspects of a text:

- tone – look for strong feelings, such as anger, frustration or enthusiasm
- register – consider how formal or informal the writing is
- word choice – look for emotive language, technical language, strong expressions, deliberate understatement or exaggeration
- the details, reasons and evidence offered.

KEY TERMS

persuasive text: a text where the main purpose is to present a point of view and persuade the reader

informative text: a text which informs the reader about a specific topic through factual knowledge

bias: being in favour of, or against, an idea or cause



Read Text 2.10, a short article about young people volunteering overseas.

Text 2.10

Every year, thousands of young people embark on overseas adventures intent on solving world poverty through digging a few wells or helping to build a village school as part of a gap-year project. Many of them pay thousands of pounds for this 'privilege' and few of them bother to check later to see whether the 'project' ever got finished. However sincere their intentions are, deep down they are far more interested in travelling the world or having something interesting to put on their CV than genuinely engaging with the communities they are meant to be helping.

Orphanage volunteering has become increasingly popular in some countries. Inexplicably, the number of orphanages in these countries has grown in spite of the number of orphans decreasing. It's become big business, and there is a long line of 'volunteers' happy to stay for six months working with vulnerable children then cheerfully wave goodbye as they return to their 'real' lives. How the children feel about this never-ending cycle of people coming in and out of their lives remains a mystery because their voices are never heard.

- 1 In pairs, using the checklist on the previous page, discuss:
 - a the writer's opinion of gap-year projects
 - b the writer's attitude to young people who volunteer overseas.

Exploring opinions

Read this newspaper article, in which the writer expresses concern about the rapid growth of tourism in Bangladesh.

Text 2.11

Bangladesh's beauty spots and how not to destroy them

I was in Bandarban towards the end of this April. An extended holiday weekend had just begun, with fatigued tourists crossing hundreds of miles from around the country to reach this dreamy south-eastern district of Bangladesh. Bandarban, with its remote tribal villages, many still cut off from the outside world, its mountains and springs, blissfully simple life, and the beautiful Sangu with its rocky riverbed, rapids and boulders, is perfect for both nature-lovers and adventure-seekers. It's the kind of place you never tire of getting back to, like a beautiful dream from your childhood that you relive even long after you have reached adulthood, [...] and the memory of it is so precious that you feel almost protective of it.

The first time I came to Bandarban was nearly a decade ago. Along with three others, I scaled what was then considered the highest peak in Bangladesh. Bandarban was not a popular destination then. There were fewer tourists, and fewer assaults on the integrity of the place. In a few years this would change. There are now more visitors than I ever imagined a place as restricted as this would accommodate. In Thanchi, the familiar calm has been replaced by chaos. There are, of course, more structures and roads that came through the promised path of development, but there is also considerably more garbage, with [...] discarded packets and water bottles strewn across the dirt tracks. As we waded in the deep, the air smacked of self-indulgence. Judging by the rapidity with which trash is accumulating, it

may not be long before those beautiful waterfalls will turn into sinkholes of plastic waste.

[...]

Can mass tourism ever be sustainable? Here lies a paradox. Part of Bandarban's old-world charm, for example, is its remoteness and lack of access to what in cities we take for granted. But mass tourism demands that there will be greater connectivity and greater access to essentials/amenities. You need to boost tourism through the provision of all these facilities but at the same time, you need to exercise restraint to preserve the integrity of the place, local culture and the environment. But can an industry built on self-indulgence and escapism integrate restraint in any real way?

How we respond to this issue will affect the trajectory of our tourism in the coming days. Some people, however, say tourism is inherently unsustainable, because travel addiction is in itself unsustainable. This is apparent in the new breed of litter-dropping, camera-brandishing tourists emerging out of Bangladesh's latest crush with "exotic" destinations.

[...]

One can link this tendency to replace a place's worth to a shareable photo, or the failure to form a real connection with a place or grasp anything beyond the superficial, to a lack of respect for that place and those who inhabit it.

From the website of *The Daily Star* newspaper, Bangladesh

- 2 In pairs, make notes on:
- a the writer's view of tourists and the impact they have on beauty spots
 - b whether the writer thinks that mass tourism is possible without negative consequences.
- 3 Join up into groups of four. Using your notes, devise a role play in which the writer of the article is interviewed as part of a panel on a travel chat show. Decide which of the following roles each of you will take:
- the chat-show host
 - the writer of the article
 - the editor of a travel guide to Bangladesh designed to encourage Bangladeshis to travel widely in their country
 - a young traveller who blogs about visits to remote areas.

Work together to write the questions the chat-show host will ask, making sure that questions are directed at each member of the panel. Then stay in role and see how the discussion goes.

READING TIP

Creating an authentic voice

To create an authentic **voice** for a character, you need to view the issue from their **perspective**, considering how they would feel about it. You should choose a tone and use language that reflects the strength of their feelings, as well as considering whether they might be biased in favour of one opinion, or more likely to be aware of an opposing viewpoint even if they do not agree with it. When you use information and evidence from the text, you need to adapt it to fit with the attitude of your character, so consider:

- the age of your character
- their job
- their experiences in life
- their attitude to the topic being discussed
- how they might relate to the other members of the panel.

KEY TERMS

voice: the way a particular character speaks or thinks in fiction, or the writer's tone and point of view in non-fiction

perspective: the 'angle' that a story or account is told from – whose eyes the reader sees it through

- 4 Now write a response to these interview questions, focusing on creating a convincing voice for each character and using the ideas in text 2.11 to support your opinions.
- a You are the writer of the article:

Interview question: Some people think you just dislike tourists and want to keep beauty spots for yourself instead of sharing them with others.

What is your opinion and why?

b You are the travel blogger:

Interview question: People think that travellers like you just take photographs and leave rubbish behind instead of really appreciating beautiful places.

What is your opinion and why?

c You are the editor of the travel guide to Bangladesh:

Interview question: People think that mass tourism is unsustainable without ruining the environment.

What is your opinion and why?

5 In groups, read your answers to the interview questions aloud and offer one another feedback. Use this checklist:

- ✓ Is the voice age-appropriate?
- ✓ Does the voice adopt the perspective in terms of the character's job, experiences or interests?
- ✓ Does the answer select appropriate information from the text to defend their opinion?
- ✓ Is the response to the question convincing?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Read Text A, 'Whaling in Barrow', and then answer the questions.

Text A: Whaling in Barrow

In this extract a travel writer is invited to go whaling in Barrow, Alaska.

As we wait at Barrow airport for our luggage to emerge from the plane, we take it in turns to put our heads out of the exit door and we instantly return giggling like school children. None of us has ever experienced cold like it. The wind is fierce enough to double the discomfort. I am wrapped in the thickest, most professional extreme cold-weather clothing I could find and still it is not enough. I am beginning to revise my oft-repeated assertion that I would rather be too cold than too hot.

At half past ten at night it is still as bright as day. I wander about the town, taking in the sights, such as they are, before submitting to the fact that it will never be dark. The curtains in my hotel room are not thick enough to keep out the white light and I pass a fitful night.

In the height of Barrow's summer it sometimes gets above freezing. That is the best they have to look forward to. The majority of the town's population is made up of Inupiat Eskimos who subsist by hunting caribou, fish and whale. The federal and international authorities who govern these issues allow the Eskimos of Barrow (and yes, they do prefer to be called Eskimo here, not Inuit) to hunt twenty-two whales a year. The whales, principally bowhead and beluga, are shared amongst the whole community. In a land where fruit and fresh vegetables are not indigenous and hard to come by even today, whale meat [...] provides all the vitamins and nutrition that the Inupiat need.

I have an appointment with whaling captain Henry, who invites me into his home to meet his bouncy and boisterous family. Henry is delightful: a warm, friendly

CONTINUED

and very proud Inupiat. He makes his own drums, he fashions his own tools, and he tries to live a life that his ancestors would be proud of. He agrees to take us on his whaling boat. The season is nearly upon us and it may be that whales will be spotted in the open seas. I am quite happy if we don't see a whale, for it would mean a killing. While I fully respect the Inupiat's traditional rights and while I recognise their hunting techniques on oar-powered boats have never endangered the bowhead or the beluga, I am still reluctant to watch the slaughter of any whale, no matter how traditionally done it may be.

[. . .]

Barrow is a coastal town, which is hard to verify when the sea is frozen. Henry's whaler is actually a mile or so out. He pulls us along on sleds, driving a Ski-doo.

The blueness of the ice comes as a shock to me. I had not thought that frozen sea water could be so hauntingly lovely.

We arrive at the whaler, which is not much bigger than an average [. . .] dining table. A crew of eight, at a moment's notice, can run the boat off the ice and jump into it just as it hits the water – water in which a human, no matter how fully dressed, could not survive for more than three minutes. [. . .] Henry shows me his harpoons [. . .] which he assures me end the life of the whale instantly. The Inupiat take pride in never causing pain or distress to their quarry. [. . .]

We stand where the frozen sea ends and watch the horizon. I am glad to say that I see no whales.

From Stephen Fry in America by Stephen Fry

1 Answer questions a–h.

- a Why are the writer and his companions 'giggling like school children' in paragraph 1? [1]
- b Using your own words, explain fully what the writer means by 'double the discomfort' in paragraph 1. [2]
- c Using your own words, explain fully what the writer means by 'submitting to the fact' in paragraph 2. [2]
- d Give two reasons that justify the Inupiat's right to hunt whales from paragraph 3. [2]
- e Give a phrase from paragraph 4 that means 'lively'. [1]
- f How does the writer feel about whale hunting? Give two details from paragraph 4 to support your answer. [2]
- g i Why is Henry's whaler 'a mile or so out' from the shore? [1]
ii Using your own words, explain why the writer describes the sea ice as 'hauntingly lovely'. [1]
- h Explain, using your own words, the challenges of living in Barrow. Give **three** details from anywhere in the text to support your answer. [3]

2 Imagine you are Henry, the whaling captain. You are interviewed by a journalist about how outsiders view Inupiat life. Give your answer to the interviewer's question, using information from the text.

Interviewer's question: Some outsiders think all whale hunting should be banned because it's cruel and unnecessary. What is your opinion and why? [5]

[Total: 21]

PROJECT

In groups, you are going to create an anthology of short reading texts to help students prepare for the start of their Cambridge O Level English Language course. You should find some extracts from fiction stories, some extracts from newspaper and online articles, as well as travel writing.

Sort your anthology into clear sections for fiction and non-fiction, then any genres or different text types within them. For each extract, discuss in your groups whether there are any words that students may find difficult and provide a glossary to explain the meanings of the words. Search for some suitable pictures to illustrate your anthology. Write a contents page with page numbers.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How confident do you feel about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter?

Rate yourself from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident), then answer the question to prove it.

Now I can . . .	Confidence rating (1–5)	Prove it
use different strategies to build vocabulary through reading		Make a list of new vocabulary that you have learnt recently.
understand how to respond to comprehension questions		Write three key learning points about answering comprehension questions.
remodel the language of a text in my own words		Choose three sentences from any of the texts in this chapter and rewrite them in your own words.
identify explicit and implicit meanings in a variety of texts		Give three examples of sentences where the meaning is explicit then rewrite the sentences to make the meaning implicit.
select appropriate information from texts for different purposes		Make a list of the main points from Text A in the Exam-style question that show how life is challenging for the people who live in Barrow.
show understanding of the ways in which writers convey attitudes and opinions using an appropriate voice		Write a paragraph describing someone missing a bus three times, each time adapting it to show a different perspective and voice: the person missing the bus, the bus driver, and a passenger on the bus.

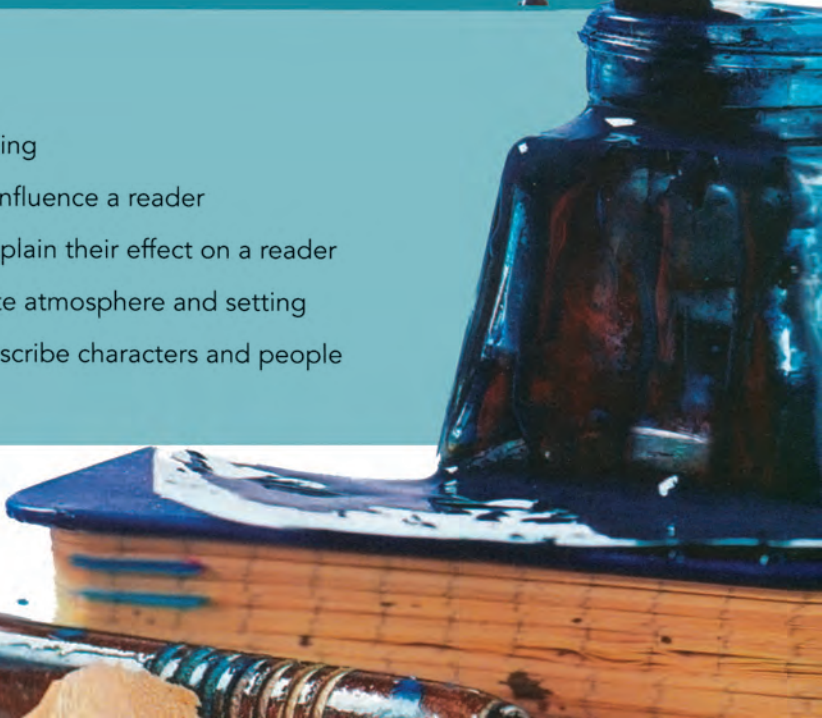


› Chapter 3

Analysing and explaining writers' effects

LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- understand what is meant by a 'writer's effect'
 - describe the ways in which word choices affect meaning
 - explain how the connotations of words and phrases influence a reader
 - identify a range of different language devices and explain their effect on a reader
 - describe how writers use figurative language to create atmosphere and setting
 - explain the effects of writers' language choices to describe characters and people
 - analyse how and why writers use sensory language.
- 

> Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn about the ways in which writers use language to create effects and influence the reader. Although this is referred to as writers' effects, it is not just about generating an emotional response; language techniques also enhance the reader's understanding of a text by creating atmosphere, describing settings, establishing complex characters and exploring relationships and situations.

GETTING STARTED

In small groups, discuss what you think writers' effects means. Brainstorm all your ideas before sharing them in a class discussion.

SKILLS FOCUS

Writers' effects questions assess your understanding of the way writers use language for specific effects, to shape the reader's response to characters, situations and ideas. You will need to show understanding of:

- literary terminology
- how to analyse language choices at word and phrase level through considering the strength and shade of words, as well as their connotations
- how to analyse figurative language, including imagery.

> 3.1 What is a 'writer's effect'?

Writers use language to engage readers in all sorts of ways. Many people assume that writers' effects refers only to the reader's emotional response to a piece of writing. In reality, writers can use interesting language for a variety of reasons, including:

- capturing the reader's attention by using language as a deliberate **hook**
- conveying an emotional response, or a strong attitude or viewpoint
- creating a **sensory image** that draws on the reader's own experiences
- enhancing the reader's understanding of a character's behaviour or attitudes
- creating a vibrant setting as a backdrop
- creating atmosphere, such as a sense of **foreboding**, **foreshadowing** or to build suspense.

KEY TERMS

hook: an opening sentence or statement designed to grab the reader's attention so they want to read on

sensory image: an image that appeals to the reader's senses: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell

foreboding: a sense that something bad is going to happen

foreshadowing: a hint or suggestion of something that happens later

When commenting on any of these effects, it is best to avoid using general phrases such as:

- It draws the reader in.
- It makes the reader want to read on.
- It makes the reader feel as though they are there.
- It helps the reader know what is in the character's mind.
- It paints a strong visual image in the reader's mind.

Instead, make clear and precise links to the language you are discussing, making sure your analysis engages with the text at word level.

READING TIP

Things to avoid in language analysis

Other things to avoid when explaining writers' effects include:

- using the language of the phrase in your explanation
- simply naming literary devices, such as **similes** or **metaphors**, without exploring the language in them
- describing the reader's emotional response without explaining it fully.

KEY TERMS

simile: a type of figurative language in which one thing is compared to something else using the words 'as' or 'like'

metaphor: a type of comparison that describes one thing as if it is something else

Read Text 3.1, an extract about a woman who is skydiving for the first time.

Text 3.1

As she looked out of the open door, her stomach dropped. It was high . . . very high; the land below was a patchwork quilt featuring browns of differing shades. She was tottering precariously near the sharp edge with an increasingly strong breeze buffeting her. Her heart started to race and she could feel a warm flush rising through her body. Her limbs began to tremble uncontrollably; she felt woozy and light-headed.

'Are you ready?' shouted her instructor. 'Jump!'

She dropped like a stone, plummeting and hurtling downwards with her eyes tightly shut. Then she felt herself spiralling and spinning as she frantically tried to remember the instructions to hold her arms and legs out wide.

All of a sudden she felt a whoosh, and up she rose as her fall was miraculously broken. Now it was like she was floating on a sea of air as she looked up and saw the billowing sails of the parachute above her.



- 1 A group of students has been asked to comment on the effects of the highlighted phrases in the text. In pairs, decide which one of each pair of answers is the most successful. Remember, you need to consider whether they are general comments or whether they show understanding of the highlighted phrases at word level.

Student A: 'The land below was a patchwork quilt' is a metaphor that creates a strong visual image of what she could see for the reader. It makes the reader want to read on to see what happens to her next.

Student B: The metaphor 'the land below was a patchwork quilt' emphasises how high up she is because each field looks tiny and she can see lots of them below her. It also makes it seem as though each field is a square in a different colour spread out below her. The writer is deliberately using a metaphor of a familiar household item to enable the reader to imagine the scene effectively.

Student C: The writer uses the phrase 'tottering precariously' to show that her footing feels insecure and she feels as though she could fall out at any minute. This creates tension.

Student D: The phrase 'tottering precariously' makes the reader feel afraid. This makes the reader want to read on to find out what happens next.

Student E: The simile 'dropped like a stone' shows that she fell quickly and in a straight line. It makes it sound as though she is completely helpless and a dead weight. It emphasises how fast she is falling, which creates tension for the reader.

Student F: The writer says 'dropped like a stone' to make the reader feel afraid that she is going to be hurt. This is a simile because she is being compared to a stone. A stone isn't like a person so this is a writer's effect.

Student G: The words 'plummeting and hurtling downwards' give not only a sense of speed through 'plummeting' but also a lack of control, as she is unable to stop herself. This creates tension as it makes her situation sound dangerous and gives the impression that she may get hurt.

Student H: 'Plummeting and hurtling' makes the reader feel scared. It makes the reader feel as though they are also experiencing the fall with her.



Student I: 'Spiralling and spinning' uses **alliteration**. The 's' sound makes it clear that she is spinning and spiralling and the reader can easily picture it.

Student J: The alliterative use of 'spiralling and spinning' adds to the sense that she cannot control her movements. The alliterative phrase has a dizzying effect on the reader, as she appears to be twisting and turning at speed as she falls.

KEY TERM

alliteration:
use of the same sound, especially consonants, at the beginning of several close-together words

Student K: 'Floating on a sea of air' sounds peaceful and soothing, as though she has no worries or cares but can just relax. She sounds light and as though she has space all around her. The metaphor of the sea makes it sound as though she is bobbing along on the waves of air without a care in the world.

Student L: 'Floating on a sea of air' is a metaphor. It makes the reader visualise her floating in the air as though it is like the sea but it is air. It makes the reader feel relieved.

Student M: The phrase 'billowing sails of the parachute' makes it clear that she feels saved by the parachute, as though it is her ship taking her to safety. The word 'billowing' shows that there is a lot of fabric filling with air and flapping in the wind.

Student N: The 'billowing sails of the parachute' make it sound like a ship with sails. It sounds as if it is sailing on the sea and makes the reader feel relieved. It creates a strong visual image of a ship on the sea for the reader to imagine in their minds.

2 In pairs, discuss the effects of the following phrases. Write an explanation for each one.

- a strong breeze buffeting her
- b she felt woozy and light-headed
- c she felt a whoosh, and up she rose.

REFLECTION

Think back to what you have learnt in this section about what a writer's effect is and how writers use language for impact. Note down three key points that you will use to inform your analysis of writers' effects in later activities.

> 3.2 How language suggests meanings and ideas

Writers choose words very carefully to maximise the impact of their language. Many words have similar meanings, but they do not all have the same **connotations** or effect. Often, there are subtle differences – **shades of meaning** – that are key to the effect the writer is trying to create.

Exploring word choices

Descriptive words and phrases make writing more effective for the reader.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: POWERFUL VERBS, ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Word choice is key to vivid and dramatic writing. For example, a writer will choose specific verbs to convey a clear idea of how an action is performed. For example:

- The boy devoured the food placed in front of him.

The writer could have said 'He quickly ate the food', but 'devoured' creates a much more dramatic image and gives the reader the sense that the boy is desperately hungry. Just by choosing this single word, the writer *adds information to the sentence*.

Careful selection of adjectives can also make writing more meaningful. Look at the extreme adjectives in this sentence:

- The boat had no hope when faced with the gigantic waves generated by the horrific storm.

The adjectives 'gigantic' and 'horrific' *add drama* to the sentence, in a way that the words 'big' or 'bad' would not have done.

Specific effects can be created by choosing powerful adverbs, too. For example:

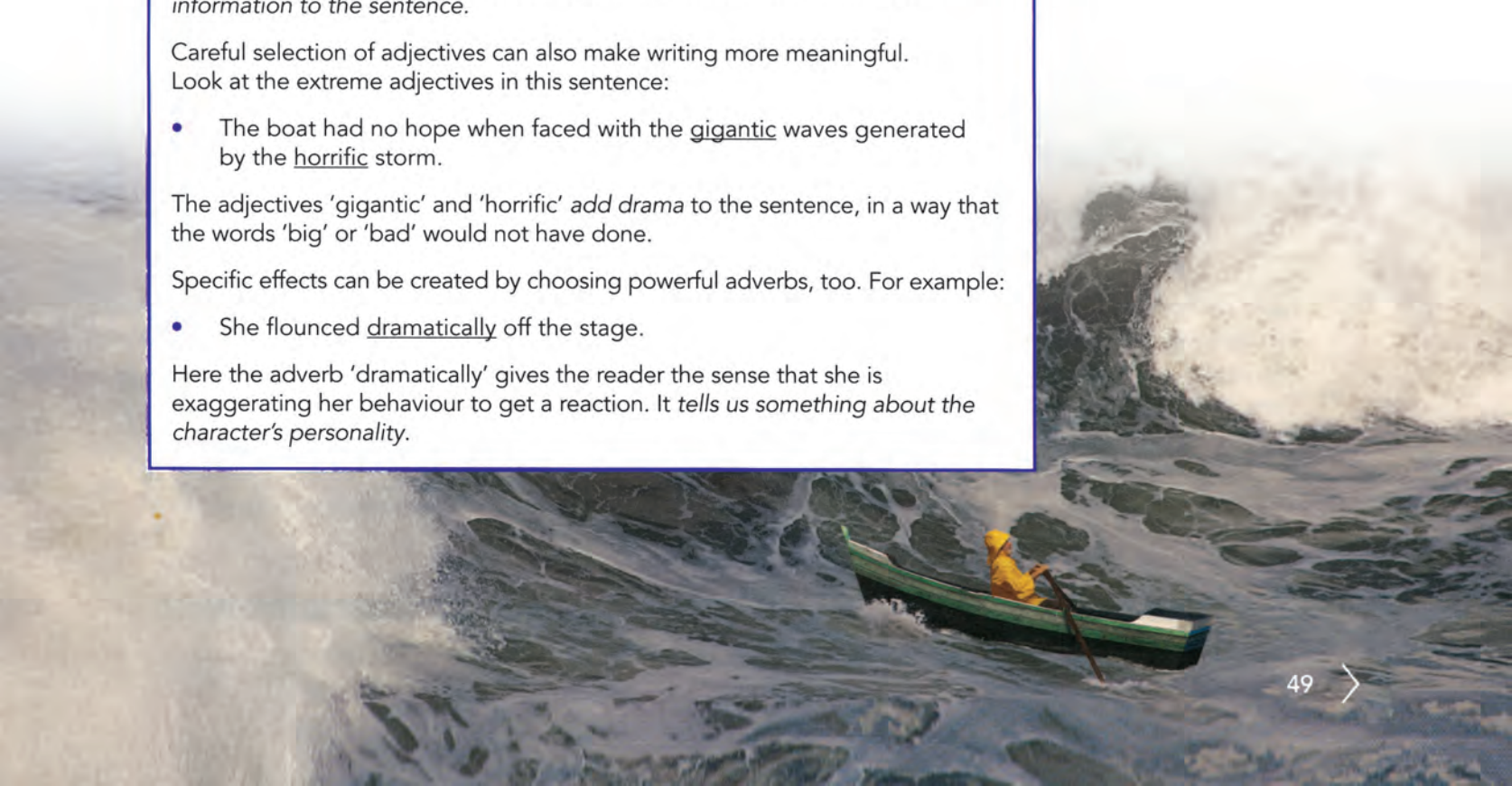
- She flounced dramatically off the stage.

Here the adverb 'dramatically' gives the reader the sense that she is exaggerating her behaviour to get a reaction. It *tells us something about the character's personality*.

KEY TERMS

connotations: the ideas, feelings and associations that a particular word evokes in a reader, in addition to the main meaning of the word

shades of meaning: the small, subtle differences between words with similar meanings



- 1 Look at this example of how verb choice changes and adds depth to a character description:

- The elderly man walked down the street.
- The elderly man shuffled down the street.
- The elderly man ambled down the street.
- The elderly man strolled down the street.
- The elderly man stumbled down the street.
- The elderly man strode down the street.
- The elderly man sauntered down the street.

In pairs, discuss what is suggested about the old man in each sentence. How does changing the verb alter your impression of the character? Which are the most and least effective? Why do you think this?

- 2 Now look at this example of how adjectives can change the meaning of a sentence:

- As she entered the room, the musky fragrance of her perfume filled the air.
- As she entered the room, the delightful fragrance of her perfume filled the air.
- As she entered the room, the cheap fragrance of her perfume filled the air.
- As she entered the room, the sickly fragrance of her perfume filled the air.
- As she entered the room, the revolting fragrance of her perfume filled the air.
- As she entered the room, the floral fragrance of her perfume filled the air.
- As she entered the room, the powerful fragrance of her perfume filled the air.
- As she entered the room, the familiar fragrance of her perfume filled the air.

In pairs, discuss whether each sentence seems negative or positive. Think about the strengths and shades of meaning of each word – is ‘revolting’ a stronger word than ‘sickly’, for example? The strength and shades of meaning of words can imply a judgement or attitude. How does this influence your response to the character? Which adjectives are the most and least effective? Why do you think this?

- 3 To see just how effective powerful word choices can be, try removing them from a piece of writing. Rewrite the following passage about a football match using plain language to describe the events. Keep all the events and reactions in the text, just change the language so it is more ordinary. This is more challenging than it seems!



Text 3.2

Following the curved line of the ball, the crowd was open-mouthed and wide-eyed as it arched through the air, the atmosphere was electric in the stadium. As it hit the post, groans rang out as they collectively sank into their seats, their faces filled with gloomy disappointment. Within seconds a roar rose in volume, ringing around the ground as Malik blocked the ball with his head,

manoeuvred it onto his knee then his foot and shot it straight back into the top left corner of the net. The crowd erupted, leaping from their seats and punching the air in triumph. Chants filled the air as Malik ran down the pitch, leaping excitedly then falling to his knees on the pristinely manicured grass.

- 4 Swap your rewritten text with a partner.
 - a Make a list of the words and phrases you both changed.
 - b Read through the original text again and compare it with your new texts. Discuss what has been lost in terms of engaging the reader's interest.
- 5 Now look at Text 3.2 again and note down what each of the words and phrases in your list suggested to the reader. For example:

The 'curved line of the ball' suggests that the crowd didn't take their eyes off it as it moved through the air. This shows how involved in the action they were.

The phrase 'open-mouthed and wide-eyed' suggests that the crowd were full of excitement and expectation that a goal was about to be scored. It also stresses how the whole crowd was acting in unison and develops a sense of unity.

READING TIP

Focus on phrases

When analysing a phrase, you do not have to explain every single word. Focus on what the phrase as a whole suggests. However, if you only understand one of the words in a phrase, focus on that one in your response.

Word connotations

Connotations are the associations that words have beyond their literal meanings. For example, the word 'blue' is a colour, but it is often also used to describe a feeling of sadness – as in 'He was feeling blue that day.' So, you would say that the word blue has connotations of sadness.

Connotations of words allow you to explore strengths and shades of meaning within words, taking a reader beyond a literal interpretation. Exploring connotations is another way of engaging with a writer's language at word and phrase level.

It is helpful to start by thinking about word connotations in terms of whether they are positive, negative or neutral.

- 6 In pairs, look at these examples and discuss the connotations of each word.

Positive connotation	Neutral connotation	Negative connotation
thrifty	economical	miserly
persistent	resolute	obstinate
statuesque	tall	lanky
driven	ambitious	pushy
easy-going	indifferent	docile
unique	unconventional	weird
interested	curious	nosy

Choose three rows from the table and write a sentence for each word to demonstrate its connotations. Swap your nine sentences with your partner and give feedback. How clearly do your partner's sentences show understanding of the word connotations? Offer one another feedback.

Symbolism

Symbolism is a literary device where writers use something to represent something else. For example, a rainbow is often used to symbolically represent hope and promise, or a red rose is used to symbolise love. Look at these examples where the symbolism has been underlined.

- She looked at the ring on her left hand and felt completely let down.
- He could see the dollar signs in his eyes as he signed the contract.
- On top of the ravaged building, the torn flag fluttered in the breeze.

In the first example, the wedding ring symbolises commitment and makes her feelings of disappointment much more striking. In the second example, the 'dollar signs' represent greed or expectation of great wealth. In the third example, the flag symbolises national pride and identity so the fact that it is 'torn' indicates that there has been conflict.

- 7 In pairs, discuss the following symbols, often used in stories and poems. Decide what they are used to represent when used by writers. Share your ideas with another pair and see how similar your ideas are.

Releasing a white dove	A single red rose	A rainbow stretching across the sky
Leaves falling from trees in the autumn	Someone tossing a coin and catching it	A bolted door
Balloons being released into the sky	Steep steps leading into a dark basement	A flower poking out of the snow

KEY TERM

symbolism: using a literal object to stand for or represent something else

Exploring the effects of emotive language

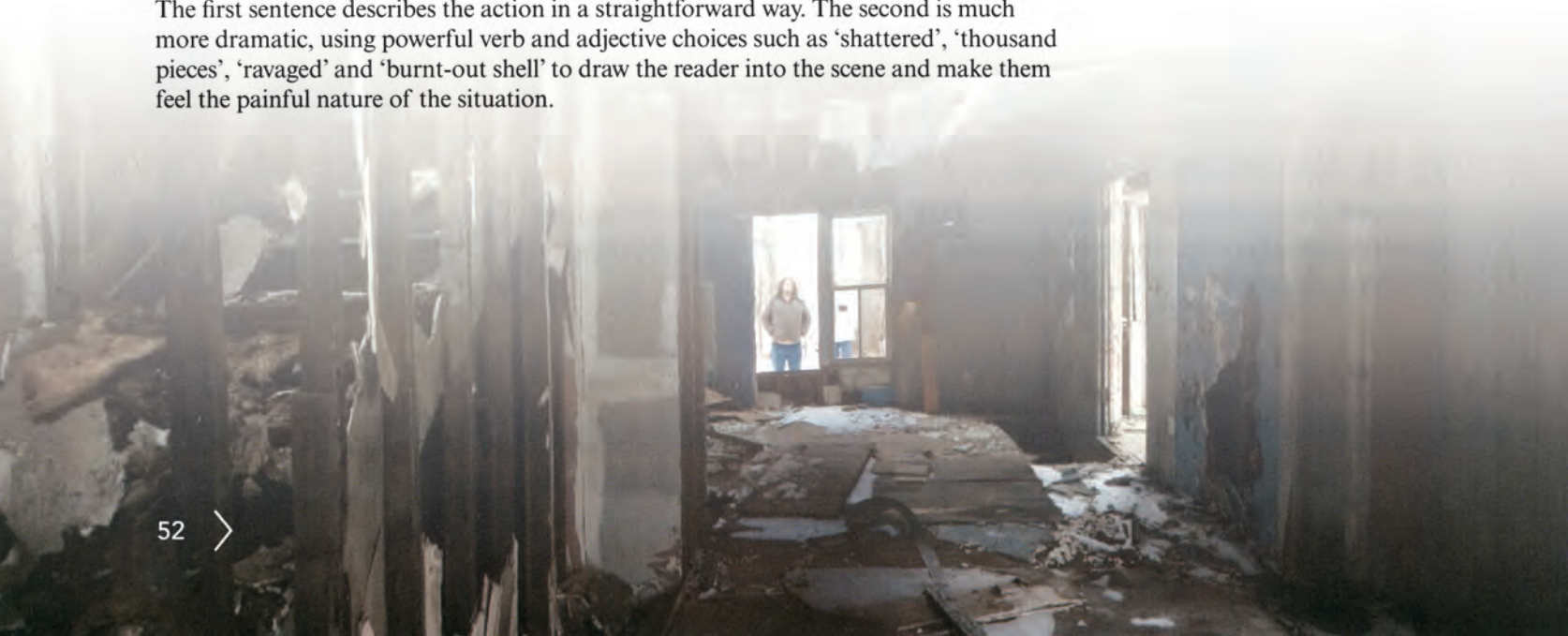
Emotive language means words and phrases that are deliberately chosen to evoke an emotional response in the reader. This may be to encourage the reader to empathise with a character or shape their response to a situation. Writers choose emotive words when they want to influence readers to have a strong reaction to the text – for example, sympathy, shock or anger. Look at these examples:

- She felt sad as she looked at her house after the fire had been put out.
- Her heart shattered into a thousand pieces as she looked at the ravaged, burnt-out shell of her former home.

The first sentence describes the action in a straightforward way. The second is much more dramatic, using powerful verb and adjective choices such as 'shattered', 'thousand pieces', 'ravaged' and 'burnt-out shell' to draw the reader into the scene and make them feel the painful nature of the situation.

KEY TERM

emotive language: language designed to appeal to a reader's emotions



- 8 In pairs, look at the examples of emotive and non-emotive language in the table.
- a Which phrases in the second column are designed to have an emotional impact?
- b What response is the writer trying to evoke in the reader?

Non-emotive language	Emotive language
A number of houses were badly damaged in the storm last night.	As the storm wreaked havoc last night, several houses in its path were left in tatters.
The outcome of the football match was unexpected and surprised the fans of both teams.	Fans were left aghast by the shock result.
Failing to recycle single-use plastic has had a negative impact on marine environments.	The mountains of dumped plastic found in our oceans is an absolute disgrace.
His ambition was to be accepted by a university overseas with a full scholarship.	He was desperate to get the funding he needed to escape to a new country to study.
An elderly woman was injured when a group of youths on bicycles knocked her over.	A defenceless old lady was mercilessly mowed down by a gang of thugs on bikes.

- 9 What kind of emotional response do you think the writer is trying to create in each of the following sentences? How do the word choices help evoke that response? Discuss your ideas in small groups.
- a As the storm subsided and the rain softened into a drizzle, the dark clouds rolled away allowing the sun to emerge and spread its warmth across the valley.
- b The bear caught sight of them cowering in the ditch; its mouth opened in a terrible roar as it rose up in front of the terrified tourists.
- c She crouched in the dark without moving as her heart pounded furiously; she could hear a faint scratching noise at her door and the sounds of muffled movements.
- d She could see her mother far in the distance: a small, lonely figure walking up the silent street away from her, her silhouette fading into the gathering darkness.
- e Their car hurtled down the thin metal track, looping and spiralling high above the fairground, their exhilarated screams and shouts of laughter filling the air.

REFLECTION

Think about how language suggests meanings and ideas.

- What could you explain easily to another student about how writers choose language to create effects?
- What do you feel less confident about?
- How could you build your confidence in these areas?





> 3.3 Responding to writers' effects

In this section, you will investigate some of the approaches you can take when identifying and analysing how writers achieve effects and influence readers.

Analysing language

Two key strategies for considering language associations in a piece of writing are the 'peeling an onion' approach and the 'iceberg' method.

In the first, you break down the process of analysing language by thinking of five layers of an onion. As you read, you 'peel away' these layers to explore deeper meanings in the writer's language.

- Layer 1 = the literal meaning of words.
- Layer 2 = the strengths and shades of meaning of the words.
- Layer 3 = the words' connotations or associations.
- Layer 4 = sensory effects.
- Layer 5 = emotional effects.

For example: *Her words rang out defiantly, but they sounded hollow.*

- Layer 1: She spoke loudly and daringly but did not say anything meaningful.
- Layer 2: 'Rang out' indicates that she wanted to be heard; 'hollow' indicates emptiness and lack of any substance.
- Layer 3: 'Rang out' is associated with bells, which usually indicate celebration or good news; 'hollow' is a word usually associated with something that looks intact but on closer inspection the substance has been removed, suggesting unfulfilled expectations.
- Layer 4: 'Rang out' appeals to our sense of hearing indicating clarity and perfect pitch – it is full of promise; 'hollow' appeals to our sense of sight – an empty shell.
- Layer 5: The contrast between 'rang out defiantly' and 'sounded hollow' engenders feelings of disappointment, as something sounding so promising doesn't amount to anything. Crushing disappointment.



The 'iceberg' method involves thinking about surface meanings (above the waterline). Then thinking of the deeper meanings (below the waterline). Just like an iceberg, you will find that a lot more meanings lie beneath the surface.

For example: *She had tried to rid herself of these despairing thoughts for a number of years, but like the weeds in her garden, they kept resurfacing.*

You might consider the writer's choice of the word 'weeds' in the following way.

Literal meanings:
something unwanted or
damaging; where they do
not belong.



Connotations: weakness;
helplessness; at the mercy of; unable
to control.

Deeper implications: threat to
welfare; persistent; leave hidden
roots beneath the surface; appear to
be gone but are still there waiting to
reappear.

Symbolism: futility of human
endeavour; human frailty in the
face of more powerful forces.

- 1 Work in groups. You will be given one of the sets of words below that describe feelings. In each set, the words have a similar meaning. Think about the strength of each word and rank them from the least intense to the most intense. If you think that some of the words have the same intensity, put them side by side.

Group 1

angry bitter annoyed
aggravated irate vexed cross
irritated furious enraged fuming
displeased apoplectic raving

Group 2

happy content cheerful jolly
ecstatic joyous euphoric
exhilarated delighted gleeful
glowing blissful merry gratified

Group 3

enthusiastic keen excited
willing earnest ready zealous
exuberant committed devoted
wholehearted eager fervent
fanatical

Group 4

group clique assembly gang club
bunch family flock party crowd
troop band class pack

**2** Complete these tasks.

- a** When your group has ranked the words, discuss their associations and connotations. What does each word make you think about? Use a mind map with the word in the centre to explore the different associations.
- b** Join with another group and explain your word rankings. Discuss your mind map and listen as they explain their own mind map. Each group should offer feedback to the other and discuss any areas where you would change the rankings.
- c** Choose five words, including your most and least intense, and use the onion or iceberg methods to consider their connotations. Write a sentence including each word to show your understanding of the deeper meaning and associations.

Literary devices

Literary devices are specific techniques used by writers to allow them to convey deeper meanings and implications. Key language devices include metaphor, simile, **personification**, **hyperbole**, **onomatopoeia** and alliteration. You should be able to identify these devices in texts and explain why they are effective.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Literary devices are often collectively referred to as **figurative language**. Writers use them to convey deeper meanings, or to add depth and detail to their descriptions of settings, situations, characters and relationships. You should already be familiar with simile and metaphor – which are used to draw comparisons for effect – as well as personification, in which an inanimate object is described as though it is alive. (See Chapter 8 for how to use these devices effectively in your own writing.)

Hyperbole is where a writer deliberately exaggerates to add emphasis or make something more dramatic. For example:

- Waiting at the station was tortuous: she felt as though a thousand years had passed before she caught sight of his stricken face just beyond the barrier.

The exaggerations used in 'tortuous' and 'a thousand years' convey the character's extreme impatience and frustration, and help the reader understand the emotional intensity of the situation.

Onomatopoeia is when a writer uses a word in which the sound imitates the thing being described. For example:

- The chainsaw rattled, clattered and buzzed as he worked his way through the huge pile of logs.

The sounds created by 'rattled, clattered and buzzed' evoke the sounds and vibrations of the chainsaw, appealing to the reader's sense of hearing, bringing the action to life.

KEY TERMS

personification: a type of figurative language in which an object is described as if it has human characteristics

hyperbole: exaggerated statements

onomatopoeia: words that sound like the thing they describe (e.g. 'sizzle', 'boom')

figurative language: words and phrases used not with their basic meaning but with a more imaginative meaning to create a special effect; figurative language techniques include simile, metaphor and personification

CONTINUED

Alliteration is the repetition of a sound or letter at the beginning of words. Writers use it to create a rhythm or evoke atmosphere. For example:

- She wandered wearily along the winding path.

Here, the alliterative use of the letter 'w' creates a slow rhythm that reflects the mood of the sentence. The character appears to be tired and lacking motivation.



- 3 Identify the literary devices used in each of these sentences.
 - a The moon was a ghostly galleon floating across the sky.
 - b The boy ran down the street, dodging the cars and trucks like a footballer dribbling the ball down the pitch in a world cup final.
 - c The elderly man's eyes shone with the wisdom and knowledge of millions of years.
 - d The tree's skeletal arms seemed to be reaching into the inky night sky.
 - e The young boy groaned, squealed and howled when he didn't get his own way.
 - f As it slithered softly and slowly towards her, she sensed its presence.
 - g The rain lashed angrily against the windowpane, as if trying to break the glass.
 - h He felt as though the world had ended when his mother refused to buy him a new phone.
 - i He looked as joyous as a spring day when he heard the good news.
- 4 Write six sentences of your own using each of the literary devices.
- 5 Read the following extract and note down the literary devices that the writer has used.

Text 3.3

High on the hill stood the desolate house, looking forlorn and lonely with its windows shuttered and blind. Each winter the winds howled and screeched around the house, tossing up roof tiles and chipping away paint, leaving it looking shabby and unkempt. Each year the spring flowers in the long green grass poked their heads up hopefully only to find that there was still no one there to tend the gardens. The crooked path gradually disappeared as the earth and leaves encroached on it like an army gaining territory. Eventually it would lose the battle.



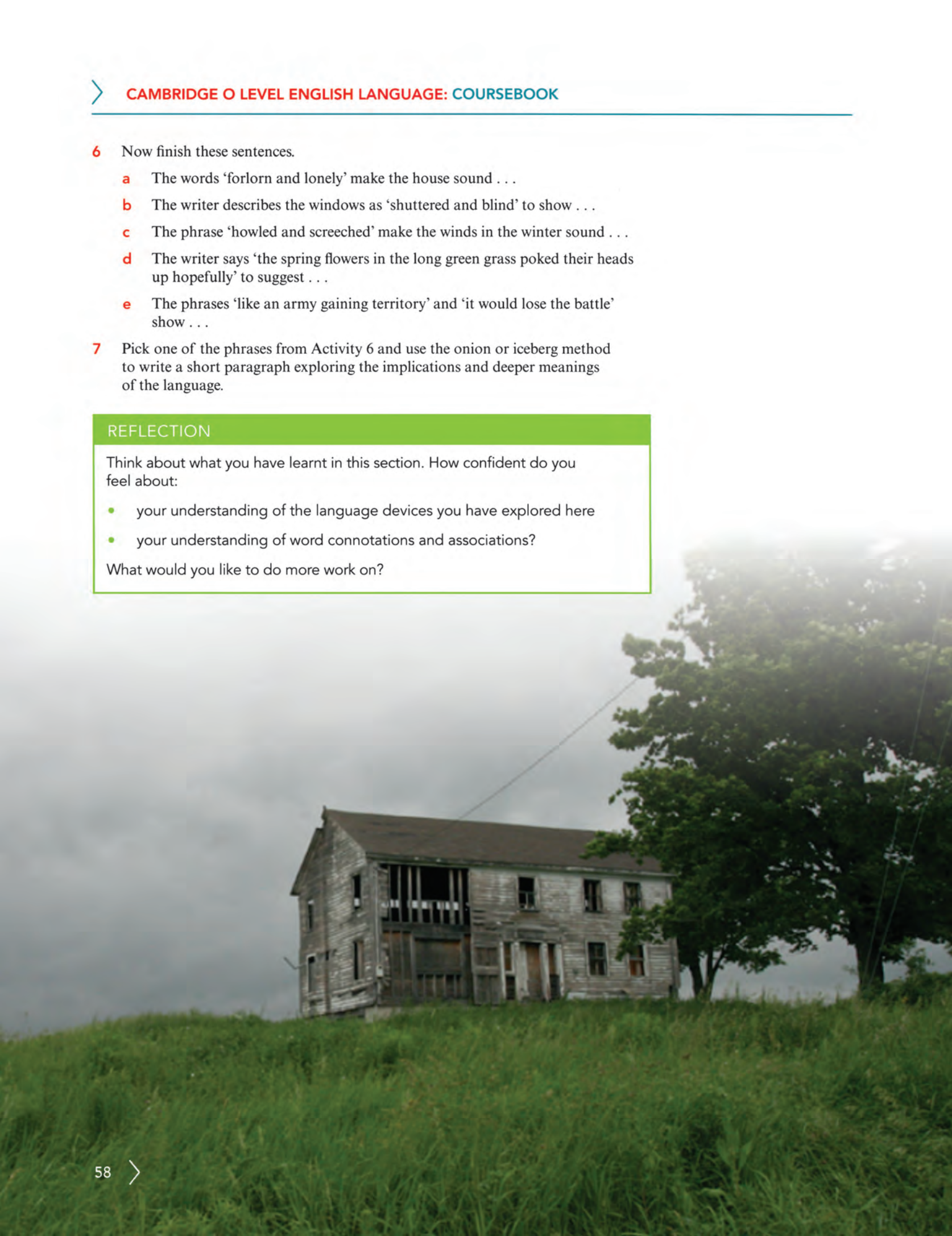
- 6 Now finish these sentences.
- a The words ‘forlorn and lonely’ make the house sound . . .
 - b The writer describes the windows as ‘shuttered and blind’ to show . . .
 - c The phrase ‘howled and screeched’ make the winds in the winter sound . . .
 - d The writer says ‘the spring flowers in the long green grass poked their heads up hopefully’ to suggest . . .
 - e The phrases ‘like an army gaining territory’ and ‘it would lose the battle’ show . . .
- 7 Pick one of the phrases from Activity 6 and use the onion or iceberg method to write a short paragraph exploring the implications and deeper meanings of the language.

REFLECTION

Think about what you have learnt in this section. How confident do you feel about:

- your understanding of the language devices you have explored here
- your understanding of word connotations and associations?

What would you like to do more work on?



> 3.4 Figurative language to create atmosphere and settings

Writers use figurative language most commonly in fiction texts, where it is effective in creating atmosphere and describing settings. Both these features allow writers to add depth and meaning to a text.

Analysing atmosphere

Figurative writing can help a writer establish any kind of atmosphere – positive or negative, happy or sad, relaxing or tense, humorous or serious. When reading to analyse how a writer has created an atmosphere, you may find it helpful to use a reading strategy known as zooming. You can think of this like a film shot, where the camera starts with a really wide focus on a scene then zooms in to look closely at one part of it. So, in your analysis:

- Start by zooming out, looking at the text from a distance with a wide perspective, deciding whether the atmosphere is positive or negative.
- Then zoom in on more specific analysis, looking more closely at the language.

Look at the examples in Text 3.4. Starting from a wide perspective, you can see that the writer has created an overwhelmingly positive atmosphere. As you start to zoom in, think about what creates this positive atmosphere. The theme of the text is family relationships, as it is describing the reunion of family members after a long separation. The text is therefore exploring emotions such as relief, joyfulness and love.



Laughter is not literally enveloping her, but using this metaphor allows the writer to suggest that she is completely surrounded in laughter, capturing the essence of its ability to spread joy. It creates the effect of abundant happiness. An envelope also protects its contents, which suggests that her happiness provides a protective layer and makes her stronger.

Text 3.4

Their separation did not cause literal pain, but here the word 'painful' is used to show how intensely difficult it was. The association with physical pain helps the reader understand how very unhappy they felt.

All she could hear was laughter; it enveloped her, like a swirling breeze dancing down a green valley playfully touching everything in its path. She could feel her heart lifting and found herself smiling at the sight in front of her: her family together again after such a long and painful separation. Love radiated from every face as they laughed and hugged and twirled one another around.

This phrase uses a metaphor – love cannot literally radiate from a person's face. This figurative language is effective at stressing their happy and joyful facial expressions, which stem from seeing their loved ones again. Love is the source of their joy, so the metaphor is effectively used to develop that idea.

Here, the writer uses a simile to compare laughter to a light wind 'dancing', which gives a joyous and carefree effect. The natural setting of a valley gives the impression that the laughter has room to spread, with no obstacles in its path.

The light-hearted tone continues with the personification of laughter and the idea that it is capable of 'touching' people. This develops the idea of happiness being infectious and that it can spread easily from person-to-person contact.

- 1 Read the following three passages, then discuss them in pairs. Decide whether the atmosphere created is positive or negative (zoom out), then try to be more specific about how the writer uses details to create this atmosphere (zoom in).

Text 3.5

She froze as she heard the sound: it was faint but audible. They were being followed. She gathered her thoughts quickly trying to work out how near they were. Could they run? Could they hide? She looked around frantically, but the landscape ahead was dry and desolate, offering no refuge. As soon as he emerged from the forest, he would see them. There was no escape.

Text 3.6

Uzma held her mother's hand tightly as they entered the crowded market. The bustling crowds swarmed around her, jostling and bumping against her small frame as her feet moved quickly to keep up. Her mother's grip tightened and almost lifted her off the ground with each step. Uzma felt her lungs getting tighter as though filled with cotton wool. The air was warm and sticky, and it was getting difficult to breathe while surrounded by people who looked like giants to her. She could feel panic rising up in her as she started to sob with fear.

Text 3.7

Tom looked at the enormous table filled with sumptuous food. He had never beheld such a glorious feast. His mouth started to water as his greedy eyes scanned the dishes in front of him. He felt like a king hosting a banquet. Suddenly his gaze was drawn to the trophy on the table: his birthday cake. It towered above the other dishes and was covered in creamy icing, just waiting to be devoured by his party guests. Tom couldn't wait for them to arrive.



- 2 Choose five words or phrases from each text and write a sentence for each one, explaining why it is effective in creating the atmosphere you decided on in Activity 1. Look at the examples given for Text 3.4 to help you.

Exploring settings

Writers choose language carefully to describe settings, as it is important to help a reader picture the scene clearly and so they can imagine where the story takes place vividly. Language choices here enrich a text, adding depth and detail.

When analysing texts, you will need to think about your own choice of language. How can you choose interesting words to describe the type of setting the writer has presented? It may be helpful to develop your vocabulary related to settings by thinking of opposites and asking yourself which apply to the texts you read.

- 3 Look at the pairs of words in the box, which cover key ideas about settings. Decide which of the words could be applied to the descriptions of settings in Texts 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10, then answer the questions on each text using your own words.

rural/urban isolated/crowded wealthy/poor hot/cold welcoming/hostile

Text 3.8

The desert stretched out before them, an endless landscape of sand and sky. Its emptiness was eerie, and it felt as though they were alone in the world. The sky was devoid of colour – blinding white. They could see a shimmering haze rising upwards from the pale sand creating ripples in the air. It distorted their vision and made them feel woozy and unbalanced. The air was thick and parched making breathing painful. They couldn't survive for long.

- a i What does the phrase 'stretched out before them' suggest about the desert?
 ii Name the literary device used in the phrase, 'an endless landscape of sand and sky'.
 iii What effect is created by the description of the sky?
 iv What type of sensory imagery is 'shimmering' an example of?
 v How do the last two lines show the physical effects of the heat on the characters? Select three words or phrases and explain their effects.



Text 3.9

The house was a poor, wretched coop of a room, through the black, water-stained **shingles** of which you could count a dozen blue glimpses of the sky. The walls of the shack were papered with old newspapers and magazines, discoloured with age and stained and spotted from roof to floor, torn in a score of places, to reveal the rotten, worm-eaten boards beneath. The small room was divided by a threadbare, cotton screen depicting seagulls soaring up from a sea of faded blue. In the midst of this drab poverty the three, soaring seagulls, and the [...] pictures of the magazine pages were an unkind comment.

From 'The Pieces of Silver' by Karl Sealy

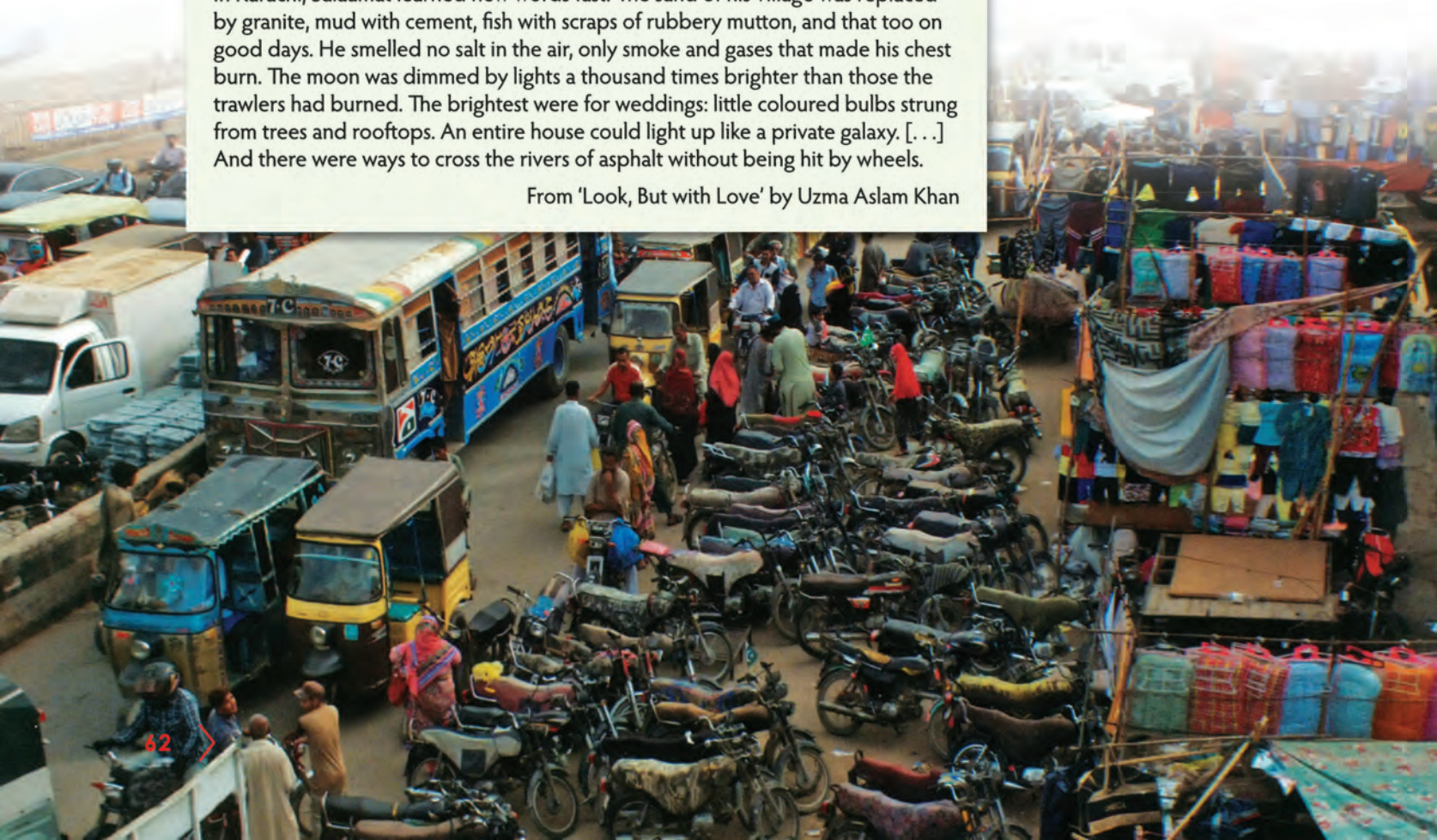
shingles: roof tiles

- b i** What does the phrase 'poor, wretched coop of a room' suggest about the home being described? Name the literary device used in your answer.
- ii** What are the connotations of the word 'shack' being used to describe the home?
- iii** Select two phrases from the sentence beginning, 'the walls of the shack' which suggest that the house is in a poor state of repair.
- iv** Why do you think the writer describes the 'seagulls soaring up from a sea of faded blue' as 'an unkind comment'?
- v** What does the description of the home suggest about the people who live there? Pick out words and phrases to support your suggestions.

Text 3.10

In Karachi, Salaamat learned new words fast. The sand of his village was replaced by granite, mud with cement, fish with scraps of rubbery mutton, and that too on good days. He smelled no salt in the air, only smoke and gases that made his chest burn. The moon was dimmed by lights a thousand times brighter than those the trawlers had burned. The brightest were for weddings: little coloured bulbs strung from trees and rooftops. An entire house could light up like a private galaxy. [...] And there were ways to cross the rivers of asphalt without being hit by wheels.

From 'Look, But with Love' by Uzma Aslam Khan



- c i What does the contrast in 'The sand of his village was replaced with granite, mud with cement, fish with scraps of rubbery mutton' suggest about the difference between Salaamat's village and the city, Karachi?
- ii What does the phrase, 'smoke and gases that made his chest burn' suggest about the air in Karachi?
- iii What impression of the city is created by the descriptions of the lights in Karachi?
- iv Which literary device is 'rivers of asphalt' an example of? What is it being used to describe here and what does it suggest about Salaamat's view of the world?
- v Which literary device is used in the sentence, 'An entire house could light up like a private galaxy'? What does it suggest about Salaamat's impression of the houses in the city?

REFLECTION

Reflect on what you have learnt in this section about how figurative language can be used to create atmosphere or describe a setting. Write three key learning points and share them with a partner.

> 3.5 Language choices to describe characters and people

Writers use language to create vivid characters. The words and phrases they choose can affect a reader's response to a character in many ways. A writer will use language to:

- shape the reader's response to characters (whether they get a positive or negative impression)
 - evoke feelings such as empathy or hostility
 - offer the reader insight into a character's attitudes and feelings
 - describe how a character looks to others
 - broaden the reader's understanding of a character's situation or circumstances.
- 1 What do the underlined phrases in the following sentences imply about the characters they describe? Share your ideas with a partner and see if you agree. Discuss any differences you have and try to agree on a final explanation for each sentence.
- a Her mother gave her an icy smile as she drew the car up beside her.
 - b He groaned inwardly as the final groups were announced.
 - c She looked at him lying there and could feel his pain.

- d When she finally found her dream job, her happiness was complete.
- e His approach to resolving any issues was rather heavy-handed.
- f He was convinced that she wasn't being straight with him.

Read Text 3.11, which describes a young woman.

Text 3.11

A glimpse of Miriam at a [...] party had tugged at Begum's heart. From the first moment she had fit the image of what her future daughter-in-law should be like – young, beautiful, and well educated. She had obtained three A levels and was now doing geography at university.

Begum had liked the way Miriam behaved – ever so correctly and gracefully. Above all, she had liked the way she dressed. [...] It was the way the black chiffon sari had hugged her slender figure, and how her hair was elegantly wound up in a knot at the top of her head – just perfect. She was neither overdressed nor overdecked in jewels, nor over made-up as some of her peers were; nor was she overboisterous. In short, Begum had viewed Miriam as the epitome of perfection, everything that was correct and appealing. [...] Looking back now, two years later, Begum was sure that, not her son, but she herself had fallen in love with Miriam at first sight. And not just that. Her name, Miriam, wove a magic spell around her. It had a special ring to it and she had loved using it.

From 'A Pair of Jeans' by Qaisra Shahraz

- 2 In pairs, discuss the following:
- a What impression of Miriam does the writer create? Consider her physical features as well as her personality.
 - b What is the effect of describing Miriam through Begum's eyes?
 - c Does Miriam have a 'voice' in the text?
 - d What does the text suggest about Miriam and Begum's relationship?

Now read Texts 3.12 and 3.13, which are both from the same short story.

Text 3.12

The Dovecots were a family of four: Dave and his wife Maud, Clement and his older sister, Evelina.

Clement sat on the sanded floor of the poor sitting room, his plate of rice between his legs; Evelina lolled over the one battered, depreciated mahogany table, picking at the coarse food with an adolescent discontent; Dave Dovecot, a grizzled, gangling labourer, held his plate in his left hand, while with his right he plied his mouth from a peeling metal spoon; at the propped-open window of the room sat Mrs Dovecot, a long thread of a woman whose bones want had picked like an eagle. Her plate was resting on her lap, and she scraped and pecked and foraged her food like a scratching hen.

From 'The Pieces of Silver' by Karl Sealy

Text 3.13

On the platform the acting Head cleared his throat and said:

'Those who have contributed to our retiring Head's purse will now sit. Those who have *not* will remain standing.'

When the scuffling tumult of a school of boys taking their seats had subsided, here and there about the schoolroom a scattered few stood with downcast eyes.

The acting Head was a squat jug of a man, fierce-eyed and unsmiling. He now sauntered along the edge of his platform and fixed, one after the other, each of the standing boys with a look of complete scorn. Then, mopping his brow, he ordered those who had brought no gifts to come up and mount the platform where the dozen of them were lined up.

Taking a stick of chalk he scrawled an X upon the forehead of each boy, to the huge delight of the rest of the school. When he had imprinted this symbol of shame upon the brow of each unhappy child, he turned to the laughing school, and holding his hand up to check the gusts of merriment, said:

'Look! They bear the symbol of ingratitude!'

The cruel laughter went up to the rafters. The schoolmaster permitted it free swell for a few moments before raising his hand once more.

From 'The Pieces of Silver' by Karl Sealy

- 3 First, decide whether the impression of the characters is positive or negative and whether you feel empathy or hostility. What ideas do you get about the way characters look? What insights do you get into their circumstances or situations? Discuss your responses in pairs and see if you each reached the same conclusions. In your discussion share which words and phrases helped form your reactions.
- 4 Answer these questions about Text 3.12.
 - a What impression do you get of Clement and Evelina from the descriptions of them eating their food? Select words or phrases to support your answer.
 - b What does 'a grizzled, gangling labourer' suggest about Dave Dovecot? Make three suggestions.
 - c Mrs Dovecot is described as 'a long thread of a woman whose bones want had picked like an eagle'. Name two literary devices used in this description and explain what they suggest about her.
 - d What impression do you get of the way Mrs Dovecot eats from the words 'she scraped and pecked and foraged her food like a scratching hen'?
 - e List all the language associated with birds in this extract. How does it affect your impression of the Dovecot family?
- 5 Answer these questions about Text 3.13.
 - a How does the description 'the acting Head' affect your impression of the character at the start of the extract?
 - b What language device is 'scuffling' an example of? What impression does 'scuffling tumult' give of the school hall?

- c What impressions do you get of the acting Head from the description 'a squat jug of a man, fierce-eyed and unsmiling'? Make three suggestions.
- d What does the language used in the phrases, 'the huge delight of the rest of the school', 'gusts of merriment' and 'cruel laughter' suggest about the way the rest of the school respond to the acting Head's actions? How does this language help shape the reader's response?
- e Select words and phrases that show how the acting Head is encouraging the school's reactions.

Writing to express emotions

Writers use language to bring to life the emotions and feelings their characters are experiencing. Rather than simply describing these feelings, writers allow the reader to see the effects of their characters' emotions through their body language, facial expressions and actions. They can also explore a character's physical reactions to their emotional state.

- 6 Look at Text 3.14, which focuses on a character experiencing strong emotions. Copy and complete the table below. In pairs, choose words and phrases from the text to add to the table.

Body language	Facial expression	Action	Physical reaction
teetered	big doleful eyes	arm outstretched	shaky little hand
		walked closer and leaned in	felt his heart break

Text 3.14

Amjad thought he saw a pair of eyes peeking through the bedroom door. It creaked open and ten-year-old Saahil teetered into the room. His long, uncombed hair shrouded his tiny face and his big, doleful eyes looked to Amjad, desperately.

'Come here,' Amjad whispered, arm outstretched.

Saahil walked closer and leaned in to his father. His shaky little hand gently stroked Zahara's head. Amjad felt his heart break.

'My beautiful little boy,' he said as he enveloped his son. They all huddled together for some time. Zahara, wrapped in the silky smoothness of her mother's shawl, and sleeping soundly against her father's chest. Saahil, small and fragile as a baby deer, struggling to take his first steps in a new world, a world without his mother. And Amjad, holding them all together. He must stop feeling sorry for himself, he thought. He was determined to protect his children from anything. Pain would have no place in his household. He would fling it out the door at its first appearance.

From *The Family Tree* by Sairish Hussain



- 7 Using your table from Activity 6, select six phrases that you consider to be the most effective in terms of evoking an emotional response in the reader. Write a sentence for each of them, explaining why you think they are effective.
- 8 Now read Text 3.15 and then answer these questions.
- What literary device is the sentence 'It seemed to be glaring at her' an example of? What is its effect?
 - What is the effect of the metaphor used in the sentence beginning, 'Contained within that perfectly folded . . .'?
 - How does the writer use language to suggest her fear in three sentences after 'She could feel the heat . . .'? Make three separate points, each supported with a quotation.
 - Write a comparison of how the character imagines each of her parents reacting to bad news. How does the writer use language to convey their behaviour?
 - How does the writer use language effectively to convey the character's feelings of relief? Make three separate points, each supported with a quotation.

Text 3.15

She looked at the crisp, white envelope lying on the dining table. It seemed to be glaring at her. Contained within that perfectly folded paper were her hopes, dreams and ambitions: whether they were intact or in fragments, she was yet to discover. She could feel the heat rising through her body and up to her face; her cheeks flushed as her heart started to beat faster. But still she just stared at the envelope. Tentatively, she reached out her arm to pick it up, but terror suddenly seized her and she snatched it away, trembling. She wasn't prepared for this; what if she had failed? As this thought struck her, she began to imagine her parents' wretched faces as she broke the news. Her mother would try to hide her disappointment, but it would be palpable in her hollow eyes and feeble attempts to feign a thin smile as she pretended to comfort her daughter. Baba would close in on himself; he always did when faced with anything uncomfortable. Like that envelope, he would fold himself up keeping his emotions contained and probably mutter something about work as he removed himself from the room.

There could be no more procrastination. She needed to know. With shaky hands she extracted the single sheet of paper. As she quickly scanned it, feelings of relief flowed through her, extinguishing the flames of terror felt previously. She felt tears of joy well up in her eyes as she whispered to herself, 'I've done it; I'm a doctor.'



Responding to a longer text

It can be challenging analysing writers' effects in a longer text, but remember that you can apply the same skills and techniques as on shorter passages. Read this longer extract from a novel, which describes a young girl's trip to her grandfather's summer residence in Japan.

Text 3.16

Every year, as **the August heat engulfed Tokyo**, my family piled their suitcases onto a local train and headed for the coast. We went to Shimoda. Father remained in the city to work, but Grandpa Sararshima always came with us. Each time, he stopped at the same kiosk in the station to buy frozen clementines for the train, and in **the metallic heat of the carriage** Mama and I would wait impatiently for the fruit to soften so we could get at the pockets of sorbet within. Finally, when our chins were sticky with juice, Mama would turn to me in our little row of two and ask what I would like to do by the sea, just she and I, alone.

Our house on the peninsula was old, **its wooden gateposts warped by the winds that peeled off the Pacific**. As we climbed towards **the stocky promontory** at the top of the hill, the **gates, dark and encrusted with salt**, signalled that my home was near: Washikura – **Eagle's nest**, the house overlooking the bay, between Mount Fuji and the sea.

Our country is built around mountains; **people are piled up in concrete boxes, cages**. To have land is rare, but the house in Shimoda had belonged to my family since before the war, and afterwards **my grandfather fought to keep it** when everything else was lost.

Forest sweeps the hills above the house. I was not allowed up there alone as a child, so when I looked at my mother on the train that summer she knew immediately what I would ask to do. In the afternoons, Mama and I climbed high on the wooded slopes above Washikura. We watched **the tea fields as they darkened before autumn**. We lay back on the **rocky black soil** and **breathed in the sharp resin of the pines**. Some days, we heard **the call of a sea eagle as it circled overhead**.

Grandpa knew the forest but he never found us there. At four o'clock each afternoon, he would venture to the base of the hillside and call to us through the trees. He shouted our names: 'Rina!', 'Sumi!' Together **we nestled among the pines, giggling**, as grandfather's **voice wavered and fell**.

I often heard Grandpa calling before Mama did, but I always waited for her signal to be quiet. On our last afternoon in the forest, I lay still, **feeling the soft and steady puff of my mother's breath against my face**. She pulled me against her and her breathing quieted and slowed. I opened my eyes and stared at her, at the **dark lashes against her cheeks**. I took in **her pallor, her stillness**. I heard my grandfather begin to call, **his voice thin and distant**. I snuggled closer. [. . .] Suddenly she smiled, her eyes still closed, and pressed a finger to her lips.

We no longer own our home, Washikura, on the outskirts of Shimoda; Grandpa sold it years ago. But when I go there today, climbing up through the undergrowth, I can feel my mother there beneath the trees. When I lie down on the ground, the pine needles sharp under my cheek, I imagine that the chill of the breeze is the stroke of her finger.

From *What's Left of Me is Yours* by Stephanie Scott

- 9 In groups, read Text 3.16 aloud. Discuss your initial reactions to the **narrator**. Consider the following:

- how old she is in the text *and* how old she is as the narrator
- her relationship with her mother
- her relationship with her grandfather
- her feelings about the house – Washikura
- what she reveals in the final paragraph.

- 10 In pairs, look at the highlighted phrases in Text 3.16 and copy them into a table like the one below, commenting on each phrase's literal meaning and its effect. Use a new row for each example. The first one has been done for you.

Example	Literal meaning	Effect
'the August heat engulfed Tokyo'	The weather in Tokyo was extremely hot in August.	The word 'engulfed' shows how oppressive and unbearable the heat in Tokyo was. They couldn't escape it.

REFLECTION

How do you feel your skills of analysis have developed in this section? Which particular skills have improved? Why do you think that is?

KEY TERM

narrator: the person telling a story

> 3.6 Sensory language

As humans, we engage with the world through our senses. Writers use this to tap into shared experiences when conveying complex ideas and experiences. They use **visual**, **auditory**, **tactile**, **gustatory** and **olfactory imagery** to appeal to a reader's physical senses.

- 1 Read Text 3.17, which contains sensory imagery.

Text 3.17

Uzma stood completely still inside the gloomy dark cellar. She shivered uncontrollably. She could feel something tickling her neck and shut her eyes tightly feeling slightly nauseated. Was it an insect – perhaps a spider – crawling all over *her*? She quickly raised her hand to her neck and squashed it, feeling a wet sticky pulp on her fingers and recoiling in horror and disgust.

She continued to stand motionless, until her legs began to feel heavy then numb. The sticky splodge on her neck gradually dried as she waited in the silent darkness for what seemed like hours. Her ears strained to hear noises from above, but all remained silent. They had forgotten her.

KEY TERMS

visual imagery: language used to appeal to the sense of sight

auditory imagery: language used to appeal to the sense of sound

tactile imagery: language used to appeal to the sense of touch

gustatory imagery: language used to appeal to the sense of taste

olfactory imagery: language used to appeal to the sense of smell



In pairs, select examples of sensory language and record them in a diagram like the one to the right. Some examples from the text have been done for you. Does the text focus on one sense more than the others? What is the effect of this?



- 2 Use your examples from Activity 1 to help you answer the following questions.
 - a How does the writer use sensory language in the first three sentences to create tension?
 - b What is the effect of the italics in 'crawling all over *her*'?
 - c What literary device is used in the word 'squashed'? What is the effect?
 - d How does the writer use sensory language to convey Uzma's fear in the sentence beginning, 'She quickly raised her hand . . .'? Make three separate points, each supported with a quotation.
 - e How does the writer use language to show the passing of time in the final sentences beginning, 'She continued to stand motionless . . .'? Make three separate points, each supported with an example or quotation.
- 3 Now read Text 3.18 and then answer these questions.
 - a What impression of the cellar is created by the phrase, 'musty smell, like an underground tomb'?
 - b How does the writer use sensory language to contrast being in the kitchen with being in the cellar? Use examples to support your response.
 - c 'The darkness was impenetrable; her eyes were wide open now, but she couldn't see anything at all. The roof was very low . . .' How does the writer create a claustrophobic effect here?
 - d How does the writer use sensory language to convey Uzma's fear in the sentence beginning, 'The roof was very low . . .'?
 - e How does the final sentence use language effectively to appeal to the reader's senses?

Text 3.18

The cellar was dark and creepy. It had a musty smell, like an underground tomb. Uzma closed her eyes tightly and tried to think of familiar things like her mother preparing bread and cakes in the kitchen with the delicious warm smell of baking filling the air, and the joy of helping knead the soft squishy dough. But the cellar was full of dust and spider webs as well as unknown and terrifying horrors. The darkness was impenetrable; her eyes were wide open now, but she couldn't see anything at all. The roof was very low, only just above her head but she coiled herself into a tight ball to avoid touching or feeling anything. What could be in there with her, scuttling or slithering in the darkness?



- 4 Text 3.19 focuses heavily on the reader's sense of smell to give a strong impression of the atmosphere during the sugar-cane harvest in Guatemala. Work in pairs. On a copy of Text 3.19, highlight words and phrases that use sensory imagery linked to the sense of smell. When you have highlighted your words and phrases:

- decide whether the effect is positive or negative (it may be both)
- discuss how the language creates an effect on the reader by focusing on the words and their connotations
- create a mind map with your chosen words and phrases circled and brainstorm your ideas about their effects. An example has been done for you.



Text 3.19

The cane cutting had given Guatemala a sickly sweet odour. The sugary smell was released by the men with machetes, but as the day grew hotter the smell weighted the air. It was a noxious sweetness, like syrup made into smoke, with a whiff of vegetables and an abrasive chemical aftertaste. And there was in it too, a sharper stink, the nauseating gust you would get by burning sugar over a fire and reducing it to black junk. This was the height of the cane harvest and the smells and the stacked trucks and the worker gangs made Guatemala seem a place of considerable enterprise.

From *The Old Patagonian Express* by Paul Theroux



- 5 What overall impression is given of the sugar-cane harvest in Guatemala in this text? Support your suggestions with quotations or examples. Remember to use the zoom strategy by starting with an overview, and then focusing on specific words and phrases.
- 6 Read Text 3.20 and then answer these questions.
 - a How does the opening sentence use sensory language to convey the intense heat?
 - b 'The only sound audible was the buzzing of insects in the softly rustling grasses stirred by the hot breeze.' How does the writer use onomatopoeia and alliteration for deliberate effect in this sentence?
 - c Choose two examples of sensory imagery in paragraph 2 and explain how each one emphasises the unpleasantness of the heat.
 - d Re-read the first two sentences in paragraph 3, from 'In the distance . . .' to '... towards the station.' How does the writer use sensory imagery effectively to describe the train approaching the station?
 - e Choose three examples of sensory imagery used to describe the narrator's physical response to the train arriving at the station. Focus on sound, smell and touch.

Text 3.20

The railway tracks stretched out endlessly, the metal gleaming in the sun as the heat radiating from them rose shimmering into the air. The sun rose higher into the sky, its glare intensifying as the hottest part of the day beckoned. The only sound audible was the buzzing of insects in the softly rustling grasses stirred by the hot breeze. I sighed. The train was late.

The small rural station consisted of a single concrete platform with a corrugated metal hut offering the only source of defence from the sun's ferocity; the temperature inside resembled an oven. I had no choice but to stay on the platform where small beads of perspiration were forming on my forehead and running down my face. I dabbed at them frantically with my handkerchief.

In the distance a small black speck appeared in the hazy air; I gazed hopefully at it while irritably blinking the sweat from my eyes to get a clearer view. The speck slowly formed into a long dark python slithering and meandering its way towards the station. The tracks started to hum gently with a high soothing ring. As the train got nearer it increased in pitch as the vibrations intensified into a frightening crescendo and the train roared into the station. I felt a rush of wind in my face and the acrid stench of diesel filled my mouth and nostrils making me cough and splutter. The squeal of the brakes hurt my ears as the train slowed to a stop. At last, I could escape from the searing heat of the sun.



PROJECT

In groups, you are going to create a revision guide to analysing writers' effects. Each member of the group should take responsibility for one part of the guide. Swap your work so you can each recommend improvements to one another. Then as a group put the guide together with some pictures and highlighted texts. Your revision guide should contain:

- an explanation of how words have different connotations with examples
- explanations and examples of literary devices with some short annotated text extracts to show examples of them
- a collection of short texts which you have annotated to show how writers use language to describe settings, and build up suspense.

REFLECTION

Think back to everything you have learnt and practised in this chapter.

- What is the most useful knowledge you have learnt?
- What is the most useful skill you have gained?
- What do you need to work on further to improve your understanding?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Read this extract from a short story about a man whose young son gets bitten by a poisonous snake, then answer the questions.

Text A

The sun blazed as if determined to burn every living thing in the broad fields to a crisp. Now and again the tall, straight, isolated *sabang* and shorea trees let go of some of their dirty yellow leaves. He sat exhausted against a tree trunk, his dark blue shirt wet with sweat. The expanse round him expressed total dryness. He stared at the tufts of dull grass and bits of straw spinning in a column to the sky. The whirlwind sucked brown earth up into the air casting a dark pall over everything. He recalled the old people had told him this was the portent of drought, want, disaster, and death, and he was afraid. He was now anxious to get home; he could already see the tips of the bamboo thickets surrounding the house far ahead like blades of grass. But he hesitated. A moment before reaching the shade of the tree he felt his ears buzz and his eyes blur and knew it meant giddiness and sunstroke. He looked at the soles of his feet blistered from the burning sandy ground and became indescribably angry – angry at the weather capable of such endless torture. In the morning the cold had pierced his bones, but now it was so hot he felt his head would break into pieces. As he recalled the biting cold of the morning, he thought again of his little son.



CONTINUED

That very morning he and two of his small children went out into the dry paddy fields near the house to look for frogs for the morning meal. The air was chilly. The two children on either side of him shivered as they stopped to look for frogs hiding in the cracks of the parched earth. Each time they saw two bright eyes in a deep crack they would shout, 'Pa, here's another one. Pa, this crack has two. Gold-legged ones! Hurry, Pa.'

He had hopped from place to place as the voices called him, prying up the dry clods with his hoe. He caught some of the frogs immediately, but a few jumped away as soon as he began digging. It was the children's job to give chase and pounce on them. Some they got. Some jumped into other fissures, obliging him to pry up a new cake of earth. Besides the frog, if his luck was good, he would unearth a land snail or razor clam waiting for the rains. He would take these as well.

The air had started to warm and already he had enough frogs to eat with the morning rice. The sound of the drumming, the village chief's call for a meeting, had sounded faintly from the village. Vague anger again spilled over as his thoughts returned to that moment. If only he had gone home then, the poor child would be all right now. It was really the last crack. As soon as he had poked it, the ground broke apart. A fully grown gold-legged frog as big as a thumb leaped past the older child. The younger raced after it for about twelve yards when it dodged into a deep hoofprint of a water buffalo. The child groped for it. And then he was shocked almost senseless by the trembling cry of his boy, 'Pa, a snake, a snake bit my hand.'

A cobra spread its hood, hissing. When finally able to act, the father with all his strength had slammed the handle of his hoe three times down onto the back of the serpent, leaving its tail twitching. He carried his child and the basket of frogs home without forgetting to tell the other to drag the snake along as well.

From 'The Gold-legged Frog' by Khamsing Srinawak

- a What impression of the sun is given in the first sentence? [1]
- b Pick out a word from the second sentence beginning, 'Now and again . . .' that shows that the trees grow far apart from one another. [1]
- c Read this extract from the text:

The expanse round him expressed total dryness. He stared at the tufts of dull grass and bits of straw spinning in a column to the sky. The whirlwind sucked brown earth up into the air casting a dark pall over everything.

What does the writer suggest about the setting in these lines? Make at least two separate points. [2]

CONTINUED

d Read this extract from the text:

A moment before reaching the shade of the tree he felt his ears buzz and his eyes blur and knew it meant giddiness and sunstroke. He looked at the soles of his feet blistered from the burning sandy ground and became indescribably angry – angry at the weather capable of such endless torture. In the morning the cold had pierced his bones, but now it was so hot he felt his head would break into pieces.

How does the writer use emotive language to evoke sympathy for the father in these lines? Make at least two separate points. [2]

e i Identify one example of how the writer uses language effectively in the final two paragraphs to convey the father's feelings? [1]

ii Explain fully the impression of the father that the writer creates in the example you have identified. [2]

[Total: 9]

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How confident do you feel about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter?
Rate yourself from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident), then complete the task to prove it.

Now I can . . .	Confidence rating (1–5)	Prove it
understand what is meant by a 'writer's effect'		Write an explanation of a writer's effect.
describe the ways in which word choices affect meaning		Give two examples of non-emotive and emotive sentences describing the same thing.
explain how the connotations of words and phrases influence a reader		Give three examples of a word or phrase with a meaning that goes beyond its literal meaning. Explain any word connotations.
identify a range of different language devices and explain their effect on a reader		Find good examples of each of the literary devices you have learnt. Explain why you think they are effective.
describe how writers use figurative language to create atmosphere and setting		Find a description of a setting where the writer has used figurative language effectively. Discuss it with a partner.
explain the effects of writers' language choices to describe characters and people		Find an example of a character description and highlight specific words and phrases where the writer has used language effectively. Explain why your choices influence the reader's response to the character.
analyse how and why writers use sensory language		Give three examples of sensory language.

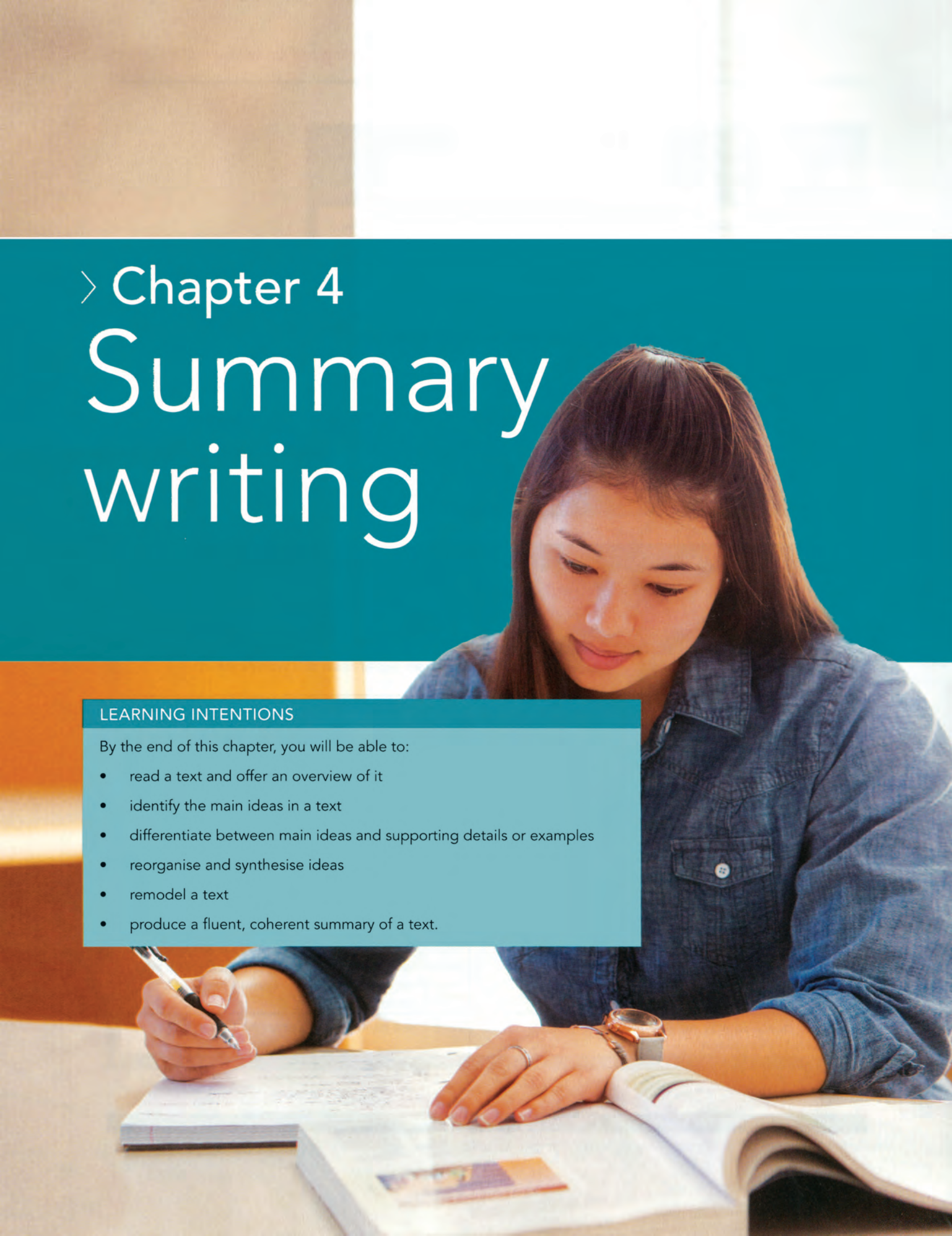
> Chapter 4

Summary writing

LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- read a text and offer an overview of it
- identify the main ideas in a text
- differentiate between main ideas and supporting details or examples
- reorganise and synthesise ideas
- remodel a text
- produce a fluent, coherent summary of a text.



> Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn how to develop effective summary-writing skills. You will practise reading a text carefully to form an overview, then use techniques of scanning and skimming to identify the main ideas and information required to plan a summary in response to a task. You will then learn how to use your plan to write a summary, using your own words to create a fluent and coherent piece of writing.

GETTING STARTED

A summary is a reduced version of a text, where you extract relevant information to produce a new piece of informative writing. Summary writing requires specific reading skills, such as skimming to get a clear idea of the content, then scanning to select relevant information.

In small groups, share ideas about when you may scan or skim pieces of writing in everyday life to find specific information. Make a list of them. Think about activities such as shopping, cooking, ordering a meal in a restaurant, using technological equipment, deciding what to watch on the television, planning a holiday, etc.

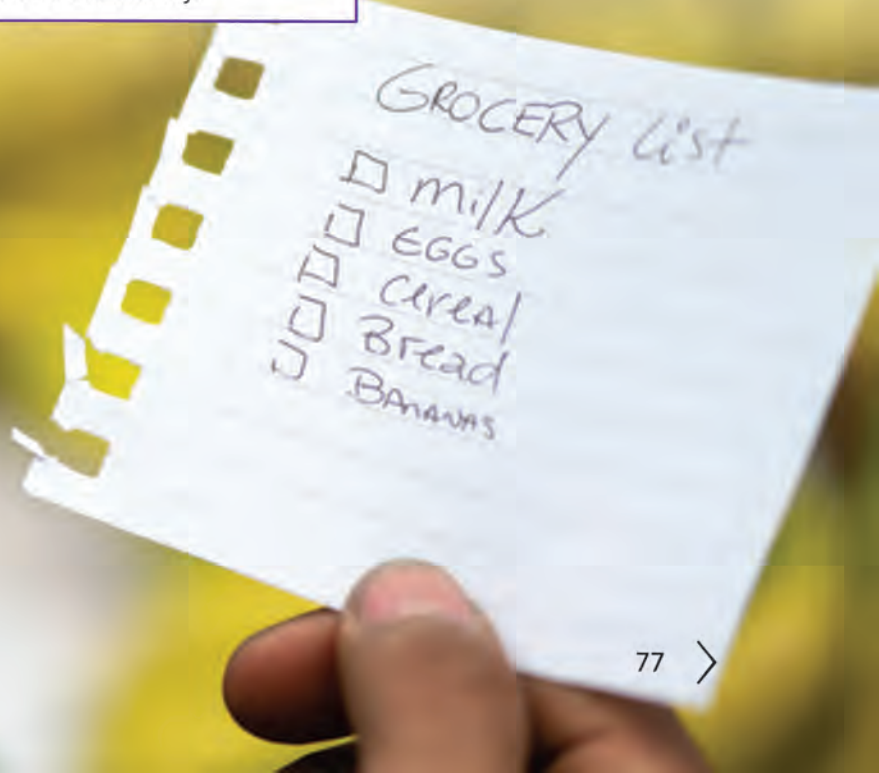
SKILLS FOCUS

When writing a summary, you need to show your reading skills by selecting and using relevant information to address a given task. You will be required to:

- demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
- select and use information for specific purposes.

You also need to show writing skills in summary, demonstrating that you can:

- organise and structure your writing
- use a range of appropriate sentence structures and vocabulary.



> 4.1 Reading for ideas

Understanding summary activities

As with all reading activities, it is important to interrogate the task carefully to ensure that you identify and select the relevant material in your response. Sometimes a summary activity will only require you to focus on one strand, but other activities may require a response that incorporates two strands. Look out for the word 'and' to identify whether there is more than one strand.

- 1 Look at the sample summary activities below. Work in pairs to decide whether they have one or two strands.
 - a Summarise the challenges and benefits of living on a boat.
 - b Summarise what would appeal most to tourists on a safari in Malawi.
 - c Summarise the ways in which tigers are under threat and what is being done to reduce the problems.
 - d Summarise the causes of pollution and the impact it has on the environment.
 - e Summarise the skills necessary to be a successful firefighter.

Although a summary is a reasonably short piece of writing (around 150–180 words), it needs to be planned and written very carefully. These steps show you how to create a successful summary.

- 1 Scan read the text and form an overview of what the text is about.
- 2 Read the task carefully and circle any key words. Make a note of whether there is one focus strand or two.
- 3 Skim read the text, looking for relevant content points. List them in note form, using just the key phrases, not whole sentences.
- 4 Look at your list of notes and see whether any of the points are similar and you could therefore use **synthesising**. Look for any repeated points and cross one of them out.
- 5 Decide whether the points are in the best order, or whether you should reorganise some of them to make your summary more coherent.
- 6 Put the text aside and use your notes to write your summary in full sentences. Change things into your own words if it is easy to do so, but use words from the text if changing them would mean using more words, or would alter the meaning. The important thing is not to copy sentences.
- 7 When you have finished writing, check your summary to ensure that it reads fluently and has no errors.

KEY TERM

synthesising:
combining or
drawing together
similar points

Forming an overview

In summary writing, you will be responding to non-fiction texts. These may include reports, articles, letters, biographies, information texts, reviews, speeches and diaries – all of which have different purposes and audiences. For example:

- A news report is written to report on something of current interest. Newspapers can be local or national, so could report on a variety of incidents and events ranging from very local concerns to ones of global interest.
- An article could be written to persuade the reader to agree with a viewpoint, or to inform the reader about an event, or simply to offer a humorous perspective on an issue or idea.
- A review gives the writer's views on something (e.g. a film, restaurant, book, computer game or live performance) and helps the reader decide whether they would like it or not.
- Many informative texts are written to increase the reader's knowledge and understanding of a topic, such as a book about a key period in history, or a guide to travelling in a specific city or country.
- Some texts are written to appeal to a smaller group of people who perhaps share an interest or come from the same area. Examples here could include a specialised book about birds, or a booklet focusing on the history of a local area.

When you read a text with a view to summarising it, it is helpful to first form an overview of what it is about, what type of text it is and what its purpose and intended audience are.

- 2** In pairs, read the extracts 4.1 to 4.4 from a range of texts. For each text, decide on:
- a** the text type
 - b** the purpose
 - c** the intended audience.

Text 4.1

The history of tea

The history of tea spreads across multiple cultures over thousands of years. Tea originated as a medicinal drink in south-west China during the Shang dynasty. There is a reference to tea in a medical text written in the 3rd century CE. It was not introduced to Europe until 1555, when an Italian traveller made a reference to it in a published book. China began a thriving trade in tea and by the end of the 17th century it had become a popular drink in Britain, where people preferred to add milk and sugar to make it a sweeter drink. By the end of the 18th century, tea had become a huge global industry.



Text 4.2

Eating out in Colombo

In the heart of Colombo, the old Dutch hospital has been transformed into a lively restaurant complex. Look no further if you are searching for a great night out with tasty food and fantastic ambience. The venue sits in the shadows of Colombo's world trade centre and is within a stone's throw of the Hilton and Galadari hotels. There is a superb choice of restaurants to satisfy everyone's palate. My favourite was Ministry of Crab, where you can view your dinner in a tank before eating it! If crab isn't on the menu, I'd recommend the chicken curry rice, which is served with sticky rice and a fried egg. The restaurant even provides bibs for messy eaters!

Text 4.3

New metro line for Lahore

This week Lahore unveiled its new Orange Line metro service, with its fleet of sparkling air-conditioned trains. Designed to serve commuters in this bustling and sprawling city – where journeys to work can take over two hours via its busy roads – this light-rail transit system promises to lighten traffic, reduce pollution and offer a cheaper way to travel around Lahore. The greatest beneficiaries are likely to be women, as they tend to use public transport more than men. We spoke to some of them and they agreed that it would make their lives much easier. Reena, a 35-year-old mother of five, was thrilled to be among the first passengers. 'This service will cut down my commuting time by more than two hours each day,' she said smiling. 'This means that I will have more time for my children.' The project has also provided 3700 new jobs for Pakistani workers, many of whom were riding on the metro to celebrate its opening. 'I am so happy with my work opportunity and that my

friends and family can now move around Lahore easily while being safe,' said Junaid, one of the new station managers.



Text 4.4

Mary Eliza Mahoney

Born in 1845, Mary Eliza Mahoney was the first African American woman in the United States of America to graduate from nursing school and forge a career as a professional nurse. Her parents were formerly enslaved people, who moved northwards in the hope of a life with less racial discrimination and to ensure that their daughter could receive a proper education – something many African Americans were denied. Mahoney began to show an interest in nursing at a young age, but opportunities for African Americans to enter training programmes were still severely limited. In 1878, at the age of 33, she was finally admitted into a training programme at the New England Hospital for Women and Children. Her acceptance came

only after working at the hospital as a cook, maid and washerwoman for 15 years. After receiving her nursing diploma, Mahoney battled relentlessly to abolish racial discrimination in the nursing field, believing that all people should have the freedom to pursue their dreams and ambitions. In 1908, Mahoney became co-founder of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, an organisation aiming to eliminate racial discrimination in the nursing community. In retirement, she became an advocate for equality for women and was one of the first women to register to vote in 1920 when that right was finally granted to them. Mary Eliza Mahoney died in 1926 at the age of 80. She was inducted into the American Nurses Association Hall of Fame in 1976.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: UNFAMILIAR WORDS

Any unseen text is likely to contain words that you are not familiar with. You can often work out the meaning of words like this by using context.

Look at the words and sentences around the unknown word – sometimes there is a synonym or **antonym** in the text. For example:

- Despite her reputation for being completely intractable, when she was surrounded by her extended family, his elderly mother was always more malleable to suggestions. A family wedding was the perfect opportunity to invite her to live with them; her love and pride would make her more amenable and likely to accept.

In this quotation, the word 'malleable' might be unfamiliar to you, but looking at the words 'intractable' and 'amenable' can help you work it out. 'Intractable' is an antonym of 'malleable' so if you understand that she is usually hard to persuade, it will help you work out that in this context 'malleable' means that she is more inclined to be persuaded. Further on in the text, the writer uses the word 'amenable', which is a synonym of 'malleable' and is also followed by the clue 'likely to accept'.

It also helps to look for clues in the information in the text around the word you do not understand. For example:

- It was the hottest part of the day in the height of summer. The bougainvillea hung from the veranda walls in great clusters of vivid colour.

You may not know what 'bougainvillea' means, but there are clues to help you work it out. The text tells you that it is summer, and the words 'hung from the veranda walls' suggest that this is a garden setting. Add that to the information that it is hanging 'in great clusters of vivid colour', and it is easy to deduce that bougainvillea is a plant or flower of some kind.

KEY TERM

antonym: a word opposite in meaning to another word



READING TIP

Keep a list

When you find out the meaning of an unfamiliar word, keep a written record of it somewhere easy to access so you continue to broaden your vocabulary. This will help with both your reading and writing skills.

- 3 For each of the four texts you read in Activity 2, write a three-sentence overview of what it is about. Use context to try and work out the meaning of any unfamiliar words.

Identifying the main points in a text

To write a successful summary, you need to identify the main points in a text relating to the focus of the task. This means excluding any unnecessary information, such as examples and finer details. Being clear about the task is key to deciding what is relevant and what is not. Remember that a *main point* is essential information. A *detail* adds further information but is not essential. An *example* is an illustration of the main point.

Read Text 4.5 and the summary task that follows.

Text 4.5

Problems in the Arctic

The largest bear in the world is under threat, despite being the Arctic's top predator. Although climate change is the greatest threat to the polar bear's survival, the development of oil and gas industries in the Arctic poses new problems, with the dangers of oil spills that can damage the protective qualities of their fur, as well as exposure to toxic chemicals such as pesticides, which are ingested when they eat their prey. These toxins can affect a bear's biological functions, such as its ability to reproduce. Melting sea ice due to climate change also restricts their hunting grounds for seals, and means there is increased conflict with humans as hungry bears go searching for food on shore in the summer. Increased hunger in hunting seasons means that polar bears will not have enough body fat to produce milk for their cubs in the ice-free season. This is likely to result in decreased numbers of polar bears.

Summarise the threats to the continued survival of polar bears.

- 4 Which of the following is a *main point* when addressing this task?
- Toxins can affect a bear's biological functions.
 - Climate change is melting the sea ice.
 - Their fur is losing its protective qualities.

The *main point* is that climate change is melting the sea ice. Toxins affecting their biological functions is a *detail* (which develops the *main point* that oil and gas development are a key problem). Fur is losing its protective qualities is an *example* (to illustrate another *main point* – that the bears are being exposed to harmful oil spills).



- 5 Now read the text again and list the main points, the details and the examples in a table like this. The examples on the previous page have been added to the table.

Main point	Details	Examples
Climate change is melting sea ice.		
	Toxins affect their biological functions.	
		Their fur loses its protective qualities.

- 6 Look again at Text 4.3, about the new metro line in Lahore. Plan a summary of the benefits that the new metro line offers to people living in Lahore. Create a table to record the main points, details and examples. When you have completed your table, swap it with a partner and see if you recorded the same things. Discuss any differences and try to agree a final version of the table.
- 7 Look again at Text 4.4, the biography of Mary Eliza Mahoney. Plan a summary of the challenges Mahoney faced and her achievements in nursing. List the main points from the text – leave out any details or examples. Then swap with a partner and see if your lists are the same. Discuss any differences and try to agree a final list of main points.

READING TIP

Watch the wording

The wording of a summary activity determines what the main points are. If the activity here was reworded as: 'Summarise the threats to polar bears and the impact on their behaviour', the focus would widen to include more main points. Always read the task very carefully to help you make clear judgements.

READING TIP

More than one focus

Remember that sometimes the summary question has two strands or focus areas. In Activity 7, you need to identify the challenges Mahoney faced *and* her achievements.

Reorganising and synthesising ideas

Once you have listed the main points from the text, you need to use them to plan your summary. This involves another stage in the summary-writing process – reorganising the ideas into the most helpful order and synthesising similar points to make sure that you do not include any repetition. Remember that you must write concisely in a summary, so these are important skills.

Read the following text about the risks of cycle rickshaws in the city of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Text 4.6

There are more than 600 000 cycle rickshaws on the streets of Dhaka, most of them driven by young men who have migrated from rural areas to the city to find work. So crowded are the city centre streets of Dhaka that sometimes the cycle rickshaw is the fastest means of transport. But cycle rickshaws can also be dangerous. Weaving in and out of stationary traffic may save time, but it is not always safe or comfortable when the passengers aren't wearing any restraints. Rickshaw cyclists sometimes try to shorten their journey times by going against the line of oncoming cars. In doing so, they run the risk of being knocked off their cycles and suffering from serious injuries. At crowded junctions, rickshaws often weave their way to the front and risk being clipped by larger vehicles pulling out without seeing them.

Damage to cycle rickshaws has become quite commonplace too – it is easy to dent a tyre as you accidentally bump into the kerb in your attempt to dodge a wide vehicle like a bus or a car. Scraping the wheel of a cycle can also occur in this way, and it can be so expensive to have a cycle repaired that it causes financial hardship in many households. Cyclists would be safer if they wore helmets, but unfortunately they don't, as again this would put additional strain on the family budget. Passengers in cycle rickshaws would be safer if they were strapped in but installing safety belts in these colourful vehicles would be very expensive. Passengers also want to hop on and off rickshaws for short journeys so may not use safety restraints even if they were available.



- 8 In pairs, select and write down clusters of words or whole sentences that:
- a offer a general introduction to the text
 - b offer an example to illustrate a previously made point
 - c repeat a previously made point.
- 9 Summarise why taking journeys in rickshaw cycles in Dhaka may be dangerous and how they could be made safer. Follow these steps:
- Make a list of the main points.
 - Reorganise your points so they are in a logical order.
 - Check you have not repeated any ideas.

Now complete the following summary planning tasks, focusing on reading the question and the text carefully in order to plan your notes.

- 10 Text 4.7 discusses whether school uniform is desirable in schools. Summarise the advantages and disadvantages of wearing school uniform. In pairs, follow these steps:
- Read the text aloud and discuss what it is about – think about the text type and purpose.
 - Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages in note form by dividing your page into two columns.
 - Look through your points and see whether any of them can be synthesised; check that you have no repeated points.
 - Decide whether any of your points should be reordered to make your response more logically organised.

READING TIP

Avoid Irrelevance

Sometimes a text may have a general introduction or repeat some of the ideas within it. This means that you have to be careful to avoid irrelevance or repetition when you are scanning the text looking for the main points.

Text 4.7

Many schools insist that students wear school uniform. The style of uniforms varies from country to country: in some countries the uniform is formal with a blazer and tie, but in others, student uniform may consist of a tunic or even a tracksuit. The heads of schools tend to favour the wearing of uniform for their students because it encourages a sense of belonging to the same group, like being easily identified as a member of a community. Furthermore, school uniform reduces the possibility of some students being seen to be better off than others through wearing designer clothes. All students look the same, both rich and poor, and so school uniform is a great leveller of social groups. Children can concentrate on their studies without worrying whether or not they're dressed in the latest fashions. There is no competition to be 'coolest' in the class or pressure to spend time admiring the latest pair of shoes or new jacket being flaunted by a classmate. Many schools claim that wearing a uniform also reduces bullying in the form of teasing or mocking someone over what they wear.

Outside school, students are clearly identified. This is a good thing because they are ambassadors for their school and, if they misbehave, the school can be quickly informed. A fear of bringing their school into disrepute, or a fear of being identified and their teachers or parents notified, might prevent some students from indulging in antisocial behaviour, especially in big cities. Conversely, good behaviour admired outside the school day could cause adults to see a particular school in a good light and want their children to attend it – well-behaved students in uniform are an eloquent advertisement for their school. Very young children might aspire to be pupils at that school when they are older because the students inspire them by their exemplary behaviour.

On the other hand, some students are not so keen on wearing uniform, arguing that it suppresses their individuality and freedom to express themselves. What is the point, they say, in everyone being identically dressed? Doesn't that lead to robots rather than human beings, a bland group of people who are unable to think for themselves or to be creative? Others might say that parents have to buy yet more clothes for their children when they have to buy school shirts, trousers, ties, even special shoes, and so school uniform costs rather than saves money in the family and puts an extra burden on its finances. This is clearly more significant in a family with a limited income. Some students use their uniform to rebel against the school rules, by wearing their uniform scruffily or customising it with non-uniform accessories. Some teachers argue that too much of their time is taken up with sorting out petty issues over school uniform regulations when they should be teaching.

Whatever your views on school uniform, it seems unlikely that those who would like it abolished will get their way. Too many headteachers believe that it helps students be more equal and enhances good behaviour to risk letting it go.



- 11 Text 4.8 describes the events leading up to the sinking of the passenger ship *Titanic* in 1912. Summarise all the human errors that led to the ship sinking.

With a partner:

- Read the text aloud and discuss what it is about – think about the text type and purpose.
- Make a list of all the human errors mentioned that led to the sinking of the ship.
- Look through your points and see whether any of them can be synthesised; check that you have no repeated points.
- Decide whether any of your points should be reordered.

Text 4.8

Reports showed icebergs nearly in the path of the huge ship; unfortunately, not all these reports reached the ship's control room. Nevertheless, the captain and his officers clearly knew there was a distinct possibility, even likelihood, of encountering an iceberg during the night. The captain must have known the risk he was taking in maintaining *Titanic's* speed, but decided to take it anyway; to have slowed his ship under the circumstances would have suggested a degree of timidity out of keeping with his character. Also, his reputation was involved; he was understandably proud of it and did not want to damage it at this stage in his career. This marvellous vessel he commanded was on her first voyage while he, ironically, was on his last.

The lookouts were specifically warned to watch for icebergs, yet they did not seem particularly concerned about this possibility. Nor had any extra lookouts been posted. No special instructions were given to the ship's engineers to stand by for possible emergency manoeuvres. The advisability of slowing the vessel to allow more time to react should an iceberg be sighted ahead does not appear to have been considered by the captain. This is hardly surprising as it would have thwarted the hope for an even higher speed on the following day.

When further messages about icebergs came in from the ship *Californian*, the young radio operator on *Titanic* ignored them. Although he was dedicated to his profession, he did not have that degree of judgement which comes from years of experience. Besides, the glamour of his job had made him arrogant.

Meanwhile, as one of the lookouts neared the end of his watch, an ominous smudge about the size of his hand loomed on the horizon dead ahead. The object grew rapidly in size and distinctness. Convinced that one of the icebergs he had been warned about was directly in *Titanic's* path, the lookout raised the alert and watched helplessly as the ship hurtled towards the sheer grey wall of ice.

From *Disasters at Sea* by Captain Richard A. Cahill



REFLECTION

Think about what you have learnt so far about planning your summary writing. Write down three key learning points about reading a non-fiction text to understand the main ideas. Which of the skills did you find most challenging and why? Which of the skills do you need more practice in?

> 4.2 Remodelling the text

Once you have planned your summary by making a list of the main ideas and reorganising them to focus fully on the task, you next need to think about how you are going to write your remodelled text.

Using your own words

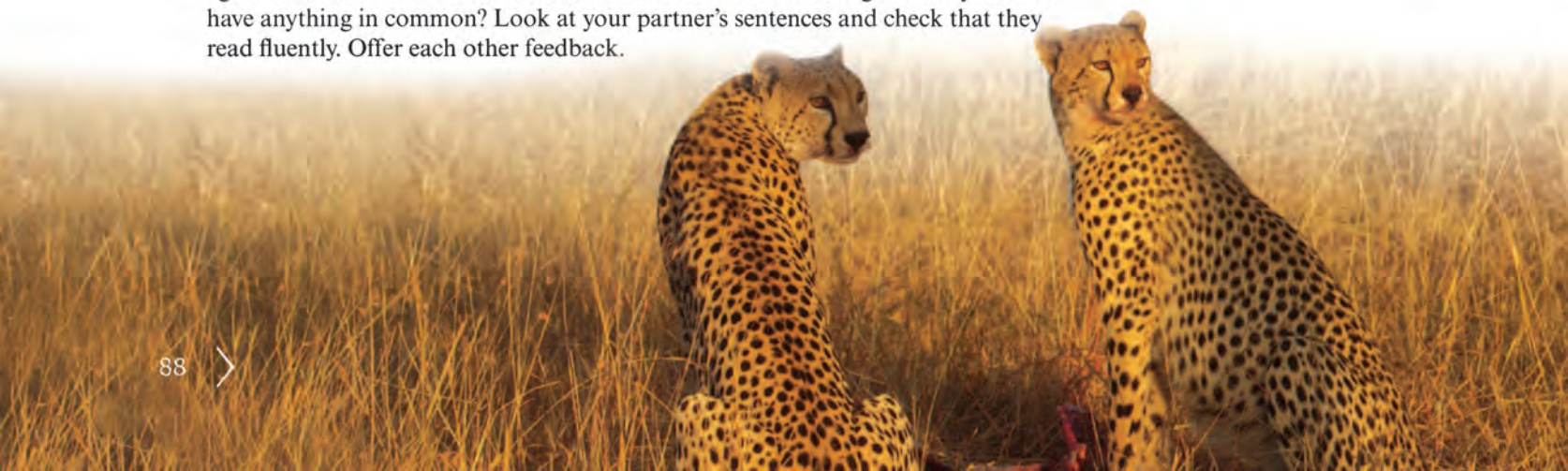
In summary tasks, you are usually expected to use your own words 'as far as possible'. But what exactly does that mean? Firstly, remember that you do not need to find synonyms for every word in the original text. Proper nouns and technological language do not need to be reworded, for example, and there is no need for you to even try. The important thing is not to copy whole phrases and sentences from the text; keeping your planning notes concise will help you to avoid this. You should also use your own words to summarise ideas in the text that may not be expressed as concisely as they could be.

- 1 Rewrite the underlined words in the sentences below, reducing the number of words by grouping them together in a new word or phrase. Make sure that the sentence still reads fluently with your new wording.
 - a Escape Beach in Cyprus is a great place to enjoy jet-skiing, water-skiing, sailing and surfing.
 - b At the seafood restaurant, he wasn't too keen on trying prawns, crayfish, muscles or squid.
 - c My older sister had a huge collection of handbags, scarves, belts and sunglasses.
 - d The changes to the road intersection between Highway 4 and Highway 10 resulted in more bumps, scrapes, knocks and collisions involving cars, vans and mopeds.
 - e On their Kenyan safari they were lucky enough to see lots of cheetahs, lions, leopards and pumas.
 - f Rakhshanda felt very lucky to have so many aunts, uncles and cousins to visit.
- 2 Now look at the sentences in Activity 1 again. Note down which ones it may be better *not* to change. Afterwards, swap your ideas with a partner and see if you agree on which words in the sentences it was better not to change. Do any of them have anything in common? Look at your partner's sentences and check that they read fluently. Offer each other feedback.

READING TIP

Put the source aside

Once you have planned your summary, put the original text out of sight. That way, you will not be tempted to refer back to it, which will help you to focus on remodelling the text using your own sentences. From this point you should only need your notes.



Register and style in summary writing

When writing a summary, try to keep your **register** formal and your writing style straightforward. For example, if the original text is from a travel guide, it may have a persuasive tone, hoping to encourage the reader to choose this as their next holiday destination. However, if you are asked to summarise what the place would offer a potential visitor, you do not need to write persuasively. Your response should be informative and written in a neutral **tone**.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: FORMALITY

The **formality** of a piece of writing refers to whether or not it follows certain standards and **conventions** of language and grammar. A definition of formal language is probably best given by a definition of what it is *not*. Signs of an informal piece of writing include chatty language and conversational tone, abbreviations or contractions. Informal pieces also use the **active** rather than the **passive voice** of the verb and **direct speech**.

A formal piece of writing can therefore be characterised by the following:

- ▷ more serious tone and language
- ▷ a lack of contractions (for example, 'cannot' instead of 'can't')
- ▷ the passive rather than the active voice (for example, 'It can be seen that ...' rather than 'I can see that ...')
- ▷ **reported speech** rather than direct speech (for example, 'She said her journey had been long and tiring and asked to be shown to her room immediately.')
- ▷ no slang or colloquial expressions (for example, 'The children thought their teacher was efficient and friendly.', not 'The kids thought their teacher was cool.').

Read this piece of persuasive writing and the task that follows.

Text 4.9

Come to Sri Lanka and enjoy a wonderful climate, miles of dramatic coastline, and spectacular mountainous regions. This jewel of an island has everything to offer the discerning tourist. The capital city, Colombo, enjoys a wealth of boutiques and stores for the shopaholic, while evenings can be spent enjoying sumptuous food from a huge range of restaurants with menus to suit every palate. This bustling and lively place boasts modern, luxurious hotels where every comfort is offered to make your stay enjoyable. If you are feeling adventurous you can hop on a train and enjoy an incredible journey to Sri Lanka's tea-growing areas. The views are mesmerising as the train snakes its way past hills with tea plantations as far as the eye can see. You can even stop to try

KEY TERMS

register: the level of formality in a piece of writing

tone: the way that someone speaks or how a piece of writing sounds, which helps suggest mood and feelings

formality: the extent to which a piece of writing follows standard English conventions

conventions: the 'rules' of how a story is told or a piece of writing is set out

active voice: where the subject of a sentence is the person or thing performing the action

passive voice: where the verb is before the person or thing, so the verb acts upon the subject

direct speech: the exact words a person says, marked by speech marks

reported speech: a speaker's words reported rather than stated directly, using changes of person and tense and governed by a reporting verb (for example, 'he said', 'she stated')

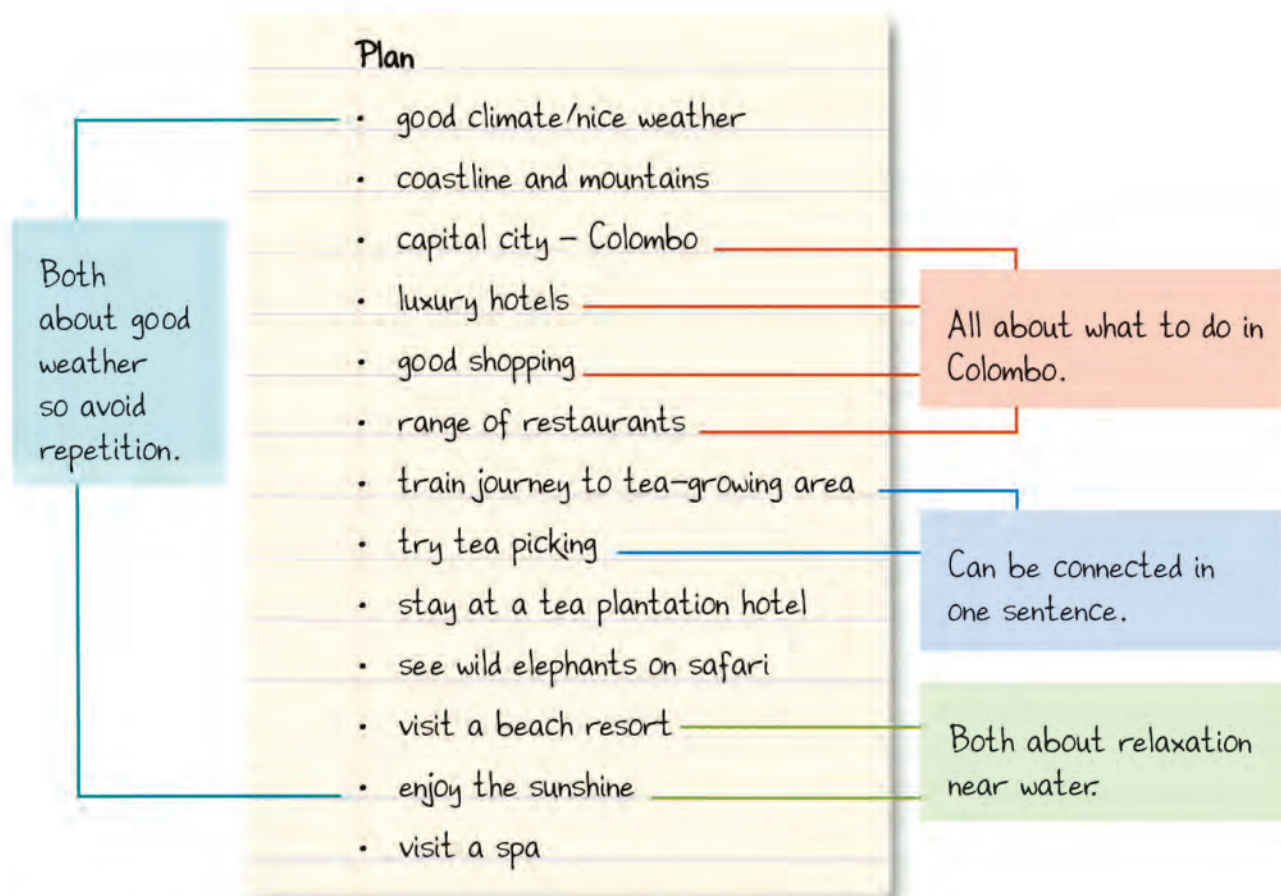


some tea picking for yourself, or enjoy afternoon tea at the many plantations that now house luxury hotels. And, of course, a visit to Sri Lanka wouldn't be complete without seeing wild elephants – did you know that Sri Lanka is one of the few remaining places where you can see elephants roaming free? We recommend that you go on an elephant safari at one of the country's national parks, where you can enjoy a day trip or stay overnight and take advantage of the quiet early mornings to spot these magnificent creatures before the crowds arrive. Our final recommendation is that you spend a few days unwinding at one of Sri Lanka's many beach resorts. Recline with a good book enjoying the sunshine, or relax in the spa, while your every need is catered for by highly trained staff. What could be a better end to your trip of a lifetime to Sri Lanka?

Summarise why Sri Lanka is such a popular tourist destination and what attractions there are for visitors.



Here are a student's planning notes for this task, indicating where they intend to synthesise points to organise their writing.



Now look at the student's response to the task, which is written in a formal, neutral tone.

Summary

Sri Lanka is a popular tourist destination because it has very pleasant sunny weather and a large variety of landscapes, including beaches, mountains and cities. Tourists can stay in the capital city of Colombo, where there is a massive choice of luxury hotels, good shopping opportunities and a variety of restaurants serving different kinds of foods to please everyone. Tourists can also go on an exciting and dramatic train journey to visit the beautiful rural areas, including tea plantations where they can try picking tea and stay overnight in a hotel on site. They can also go on an elephant safari to see rare wild elephants wandering freely in their natural habitat as the sun rises. This can be as a day trip or include an overnight stay. There are also a number of beach resorts where tourists can relax and unwind in a spa while being pampered by qualified staff.

Now look at another summary text and task.

Text 4.10

The Eiffel Tower in Paris is one of the most instantly recognisable landmarks in the world and attracts millions of visitors every year. Standing at a height of 324 metres, it is the tallest structure in Paris – the equivalent of an 81-storey building. It has three levels for visitors and is made of vast iron plates and beams bolted together like a huge pylon.

When it was first designed by Gustave Eiffel in the late 19th century, the Eiffel Tower caused a lot of controversy, drawing criticism from those who did not believe that it was feasible to build such a tall structure, as well as those who thought it looked monstrous and tasteless against the backdrop of such an elegant and historic city. The designer was keen to defend his work, arguing that the tower would be the tallest structure ever erected, with magnificent views of the city, and would become as admired and important as the ancient pyramids in Egypt. He stated that the tower would celebrate the art of modern engineering and be a fitting symbol of France's gratitude to the great scientific progress of the century, attracting attention for its unique and bold design.

The original plan was to construct the tower as a centrepiece for the centenary of the French Revolution in 1889, when France was hosting an event called the World Exposition. However, when the exposition opened the tower was still incomplete, with no lifts fitted. Despite this, it was an instant success and by the time the exposition ended, the Eiffel Tower had received nearly two million visitors, despite the entry fee of two francs for the first level, three francs for the second level and five francs to go to the top – from where the view of Paris was spectacular. After dark, the tower was illuminated by hundreds of gas lamps and beacons, sending out beams of red, white and blue to symbolise the French flag. At the top of the tower there was a post office where visitors could send postcards to their friends and family, as well as a café for them to buy delicious cakes.

Initially, the tower was only meant to stand for 20 years – the plan was to dismantle it in 1909. However, this iconic structure soon became entrenched in the hearts of the French people. Over the years, it received improvements and modifications including new lifts and staircases. Many famous visitors graced the tower over the next few years, including Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb. In 1964, the Eiffel Tower was officially declared to be a historical monument by the French Minister of Cultural Affairs.

Summarise what made the Eiffel Tower so controversial and why it was attractive to visitors when it was first constructed. Write 150–180 words.



- 3 In pairs, read these three student responses to the task. Rank the responses by how successful you think they are, where 1 is the most successful and 3 is the least.

Student A

The Eiffel Tower is an instantly recognisable landmark. It is controversial because it stands at a height of 324 metres and is made of vast iron plates and beams bolted together like a huge pylon. People did not believe it was feasible to build such a tall structure. Others thought it looked monstrous and tasteless. Visitors were attracted to it because it had magnificent views of the city and was like the pyramids. It was an instant success because they could pay five francs to go to the top level where the view of Paris was spectacular. The tower was illuminated by hundreds of gas lamps and at the top was a post office where visitors could send postcards to their friends and family, as well as a café where they could buy delicious cakes. It soon became entrenched in the hearts of the French people and many famous visitors graced the tower. It was declared a historical monument in 1964.



Student B

The Eiffel Tower was controversial because its design was unusual for Paris at the time: a huge iron structure, as tall as an 81-storey building, which people thought was ugly, tasteless and impossible to build due to its height. It was also a lot of work for something that was not built to last for more than twenty years and it was not even finished on time. Visitors liked the amazing views of Paris from the tower and the fact that they could choose how high up to go. For them it was as exotic as other famous landmarks such as the Egyptian pyramids. In later years it also had lifts fitted to make it easier for visitors to climb it. On the top floor was a café and post office where they could send postcards. At night the tower was lit up with red, white and blue beams. The French people soon loved it.

Student C

People just love visiting the Eiffel Tower. It's as tall as a building which has 81 different floors - imagine the scary views from being up that high!! When you are at the top, you can send a postcard to all your mates. Cool huh? They've put in some really helpful lifts which can take you up the tower so you don't have to climb loads of stairs and get tired out. It would be a great place to visit especially when it is all lit up with gas lamps and beacons in the night. That must make it look like it's New Year's Eve every night! People thought it was a monster when it was first built because they thought it looked hideous, like one of those massive electricity pylons. People were quite rude about it, in my opinion. I think it's great and would love to get to the top and visit the café to have some cake. It would be a laugh to send my mates a postcard from there too - you can post them there at the post office. I love it that some famous people have been there. That sounds amazing.



- 4 Use this checklist to decide what feedback you would offer each student to help them improve their summary writing.
- ✓ Have they used a formal register – no chatty asides or informal expressions?
 - ✓ Is the tone neutral – no opinions or comments?
 - ✓ Have they used their own words – are there lifted sentences or phrases that could have been changed?
 - ✓ Have they avoided repetition?
 - ✓ Have they synthesised similar points?
 - ✓ Is the summary an appropriate length – no more than 180 words?
- 5 Now look at three more student summaries to different tasks. All three are written in a tone and register that is not appropriate for a summary. Rewrite each response to improve it, changing the language where necessary to achieve a formal, neutral writing style.

Student D

Eating too much sugar is bad for you. We all know that's a fact, right? Medical experts tell us constantly that if we don't cut our sugar intake, we will all end up being massively overweight with diabetes and heart disease running rampant. So why are all the nicest foods full of sugar? It's not fair, is it?! But do you know how better you'd feel if you ditched the sweet stuff completely? Kicking the sugar habit leads to huge benefits such as better skin (we all hate acne, right?), less tummy fat (and we all hate those wobbly bits!) and more energy. That last one seems weird because sugar gives you energy but in fact, the energy sugar gives you doesn't last long and you eventually crash which just makes you crave more sugar. So, it's true! We'd all be much healthier if we just cut out the sugary snacks!

Student E

Our oceans are full of plastic and there's only one species to blame for it: humans. Many humans simply drop their litter wherever they feel like it, harming wildlife and ruining areas of natural beauty. However, every time you discard a plastic bottle, bag or packet, you could be adding to the problem even if you always use bins to dispose of your rubbish. Did you know that when rubbish is being transported to landfill, plastic is often blown away because it is so light? The wind then picks it up carrying it to streams, ditches, rivers and drains where it inevitably ends up in the ocean. There are also minute particles of plastic in many of the products that we flush away or put down our sinks; the beauty industry is particularly bad in this respect. Many of these end up consumed by minute marine creatures, eventually making their way back into the human food chain. So, watch where you put your rubbish in future!



Student F

The oldest living animal in the world, at 190 years of age, is a simply amazing giant tortoise called Jonathan. He has massively exceeded the usual life expectancy of a Seychelles giant tortoise, which is on average 150 years. Jonathan lives on the tiny Atlantic island of St Helena which has been his home since he was presented as a gift to the governor when he was a youthful 50 years old. This dear old gentleman has been robbed of both his eyesight and his sense of smell, but fortunately he still has his very sensitive hearing! He is fed on a sumptuous diet of all kinds of fruits and vegetables, including apples, bananas, carrots and guava which provide him with all the nutrients he needs to stay in tip top condition. Jonathan is still resident in the grounds of the governor's house and will hopefully stay that way for the foreseeable future. What a gorgeous creature!



- 6 Now look at Texts 4.11 and 4.12, and the summary task for each one. Plan and write the summaries, focusing on using your own words as far as possible and writing in a formal, neutral tone.

Text 4.11

A tour of Islamabad

With so many things to do in Islamabad, planning a day trip can be a nightmare. It's impossible to fit everything in. This means thinking carefully about the itinerary to ensure that it suits the interests and needs of the whole family.

Islamabad is green and spacious, nestling into the Margalla Hills, the foothills of the western Himalayas. The city boasts wide tree-lined avenues and modern architecture which lie under a startling backdrop of mountains.

The first stop on any day trip in Islamabad has to be the Pakistan Monument, which is on the edge of the Shakarparian National Park. The monument, designed to resemble a lotus flower, is a striking piece of architecture. It was erected as a symbol of national unity: the five petals represent the five states of Pakistan and the central black triangle represents Islamabad as the capital city. The monument always attracts crowds of people and as a result there are stalls outside it



selling snacks and refreshments. There are even camel rides on offer and clowns wandering among the tourists to entertain them. It is a wonderful spot to sit down, relax and do some people-watching!

If there is a budding artist in the family, think about a visit to a truck-painting workshop! Pakistan's highly colourful and hand-decorated trucks are one of the country's most iconic sights and a huge attraction for tourists. Each truck is lovingly and carefully decorated with fluorescent stickers, painted murals, vibrant tassels and reflectors. Truck art is a mode of expression for the drivers and often the decorations contain designs which remind them of home when they spend time away on the roads. This traditional art form is an important part of Pakistani culture so learning more about it and seeing the trucks close up would be a fascinating way of spending some of your day out.

Later in the day when the weather is cooling, take a drive up the winding roads with hairpin turns into the Margalla Hills. This superbly maintained national park offers a popular escape from the city. It's the perfect setting for hiking with lots of trails to choose from. Watch out for the wildlife, such as monkeys and rare birds. The views are incredible, especially if you have the opportunity to watch the sun setting. There are plenty of excellent restaurants serving a huge range of dishes and refreshing drinks where you can enjoy panoramic views of the city as you restore your energy at the end of the day.



Summarise why a day trip to Islamabad would offer something enjoyable for everyone in the family.

Text 4.12

Have mobile phones made our manners worse?

There is no doubt that the mobile phone has changed our lives. A few decades ago, a telephone was a tool to contact someone if they were at home or at work, but when people were out and about it was impossible for them to either receive or make calls. Now we are contactable wherever we go, but is that always a good thing?

People tend to have a love/hate relationship with their mobile phone: they love the sense of freedom it gives them, and the fact that they can look up information so easily, as well as the constant communication with friends a phone enables through chat apps and social media sites. Many people also think that having the latest technology gives them special status and use their phone as a fashion accessory as well as a piece of essential equipment. Taking selfies to chart every aspect of our daily lives has become the norm.

But is it all positive? There are many who believe that the rising popularity of the mobile phone has had a negative effect on our behaviour and general manners. Many older people claim that the younger generations have forgotten basic courtesies, ignoring the people around them while glued to their devices, or playing music loudly instead of communicating. Commuters complain that people using their phones on trains speak so loudly that the whole carriage can hear a one-sided conversation. Even when other passengers make their displeasure obvious, many of them just ignore it and carry on shouting away. Shop workers claim that some customers take a call while they are being served, either expecting the whole queue to wait until they have finished, or rudely talking while the assistant is trying to process their purchases. Often, they then grab the bag of goods and leave the shop without saying thank you or acknowledging that they have been served at all.

There is no doubt that for many, mobile phones have made life easier. It is less stressful to travel long distances now, knowing that if there is a problem it is easy to contact help. Those living overseas are able to keep in close touch with their loved ones: being able to see people as well as speak to them has made families closer even when they live in different parts of the world. There is a certain irony, however, that we often sit in silence with those with whom we live as we all check our phones. It is not uncommon to see families sitting at the dinner table ignoring one another completely as each person sits obsessed with their phone or tablet.

Without doubt mobile devices are here to stay, but do we need to develop more commonly accepted etiquette in their use?

**REFLECTION**

Think about the activities you have completed in this section. Make notes on the following:

- What have you learnt about planning a summary?
- What have you learnt about the register and tone needed to write a successful summary?
- What aspects of summary writing do you still need to improve?

Summarise the positive and negative impacts of mobile phones.

> 4.3 Developing coherent writing

When you have practised planning your summaries, reorganising the material and writing them up in your own words, you can start to really refine your summary-writing skills. To do this, you need to focus on writing in fluent and coherent English. These are skills that you will learn through writing tasks and can be put to great use to make your summary writing even better.

Paragraphing your summary

Paragraphing your summary is easy. Because it is a short piece of writing, it may be written in a single paragraph. In cases where there is more than one strand in the question, you may find it more logical to write a separate paragraph to address each strand, but it is up to you.

The length of your summary

A summary will usually be about 150–180 words. You are not likely to be penalised for exceeding that limit slightly, so you do not need to spend time counting the words. Although, bear in mind that if your summary is too long, it may become self-penalising, as it will probably include repetition, details that are irrelevant to the task or unnecessary examples. At the same time, there is no benefit in writing much below the recommended number of words, because you will probably not include enough content points and ideas. You should be able to make all of the relevant points within this word recommendation.



Focusing on fluency

Fluency and coherence are essential to a successful summary. To demonstrate these skills you should:

- organise and structure your ideas carefully
- use a range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate connectives.

Sentence structures can help improve the organisation and fluency of your summary writing. When you plan your summary by making a list of points in note form, it can be tempting to write them up in simple sentences. However, this can make your summary sound stilted rather than fluent. To avoid this, link some of your notes to make compound or complex sentences. This will also help you to avoid copying from the original text.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

To write fluently and coherently, it is important to use a range of sentence types. There are three main sentence types: simple, compound and complex. All three have an equally important role in writing fluently.

- **Simple sentences** have only one main verb – for example, *He ran back to the car*. Simple sentences are important when making a strong point, but using too many of them can make your writing feel disjointed and less interesting to read.
- **Compound sentences** have more than one verb. When writing a compound sentence you use **coordinating conjunctions** to combine two simple sentences – for example, *He realised the weather was deteriorating so he ran back to the car*. Compound sentences are useful for connecting similar ideas in your summary writing.
- Complex sentences use **subordinate clauses** to add information – for example, *Despite the deteriorating weather, he wanted to stay outside rather than sit in the car*. The subordinate clause does not make sense on its own.

KEY TERMS

simple sentence: a sentence with only one verb

compound sentence: a sentence with more than one verb

coordinating conjunction: a word such as 'and', 'but', 'or' that joins two words or two main clauses in a sentence

subordinate clause: in grammar, a clause that cannot form a sentence alone but adds information to the main clause

- 1 Combine the following sentences by using one of the following conjunctions: *but, and, because, when*.

Example: *Blue whales are the largest animal in existence. They can reach a length of 30 metres.* → *Blue whales are the largest animal in existence and can reach a length of 30 metres.*

- a Blue whales used to be abundant in all the Earth's oceans. They were hunted almost to the point of extinction by whalers.
- b Blue whales migrate in spring and summer. There is more food available in the cooler northern waters.
- c Blue whales were listed as endangered in 2018. Their numbers had dwindled seriously.
- d Blue whales can ingest pollutants from oil. These can injure their respiratory or intestinal tracts.



- 2 Combine the following sentences by using one of the following **relative pronouns**: *which, who, whose, whom*. Note that sometimes you will need to change the word order when combining sentences using relative pronouns.

Example: *In Bangladesh there are many dedicated English teachers. All the teachers want their students to succeed.* → *In Bangladesh there are many dedicated English teachers who all want their students to succeed.*

- a Abdul was an English teacher. He worked in a high school in Bangladesh.
- b Abdul taught English in a high school. The school had almost 500 students.
- c Abdul met one of his former students. He had taught this student for three years of high school.
- d Abdul lived next door to Shahnawaz. He had taught Shahnawaz's son for two years of high school.

- 3 Combine the following sentences by using present participles (a word ending in '-ing' formed from a verb). Note that sometimes you will need to change the word order when combining sentences using present participles.

Example: *Tabinda woke up early. She jumped out of bed, eager to go to work.*
→ *Waking up early, Tabinda jumped out of bed, eager to go to work.*

- a Tabinda walked to school. She met an old friend from high school.
- b They chatted together. They walked along the street.
- c Tabinda heard that her friend was a teacher. She told her friend that she was a teacher too.
- d Her friend smiled. She told Tabinda that she had heard from many colleagues that Tabinda was a wonderful teacher.

KEY TERM

relative pronoun:
a word such as 'who', 'whom', 'whose', 'which' or 'that' used to connect a relative clause or phrase to a noun or pronoun in a sentence

Using connectives

Coherent writing uses accurate and effective linking words or phrases. These may show a continuation and development of the ideas in the text, or they may show a change of direction in the writing.

Continuation/development	Change of direction/contrast
moreover, similarly, again, in the same way, likewise, furthermore	on the other hand, however, in contrast, nevertheless

However, these words and phrases should not be used without clear understanding of their purpose – and they should be used carefully. Using too many connectives will not improve the fluency of your writing, instead making it sound too wordy.

- 4 Look at this summary task.

Summarise the impact of mass farming on animals and how it changed their relationship with humans.



Use the notes below to produce a written summary. Use a combination of simple, compound and complex sentences. Do not use more than three linking words. Remember to reorganise the material by synthesising similar points and avoiding repetition. Write 150–180 words.

Plan
• physical appearance of farmed animals changed
• most farmed animals became smaller
• some farmed animals developed more distinctive markings and/or bright colours
• jaw muscles in grazing animals became smaller
• faces of grazing animals became shorter
• farmed animals have a lower life expectancy
• brains of farmed animals became smaller
• senses of farmed animals became less acute
• before the farming of animals, man respected the animals he hunted
• man depended on animals for his needs, like food and clothing
• hunters feared and admired the animals they hunted
• farming certain species of animals has led to a bond of mutual affection between them and the farmers
• some animals are used to help the farmer, such as horses and dogs
• shepherds often risk their lives to rescue their lambs

5 Swap your answer with a partner. Do the following to assess your partner's summary.

- a Count the number of sentences.
- b Check that they are all sentences. (Do they all have verbs? Do they all make sense on their own?)
- c Count the number of simple sentences – sentences with only one verb.
- d Check to see if there are any compound sentences – sentences joined by coordinating conjunctions.
- e Check to see if there are any complex sentences, and whether or not these are original.





- f** For each complex sentence used, check the way in which the structure has been created:
- i** Has a conjunction been used ('because', 'when', 'after', 'before', 'since', etc.)?
 - ii** Has a relative pronoun been used ('who', 'whose', 'whom', 'which', 'that')?
 - iii** Has a present participle been used (the part of the verb ending in '-ing')?
 - iv** Have up to three linking words been used appropriately (for example, 'however', 'moreover', 'nevertheless', 'furthermore')?

Make a list of your findings for your partner.

- 6** Now repeat the exercise with the summary plan below. Note that this plan contains some less relevant points.

Summarise how tornadoes form and why they are so dangerous.

Plan

- warm humid air rises from ground
- meets cold air
- causing an updraft and swirling air
- a spinning funnel forms
- starts to suck up more warm air
- funnel grows longer and spins more quickly
- funnel touches the ground
- they can move at speeds of up to 400km per hour
- can tear houses and buildings apart
- can lift people up and throw them from dangerous heights
- can lift up cars and other vehicles
- throw debris around
- bring down power lines
- they destroy everything they come across
- they can last for three hours
- they are called twisters
- they can destroy bridges
- forecasting has improved so fewer people get injured now

REFLECTION

List three key learning points about writing fluently. Which techniques and skills for writing fluently and coherently do you need to work on more? Make notes on how you can do this.

> 4.4 Summary-writing practice

You are now going to practise your summary writing following the plan below carefully.

Remind yourself of the seven different stages of planning and writing a summary. Make sure that you follow them all.

- 1 Scan read the text and form an overview of what the text is about.
- 2 Read the task carefully and circle any key words. Make a note of whether there is one focus strand or two.
- 3 Skim read the text, looking for relevant content points. List them in note form, using just the key phrases, not whole sentences.
- 4 Look at your list of notes and see whether any of the points are similar and could therefore be synthesised. Look for any repeated points and cross one of them out.
- 5 Decide whether the points are in the best order, or whether you should reorganise some of them to make your summary more coherent.
- 6 Put the text aside and use your notes to write your summary in full sentences. Change things into your own words if it is easy to do so, but use words from the text if changing them would mean using more words or would alter the meaning. The important thing is not to copy sentences.
- 7 When you have finished writing, check your summary to ensure that it reads fluently and has no errors.

- 1 Summarise what makes Malawi attractive as a tourist destination according to Text 4.13. Write 150–180 words.

Text 4.13

A safari in Malawi has everything to offer

Most people think that the best safaris are to be found in Kenya or South Africa, but we found a hidden gem when we discovered Malawi – a tiny land-locked country in Africa where there is everything a discerning traveller could want, including a lack of crowds! Malawi's wildlife parks have undergone an exciting revival in the last ten years, with a deliberate programme to reintroduce several species, including cheetahs and lions. This has not only preserved Malawi's natural heritage but also increased its

market share of the tourist industry as it has become a true 'Big 5' destination where you can tick the elephant, lion, buffalo, rhino and leopard off your wish-list!

What makes Malawi so special is that each of its protected wildlife areas has its own unique characteristics, so most tourists divide their time between them. Majete Wildlife Park is situated in a rugged and beautiful landscape of woodland, granite hills and river valleys. As well as the 'Big 5', visitors can see a huge range of animals, including zebra, giraffe, warthog and nyala. In contrast, Nyika National Park is set in rolling green hills with acres of grasslands where over 400 species of birds can be found as well as wild alpine flowers, including 200 varieties of orchid. Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve is more famous for its elephants and blue monkeys and offers the more intrepid visitor an opportunity to explore by canoe along the Bua River.

As a land-locked country, the last thing anyone would expect when visiting Malawi is a few days' relaxation on a glorious sandy beach watching the water lap gently around your feet. However, Lake Malawi at 600 km long and 80 km wide covers one-third of the country's land mass! It offers tourists a number of idyllic sandy beaches adorned with mango trees and clear crystal fresh water which is home to over 1000 species of brightly coloured tropical fish. A variety of water sports are on offer for the more energetic travellers, including snorkelling, water-skiing and kayaking. Those who are less energetic can enjoy a romantic sunset cruise or a yoga class on the beach.

Accommodation varies enormously: some prefer to go for the 'Robinson Crusoe' experience and stay in a basic wooden shack on the beach where things are kept as simple as possible, whereas others prefer to be pampered in one of the many spa hotels which offer complete luxury such as private decks and personal plunge pools with magnificent views of the lake. Whichever you choose, you can be assured of a superb range of local restaurants serving innovative dishes, including locally sourced fresh water fish.

So, Malawi has well and truly emerged from the shadows of its close neighbours as a desirable holiday destination. With a range of destinations to suit every taste, it isn't surprising that the number of visitors flocking to this tiny country is growing exponentially each year. The only downside to a holiday in Malawi is that it will be difficult to leave . . .



- 2 Summarise how learning outdoors can benefit children and why some teachers may object to it according to Text 4.14.

Text 4.14

As the summer sets in, you may be thinking about taking lessons outside.

But such moves can be tricky to justify; is it really going to benefit learning or will it just become a distraction? It's often intuitively believed that nature is good for children, and that being away from the restrictions of the classroom environment enables them to learn more effectively. But what is the evidence telling us? Are such claims based on any research findings?

There is certainly a benefit to spending time outside. In a 2014 study [...] children from urban communities who had access to parks and other green spaces were found to have higher levels of emotional and behavioural resilience, while other studies have found relationships between nature and academic achievement [...].

But there hasn't been a systematic critical review of the evidence until now. Ming Kuo and her team at the University of Illinois recently examined hundreds of studies that reported many different positive outcomes of outdoor learning and spending time with nature. They found that nature does indeed boost learning, in several different ways.

It has a rejuvenating effect on attention, relieves stress, boosts self-discipline, increases physical activity and fitness, and promotes self-motivation, enjoyment and engagement. Additionally, nature creates calmer, quieter and safer learning environments, fosters warmer, more cooperative relations among students and encourages more creative and exploratory forms of play.

All of these factors are clearly conducive to more favourable academic outcomes; if students are

calmer, they learn better. If they are able to regulate their own behaviour, they are less likely to disrupt their own and other students' learning. More specifically, increased connection with nature was found to result in better attention, higher standardised test scores and higher exam grades, and better reading, maths and writing skills. [...]

There are, of course, some obvious problems with these conclusions. Schools in inner cities tend to have fewer green spaces than those in the leafy suburbs, which also tend to have fewer pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Trips out into the countryside or to outward bound-type facilities can be expensive, leaving some children disadvantaged. As is often the case, the research doesn't necessarily match what happens in the real world. However, the authors of the study say that even brief exposure to nature can be beneficial. This could even include just being able to see green spaces from classroom windows or spending just a short period of time learning outside.

Justifying outdoor learning could also be difficult in a climate where a traditional academic curriculum is the highest priority and exam results are so important. Such a climate may often lead to an emphasis on classroom learning rather than more non-traditional methods. Teachers might even feel that outdoor learning gives them less control.

Kuo and her colleagues, however, are convinced that the more we allow learners to experience nature, the greater the benefits to both their academic performance and overall wellbeing.

From the website of Tes Global



- 3 Swap your summaries with a partner. Read their responses and see whether there is any feedback you would offer them using this checklist:

- ✓ answering the questions – considering both strands if appropriate
- ✓ range of ideas included
- ✓ relevance of ideas included
- ✓ use of own words – avoiding copying from the text
- ✓ organising the material
- ✓ writing fluently using a range of sentence types
- ✓ using connectives – but not overusing them!

PROJECT

In groups, you are going to design a booklet for students who will be joining your school next year. Your booklet should include sections on:

- the school site – buildings and outdoor facilities
- the subjects studied
- the co-curricular opportunities offered to students.

You should use your school website to gather the information you need. You will need to summarise the information to make sure that the booklet only contains material that new students will be interested in. You should include both bullet-point lists and short sections of text in each section.



EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 10 marks for the quality of your writing.

Read Text A, about a dam project near the city of Hasankeyf in Turkey.

Summarise what negative impacts the dam project will have on the local area and the people of Hansankeyf according to Text A.

You must **use continuous writing** (not note form).

Use your own words where appropriate.

Avoid copying long sections of the text.

Your summary should not be more than 180 words.

Text A

In south-east Turkey, the ancient city of Hasankeyf, which sits on the banks of the Tigris River, appears as an oasis. Hasankeyf is thought to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements on Earth, dating as far back as 12,000 years [. . .]. But this jewel of human history will soon be lost; most of the settlement is about to be flooded as part of the [. . .] Ilisu dam project.

CONTINUED

Construction work on the dam and its hydroelectric power plant started in 2006 and Hasankeyf is now just weeks away from destruction, despite a fight by residents and environmental campaigners to save it. [. . .]

First conceived as far back as the 1950s, the [. . .] project [. . .] will be the fourth biggest dam in Turkey and is predicted to generate 4,200 gigawatts hours of electricity annually, but at a huge cost. The scheme will mean the flooding of 199 settlements in the region, thousands of human-made caves and hundreds of historical [. . .] sites. Campaigners warn that close to 80,000 people will be displaced. They also warn of terrible damage to the natural environment, saying biodiversity will suffer, and that numerous vulnerable and endangered species are threatened by the construction of the dam. [. . .]

Hasankeyf has been part of many different cultures in its long history, including ancient Mesopotamia, Byzantium, Arab empires and the Ottoman empire, but Hakan Ozoglu, a history professor at the University of Central Florida, said the settlement predates all these civilisations. [. . .] The professor says Hasankeyf is a laboratory that could provide many answers about the past. "Such rare physical evidence of the human past must be protected at all cost," Ozoglu said. [. . .]

The government has built a "new Hasankeyf" for 700 households, 3 km away from historical Hasankeyf, to relocate residents before 8 October. But Eyup Agalday, 27, said he and his wife were not offered their own home in the new settlement, as the government has a cut off for those married after 2014. "I will have to live with my parents again – the whole family of 10 members will be in the one house," he said.

Agalday, like his ancestors, is a shepherd, and currently lives in in one of Hasankeyf's many caves. He will not be allowed to take his animals to the new village and has started selling his goats. "I am forced to do something and be in a city where I don't want to live," he said. [. . .] [He] said about a fifth of Hasankeyf's residents have already moved to the new settlement, with around five or six families moving each day. A green pick-up truck could be spotted from below with belongings and furniture piled high, making its way out of Hasankeyf.

Sitting under the shade of bountiful grapevines on the opposite side of the river, Hediye Tapkan, 38, said she had no idea where her family, including five young children, will go. "We like our place, we make our bread here, we have lots of grapes and figs which sometimes we sell, our lands are productive," she said. [. . .]

As the residents wait for the floodgates to open and for Hasankeyf to be slowly submerged by the rising river, they say they will continue to raise their voices and spread the message of the settlement's history. [. . .]

From the website of *The Guardian* newspaper

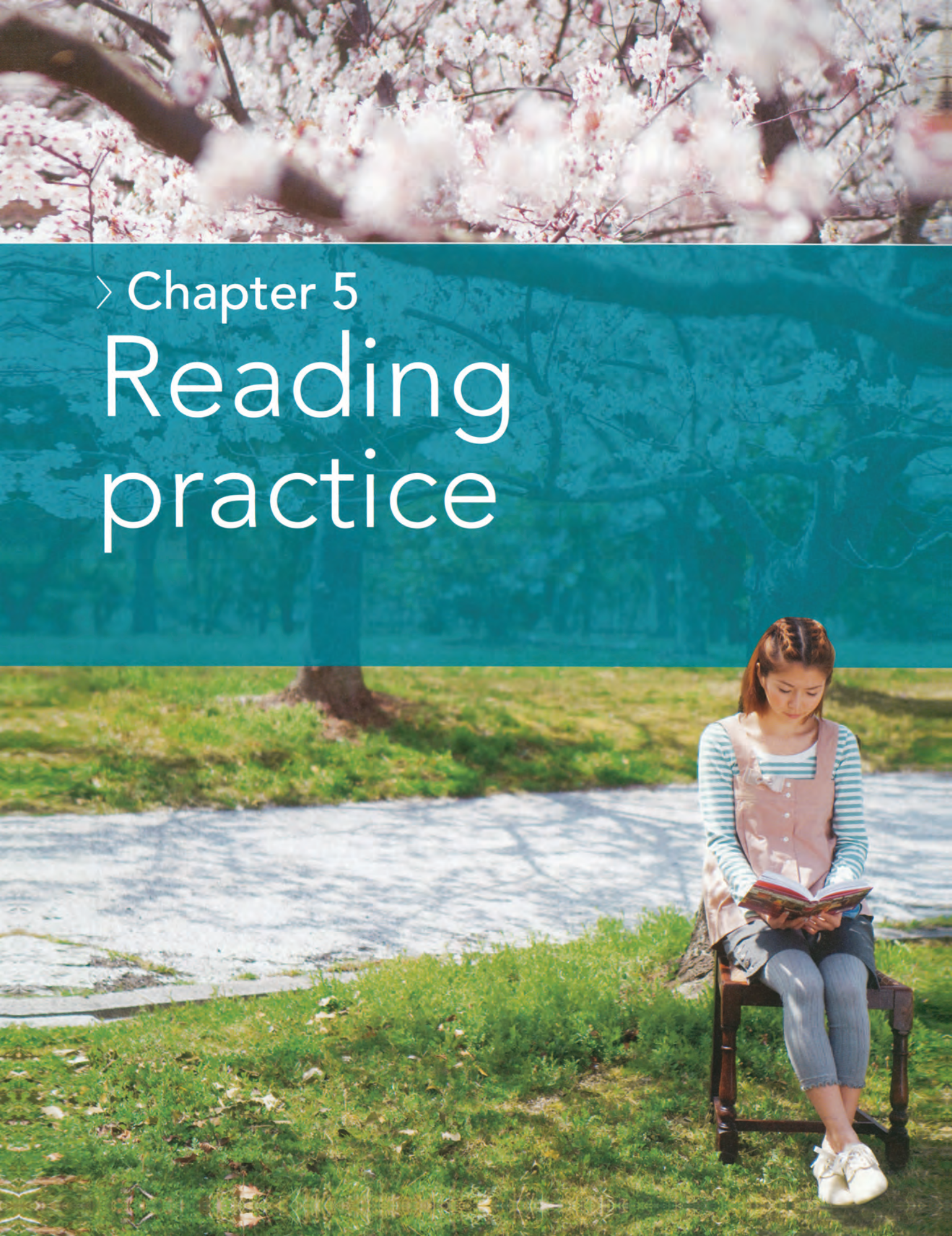


SELF-ASSESSMENT

How confident do you feel about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter?
Rate yourself from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident), then answer the question to prove it.

Now I can . . .	Confidence rating (1–5)	Prove it
read a text and offer an overview of it		Explain what reading strategy should be used to form an overview of a text.
identify the main ideas in a text		Explain why it is important to read the question carefully before writing a list of the main points.
differentiate between main ideas and supporting details or examples		Explain the difference between a main point, a detail and an example.
reorganise and synthesise ideas		Write three key points about reorganising and synthesising the notes in a summary plan.
remodel a text		Explain how to remodel a text to a partner. What are the key things to remember?
produce a fluent, coherent summary of a text		Write a list of useful connectives to use in summaries to develop the ideas and to offer an alternative idea.





› Chapter 5

Reading practice

> Introduction

Use the tasks in this chapter to practise the comprehension and summary skills you have learnt in Chapters 1–4.

> Comprehension and use of language

Read Text A, an extract from *No Turning Back*, then answer Questions 1a–h and 2a–e.

Text A

In this extract, a teenage boy called Sipho has run away from his township. He has just arrived alone in Hillsbrow, a suburb in a large city in South Africa called Johannesburg.

BP . . . Shell . . . Honda . . . Coca-cola . . . Signs in front of garages and great box-like metal, brick and concrete buildings flashed by on either side. Stretching his neck, Sipho saw people milling through gates and doorways. It reminded him of when Ma was working. Her pay from working at the café hadn't been much, but with payday every Friday, his stepfather wasn't always so angry then.

- 5 [. . .] Even so they had argued. Like when Ma needed extra money for Sipho's school uniform. But the really bad rows started when the café owner had sacked her. [. . .] Perhaps if she was still working, he wouldn't be running away now . . .

Suddenly the driver swerved [. . .] as another taxi pulled out in front of them. The passengers bumped against each other and the old lady opposite was jolted into talking.

- 10 'Why is there so much fighting, my children?' [. . .] The old lady sighed heavily, her face so creased with deep lines that it looked to Sipho like bark on a very old tree. As more people joined in Sipho only half listened. He needed to see where he was going. The garages and factories had given way to a mixture of shops and houses of different shapes and sizes. There were no shacks here. The early morning sun shone on bright white walls and red roofs of houses, all with gardens and pavements between them and the tarmac streets. Not like the township, where lots of houses and shacks spilt right onto the dusty, stony roads. Springing up ahead, a mass of buildings reached upwards to the sky. One was taller and slimmer than all the others. Sipho recognized the concrete drum with the saucer eyes. The tower slipped from view and Sipho's fingers tightened their grip on his seat. [. . .]
- 20 The man who had taken Sipho's fare signalled to him. The taxi jerked and whined as the driver pulled in to the left. Trying not to step on feet or parcels, Sipho squeezed his way out of the taxi. He could feel the old lady's eyes on his back. The sliding door wasn't even closed behind him before the vehicle was hurtling off on its way to the city centre.

25 Standing at the corner where he had alighted, he tried to take in where he was. Traffic was coming from all directions and the smell of petrol was almost overpowering. [. . .]

'Move over!'

A large hand pushed him roughly to one side.

'You'll make us late for work!'

30 Another taxi had pulled up at the corner with people clambering out. Within seconds, it had swung back out into the road. Sipho looked around to see which way he should go. It could be any way. Apart from a garage opposite him, all around were tall buildings with the sun glinting on glass windows high above. The streets were lined with shops, and street sellers were setting up stalls along the pavement. Close by, a woman sitting on a blanket was laying out plastic plates with an orange, an apple and banana on each. In between were small piles of sweets. Feeling in his pocket, 35 he pulled out the remaining coins. [. . .] There was a one-rand coin which he put back in his pocket. Offering all the others, which came to ninety-seven cents, he was allowed to take one of the piles.

Unwrapping the sweet which was the brightest red, Sipho savoured its cherry flavour. Why not go down this street? There was no need to hurry now. Where would he hurry to? No one knew him and he knew no one. All he knew was what his friend Gordon had told him. Children lived on the streets 40 here. Gordon had been to Hillbrow and seen them asking for money and doing jobs. That way they got something to eat. Well, if they could do it, so could he. And if he was lucky, some of them might be friendly too.

He walked slowly, examining the shop windows on the way. In a furniture shop he gazed at a mattress marked R475. Almost 500 rand just for a mattress! Ma had struggled to find twenty rand 45 to buy his old one from the man who sold goods from his cart. Behind the mattress was a chest of drawers marked R600. This place was expensive. At home they use cardboard boxes for their clothes. [. . .]

These shops were quite different from the local township ones where everything was stuffed together in one small place. Nearly every shop here had something different . . . clothes . . . electrical things 50 . . . medicines . . . even a shop just for books. But it was a window full of cameras that held the best surprises. The lenses stared out at Sipho like detectives behind dark glasses. [. . .]

The streets were filling up with people. Waiting for the traffic lights to turn green, Sipho took note of the cars passing by. Some were very sleek and shiny. Like the shimmering pale blue Benz turning the corner which suddenly pulled up on the next block. As if from nowhere, two boys of about Sipho's 55 age appeared, one on the pavement, the other on the road, and began directing the driver into a parking space. They whirled their hands and pointed as the car moved backwards and forwards, finally coming to a halt. Crossing the road, Sipho stopped nearby and watched as a lady with light brown hair tumbling around her face got out of the car. She ignored the boy on the pavement.

Adapted from *No Turning Back* by Beverley Naidoo

- 1 a Give a phrase from lines 1–3 which shows that Sipho's taxi was moving quickly. [1]
- b Using your own words, give **two** observations that Sipho makes about the old lady in lines 8–11. [2]
- c Using your own words, explain fully what the text means by 'springing up ahead' (line 16). [2]
- d Give **two** details that show how busy the area is when Sipho got out of the car (lines 24–28). [2]
- e Explain what the word 'savoured' shows about how Sipho ate the sweet. [1]
- f What does Sipho realise about his life in the township from looking at the shops in the city (lines 43–51)? Give **two** details from the text to support your answer. [2]
- g i What makes Sipho interested in the two boys in the final paragraph? [1]
 ii Explain, using your own words, what the boys are doing. [1]
- h Explain **using your own words**, how the writer shows Sipho's childish naivety about his new life in the city. Give **three** details from anywhere in the text to support your answer. [3]
- 2 a Read this extract from the text.

The early morning sun shone on bright white walls and red roofs of houses, all with gardens and pavements between them and the tarmac streets. Not like the township, where lots of houses and shacks spilt right onto the dusty, stony roads.

- What contrast does the writer suggest between the city and township in these lines? [1]
- b Explain the effect of the phrase 'a mass of buildings reached upwards to the sky' (lines 18–19). [1]
- c What **two** impressions of the city does the writer want to convey to the reader in this extract: [2]

Sipho looked around to see which way he should go. It could be any way. Apart from a garage opposite him, all around were tall buildings with the sun glinting on glass windows high above. The streets were lined with shops, and street sellers were setting up stalls along the pavement.

- d Read this sentence from the text: 'The lenses stared out at Sipho like detectives behind dark glasses.'
- i What literary technique does the writer use here? [1]
- ii What does it suggest about Sipho's feelings? [1]
- e Choose **one** example of how the writer uses language effectively to convey life in the city in the final paragraph.
 Explain the impression the writer creates in the example you have identified. [3]

[Total: 25]

> Summary task

Read Text B, 'Our cities need fewer cars, not cleaner cars', then answer Questions 3a and 3b.

Text B

Our cities need fewer cars, not cleaner cars

The spectre of our cities choking with unhealthy air has prompted numerous governments to mandate a transition to electric cars. Their concerns are well founded, even if their proposals fall short of what is needed. Over the past four decades, cars have become far less polluting. Their fuel efficiency has practically doubled and their tailpipe emissions have been reduced by more than 95%. Yet cities such as London and Paris are still battling smog and pollution. California has for decades demanded the toughest emission standards in the US, and yet Los Angeles heads the list of US cities for bad air quality. Moving to all-electric car fleets will be a positive step, albeit an inadequate measure. [. . .]

Even considering the far greater efficiency of an electric vehicle, zero tailpipe emissions does not mean zero carbon emissions for the travel. Today over 50% of the electricity generated in the UK and over 65% of electricity generated in the US comes from fossil fuels. Our carbon footprint will improve by barely a quarter if we all switch to electric vehicles.

And there are other aspects to be concerned about. We currently demand considerable amounts of valuable urban land for roads. London allocates almost 24% of its land area to roads and supporting infrastructure. In many US cities this can be as high as 40%.

The World Health Organization has estimated that a city needs to allocate at least nine square metres of green space for each resident. Yet many fast-growing cities around the world are making do with less than two square metres after allocation of ever more precious land to feed the insatiable appetite for roads and parking. [. . .]

Los Angeles, which offers more road capacity per capita than any other large US city, has discovered [that] adding roads and highways merely encourages more people to use private transport modes. The average Los Angeles commuter wastes almost 5.5 days each year paralysed in gridlock. Traffic congestion is also a growing economic burden for most cities. A study in India has determined that traffic congestion can account for erosion of almost 3% of GDP for the sprawling New Delhi metropolitan region.

In other words, the rush to cleaner cars alone will not solve the problems cities are grappling with. Rather, cities need far fewer cars and should support a wide variety of modes favouring pedestrians, cyclists and mass transit or shared mobility. New York City, where, per capita, car ownership is half the US average, has half the overall carbon footprint per person of Los Angeles. [. . .]

In order to get people out of cars, cities also need to make it easier for people to connect between different transport modes. Behavioural studies have shown that commuters will switch routes and modes if better options are available.

Above all, city administrators are recognising the importance of governance for improving mobility efficiency. Regulations that manage parking capacity or city centre driving restrictions [...] are increasingly used to motivate commuters to gravitate towards modes

of travel aligned to societal goals. These range from incentives for higher occupancy vehicles, [to providing] favourable access to roads and parking spaces for low environmental impact vehicles. [...]

We all want our cities to be faster, smarter and greener – and the car is not the only answer. We must use technology and entrepreneurship to ensure that our urban future is fair, inclusive and aligned with the common good.

From the website of *The Guardian* newspaper

- 3 a Summarise the problems caused by heavy traffic in our cities *and* what measures should be taken to reduce it, according to Text B.

You must use **continuous writing** (not note form).

Use your own words where appropriate.

Write 150–180 words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 10 marks for the quality of your writing.

- b Imagine you are a city planner.

You are interviewed by a news reporter investigating the impact of electric vehicles on pollution and congestion in your city.

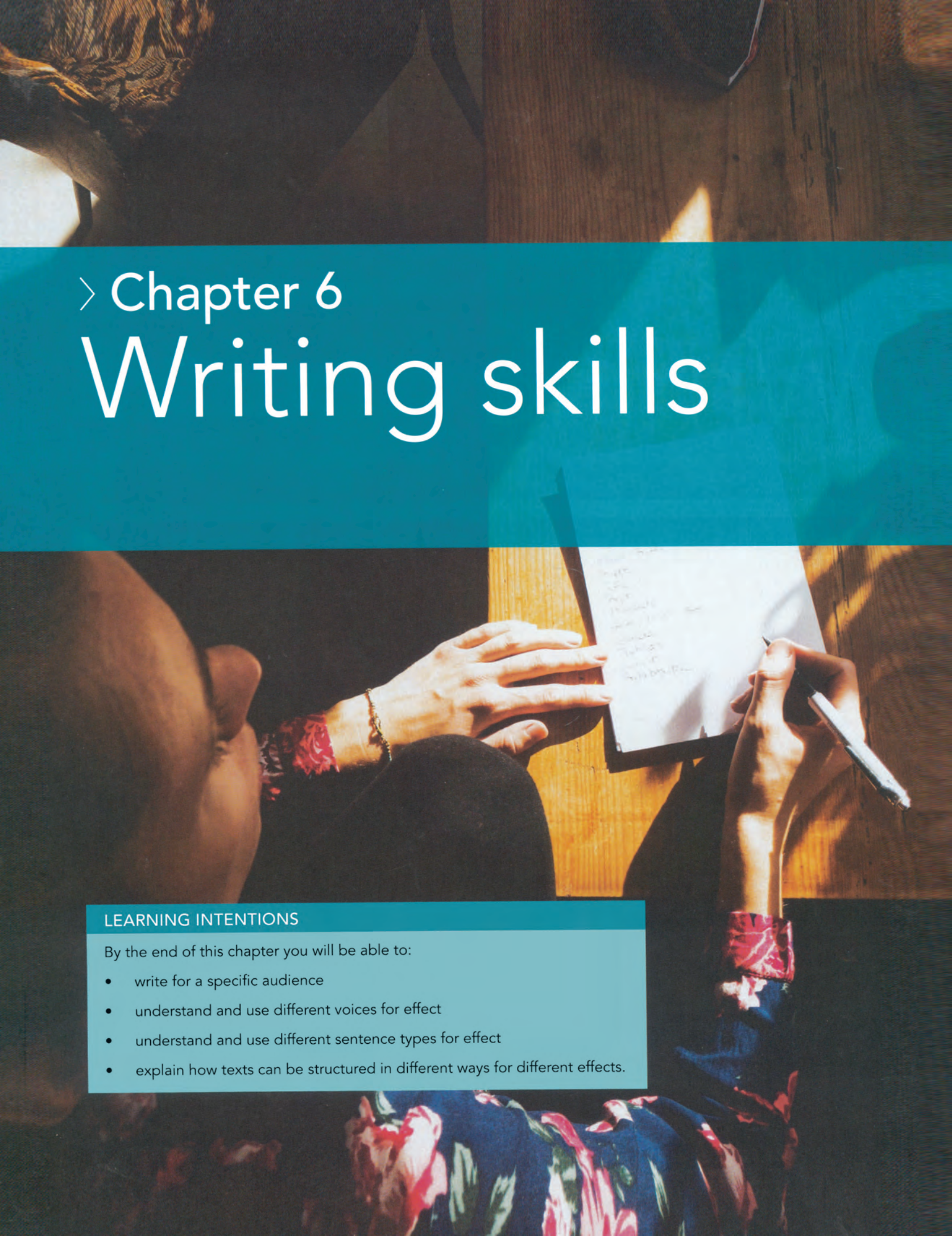
Interviewer's question: Some city residents think increasing ownership of electric cars will solve all our problems with pollution and congestion on our roads.

What is your opinion and why?

[5]

› Part 2

Writing

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a white notepad. The person is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt with a vibrant pink and white floral pattern on the cuffs. Their left hand rests on the notepad while their right hand holds a black pen, actively writing. The notepad is placed on a rustic wooden table with a prominent grain. In the upper left corner, a portion of a dark, textured object, possibly a lamp or a piece of furniture, is visible. The scene is lit with warm, directional light, creating strong shadows and highlights on the wood and the person's skin.

› Chapter 6

Writing skills

LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- write for a specific audience
- understand and use different voices for effect
- understand and use different sentence types for effect
- explain how texts can be structured in different ways for different effects.

> Introduction

This chapter will introduce you to the key writing skills and concepts you will use throughout your Cambridge O Level English Language course. You will learn about the importance of audience, purpose and voice when writing. You will also consider how to plan, sequence and write different text types with appropriate features.

You should practise writing often: in the same way that regular exercise keeps you fit, writing practice will sharpen your skills and give you confidence. In later chapters you will generate longer pieces of writing. This opening chapter offers opportunities for shorter writing practice to embed the key skills you will need.

GETTING STARTED

What does it mean to be a good writer? What does 'good writing' look like? In groups, create a spider diagram showing the different skills that combine to make effective writing. Think about different types of writing – this could be anything from fictional stories to persuasive non-fiction. Share your thoughts with the class.

> 6.1 An introduction to your writing studies

What are you trying to achieve in the writing section of your Cambridge O Level English Language studies? Put simply, you are developing your power to communicate in English. The following skills are key to your success:

- expressing ideas and experiences (both real and imagined)
- structuring your writing for effect
- using appropriate words and sentence structures
- selecting the correct register for your purpose and audience
- using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Underpinning this skill of communication are two key aspects: content and accuracy.

Your writing skills

Content – the ideas and subjects you write about – drives everything. Content development takes time, but you will find it easier if you read and interact with stories, points of view and debates in your everyday life. The more reading, listening and interaction you do, the easier it will be to generate ideas for your own writing.

Accuracy refers not only to correct spelling and punctuation, but also the effectiveness of the choices you make – that is, the *way* you use language to express your ideas. You have probably experienced the frustration of having a good idea but not quite being able to put it into words. With practice and time, however, your ability to write clearly and fluently will develop. There are plenty of grammar support materials available in print and online, but it is just as important for you to read and hear English being used in context. Find time to read, listen to and speak English as often as you can.

- 1 Think about your current writing skills. In pairs, talk about the following points:
 - a A piece of writing you have done previously that you thought was successful – what made it effective?
 - b Your ability to think of ideas – how easy do you find it to write content?
 - c Your use of technical English – which aspects of grammar and expression do you find challenging?
 - d The ways in which you could help yourself to improve these skills – what will you do to take control of your own progress?
- 2 Use your discussion to set yourself some targets. Write a brief letter (around 100 words) to your teacher, explaining:
 - a what writing skills you would like to improve in the coming months
 - b the ways you will improve these skills.



WRITING TIP

Immerse yourself in the English language

Take the opportunity to read newspapers, listen to debates and explore different types of stories. Take an interest in the ideas, beliefs, art and writing of a range of English-speaking cultures. Not only will this provide you with new ideas and ways of thinking, but reading and listening to the way English speakers use language will also support your ability to use language and grammatical structures.

> 6.2 Audience, purpose and voice

Writing is a communicative act. It is always intended for an audience. Sometimes that audience might be the writer themselves – for example, a person keeping a diary. Most of the time, however, writing is designed to connect with an audience, be that either one person or many. Always think carefully about who your writing is aimed at and what you are trying to achieve.

Understanding audience and purpose

When you write as a student, you have two audiences: an imagined audience and a real audience. The real audience is your teacher or anybody who assesses your work. They are judging your writing in terms of content and accuracy. They are also trying to work out how well you have written for your *imagined* audience.

For some writing activities, you will be given a specific imagined audience to write for, such as a headteacher or students your own age. For other activities, the audience may not be so clearly defined, so you will need to think carefully about who your writing is aimed at. For example, if you write a short story, who are your intended readers?

- 1 Copy and complete the table. Think carefully about how the audience affects the content and language you use. In particular, think about the register – the style and formality of the words and the grammar used.

Type of writing	Imagined audience	Content, register and language
A letter to your headteacher persuading them to change the school uniform	- someone with power and status - just one person - you are writing from a subordinate position as a student	- plenty of detail – a series of points in paragraphs - polite and respectful – a relatively formal register - word and grammar choices should be formal
A mystery story for young adults		
An email to a friend to plan a day out		
A speech given to other students about a topic you feel strongly about		

- 2 Now think about *purpose*. Look at the table again and make notes on:
 - a the purpose of each type of writing – what is the writing trying to achieve (for example, is it to entertain or persuade)?
 - b how the purpose might inform the content and language you use.

Share your thoughts in pairs. You will explore writing purposes further in the following chapters.



Choosing a voice

In the previous activities you briefly explored the links between audience, purpose and content, and made some sensible generalisations about how to apply these elements in different writing tasks. However, the choice of content and approach are not always clearly fixed. Although audience and purpose should guide your writing, you have an important choice to make: what *voice* to write in.

You explored the idea of using a particular voice in a role-play context in Chapter 2. Remember that voice in any piece of writing refers to the 'personality' of the writer or narrator, conveying their emotions and attitudes. For example, the voice may be positive or negative, serious, comic, excited or frustrated. Voice also establishes the overall mood of the writing and directly affects how the reader responds.

- 3** Here are three different versions of the opening of a speech written by a student. They are trying to persuade their classmates to use less plastic in order to save the environment.
- a** In pairs, discuss the voices used in each version – what impression do you get of the personality of each voice?
 - b** Which version do you feel is more engaging and effective? Why?

Version 1

Have you ever seen an innocent sea bird struggling to breathe, a plastic bag trapped in its throat? Have you ever casually bought yet another plastic bottle or bag? Have you ever thought how many miniature beads of plastic are in the water you consumed this morning?

Version 2

I know you've heard this so many times before, but it's now time we did something. Plastic is harming our world, but together we can stop things from getting worse. I want you to join me in banning plastic bags and bottles in our school and town. Here's why we need to do it.

Version 3

I love my older sister and brother, but they think that plastic is the solution to everything. My sister has more plastic bags than the hairs on her head, and my brother has 20 half-finished plastic bottles of water in the back of his car. We need to change: our generation needs to be the one that changes things for the better.



WRITING TIP

Experiment with voice

Start experimenting with voice in the planning stages of your writing. Vary the seriousness of your tone or, rather than being objective, write as if you are more involved with or committed to the topic. Before you start writing, be sure that the voice you adopt is suited to the task.

- 4 Write the opening paragraph of a speech aimed at your headteacher. Your speech should attempt to persuade them that school holidays should be longer. Choose a suitable voice and write around 80 words. Allow yourself five minutes for thinking and planning, then ten minutes for writing.

REFLECTION

When you have finished your paragraph, get together in groups and read your individual paragraphs aloud to each other. Then discuss the successes and challenges of this activity. Consider the following questions:

- Which element did you find easiest to incorporate – audience, purpose or voice? Why do you think that is?
- Which was the most difficult and why?
- What could you do to improve your understanding of the feature you found most difficult?

> 6.3 Vocabulary and grammar choices

The decisions you make about audience, purpose and voice have a direct bearing on the words and sentence structures you use when you write. The clarity of your writing (how clearly it is phrased and whether it will make sense to a reader) is something you should always keep in mind, whatever its form or purpose.

Choosing words with care

Having a wide vocabulary to draw on will make your writing feel varied and engaging. But it is also useful to understand the subtle differences between synonyms so that you can be sure you are using words that accurately reflect what you want to say. English speakers gradually acquire understanding of the differences between words over time by reading, talking and listening. You can do this too, but you can also make use of reference tools to learn and define new words.

- 1 Here are five sentences that describe somebody feeling happy. They use slightly different words to describe the emotion. In pairs, carry out the following tasks.
- Discuss the differences between the underlined words – what precisely do they mean?
 - Put them in order from the weakest to the strongest expressions of happiness.
 - Share your order with another pair. Do you agree?

Hamza felt cheerful as he opened the curtains.

Irani was delighted with her exam results.

I was ecstatic when I heard the news.

Ayaan was glad when he found his watch.

I felt contented as I walked through the mountains.

WRITING TIP

Use a thesaurus

You can use an online thesaurus to find synonyms and new vocabulary, but make sure you fully understand the meaning(s) of any words before you include them in your writing. Look up sentences that contain the word or find out how it relates to similar words.

The more words you know, the easier it is to express your ideas and opinions. However, it is important to choose your words carefully and avoid 'overwriting'. This means using too many words with the result that your writing may seem too formal or simply packed with inappropriate language.

- 2 Look at this example from the opening of a student's letter to their headteacher, suggesting a change in school uniform. They have misjudged the tone and word choices. On your own:
- identify the words and phrases that seem misjudged
 - rewrite the opening in order to make it clearer and more direct.

Dear Headteacher,

It is an honour to be writing to you. I politely request that you survey the contents of this letter and give it your deepest consideration. The matter upon which I write concerns the issue of school uniform and the possibility of its transformation.



Expressing ideas through grammar

Many students are concerned about using grammar correctly, but remember that by the time you begin your Cambridge O Level English Language course, you will already have a good understanding of English grammar. The key things you need to demonstrate are:

- *effective choice* of sentence structures
- *accurate use* of sentence structures.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: SENTENCE TYPES FOR EFFECT

You can achieve interesting effects in your writing through the choice and arrangement of different sentence types. Consider this example:

- Although Ali tried not to look back, he couldn't help but take a long, last look at the place he called home and as he did so, he shed a silent tear. This was goodbye.

The long, complex sentence provides detail about the situation. It also has a sense of rhythm, as if the story is unfolding as the voice consciously shapes it. The brief simple sentence that follows it not only provides contrast, it is also stark – just like the idea it contains. The combination of these contrasting sentences emphasises the feeling of **pathos** in the story.

Now look at another example:

- Creak. Something dark and unknown made its way slowly up the stairs, wheezing as it climbed. Maria cowered.

This combines a **minor sentence**, a complex sentence and a simple sentence. The single-word minor sentence is unusual and helps to suggest drama – as if something odd is happening. The complex sentence adds detail to the story, which is nicely complemented by the short simple sentence at the end – as if the terseness of the final sentence mirrors the terror Maria is feeling.

Remember that 'effects' can sometimes refer to emotional effects upon the reader, such as surprise, pity or disgust. It can also mean more prosaic effects such as providing detail, contrast or conveying information in a condensed way.

KEY TERMS

pathos: a quality that evokes sadness or pity in the observer

minor sentence: a sentence that does not contain a main verb

- 3 Use the following activity to see different effects created through grammar choices. In pairs, read these two versions of the ending of a piece of descriptive writing called 'The Market'.
 - a Identify the different types of sentences used in each extract. Look for examples of complex, compound, simple and minor sentences.
 - b Identify where repeated sentence structures have been used.
 - c Discuss the different effects created by the arrangement of different sentence types. Which one do you prefer and why?

The Market (1)

By the end of the day, the light was fading. The local people, weary from the cold and the commotion of the day, wound their way home and the market traders began to pack up their stalls. In the distance, lights were going on in people's houses and the world was settling down for the long winter night.

The Market (2)

The day was ending. The light was fading. Weary from the cold and the commotion, the local people wound their way home. Weary from the cold and the commotion, the market traders began to pack up their stalls. In the distance, lights were going on in people's houses. The world was settling down. The winter night lay ahead. The long winter night.

WRITING TIP

Write clearly

Remember that clarity is very important in writing. Do not assume that good English is always about using long words and complex grammatical structures. Choose the most appropriate language and sentences for the effect you are trying to create, and always bear in mind that effective communication of your ideas is your aim.

- 4 Write a description based on Figure A. Concentrate on your word and sentence choices and write around 100 words.



Figure A

> 6.4 Structure and plans

As you progress in your studies, you will need to write different types of texts. For directed writing, you will practise writing articles, emails, letters, speeches and reports. For composition, you will write descriptive and narrative pieces. But you do not need to confine yourself to just these forms: exposing yourself to all types of writing will develop your English skills, so find time to read and write other text types too, from blogs to plays and poems.

Using appropriate features

In later chapters you will look more closely at text structures, but for now think about the general features of different text types and the way in which the information and ideas are usually ordered.

- 1 Copy and complete the table. You may find that some of these text types have more obvious features than others.

Text type	Features and sequence
Article	• Heading/title • Introductory paragraph • Sequence of paragraphs that build and develop points in order • Closing paragraph to conclude • Subheadings if appropriate
Letter	
Email	
Speech	
Report	
Descriptive writing	
Narrative writing	

In Activity 1, you probably found that it was harder to list many obvious features for descriptive and narrative writing. This is because some text types, particularly fiction texts, are generally driven by deeper narrative sequences, whereas non-fiction tends to rely on more obvious features to guide a reader. Nonetheless, it can be helpful to know the general layout features to use when writing in a particular format. How you decide to sequence or organise the information is equally important.

Effective planning

Planning is an essential part of writing. You can always change some details as you write, but a good plan will keep your mind focused. As you create your plan, think about how the content and sequencing of your ideas will affect your readers.

Ask yourself: *What do I want my reader to find out at various points?* Think of your writing as a journey you are taking the reader on, in the course of which they will encounter different events and information. How you introduce, order, develop and end a piece of writing directly influences how a reader reacts.

- 2 In pairs, write a plan for a story called 'The Missing Ring'. The basic plot is that a girl has lost a ring. She returns to the beach where she last had it and spends the day searching.

Make a list of around six bullet points showing the order of events you will include in the story. You can introduce other characters and decide how the story ends.

- 3 In pairs, read these two students' versions of a plan for 'The Missing Ring'.
- Identify the differences between the sequence and content of these plans.
 - Suggest how readers might respond to each version of the story – what emotional reactions might they have?

The Missing Ring (Plan 1)

- The story starts late at night when Alesha realises she has lost a ring – she is very upset.
- Alesha has a sleepless night, as she wonders if she will ever find the ring again.
- The next morning she returns to the beach where she lost the ring and begins searching, becoming more upset as the day progresses.
- Some local people that she doesn't know help her to look for the ring.
- Just as light fades, Alesha finds the ring and returns home happy – she is delighted to have found the ring as it belonged to a relative.

The Missing Ring (Plan 2)

- The story starts with Alesha telling us that she has lost something and found something.
- The story goes back in time to the previous day where Alesha is on the beach looking for a missing ring.
- With each paragraph, Alesha becomes more upset at the lost ring.
- Alesha explains that the ring was a gift from a relative who is no longer alive.
- People on the beach notice she is upset and begin to help – she makes friends with them.
- At the end, Alesha accepts that she has lost the ring, but more importantly has learnt how kind and friendly people are.



WRITING TIP

Plan your ending

Once you have a general idea of character and situation, it often helps to plan how a story will end. If you can decide what will happen to your character by the end, you can work backwards and fill in the other stages of the story.

Accuracy

When you have finished the first draft of your writing, you should check your work thoroughly and redraft any parts that could be improved. Remember – accuracy is important, so editing is a key part of the process.

Editing and redrafting

There are three stages to checking and correcting your writing:

- ✓ **Content correction:** Make sure you are happy with the overall flow and sequence of your writing.
- ✓ **Clarity check:** Make sure that your phrasing is clear and makes sense. Go through every sentence and check that your reader will understand you.
- ✓ **Technical check:** Look closely at spelling, punctuation and grammar. Use your knowledge of spelling patterns and punctuation rules to double check common errors.
- 4 Look back at a sample of your own writing, perhaps from a short writing exercise or another piece of classwork, and do a three-stage check for content, clarity and technical matters. Make any corrections you need to.
- 5 Show your writing to a partner. Double check each other's work and proof read carefully.



As you attempt longer pieces of writing in the rest of this book, use this writing checklist to remind you how to plan (and afterwards, self-assess) your work.

Assessing writing

- ☒ Who am I writing to/for and what register do I need to use?
- ☒ What type of text am I writing? What are its usual features?
- ☒ What is the overall purpose of my writing – what effect do I want to have on my reader?
- ☒ What voice should I write in?
- ☒ What content and ideas should I include?
- ☒ How should I sequence my writing?
- ☒ What word choices would be most effective for the purpose?
- ☒ How can I use sentences effectively and accurately?

WRITING TIP

Assessing writing

Taking time to read and discuss the work of writers and other students is an essential part of your learning. Thinking about the choices made, how well they work or how they might be improved will help you in your own writing. Assessing your own work is the first stage of improving it.

REFLECTION

This chapter has introduced overarching writing skills and concepts you will encounter in your studies. Think about:

- whether what you have learnt here reflects your previous understanding of writing skills and concepts
- which skills and concepts you feel confident about
- how you can go about developing these skills and concepts further.

PROJECT

In groups, you are going to make an audio or video recording. Your audience is next year's new O Level students and the purpose of your recording is to give them some top tips for writing success. Use the ideas from this chapter, but write for your audience – make it lively, memorable and useful. Your finished recording should be no longer than one minute, so make sure you plan carefully and make it direct and engaging.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How confident do you feel about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter?
Rate yourself from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident), then answer the question to prove it.

Now I can . . .	Confidence rating (1–5)	Prove it
write for a specific audience		Using examples, explain how the register of your writing will change depending on your audience.
understand and use different voices for effect		Write two short paragraphs in different voices about your journey to school today.
understand and use different sentence types for effect		Choose one of the paragraphs from your journey to school account. Redraft it using different combinations of sentences.
explain how texts can be structured in different ways for different effects		'The way you release information and crucially how you introduce, develop and end texts influences directly how a reader reacts.' Using an example, explain what this means.



› Chapter 7

Directed writing

LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- discuss and evaluate opinions
- write articles, letters, emails, speeches and reports giving opinions
- write for different audiences
- use persuasive language
- use conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs to shape a debate
- use colons for effect.

> Introduction

In this chapter, you will practise skills for succeeding in directed writing tasks – **evaluating** information and presenting a point of view. You will learn how to judge and interpret ideas, facts and opinions, and arrange them in a response. You will also practise writing articles, letters, emails, speeches and reports.

KEY TERM

evaluating: judging information, assessing its worth and responding to it

GETTING STARTED

Is it good or bad for teenagers to own mobile phones? Spend five minutes thinking and writing notes, deciding on three reasons or examples to support your view on this topic. Then, in groups, take turns presenting your views. Each person in the group should speak for one minute.

SKILLS FOCUS

Directed reading tasks assess specific reading and writing skills. In a single response, you will need to:

- choose and evaluate information
- express views, opinions and ideas
- use appropriate structures for your response
- use a range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures
- use a suitable register for your writing
- make accurate spelling, punctuation and vocabulary choices.



> 7.1 Key evaluation skills

Directed writing involves both writing and reading skills, as you will base your own writing on other texts. For example, you may be given two articles to read that present different views on mobile phones. In your response you will give your thoughts on what you have read, as well as your own views on the topic.

There are several stages to the evaluation process. They are as follows:

Reading a text for the overall meaning.

Exploring the details of the text and different points that are made.

Thinking about who has written the text and their attitudes.

Deciding how convincing or useful you find the ideas in the text.

Giving your own thoughts on the ideas presented.

- 1 In the Getting started activity, you presented views about mobile phones. Part of the process of evaluation is reflecting on ideas and thinking about the attitudes of the writer – the reasons why a person may hold certain views.

In pairs, look back at the notes you made, and reflect on your viewpoint and the reasons you gave for it. Then discuss these points:

- How your age and experience of using phones has influenced your viewpoint.
- The details of your viewpoint – what reasons did you give?
- How convincing each of your reasons are – which ones do you think are most persuasive?



> 7.2 Beginning to evaluate

In Chapter 4, you practised summary writing skills and learnt techniques for gaining an overview of a text. You noted the ways in which main points can be identified and distinguished from details. This is a good starting point for developing your skills of evaluation.

Following a point of view

When people present a point of view, they usually give a variety of reasons, the way you did in the Getting started activity. Tracking these reasons throughout a text, and seeing how they build up to contribute to an overall view, is one of the first things you should do when you read.

The other key part of this initial reading process is thinking about the ways in which facts and opinions are used. Although some hard facts, such as statistics, are used to support views, writers also often use opinions, generalisations or selective factual material. They choose facts or examples to suit their viewpoint, or give general statements that appear factual but are really an opinion. You do not have to analyse a text in this way for a directed writing task, but you should be able to evaluate (judge) how convincing the ideas presented are.

- 1 In Section 4.2, you studied an article about the impact of mobile phones on modern manners in Text 4.12. Here is a paragraph from that article. Read the paragraph and complete the following tasks in pairs.
 - a Note down the main points and accompanying details – what are the individual parts of the writer's argument?
 - b Decide whether the points and details presented are facts or opinions.

There are many who believe that the rising popularity of the mobile phone has had a negative effect on our behaviour and general manners. Many older people claim that the younger generations have forgotten basic courtesies, ignoring the people around them while glued to their devices, or playing music loudly instead of communicating. Commuters complain that people using their phones on trains speak so loudly that the whole carriage can hear a one-sided conversation. Even when other passengers make their displeasure obvious, many of them just ignore it and carry on shouting away.



Now start to evaluate the points presented in the text. One way to do this is to think carefully about the assumptions and implications that the writer makes. For example, the text says that 'older people claim that the younger generations have forgotten basic courtesies'. This is a very general statement, which makes the assumption that *all* young people who use phones are quite rude. While there may be *some* young people like this, the writer makes a broad generalisation about people, which is unconvincing.

- 2 In pairs, read through your notes from Activity 1 and evaluate how convincing the points are. Justify your reactions to another pair.

Tracking points and details

The full article on mobile phones is an example of **discursive writing** – it presents a fairly balanced view of a debate. The texts you will read for directed writing tasks often consist of a pair of one-sided opinions placed together – for example, two blog posts that offer opposing views on a topic.

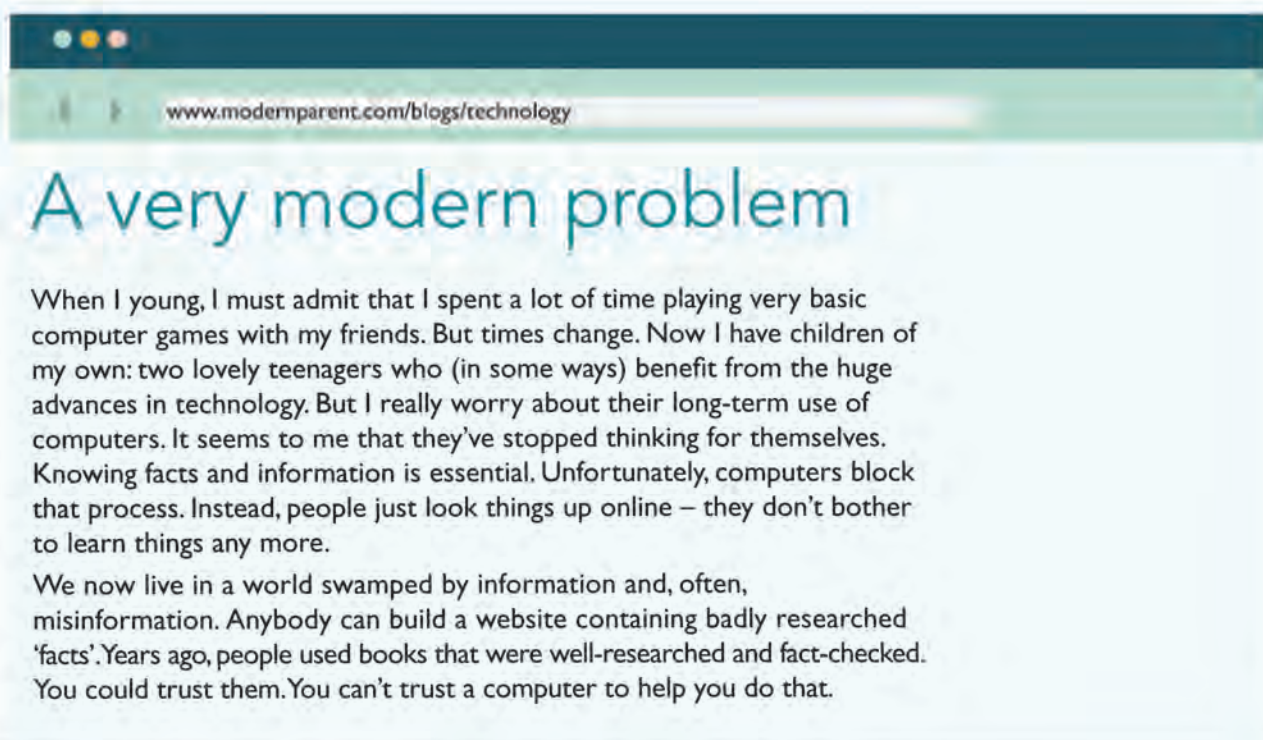
- 3 Read Text 7.1, a blog entitled 'A very modern problem', which gives a view on the use of computers by teenagers. It is written by a parent of two teenagers.
- Read the blog once to understand the general view of the writer – their overall attitude towards the topic.
 - Read the blog a second time, noting down the points and details of their argument.
 - Decide which points are factual and which are opinions.

You could use a table or bullet points to make notes. Compare your notes with a partner.

KEY TERM

discursive writing: writing that explores a topic and offers an argument backed up by evidence

Text 7.1



www.modernparent.com/blogs/technology

A very modern problem

When I young, I must admit that I spent a lot of time playing very basic computer games with my friends. But times change. Now I have children of my own: two lovely teenagers who (in some ways) benefit from the huge advances in technology. But I really worry about their long-term use of computers. It seems to me that they've stopped thinking for themselves. Knowing facts and information is essential. Unfortunately, computers block that process. Instead, people just look things up online – they don't bother to learn things any more.

We now live in a world swamped by information and, often, misinformation. Anybody can build a website containing badly researched 'facts'. Years ago, people used books that were well-researched and fact-checked. You could trust them. You can't trust a computer to help you do that.

I also worry about the time wasted on computers. A friend of mine told me his son spends hours playing games. He barely goes outside and doesn't really communicate much. That can't be a good thing for young people or their parents. Not only is it an unhealthy way to spend your life, but it also affects schoolwork. It's not possible to succeed academically while being obsessed with computers. I've noticed recently how my son's handwriting is beginning to deteriorate. He seems to type far too much these days and his beautiful handwriting is suffering.



The writer's context and attitudes

Remember that evaluating writing means judging it after careful consideration. You need to weigh up the facts and opinions presented. One thing that can help you to do this is considering who has written the text and why. You may not know the name of the writer, but you can often find clues in the text that suggest the kind of person they are and why they may hold the views they do. Thinking about the writer's context – their age, life experiences, attitudes, gender and cultural background – can help you to evaluate a text. For example, a writer who works for an IT company may well have a positive attitude towards technology.

- 4 In pairs, look again at Text 7.1. Use the text to work out:
- a the approximate age of the writer
 - b their family life and role in the family
 - c their experiences of computing as a younger and older person
 - d their own experiences of education and views on what education should be about
 - e who the intended audience of the article is and how that might influence what is written.

Discuss how these factors inform the writer's views about computers.

READING TIP

Fact and opinion

Remember that facts are undeniably true statements – things that can be proven. Opinions are people's views about something. They can be debated and can sometimes be controversial. Look out for small words that carry opinions among otherwise factual statements. For example, the word 'amazing' in the following sentence is an opinion: 'My new phone is an amazing piece of new technology.'

How do you react?

Once you have thought about facts, opinions and writer's context, the next step is to think about how *you* react to the information given. You will often come across polarised viewpoints – statements that contain one-sided or **biased** (rather than balanced) ideas. The two texts you will read in a directed writing activity are likely to offer two different viewpoints on a topic (the second one may even be a reaction to the first). These may reveal different sides to a debate and the content of the texts may help you to come to a view of your own. You may find that one of the texts is already more in keeping with your own views than the other.

Read the comments below, made by three students about the views given in the blog. The students are evaluating parts of what they have read.

KEY TERM

biased: prejudiced for or against a particular person, group or idea – sometimes unfairly

I understand the writer's comments about knowledge. Many young people don't spend hours learning lots of facts because they know they can easily find information online. But that doesn't mean that they are somehow less intelligent. The more difficult skill is using information – interpreting and analysing things, rather than just storing facts in your head. Computers are a very useful shortcut and they encourage learning.

I agree with the writer. I often wish that my life wasn't filled with endless information. Whenever I try to do some research homework, I have to wade through lots of sites to work out which bits are most useful. Often, a lot of it isn't very much help at all. I can look up simple facts like capital cities, but that's not what students usually do. We're trying to process loads of online information and that can be difficult. I suspect that things were much easier in the past!

The writer is right when they say that gaming can be a distraction. I know that I sometimes play games late into the night, but it's quite normal. The writer starts by saying that they were obsessed by games as a young person, so they undermine their own argument in a way! I'm also not sure that their point about handwriting is very convincing. What use is beautiful writing when in the real world people use computers at work to write reports and send emails?

- 5 In pairs, discuss these views. Which, if any, do you agree with?
- 6 Now read 'Digital youth', an article written by a 20-year-old student about her experiences of using computers. Write down:
 - a the points and details of her argument
 - b which points are factual and which are opinions
 - c which points you find most convincing, if any
 - d how her own context may have influenced her views and attitudes.

Text 7.2

Digital youth

I know my older relatives look at me and think it must be terrible to grow up being suffocated by technology. But they're wrong. First of all, it's not terrible – it's great, and secondly, it's not suffocating – it's liberating. I could not have achieved what I have without the aid of computers.



Computers make doing the basic things much quicker, which leaves more time for humans to think, do and create. And they're also fun. There's no better way to relax than doing some gaming at the end of a long day.

But the greatest benefit of computers is in the education of young people. At school I chose subjects that relied on modern technology. I learnt basic programming and how to code. I wrote music using cutting-edge software that allowed me to produce a professional piece of coursework. Best of all, in art I used a tablet to paint. You can see some of my art on the university website. People seem to like it.

I'm from Karachi originally but am studying overseas. Computer technology has allowed me to keep in touch with family and friends. I'm able to speak to the people at home every day if I want. Computers are great – they make the world a smaller place in a good way and bring people together.

REFLECTION

Note down the key things you have learnt about evaluative writing so far. Are there any ideas or points from this section that you feel you need to revisit before attempting a full piece of evaluative writing?

> 7.3 Beginning to write discursively

In a directed writing activity, you will be asked to show your writing and reading skills in a 250–350-word response. Look at this example task based on Texts 7.1 and 7.2.

Write a magazine article for your school magazine about the use of computers among people of your age. The school magazine is read by students, parents and teachers.

In your article you should:

- evaluate the ideas and opinions in both texts
- give your own views about whether computers are a benefit or a disadvantage to young people.

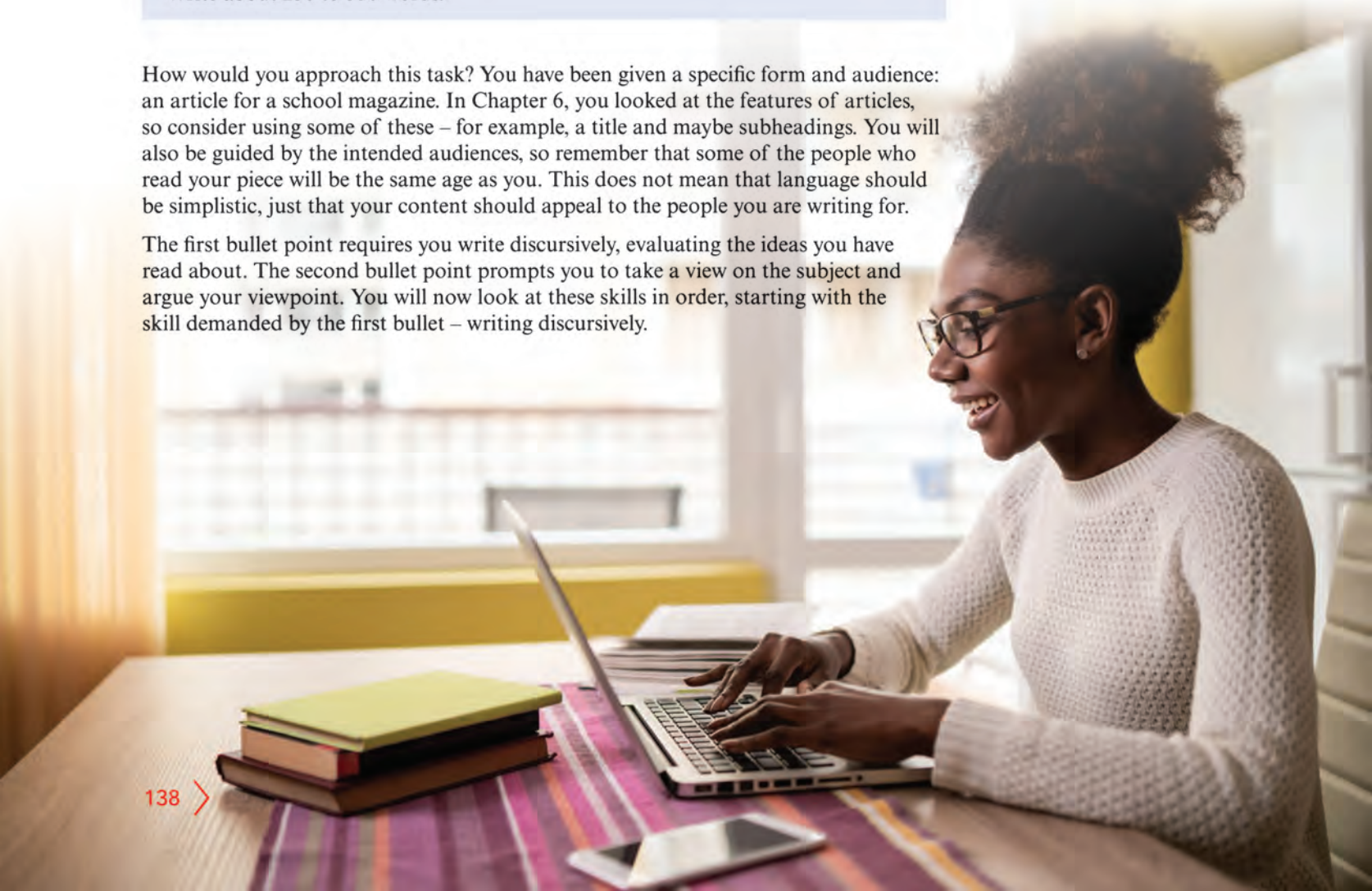
Base your article on what you have read in both texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Begin your article with a suitable headline.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

How would you approach this task? You have been given a specific form and audience: an article for a school magazine. In Chapter 6, you looked at the features of articles, so consider using some of these – for example, a title and maybe subheadings. You will also be guided by the intended audiences, so remember that some of the people who read your piece will be the same age as you. This does not mean that language should be simplistic, just that your content should appeal to the people you are writing for.

The first bullet point requires you write discursively, evaluating the ideas you have read about. The second bullet point prompts you to take a view on the subject and argue your viewpoint. You will now look at these skills in order, starting with the skill demanded by the first bullet – writing discursively.



Look at one student's notes about Text 7.1. They have summarised the main points from the article alongside their brief evaluative comments.

'A very modern problem' – points made:

- Computers discourage young people from gaining knowledge.
- There's too much information and unreliable material available.
- Young people play too many computer games and stay indoors.
- Computers negatively affect schoolwork.

These views claim that computers are replacing knowledge rather than helping. They don't mention any of the positive things. Negative examples are used, but the point about too much information is true. The writer has lived through an earlier time before computers were widespread and possibly wishes for those 'good old days'.

- 1 Using the sample student notes as a model, write your own bullet points and evaluative notes on Text 7.2. Use your own words and make some judgements about the points made in the article.

WRITING TIP

Summarise in your own words

When you plan discursive writing, it helps to work out both sides of the debate, as shown in the texts you read. Use your own phrases to summarise points rather than copying phrases from the texts – you should use your own words in your final response. See Chapter 4 for more on summarising skills.

Reshaping material

Bear in mind that in directed writing activities, you are not analysing the texts in the way you need to when responding to reading activities, but creating a new one based on what you have read. Think of it as reshaping the material you are given and creating something entirely new, the way a potter reshapes clay to create an original vase. You should echo the material you have read and respond to the ideas within it, but within a readable, accurate, *new* piece of writing, in which you apply what you know about audience, purpose, register and voice (see Chapter 6).



To illustrate the potential pitfalls of this type of task, read this opening of a student response to the magazine article task about computers at the start of this section.



Magazine article

I'm written about peoples view's about computers and how young people use it. There is one person who says that 'don't bother to learn things any more' but I think that isn't write because I have learnt lots of things and dont always need computer. The other person was saying that technology 'bring people together' and that is a better idea because me and my friends usually talk online too so I agree with her.

- 2 In pairs, talk about what is wrong with this opening paragraph. In particular, discuss the following:
 - a the choice of title and opening sentence
 - b the way the articles have been referred to
 - c the quality of the evaluative comments
 - d its suitability for the intended audience
 - e the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 3 What advice would you give to this student to improve their work? In pairs:
 - a suggest three things to improve (besides the title and opening sentence)
 - b identify and correct the errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 4 Rewrite the student's title and opening sentence, beginning the article in an engaging way that will make it clear what you are writing about. Try experimenting with different titles and phrases, then share them in groups.

WRITING TIP

Choose a good title

There are different ways to title an article. You could signpost your view very clearly by using something like: 'Why computers are ruining our youth'. Or you could choose a less obvious title, such as 'A very modern curse', which has the effect of intriguing the reader. You could give your article a more light-hearted feel using techniques such as alliteration – for example, 'Kids controlled by computers'.

Phrasing a response

Here is the opening paragraph from a student's response to the directed writing task.



The future is digital

We live in a world where computers are central to our everyday lives. Some people think computers have become our masters; others believe that they are incredibly helpful servants. One thing is certain – computers are here to stay and it is up to us how we use them. *There are some people (often genuinely concerned parents) who claim that computers make us lazy; that they stop us from learning essential knowledge.* Although I can understand this to a degree, because I do use technology for research, often these things are complex topics, not basic facts. Furthermore, in the past people relied on books, which are very useful, but people sometimes had to wait days to borrow books from a library – and often only got some of the required knowledge. Nowadays, we can use computers to find more information, more quickly.

Notice how the student has reshaped a point from the articles in their own words (in green). They have then evaluated it by responding to the point and giving a judgement (in blue). Note that the student has not quoted directly from the article, but has demonstrated how they can select ideas, interact with them and present them for a new audience.

The student has also:

- given their article a suitable title
- written an interesting opening few sentences that set up the debate
- written in a voice likely to appeal to the reader and suitable for the purpose
- used accurate spelling and varied punctuation.

Now look more closely at the phrasing. The opening sentences reveal the topic of the article and outline the two competing points of view, so the reader immediately understands the scope of the debate. Notice how the second sentence is constructed using 'Some people think . . . ; others believe that . . .'. Practise using this type of construction to quickly set up views.

The establishment of a view (in green) is also done economically, and begins with a useful sentence opener: 'There are some people who claim . . .'. Phrases such as these are effective at rapidly introducing a point. You might also use phrases such as 'Many people believe that . . .', 'Some people feel . . .', or 'it has been stated that . . .'.

The evaluation (in blue) is clearly the most detailed part. It begins with another useful construction ('Although I can understand this') before suggesting a counterview. What follows is a fairly detailed justification and the beginning of an argument that makes the following points in quick succession:

- The writer uses technology to research complex topics.
- Research from books is potentially slow.
- Research from books can be limited in detail.
- Modern technology makes research quicker and more detailed.

You may also have noticed how linking words like 'although' and 'furthermore' are used to shape the response (see the Language focus below).

LANGUAGE FOCUS: CONJUNCTIONS AND CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

Conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs are useful words to help you organise the different points and details in a text. They include words such as 'although', 'also' and 'furthermore'.

For example, 'although' is useful for arranging a sentence that contains two contrasting ideas:

- Although I can understand this to a degree, because I do use technology for research, often these things are complex topics, not basic facts.



CONTINUED

Putting a word like 'although' at the head of the sentence is an effective way of acknowledging a view while signalling that a counterview is more persuasive. Placing 'although' in the middle of a sentence is a handy way to evaluate or criticise a view, as shown in this example:

- Books are good research tools, although they often don't contain as much information as online material.

The pattern here is to present a view in the main clause then use the subordinate clause (introduced by 'although') to undermine the view.

Words such as 'furthermore', 'moreover', 'also', 'similarly' and 'additionally' can also be used to organise and develop ideas in an argument, like this:

- Furthermore, in the past people relied on books – which are highly useful – but sometimes they had to wait days to borrow them from a library and then discovered the books only contained some of the required knowledge.

'However' is also useful word to signal that you are about to present a contrary view. It can sound quite forceful, which adds weight to an argument. For example:

- I love books – they're very useful. However, modern technology has superseded them as research tools.

The pattern here is to act as a 'pivot' – a turning point where a second sentence undermines the idea presented in the first sentence.

- 5 Choose another point made in the articles and write a paragraph in which you evaluate it. Use the student response to 'The future is digital' as a model. Write about 100 words. Remember to:
 - introduce and evaluate a point from one of the articles
 - use a suitable register for your readers
 - try to use a range of punctuation
 - use some of the phrases and conjunctions you have learnt in this section.
- 6 Swap your work with a partner and read each other's work. Give your partner feedback on whether they have:
 - clearly presented a view in their own words
 - evaluated the view
 - written in a register suitable for the audience and purpose.

WRITING TIP

Present a view clearly

When you present a view from another text, you can use phrases such as 'Some people might say that ...' or 'There is the view that ...'. You do not need to use the writer's names or refer to them at all. Remember to clearly give the view in direct terms so your reader can immediately understand the point.

> 7.4 Giving a point of view

Directed writing responses combine two types of writing: discursive and **argumentative**/persuasive. In many ways, writing to argue and writing to persuade are very similar – both are intended to present a view that convinces the reader and they often use similar techniques. However, there are some differences to be aware of.

Argumentative writing	Persuasive writing
- tends to include more facts, evidence and logic (but still may use emotion to persuade) - usually acknowledges different views and sometimes compares them - tone is usually calmer – it puts forward a view rather than working hard to convince the reader.	- tends to combine facts and reasons with emotional appeals to the reader - often ignores the other side of the debate and gives views that solely support its opinion - tone can be more direct and emotional as times, as if the writer is vigorously trying to convince the reader.

KEY TERM

argumentative writing: writing that puts forward a view, supporting it with facts, evidence and logic

Note that you may not see these terms used in directed writing activities – you may just be asked to give your view on a topic, so bear in mind that sometimes you can determine just how argumentative or persuasive you want to be.

Constructing a response

When you write a response to an evaluative task, you are trying to demonstrate several reading and writing skills. In this chapter so far you have practised these skills discretely, but a directed writing response is quite fluid – it is unlikely that your responses will consist of one half-essay of discursive/evaluative points and another half-essay of opinion-giving. A successful response weaves in elements of all of these skills in one seamless piece of writing.

- 1 Look back at the directed writing task in Section 7.3 – writing an article for your school magazine about the use of computers among people of your age. Overleaf is the full version of the student response from that section. Read it, then in pairs:
 - a identify the different parts of the student's argument – list the main reasons they give
 - b identify how their views echo Texts 7.1 and 7.2.

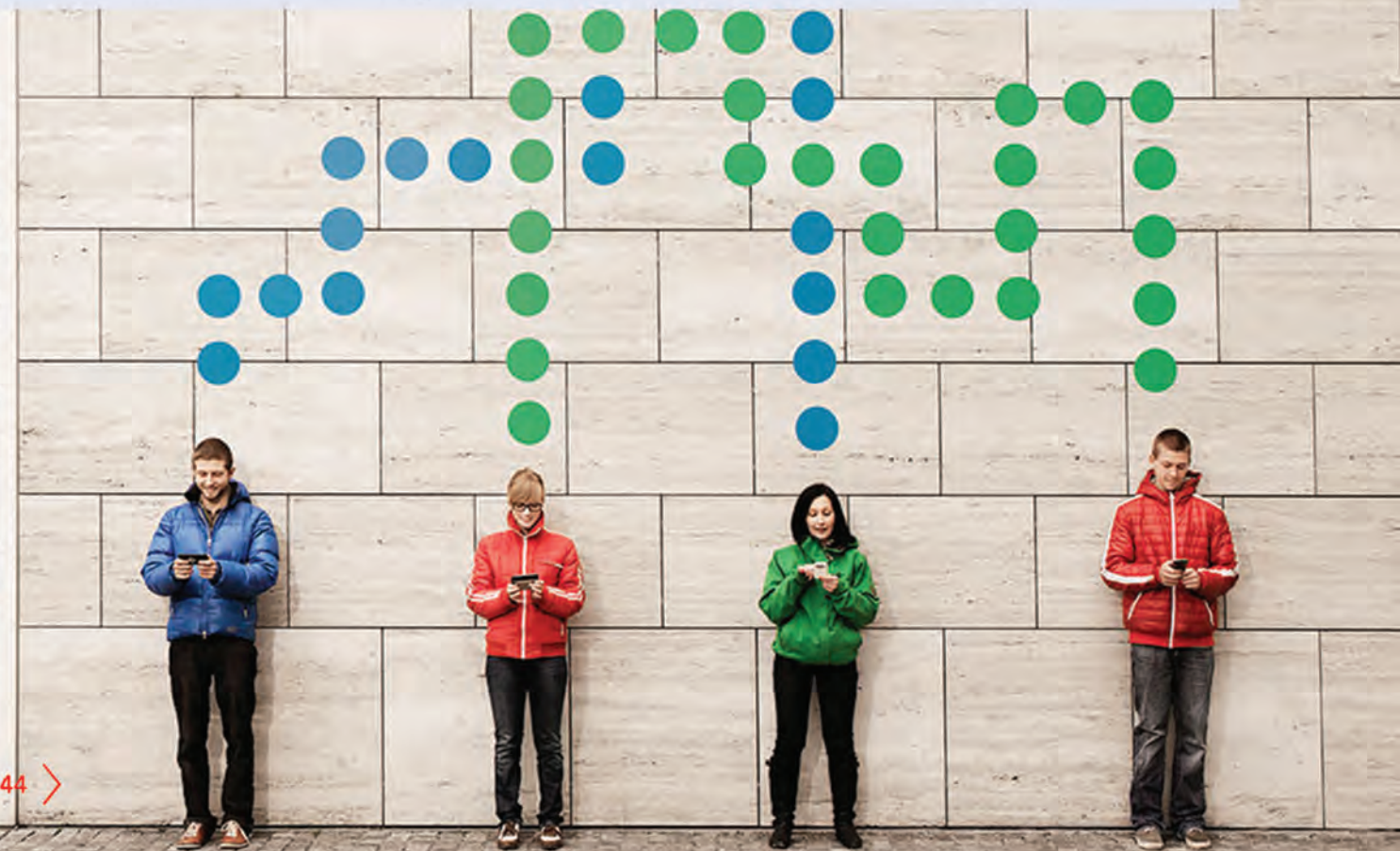


The future is digital

We live in a world where computers are central to our everyday lives. Some people think computers have become our masters; others believe that they are incredibly helpful servants. One thing is certain – computers are here to stay and it is up to us how we use them. There are some people (often genuinely concerned parents) who claim that computers make us lazy; that they stop us from learning essential knowledge. Although I can understand this to a degree, because I do use technology for research, often these things are complex topics, not basic facts. Furthermore, in the past people relied on books, which are very useful, but people sometimes had to wait days to borrow books from a library – and often only got some of the required knowledge. Nowadays, we can use computers to find more information, more quickly.

While there are issues about the amount of information that young people have to process, and its reliability, we rise to these challenges. The students I know are experts at sifting information; they have a great instinct for the truthfulness of online information. It's clear that modern ways to access information have made young people unbelievably good readers, not worse ones. Their skills are advanced and honed, far more so than previous generations; there's a reason why ill-informed adults come to rely on their teenage children's abilities to locate and use online information. Adults know that the future is a digital one.

Yet issues around technology are about much more than just finding information; technology has liberated humanity. Young people use their gadgets to create art, make music and help others. Modern technology is about bringing people together. Ask any young person and they'll tell you that the world is a smaller place – and that can only be a good thing. Today's teenagers communicate more than ever. Contrary to parents' stereotypical descriptions of their phone addicted teens, you'll discover that there is a digital network of young people sharing serious and comic things, talking about world issues, playing games, supporting each other and learning from friends around the globe. The future truly is digital. And that future is a bright one.



Notice that although the article echoes ideas from both sides of the debate, it firmly argues for one view – that technology is good for young people. This approach is important. If you are asked to give a view, do not just summarise the arguments – give your own view firmly and argue the case strongly. Committed writing allows you to demonstrate your skills more clearly, as well as being more interesting to read.

The format for this task is an article and you may wonder whether the student should have included more features such as subheadings. While it would have been possible to do so, published articles (especially short ones) often do not use them. This type of structural decision does not affect the quality of this student's response. The sense of audience and quality of the argument are more important factors here. The ideas and manner in which they are expressed are the key drivers of success in directed writing responses. Notice that although the audience is school-age readers (and possibly parents or staff), the student has sensibly avoided overly informal language.

2 As well as presenting a logical series of points, the student has used language in a confident and precise manner, making the response seem convincing. In pairs, identify the following features from the article:

- a** the use of the title and how it is repeated elsewhere
- b** references drawn from everyday life
- c** the use of contrast between attitudes/experiences
- d** the use of hyperbole
- e** positive words
- f** the use of listing
- g** the use of conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs.

Share your list with another pair.

- Talk about each technique in turn – what do they contribute to the response?
- Identify any other methods or approaches you thought were effective.



READING TIP

Consider your audience

Sometimes you may be asked to write for more familiar audiences such as school friends or even online adult readers. Always consider your audience, but do not fall into the trap of being too informal, even if you are writing to a friend. Remember that you are trying to demonstrate a range of vocabulary and accurate technical skills.

WRITING TIP

Focus on content

Although the techniques outlined here will help your writing, remember that it is *ideas* that really win arguments. When planning an argument, always focus on the content – the points you will make. Your techniques should support your ideas, not the other way around.

Sequencing an argument

The best arguments flow logically and clearly. They are structured in such a way that they take the reader on a journey, as one point is built on another. Often, the most compelling points and ideas occur towards the end of an argument – at the **climax** of the piece. This is because the writer has thought carefully about the sequence of the points – the best and most effective order for them. Big points clinch arguments, so when you plan your writing, remember to think about the *order* of your points.

KEY TERM

climax: the most exciting or important part of something

- 3 In pairs, look at the order of the points in the student's article. Why do you think ideas about 'liberating humanity' and 'making the world a smaller place' are likely to appeal to readers and clinch an argument?
- 4 Now write your own response to the task in Section 7.3. Remember to show that you are:
 - responding to the ideas set out in Texts 7.1 and 7.2
 - giving your own views on the topic
 - shaping and phrasing your argument carefully.

Write 250–350 words. Remember to check the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar when you have drafted your response.

Report writing

Reports are formal documents that are written for a particular purpose. Although they may be compiled and sent to a specific person, reports are often intended to be public documents read by a wider audience. Reports usually explain and summarise events or attitudes, and they may use subheadings to signpost different sections. However, they differ from articles in several ways. The titles they are given are often formal rather than deliberately inventive or intriguing. They usually report information in a more straightforward, factual way, although a report may conclude by giving recommendations or offering opinions.

- 5 Look at the following task. It is based on the same two texts as the magazine article task in Section 7.3, but here you are asked to write a report. In pairs, discuss:
 - how you might start and end your report – what tone and language would be appropriate?
 - the structure of your report – what title, sections and subheadings would you use?

Write a report for your local education authority about young people's use of computers.

In your report you should:

- evaluate the ideas and opinions in both texts
- give your own views about whether computers are a benefit or a disadvantage for young people.

Base your report on what you have read in both texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Organise your writing in an appropriate way for a report.

Write about 250 to 350 words. [25 marks]

- 6 Now write the report, taking care with tone and structure. Remember to draw on the stimulus material and your own ideas.
- 7 a Swap your report with a partner. Read each other's reports and give feedback. Has your partner included all the features noted in the example here?
- b Make any changes to report to improve it based on your partner's feedback and any other ideas you have from reading the formal report. Think about the structure and organisation of your report as well as the language you have used.

Now read this formal report into young people's use of computers, and look at the different features that have been annotated.

Children of the digital age

A report into young people's use of computer technology [1]

Attitudes towards computers

Computers are a permanent fixture in the daily lives of most families, and although today's parents are of an age where they can recall early computers, some of them feel that modern technology has a negative influence on their offspring. [2] Some parents cite familiar complaints relating to their children's over-reliance on search engines (rather than learned knowledge), or the way in which children spend less time out of doors.

On the other hand [4], young people seem to have embraced the digital revolution. [3] Many feel that computers are not only useful time-saving devices, but they also help them to de-stress. Above all, [4] it seems that young people view them as an essential part of their communicative repertoire, with many explaining how they allow friendships within communities and across the world to blossom.

Computers and education [5]

It is clear that some older people see computers are a threat to learning; not only do they remove the need to memorise information, they have brought about the downfall of the book and reduce focus on traditional skills such as handwriting. While there may be some truth in these views, [6] modern technology has had a very positive impact on education. For instance, young people use digital means to produce art, write music and produce investigative work. [7] Not only do they find them excellent creative tools, they also learn how to harness the technology itself through coding. Computers offer a clear benefit to society.

[1] The formal title clearly explains the content of the report.

[2] The content summarises the attitudes of a particular group towards a subject.

[3] A contrasting viewpoint from a different group is offered.

[4] Transition words and phrases structure the flow of information and guide the reader.

[5] Subheadings signpost different sections.

[6] Ideas are evaluated.

[7] Formal language makes the report sound authoritative.

Investing in the future

Computers are here to stay: [8] education authorities and schools need to be proactive in the ways they encourage and help students access modern technology. In the years ahead, it will be essential that no student is left behind, and those whose circumstances make it harder to purchase technology must be helped. A further issue will be helping students become skilled in identifying misinformation. It is recommended that these two areas are seen as priorities and that educators embrace technology rather than trying to hold back the tide. [9]

[8] Ideas are stated in a straightforward, factual way.

[9] The report concludes with clear recommendations.

> 7.5 Writing letters and emails

Although there are superficial differences between letters and emails, in practice they are very similar text types. Both are presented in paragraph form and their content is determined by audience, purpose and topic rather than form. Emails, like letters, can vary in formality and length, although for the purposes of study, you should always be guided by word counts. Some letter-writing tasks may require you to include an address and date, but you do not need to include a subject bar and address when responding to email-writing activities.

In Section 7.4, you looked at how to write an article aimed at students your own age. Here, you will explore a new task for a different audience and in a different format – a letter. The contrasting views you will consider here take the form of a conversation.

Your cousin is considering whether to continue with their education or whether to apply for a job. They have asked for your thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of further study and working.

In your letter, you should:

- discuss different views about jobs and studies
- give your own views about whether your cousin should apply for the job or continue studying.

You should base your letter on the conversation, as well as your own ideas.

Write 250–350 words. [25 marks]

Read the conversation between Faizan and Haniya and make a list of the points that both speakers make in favour of their views.

I enjoyed school, but when I had to decide between further study or getting a job, the choice was easy. I got a job. In my opinion, school can only teach you so much about the real world. When I got my job with an IT company, it helped me learn how to talk and cooperate with others. I feel much more confident now.

I agree it's good to feel interested in what you're doing, Haniya, but you learn something completely different in a job – practical skills. I think that a lot of what you learn at school has little to do with the real world. I don't think I've used more than 5 per cent of what I learnt in school. At work, the things I learn about IT, I use every day. Having a job seems like a more useful and rewarding thing to do, rather than just doing exams.

That sounds really rewarding, but doesn't it feel strange still being at school? I feel part of the adult world now. I play sport with the other people at work, go for lunch with them and share the same humour. I know that I've grown up a lot and I like that. The other thing I enjoy is getting paid! It's a great feeling knowing that I'm earning money. Next month, I'm moving into my own house.

That's great, Faizan, but you can also practise those skills in education. In schools and colleges there are lots of people to communicate with. I found that when I continued with further studies at school, teachers treated me differently because I was older. Continuing with education was a great choice for me. I've really enjoyed learning more about my subjects. I love studying and the challenge of exams.

But studying is very useful. I'm studying science subjects and I know that what I learn will be very helpful to me when I train to be a doctor. It's impossible to do that job unless you have studied things in depth. The other thing about studying difficult subjects is that they really improve your ability to think. Sometimes, I have to really concentrate and struggle to understand difficult concepts, but I know that it's making me smarter.

That's amazing, Faizan! Obviously, staying in education doesn't help me earn money, but I don't mind waiting until I have an income. I know that the more I learn, the better my qualifications will be. Most people who stay in education earn more money over their career than those who don't. I also know that if I continue to university, I might travel more, meet more people and maybe even settle overseas.

Planning a response

- 2 In pairs, review the points made by Faizan and Haniya. Discuss the following questions:
 - a How has each speaker's context and experiences informed their views?
 - b Which ideas made by the speakers were the strongest – what were their best points?
 - c Which speaker did you agree with most and why?
- 3 Now think how you will respond to this letter-writing task. Remember that you should discuss and evaluate ideas, but ultimately give your own view. The more you practise, the quicker you will become at planning, but for now you could follow this structured approach:

1 Read the **stimulus** text(s).

2 Highlight the main points.

3 Consider how convincing each point is.

4 Decide which overall viewpoint to support.

5 Think of some of your own ideas to add.

6 Plan a sequence for your points.

KEY TERM

stimulus: a text or image intended to stimulate ideas for a new piece of writing

Make a plan of the points you would make in your response. Remember to think about the order of your points. Share your plan with a partner. Give each other feedback on the content and sequence of your points. You do not need to think about the format of a letter just yet – focus on the points you will make.

Features of letters and emails

Look at the prompts in the task about audience and form. Here you are required to write a more personal text than the article. You are writing for one person only, and it is someone you know well. This should help you make decisions about the register you will use.

Letters and emails follow particular formats. You should include a **greeting** (sometimes called a **salutation**) and a **sign-off** (sometimes called a **valediction**). You also need to know how to phrase opening and closing paragraphs as they help to establish the tone. Here is an example of each from a formal letter to a headteacher about organising a new sports day. Read them alongside the annotations.

KEY TERMS

greeting (or salutation): the words used to address someone at the start of a letter (e.g. 'Dear Sir' or 'Hi Irani')

sign-off (or valediction): the words used to end a letter (e.g. 'Yours sincerely', 'Yours faithfully' or 'Kind regards')

Opening

Dear Mr Hussain, [1]

I am writing in regard to the proposed extra sports day mentioned at school council last week. [2] As you will know, many students are in favour of holding this extra day. They have suggested numerous ways we could organise the day and the types of activities that we might include. [3] I have set some of these ideas out below for your consideration. [4]

[1] formal greeting that uses the name of the addressee

[2] immediate explanation of the letter's purpose

[3] brief details about the context surrounding the letter

[4] bridging sentence that leads into the following paragraph.

Ending

Thank you for taking the time to read these proposals. [1] I look forward to your response in due course. [2]

Yours sincerely [named addressee], [3]

Jack Smith [4]

[1] politely thanks the addressee for their time

[2] indirect but polite indication that the writer is hoping for a response

[3] polite and correct valediction for the addressee

[4] sign-off using full name.

- 4 Now write the opening and ending sequences for the letter to your cousin. You should include:
- a relatively informal greeting
 - a first sentence that is warm and friendly
 - a sentence that moves the topic to the main purpose of the letter – the debate between a job or future study
 - closing sentences that wish your reader well
 - a valediction appropriate to your addressee
 - a sign-off that uses your first name only.



WRITING TIP

Greetings and sign-offs

When you use the name of your addressee at the start of a letter (for example, Mr Hussain) then use 'Yours sincerely' in the valediction. If you have used a title (for example, Dear Sir) then use 'Yours faithfully'. In less formal letters, greetings such as 'Hi' and valedictions such as 'Kind regards' are sometimes appropriate.

- 5 Swap your opening and ending sections with a partner. Give each other feedback on:
- how appropriate the greeting and valediction are
 - whether your partner has used a suitable register.
- 6 Now write a full response to the task. Remember that you are going to evaluate the different views in the stimulus material by discussing them, ultimately giving your own view to your cousin about whether they should get a job or continue studying.

A sample response

Here is a student's response to the letter-writing task. Read it alongside the annotations.

Hi Abid, [1]

I hope you're well. How are your family keeping? [2] I know how difficult it is to decide what to do about your education. In many ways, getting a job is an attractive proposition: earning money and meeting new people sounds fantastic, but I suggest you think very carefully before throwing away your educational opportunities. [3]

As long as I have known you, I have admired your intelligence. Your record at school and in exams is brilliant. I know that you sometimes find school exhausting, but just look at what you have achieved: fantastic qualifications and the admiration of your teachers. Do you really want to leave this world behind? Although getting a job sounds exciting, further study will bring you more long-term satisfaction. [4]

Many people will tell you that getting a job is a good thing. And for those people I'm sure that's true. Some people probably view staying at school as the easy option, one that keeps you a child. [5] But they're wrong in your case. Yes, you could earn money in a job, but is that the most important thing in life at the moment? Of course not. [6] I know you could be a brilliant scientist. It's been your passion for so long and there's only one way to achieve that – further study.

You will find that when you undertake further study, people treat you differently. Your relationships with teachers change and you feel like an adult. [7] You also get to specialise in areas you are good at, and believe me, there's no greater thrill than feeling you have mastered a subject. With your abilities, you could be a future star of the science world. You owe it to yourself and your family to follow your passion. Once you have, you'll feel far more satisfied with what you've achieved and the added bonus of earning a high salary will be all the sweeter. [8]

I'll sign off now, but make sure you make right decision. I'll see you in the summer when we come to visit. [9]

With love,

Tahira [10]

[1] a suitably informal greeting

[2] social expressions that are appropriate and make the addressee seem real

[3] the writer begins to evaluate here, showing knowledge of the stimulus material, but also signalling their view

[4] paragraph clearly sets out the writer's view; the final sentence reinforces the point using a conjunction effectively

[5] effective exploration of the counterview in the stimulus material

[6] good evaluation

[7] more echoing of the stimulus material

[8] final point in the sequence of the response is about money – another useful detail from the stimulus material; also a high point of the argument and concludes with the uplifting image of following your passion

[9] informal ending to the letter, appropriate for the addressee

[10] appropriate informal valediction

Using persuasive techniques

The student's letter here uses a persuasive tone, in contrast with the more logical argument presented in the article task. The letter feels more strongly worded and committed to its point of view.

- 7 Look again at the example response. In pairs, identify examples of the following persuasive techniques:

Use of praise – offering compliments to your reader

Emotional language – phrases that are used to provoke an emotional reaction

Positive language – words and phrases to make something sound appealing

Rhetorical questions – questions used to provoke thought

Anecdotal evidence – examples drawn from stories about lived experience rather than hard facts

Exploiting a personal link – using a connection with the reader to gain trust

WRITING TIP

Be guided by the topic

Many tasks will leave it up to you how persuasive you want to be. You should always offer a point of view, but bear in mind that some topics lend themselves to emotionally driven arguments but there may be topics where excessive use of persuasive techniques would strike the wrong tone.

Using more complex punctuation devices, such as the colon, demonstrates your technical skills. Your choice of punctuation should also reflect the style and tone you are trying to create.

Look at this example:

- In many ways, getting a job is an attractive proposition: earning money and meeting new people sounds fantastic, but I think you should think very carefully before throwing away your educational opportunities.

Here, the colon is used to suggest the relationship between the clauses. The words after the colon give more detail about the statement that they follow. This creates a formal tone in the sentence. Notice how it sits against the less formal phrases 'sounds fantastic' and 'throwing away', as if the writer is still being friendly, but signalling a more serious point being made.

CONTINUED

Sometimes, you can use a dash instead of a colon. This creates a less formal tone, so before you make this kind of choice consider the effect you are trying to achieve *at that point in your writing*. It might be that a dash is more appropriate. For example:

- It's been your passion for so long and there's only one way to that – further study.

Here the dash seems more conversational and fits with the tone implied by the contractions. The less formal punctuation helps the persuasive approach by implying a close relationship between writer and addressee.

You may choose different types of punctuation in different parts of your writing. For instance, in sections where a serious tone is required, colons or semicolons may be the best option.

8 Read your letter and compare it to the sample response. Decide if you have:

- ✓ evaluated and discussed the views in the stimulus material
- ✓ given your own view clearly
- ✓ sequenced your argument effectively
- ✓ used the right register throughout
- ✓ used persuasive techniques effectively
- ✓ used appropriate and accurate punctuation
- ✓ used appropriate and accurate words
- ✓ used accurate spelling and grammar.

Redraft your letter, aiming to improve any issues you have noticed. Refer back to the sample response to help you.

9 Spend time with a partner reading each other's letters. Discuss:

- ways in which you might improve your work in future tasks like this one
- the extent to which your approach to this task would be different if you were asked to write an email rather than a letter.

> 7.6 Writing a speech

At the end of this chapter, you will have the opportunity to write a speech based on new stimulus material. First, look at how changing the text type can have an impact on the way you write. Here is a new task based on the same stimulus conversation you read in Section 7.5.

You have been asked to speak at a young person's conference on the topic of choices. The organisers want you to give some advice about whether young people benefit more from further educational study or finding a job.

In your speech you should:

- discuss different views about further studies and jobs
- give your own views about whether young people benefit more from continued study or starting a career.

You should base your speech on the conversation you have read, but be careful to use your own words.

Write about 250 to 350 words. [25 marks]

Features of speeches

Speeches are a 'mixed mode' text. They are written texts, but unlike articles or letters, they are delivered orally and so the audience is more immediate – real speeches are spoken and received at the same time in the same room. This often has implications for performance context; professional speech writers and speakers often include sections where the speaker consciously talks to the audience and tries to elicit responses by asking questions or trying to create some sort of interaction between speaker and audience. This approach may work well in real-life situations, but be careful when you write a speech for a directed writing response. Carefully used, the occasional direct reference to the imagined audience can work well, but if used too often, it can distract from your argument. If you do not feel confident about doing this, avoid direct appeals to an imagined audience altogether. On the page, your speech will appear in paragraphs. There is no need to use subheadings, although there may be times when bullet points are appropriate if you are delivering points in a list. Use the next activity to get a sense of tone and narrative aspects of a speech.

- 1 Here is the opening of a response to the speech-writing task. Read it, then in pairs discuss:
 - a the way in which the speech opens compared to the previous article and letter examples in this chapter
 - b the way the writer has tried to engage the imagined audience
 - c how figurative language has been used
 - d the views that the speaker gives and the manner in which they introduce them.

Which way now?

Good afternoon. Last month, I was at a fork in the road; a point in my life when I needed to choose which route to take. Should I follow the path of education and continue the studies I had enjoyed so much? Or should I take a less familiar path: a new, challenging and slightly daunting one? Perhaps like you are now, I spent much time weighing up the possibilities. For some people, further education is an obvious choice; it gives you the opportunity to really understand the subjects important to you. Undoubtedly, further study increases your knowledge and the relationships you have with teachers are different – you feel you are treated like an adult. But after careful thought, I chose a different path. I wanted to challenge myself in a new setting. Starting a career was the right thing to do, and I'm going to tell you why it will also be the right thing for you too.

WRITING TIP

Pick a title

Titles for articles and speeches help to shape your work. A good title can intrigue your reader or signal a point of view. It can be helpful to choose a distinctive phrase from the body of your work, or a figurative idea to use as a title. It is often easier to write a title once you have finished your work.

Different voices, different views

In directed writing activities, there is always an element of imagination. In this chapter you have been asked to imagine you have a cousin who wants career advice and that you have been asked to speak at a young person's conference. Nonetheless, most students choose to write as a version of themselves. In other words, they use a voice and give ideas that are close to their own. Yet sometimes, interesting effects occur when you deliberately choose a voice and/or view that is different to yours – almost as if you are playing a role.

2 Read the speech 'Kickstarting your career'. In pairs, discuss:

- the voice the student has chosen to write in
- the benefits of writing in this type of voice.

Kickstarting your career

Good morning. When I was your age, I faced the same choice you are facing: should I continue with my studies or should I enter the world of work? On the one hand, continuing with my studies seemed a natural thing to do. After all, I had spent the past ten years in education, so why would I want to change? I'm sure many of you feel the same way. Education is a fine thing; mastering your subjects is a joy. There are people who love the challenge of fresh academic knowledge and who thrive on exams. I admire those people. But then I thought about me. And I realised that I wanted something different. So I chose a different route and I'm so glad that I did. This morning, I'm going to explain why starting your career now might be the best thing you will ever do.



3 Now write your own response to the speech task. In addition to discussing, evaluating and giving your view, you should:

- think carefully about the voice you use
- plan and sequence your points
- consider how you could engage your audience
- use a range of appropriate vocabulary, language techniques and punctuation choices
- demonstrate accurate spelling and punctuation.



PROJECT

In groups, you are going to make a collection of articles, speeches and letters from a variety of sources. The purpose of this task is to compile an anthology of good models of each text type that you can refer to and take inspiration from during your studies. The texts you compile must:

- be about familiar topics connected with education, technology, travel and work
- have distinctive voices or interesting viewpoints.

Use online sources, newspapers, magazines and published anthologies to select material. Once you have your examples, collate them and annotate them, explaining why they are effective models. Remember that you will use them for inspiration, so choose a suitable format – perhaps an electronic version will be easiest to store and share.



EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Read both texts, and then answer the question.

Text A

Home is where the heart is

Home holds a place in everyone's heart, no matter how old they are. Some people travel the world in search of excitement. Perhaps they find it, but those things are temporary. You can find all you need in the country of your birth.

Everyone needs people around them, especially family. That is why I chose to live in my home town and have done for the past 60 years. I know that if I need help, humour or just a chat, I can rely on the people I've known all my life.

But it's not just a feeling of security I get from living here. I genuinely have everything I need. Why would I need to travel abroad to see spectacular sights when I have them here? We have some beautiful scenery right here. Why would I need to visit the cities of the world? I can read about them in books. Do I really need all of those different shopping experiences? Anything I really need can be delivered here.

My advice to young people is to learn about and celebrate the land of your birth. It's the culture you were born into, so embrace it. Foreign lands are interesting and fine for the occasional holiday, but home is where the heart is.

Text B

It's a big wide world

When I was six, the end of my street was as far as I dared to go. Now I'm 26 and I live on the other side of the world. Living abroad is fascinating and it's something everybody should try.

I was brought up in a small town in Sri Lanka. I couldn't have wished for a nicer place to grow up. I moved to Canada when I was 18 to study mathematics. At first, it was like living on the moon. The people were different. The food was different. The landscape was different. It would have been easy to return home, but very soon, I grew to love the place. I grew as a person and realised I could rely upon myself rather than my family.

Living overseas has taught me how to get along with people. I found out that underneath all the superficial differences, humans are very similar. Living overseas is a great way to learn tolerance and respect for other humans.

After university, I took a job and lived in Lahore and loved the busy nature of the place. The food and people were fantastic. I made some good friends there. At the moment, I'm living in Italy and have met the man I want to marry. I still visit home. My parents love hearing the stories of my travels.

You have been asked to speak to a group of students on the topic of future life plans. Specifically, you are to present views on the benefits of living overseas or living in your home country when you are older.

In your speech you should:

- discuss different views about the topic
- give your own views about whether young people would benefit more from living overseas or staying in their home country.

You should base your speech on what you have read in both texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words. (25 marks)



SELF-ASSESSMENT

How confident do you feel about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter?

Rate yourself from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident), then complete the task to prove it.

Now I can . . .	Confidence rating (1–5)	Prove it
discuss and evaluate opinions		Using examples, give five tips for discussing and evaluating opinions.
write articles, letters, emails, speeches and reports giving opinions		Compile a table showing the features of each text type.
write for different audiences		Using examples, explain how different types of audiences affect how you phrase your writing.
use persuasive language		Using examples, make a list of persuasive writing techniques.
use conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs to shape a debate		Write three sentences on a topic of your choice using conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs.
use colons for effect		Write three sentences on a topic of your choice using colons for effect.



› Chapter 8

Descriptive writing



LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- use figurative language to describe places, events and people
- use different points of view and perspectives
- plan and think of ideas for descriptive writing
- write a variety of engaging opening sentences
- use sense descriptions to develop the content of your writing
- make effective verb choices to describe characters.

> Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn ways to develop your descriptive writing skills. You will practise using figurative language and different types of imagery. You will also learn how to describe places, events and people.

GETTING STARTED

Descriptive writing is often compared to painting a picture with words. In small groups, take it in turns to describe a familiar place. Use words to 'paint a picture' so the rest of the group can imagine the place you are describing and try to guess where it is. It might be somewhere in your local area, a place in school or a well-known location around the world. Be as imaginative as possible in your description. Use colours, comparisons and interesting words to paint your verbal picture.

SKILLS FOCUS

Descriptive writing is a composition task, which assesses specific reading and writing skills. In a single response, you will need to:

- express thoughts, feelings and imagined situations
- use appropriate structures for your response
- use a range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures
- make accurate spelling, punctuation and vocabulary choices.

WRITING TIP

Use emotions

Successful descriptive writing is about more than just the language you use. The ideas and feelings you are trying to create are a key part of descriptive writing. Places are often associated with particular feelings, so always begin by planning the overall effect you want to have on your reader. For example, do you want them to feel a sense of amazement, beauty, fear or peacefulness?

> 8.1 Describing places

When you write to describe a place, you are trying to help your reader picture a setting such as a city, a landscape or a house. Whether you describe a real or imagined place, you are trying to engage the reader. The language choices you make help to do this, but one essential way of engaging a reader is through feelings and emotions.

1 In pairs, look at Figures A and B. If you were writing a description based on these pictures, what would you choose to describe? Discuss:

- things in each picture that you might choose to focus on
- the feelings and emotions that each picture generates.



Figure A



Figure B

- 2 Read one student's short description based on Figure A. In pairs, talk about what makes this description effective.

You could discuss:

- the feeling(s) created
- the language used.

Sunrise

For a moment, nothing moved. All was still. The lake, like glass, mirrored the purple and gold of the sky. This was nature at its finest and quietest. For a moment, nothing moved. All was still. The sky was a masterpiece, its colours blurring harmoniously. The dark forest kept its secrets for now. Like guards, the mountains on the horizon stood immobile, just as they had for centuries. For a moment, nothing moved. Then slowly, a shaft of light penetrated the forest and a bird left its nest. The world was waking from its sleep.

Structuring your writing

Narrative writing features events – things that *happen*. It is driven by plot. In contrast, descriptive writing is often 'still' – the focus is on things that can be seen and heard, rather than events. However, it is important that *something* happens, otherwise your writing can seem like a list. So, think about the structure of your writing and shape it carefully to ensure it is interesting.

Repetition and contrast are useful structural devices. Repeating key words or ideas can help to give descriptive writing a sense of structure, adding a rhythm to the prose. Likewise, using contrasting images or states, such as light and dark, or stillness and movement can add depth and drama to your writing.

- 3 In pairs, look again at the response 'Sunrise'. Discuss the following elements of structure:
- The use of repeated sentences – what effect is created?
 - The sense of movement – at what point does the scene change and what effect does this create?

- 4 Here is the learner's plan for 'Sunrise'. Notice how they have decided on the feeling they are trying to create and how they can use structural ideas to give their work some shape.

Plan

Focus on stillness – then the world waking up in the final sentence.

Repeat opening line during the description.

Describe the lake, sky, mountains and forest.

Try to create peaceful feeling.



Figure C

Write your own plan for a description of Figure C. Include notes on:

- the things you can see in the picture that you could describe
- any use of repeated lines
- any movement
- what feeling you will try to create
- a suitable title.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: METAPHOR, SIMILE AND PERSONIFICATION

In Chapter 3 you considered the effect that figurative language had on you as a reader. Figurative language is a key part of descriptive writing so it is important to understand how to use these techniques effectively yourself. Metaphor, simile and personification are all useful devices to engage your reader and help them to understand what you are describing.

Metaphor and simile both work by drawing comparisons, but they also extend the meaning of what is being described. Consider this use of simile:

- The lake, like glass, mirrored the purple and gold of the sky.

The simile 'like glass' conveys a lot of information to the reader. It suggests that the lake is still, clear and smooth. It helps to reinforce the sense of calm in the description. It also helps the reader to imagine a scene where the lake and sky are connected, as if nature is a powerful force whose elements work together.

Metaphor works in a similar way, using a comparison to help the reader imagine a scene, but also suggesting the *qualities* of the thing being described. Consider this metaphor:

- The sky was a masterpiece.

Here the writer suggests to the reader that the sky looks like a painting, implying both beauty and stillness. This figurative language contributes to a feeling of peacefulness. It also suggests something valuable – as if nature is a priceless thing to be admired.

WRITING TIP

Plan your description

It is essential to plan your description before you write it. You will not be able to plan everything, but you should work out the overall structure of your writing – how it will begin, any important moments and how it will end. Consider how the shape of your writing will contribute to the overall feeling you want to establish.

CONTINUED

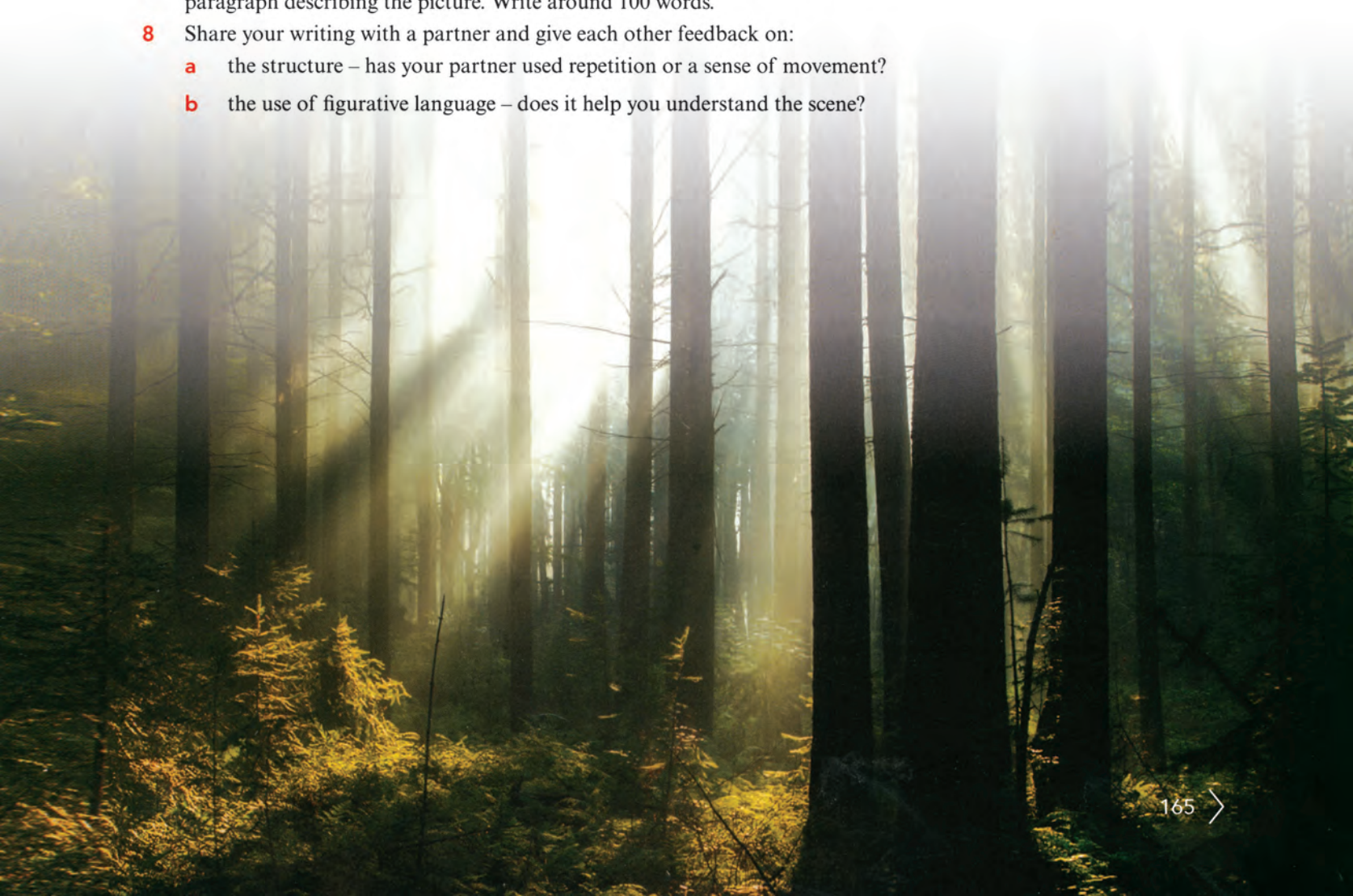
Personification is also a useful way to bring objects to life. This technique is often used to create tension or energy, but you can use it for a wide variety of effects. For example:

- The dark forest kept its secrets for now.

Notice how the forest seems to be a mysterious thing, as if it has the human ability to conceal secrets. Personification makes it appear alive.

Using figurative language

- 5 Here are two examples of figurative language from the student's description in Activity 2. For each example, write a sentence identifying the type of figurative language being used and the effect it creates.
 - a Like guards, the mountains on the horizon stood immobile.
 - b The world was waking from its sleep.
- 6 Look again at Figure C in Activity 4. How could you use figurative language to describe the scene? Think about the overall effect you are trying to create, then write two sentences that use figurative language.
- 7 Using your plan from Activity 4 and your sentences from Activity 6, write a full paragraph describing the picture. Write around 100 words.
- 8 Share your writing with a partner and give each other feedback on:
 - a the structure – has your partner used repetition or a sense of movement?
 - b the use of figurative language – does it help you understand the scene?



Developing descriptions

One way to bring a sense of development to your description of a place is to move from exterior (outside) to interior (inside). For example, you could begin by describing the outside of a tunnel entrance before going inside. This technique works well when there is a contrast between the two places as you saw in 'Sunrise'. Changing the scene or describing contrasting images is a useful way to avoid focusing for too long on sensory description.

- 9 Read the extract below, in which the narrator describes a hotel in Scotland called the Royal Thistle. Notice how the description moves from the outside of the hotel to inside and then focuses on the smaller detail of the ceiling. As you read, make notes on:
- a details about the outside of the hotel
 - b details about the inside of the hotel
 - c the use and effect of figurative language.

Text 8.1

I'd stayed at The Royal Thistle Hotel with my family when I was a young child, but could recall very little about it apart from a few sense impressions. My memory pictured it as an imposing and slightly daunting grey building nestled in a **glen** far from the bright lights of the city. And now, 20 years later, here I was again. This time, the hotel looked smaller, as if over time it had retreated into the landscape, embraced by hills punctuated with clumps of purple **heather**.

As I walked up the gravel path, I took a moment to admire the handsome stone pillars that stood like sentries at the entrance. I imagined them to be waiting in readiness to do battle with the ivy that throttled the grey stone walls. In truth, there was something slightly run-down about the place; perhaps it was finally losing its century-long fight with the Scottish weather. Certainly, the lawn on either side of the path was far from picture-perfect. Yet the whole place had a rugged charm that felt homely and honest.

The inside of the hotel was quite dark with lots of substantial wooden furniture. Having checked in, I made my way up the wide staircase, my hand on the **mahogany** handrail, which had been smoothed by countless other visitors over the years. My room was on the first floor, and I was pleasantly surprised how comfortable it was. I lay on my bed and felt the tension leave me. It had been a long journey and I was tired. My mind began to wander and I stared at the large plasterwork decoration on the ceiling above my head. I marvelled at its finer details; the small decorative touches were beautiful and ornate. They swam out of focus as I closed my eyes and vanished into sleep.

glen: an isolated valley

heather: a flowering plant

mahogany: a type of hardwood

Choosing a voice

LANGUAGE FOCUS: POINT OF VIEW AND PERSPECTIVE

Choosing the point of view and perspective you write from are important decisions to make when you write. These two terms are often used interchangeably, but there are differences.

- Point of view refers to the type of narrator used to tell the story – for example, **first person** or **third person**.
- Perspective refers to how the narrator reacts to what is happening – for example, their feelings and attitudes towards places and situations.

Many descriptions are written in the third person. One benefit of this point of view is that the narrator can be **omniscient** – they can move anywhere, even back and forth in time, and see everything. For example:

- A guest carrying a large case arrived at the hotel and rang the bell. In the office the manager sighed.

In this example, the reader can see what is happening with the guest, but also knows what is taking place in the manager's office.

When you write in the first person ('I'), you often become a character in the description. This means you are limited to only one view. However, first-person writing can make the reader feel more involved – the sense of perspective is often stronger. The first-person voice allows the narrator to display feelings and attitudes to what is being written about in a way that the third-person voice does not. For example:

- I rang the bell and waited for the manager. He finally arrived looking irritated.

This example only describes what happens in one location – the place where the guest is – but it does allow the reader to understand the guest's perception of the manager.

KEY TERMS

first person: where a story is narrated using 'I'

third person: where a story is told as if the narrator is not present in the action

omniscient: the ability to see everything – where a narrator can explain any part of the action in any location

- Look again at Text 8.1. It is written in the first person. In pairs, identify the narrator's attitudes towards the hotel – find lines where the narrator's feelings about the Royal Thistle Hotel emerge.
- Look at this writing task.

Describe a person visiting their old school. It is a school holiday. The building is open but no children are present. In your description you should describe the person walking up to their old school and then entering the building. Write about 100 words.





Write *two* responses to this task – one in the third person and another in the first person. Here are some possible ways to start. The first is in the third person and the second in the first person.

It had been so long since he'd last been here. He looked up at the old building and smiled.

I felt a strange sensation as I walked up that old path. There it was: the old building. I remembered so well.

12 Swap your descriptions with a partner. Talk about:

- the main differences in the versions of the description you have written
- which version of the description you prefer and why.

REFLECTION

Think about what you have learnt and written so far. What did you enjoy talking and writing about? Which of the skills and techniques did you find most challenging and why? What will help you further develop the skills you have practised?

WRITING TIP

Words and sentences

Remember that the choice and accuracy of your language and sentence structure is an integral part of effective writing. Use the technical skills you developed in Chapters 6 and 7 when practising your descriptive and narrative writing. Continue to make conscious word and grammar choices when you write and always check them.

> 8.2 Describing events

Some descriptive writing activities require you to focus on an event. While narrative writing is often about several connected events, descriptive writing tends to focus on a single event, describing the scene in which that event takes place and the feelings it produces. Events can be exciting or dramatic things such as sudden extreme weather, or they might be simpler things such as a pleasant journey.

Generating ideas

Ideas are at the heart of successful writing. Your creative skills (your ability to think and imagine) are the starting point for an effective description, before you even begin to write. When you plan a descriptive task, ask yourself the following questions:

What is the most interesting part of the scene – what is likely to engage the reader?

What feelings are suggested by the scene – what might you want the reader to feel?

Will you write in the first or third person and will the narrator be involved in the scene?

What might the narrator be feeling and why?

Are there other people there and if so, what is their relationship to the narrator (if any)?

What single event could happen to change the scene?

How could you move through the scene – how will things develop?

- 1 In pairs, discuss Figures D and E below. Use the seven questions listed to decide how you would describe the events in the pictures. In both images, the main event is a journey.



Figure D



Figure E

One of the hardest parts of writing is making a start, but remember that you can always come back to your opening sentences and change them later. There are several ways you can begin a piece of descriptive writing. Here are some possible approaches based on Figure D.

Approach	Example
Focusing on a specific place	I was driving down the main road towards Sacramento.
Focusing on the weather	The clouds rolled majestically through the sky.
Focusing on scenery	On the horizon, the mountains loomed.
Focusing on touch	My hands gripped the steering wheel as I sped down the road.
Focusing on feelings	I really didn't want to be here.

- 2 Choose one of the pictures and write a paragraph describing the scene. Write about 100 words.
- 3 Look again at your writing from Activity 2. Which (if any) of the approaches listed in Activity 1 did you use? Try rewriting your opening sentence using some of these approaches.

Evaluating a description

Here are two students' responses to Activity 2 and the comments each learner has made about their work. Chen wrote about Figure D and Irani wrote about Figure E.

Chen's response

On the horizon, the mountains loomed. High up ahead, an eagle swooped through the blisteringly hot air, its eyes fixed on the car making its way along the road below. Inside the car, the temperature was unbearably high. The air-conditioning was broken. The driver clutched the steering wheel, his fingers burning.

Chen's comment

I decided to write in the third person so I could describe the inside and outside of the car. I started by setting the scene with the mountains and the bird, then moved inside the car. I wanted the reader to feel how uncomfortable the situation was, so I focused on the heat.

Irani's response

I really didn't want to be here. I hate crowds. They make me feel anxious. As I walked down the street, the bright lights attacked my eyes. The street was a riot of colour and it made me disorientated. People swirled, jostled and pushed. The scent of hot food from a nearby shop hit my nostrils. Deeper into the crowd I went. Deeper into the crush. I tried to control my breathing.

Irani's comment

Most people like visiting cities - they're exciting places - but I chose to describe a negative experience. That's why I decided to write in the first person, because it allowed me to show how one person is affected by the crowd. The first person also allowed me to show the narrator's perspective more - their anxious feelings. That's also the reason why I started my description by writing about feelings.

WRITING TIP

Good readers are good writers

The more you read, the easier you will find it to write. Reading other people's work will give you ideas that can be developed. You will also learn new vocabulary, come across different phrases - and it will help with your spelling too. Next time you find an interesting piece of description in a novel, make a copy.

- 4 In pairs, read each other's responses to Activity 2. Using the responses and comments on the previous page as a guide:
- explain to your partner the decisions you made when you wrote and why
 - talk about whether you would alter anything if you redrafted your work.
- 5 Read Text 8.2, an extract from *The Teardrop Island*, which is set in Sri Lanka. In this extract, the narrator is travelling on a bus to a hotel. As you read, take note of:
- how the writer starts the piece
 - how each paragraph begins.

Text 8.2

It was market day in Puttalam and, as the bus made its way southwards along the coastal road, women jumped on from the roadside clutching rubber baskets of fruit, vegetables and rice. Puttalam produces most of the island's salt and the salt flats – large, square pools of grey water bordered by raised ridges of earth – were smooth and glassy in the sunshine. [. . .]

The bus turned off the main road heading towards Kalpitiya, [. . .] a narrow **spit** of land jutting out into the sea, surrounded by the lagoon and coconut trees. A few palm-thatched huts perched on the edge of the land, in amongst the palms, their owners leaning against the [. . .] walls and staring out over the lilac water [. . .] that gently lapped at their land. Men were dozing by the roadside under the wide brims of straw hats, next to piles of **bulbous**, orange king coconuts. Elderly men on bicycles cycled slowly along the road with large piles of dried [. . .] firewood. As the bus left the mainland behind, it felt as if we were driving towards some distant point isolated in the middle of the ocean. [. . .]

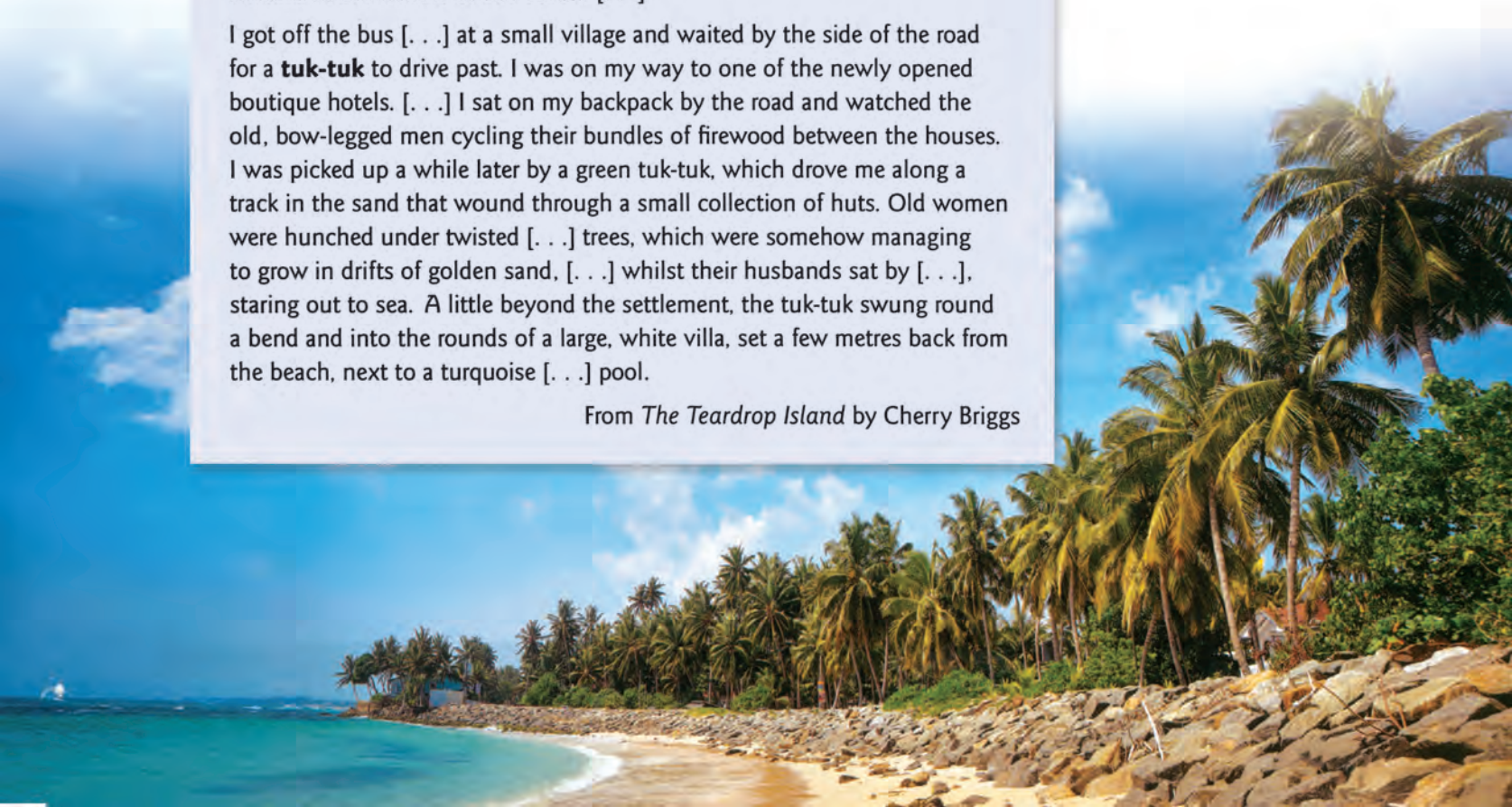
I got off the bus [. . .] at a small village and waited by the side of the road for a **tuk-tuk** to drive past. I was on my way to one of the newly opened boutique hotels. [. . .] I sat on my backpack by the road and watched the old, bow-legged men cycling their bundles of firewood between the houses. I was picked up a while later by a green tuk-tuk, which drove me along a track in the sand that wound through a small collection of huts. Old women were hunched under twisted [. . .] trees, which were somehow managing to grow in drifts of golden sand, [. . .] whilst their husbands sat by [. . .], staring out to sea. A little beyond the settlement, the tuk-tuk swung round a bend and into the rounds of a large, white villa, set a few metres back from the beach, next to a turquoise [. . .] pool.

From *The Teardrop Island* by Cherry Briggs

spit: a narrow bit of land

bulbous: round and bulging

tuk-tuk: a three-wheeled taxi



Using adjectives and adverbs

The word choices you make contribute to the effect of descriptive writing – remember that adjectives and adverbs add detail and extra information to help the reader picture the scene (see Section 3.2). Adjectives can describe a variety of features, such as colour ('golden'), shape ('twisted') and size ('large'). Adverbs tell your reader more about how an action is being performed, for example, 'quickly' or 'angrily'. Think of these type of words as adding texture to your writing. They help to make nouns more precise. For example, there is a clear difference in the image created by the adjectives (or lack of them) in these phrases:

- the sea • the angry sea • the glistening sea.
- 6 In pairs, look again at the way the writer uses adjectives and adverbs to describe the journey in paragraph 2 of *The Teardrop Island*.
- a Make a list of the adjectives and adverbs used.
 - b Discuss which ones you felt were most effective in describing the scene. Join up with another pair and share your thoughts.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: SENSORY DESCRIPTIONS

The human senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste are often used in composition. Humans experience the world through the senses, so they make for effective descriptions.

You can use visual descriptions to refer to what can be seen. For example:

- The street food stall was an old shack on the side of the road.

Use aural descriptions to refer to what can be heard. When combined with visual description, they can bring a scene to life for your reader. For example:

- The old street food vendor yelled to sell his produce, his voice shrill and grating.

Use tactile descriptions to refer to things related to the sense of touch. This does not only mean what can be sensed by your hands, but your whole body. For example:

- The warmth of the food brought life back to my cold fingers.
- The rain fell heavily as we ate, my body shivering from the cold.

You will probably use olfactory descriptions (relating to smell) and gustatory descriptions (relating to taste) less frequently, but they can be very effective. For example:

- The smell of onions being fried in the open air was delightful.
- The sweet taste of freshly cooked dumplings exploded in my mouth.

- 7 Look back at Chen and Irani's descriptions to Activity 2. In pairs:

- identify the different sense descriptions used
- talk about which ones you find most effective and why.

WRITING TIP

Use the senses

Most descriptive writing relies heavily on visual description – it is, after all, the sense we use most. However, we experience the world in other ways too, so remember to refer to other senses in your writing, especially hearing and touch. Doing so can make your scene more convincing and help your reader understand and feel it more clearly.



Writing about what you know

Some descriptions of events can be very dramatic. For example, you could describe the scene after a minor accident or a person trying to escape from someone or something. Most writers draw on real experiences and combine them with some imagined elements.

Many of the tasks you will study and practise will invite you to write about something you know or are familiar with. You might be asked not only to describe the way things look, but also to make comments about things within your description. This type of description has more of an element of personal writing than some of the examples you have looked at so far.

Describe a time when you were outside in extreme weather conditions, such as a storm or a heatwave. Describe how you felt. [25 marks]

8 In pairs, talk about what you might write in response to the task above. Discuss:

- what weather you would choose to describe
- what you might be doing in the extreme weather
- how you could use different sense descriptions
- what you could say about your feelings.

Remember that you could use a real experience, something you have imagined, or a combination of both.

9 Here is Hamza's response to the task. Read it, then discuss in pairs what you think of his ideas and the way he has described them.



The storm

Even before our last football game of the season kicked off, the storm clouds had started to gather in the sky above us. The pattern of the dark, ominous clouds seemed to move and change; they surged and threatened, never quite unleashing the promised storm. But there was no way we would cancel this game. If we won, we would be champions.

We walked from the changing rooms as if in slow motion. The pitch was on the edge of town, in a tree-encircled field with the main road into the centre running alongside it. It was quite an open spot and the ideal place for the last game we would play. A pungent scent from the local farm hung in the air as we walked, the clatter of our studs, the shouts of encouragement from the parents on the touchline and the sound of the occasional passing car filled the air. Both teams were quiet and focused. In the distance, the storm kept brewing. I shivered, even though it was a humid afternoon. The shrill sound of the referee's whistle signalled the start of things.

It wasn't a great game of football. No picture-perfect goals were scored that day. In fact, I can't recall much about the game apart from a few sense impressions. The noise from the nearby road blended with the rumbles of thunder overhead. The ball flashed through the air, hurtling against the inky black backdrop of the sky. The sounds of crunching tackles and yelled insults were all part of the drama. Tempers rose in the heat of it all. People always think that stormy conditions are cold. They're not. At least, these ones weren't. It was oppressively hot. My shirt stuck to me, and more than once I wished that the storm would break and bring some refreshing rain.

As in all the best dramas, our match was decided in the final minute. The details escape me now. There was a blur of bodies then a messy goal as someone bundled the ball over the line. As if on cue, fat, warm raindrops started to fall. They were intermittent at first, but as we celebrated, the skies opened and the rain fell in a solid sheet.

But I didn't care. We'd won.

10 Read the teacher's comment on Hamza's description. In pairs, identify:

- what she thinks is successful
- what she thinks could be improved.

Well done, Hamza. This is a very good response. You have chosen an interesting scene to describe. I like the way you have created a feeling of tension where the storm matches the drama of the football match. You have used varied, interesting words and have used personification effectively to describe the storm. I like your use of visual, aural and tactile descriptions. Your spelling and punctuation are excellent. You could develop this further by writing more about how you felt. The task requires you to do this, as well as describe the weather. You have said a little bit about your feelings, but you could say more.

- 11 Write an extra paragraph to add to the end of Hamza's description that describes his feelings in more detail. Start by imagining how he must feel about winning the match and celebrating with his team mates.
- 12 Using what you have learnt about describing events and places so far, practise your skills by responding to the following task. You should write 350–450 words.

Describe being lost in a strange city. [25 marks]

REFLECTION

Think about the activities you have completed in this section. Which ones were most useful in helping you to write about places? Which techniques and skills would you like to practise more?

WRITING TIP

Making punctuation choices

As well as using punctuation accurately, remember that there will be times when you want to demonstrate the range of punctuation marks you can use. When drafting, continue to practise using colons, semicolons and brackets – but remember not to overuse these devices – make sensible choices that serve the piece you are writing.

> 8.3 Describing people

Most of the examples of descriptive writing you have read in this chapter have focused on scenes, places and events. In this section, you will have the opportunity to describe people and characters.

Showing not telling

Effective character description *shows* the reader what a character is like, rather than *telling* them. This means that rather than describing the character in a direct, literal way, you need to find more subtle ways to convey this information.

- 1 In pairs, compare these two descriptions of the same character. Discuss which description is most effective and why.

A Melanie had dark hair and green eyes. She worked in an office and often sat at her desk using her computer. She didn't really like her job.

B Melanie yawned and her green eyes glanced at the clock. Trying to concentrate, she pushed her dark hair behind her ear and continued working at her computer.

- 2 Now read another extract from *The Teardrop Island*. Here, the narrator describes a character called Glen. As you read, make notes on:
 - how the writer presents Glen's movements in the first paragraph
 - the details of Glen's clothing in the first paragraph
 - what Glen does in the second paragraph and what this suggests about his personality.



Text 8.3

The room was cool and smelled of damp concrete, so I opened the wooden shutters to let in the late afternoon sunshine and the salty sea breeze. Through the window I could see Glen, sitting on a wooden swing that he had suspended from the branches of a sturdy [...] tree, swinging gently back and forth with his ankles neatly crossed [...]. He wore a pink polo shirt, knee-length checked shorts and the kind of sports socks that are carefully designed to be only just visible above the top of your trainers. As I walked out of my room, Glen bounced onto his toes from the swing and walked towards me through the sand. [...]

It was a Saturday evening and some of the families from the village had come down to the beach to sit together on the sand and watch the sun set over the sea [...]. Glen wandered out onto the beach, talking into a laptop, which he turned to the horizon so the person [...] could see the orange ball of the sun falling from the violet sky.

From *The Teardrop Island* by Cherry Briggs

- 3 In pairs, look at the characters in Figures F and G. Talk about:
- what the characters are doing – where they are and what they might be experiencing
 - what might make the characters interesting for a reader
 - what you imagine their personalities might be like.



Figure F



Figure G

- 4 Choose one of the pictures and write a paragraph describing the character. Write around 120 words. Start by planning your writing.
- Look again at the way Glen is described in Activity 2.
 - Decide what the character you have chosen is doing, thinking and feeling.

WRITING TIP

Avoid action!

When describing a character, be careful not to lapse into writing a story with lots of action. You will probably want to include some details of an event or incident in your writing, but keep the main focus on the description of the character.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: CHOOSING EFFECTIVE VERBS

You considered how writers use powerful verbs for effect in Section 3.2. Now consider how you can apply this knowledge in your own writing. In particular, verbs are powerful tools for describing characters – they can help your reader picture how a person moves, acts and speaks and can convey a character precisely the way you want. For example, the verb ‘walked’ may show what a character is doing, but it is not very descriptive:

- Li Jie walked into the room.

You could choose other verbs to have more power and impact, and to reveal more information about the character. For example:

- Li Jie strode into the room. (This suggests that the character is powerful and confident.)
- Li Jie glided into the room. (This suggests that the character moves gracefully.)
- Li Jie sneaked into the room. (This suggests that the character is entering the room without permission.)

When you describe character, always look at your verb choices. It is often better to select an effective verb than add another adjective or adverb.

WRITING TIP

Quality not quantity

You have probably heard the saying ‘quality not quantity’. This means that rather than writing lots of pages, it is better to write less but spend time choosing the most effective ideas and phrases. Remember that planning and thinking as you write is part of the process, so always find time to stop and consider what you are writing and whether it adds anything to your description.

- 5 Re-read your description from Activity 4. What verb choices did you make? Can you replace any of them with more powerful and effective verbs?

Positioning a character in a setting

Good writers do not simply list the features of a character to tell their readers about them. Instead, by describing the character doing something or behaving in a certain way, the writer reveals the character’s personality and actions. One way to bring a character to life is to place them in an interesting setting, or a place that reflects their personality or puts them under pressure. As in real life, people behave differently when faced with a challenge or difficulty. Their characteristics and attitudes emerge, which can add drama to a description. The difficulty you describe does not have to be extreme; often familiar events can lead to some interesting writing. For example, a description of a boy walking home from school could lead to an interesting descriptive piece if he is caught in a sudden rainstorm.

- 6 Read the extract below, from a story called ‘Lottie’, which is set in London. When you have read the extract, briefly summarise your impressions of the character Lottie to a partner.

Text 8.4

It was 7 a.m. on a cold London morning when Lottie galloped out of the taxi. As she did so, the hem of her shockingly pink jacket got caught in the car door. Lottie could see what was going to happen next, but she was powerless to stop it. The car started to move. Lottie thumped on the car window and yelled, her large mouth open, exposing an array



of perfect whiteness except for a smear of pink lipstick on one front tooth. The taxi driver was unaware. He'd turned the radio up and was singing along happily.

Fortunately for Lottie, London traffic was nearly always gridlocked, so the taxi wasn't moving very quickly. And so she found herself trotting slowly alongside the taxi in her expensive pink shoes as it moved down Euston Road. The further she went, the more the pink hair that she'd spent so long arranging before she left the house blew out of place, creating a brightly coloured nest. Other drivers were trying to attract the taxi driver's attention. Lottie felt a mixture of fear and embarrassment. She grimaced as a group of schoolchildren laughed and waved at her from the pavement.

As the taxi sped up, Lottie's feet started to slip out of those expensive pink shoes. With one hand she held the handle of the car door. The other hand clutched her bag, trying desperately to stop her work documents falling out. She'd spent the whole weekend preparing them. Suddenly, the driver realised what was happening and braked sharply. Lottie kept her balance, but the precious papers fell from her bag onto the road below and drifted off on the breeze.

- 7 In pairs, look more closely at the way Lottie is described. What different effects are created by the following details:
- a the use of the verbs 'galloped', 'thumped', 'trotting' and 'grimaced'
 - b the descriptions of her hair and clothing
 - c the situation she is placed in – is this a comic event or a serious one?
- 8 Practise writing about a character in an interesting situation. Choose one of the following options:
- a girl preparing to go to a new school for the first time
 - a wealthy businessman eating an ice cream.

Write about 120 words. Choose verbs that help to suggest character and find subtle ways to tell your reader about the character's appearance and personality. Before you start, re-read the descriptions of the characters in Texts 8.3 and 8.4. The pictures below may also give you some inspiration.

WRITING TIP

Check your writing

Re-reading your work after you have drafted it is an important part of the writing process. Reading it aloud is often more effective than reading it in your head. Even better – ask a partner to read it aloud. This can alert you to any phrasing or punctuation issues as well as content ideas.



- 9 Swap your descriptive paragraph with a partner and take turns reading your character descriptions aloud. Listen carefully to your own work and together decide whether the description:
- reveals the characters' appearance and personality – can you picture them?
 - uses verbs in an effective way
 - offers enough description but not too much action.

Describing people you know

For some descriptive tasks you may need to write about a person you know. It is often easier to write about real people than imagined ones, but many of the techniques you have learnt about describing imagined characters can still be used.

- 10 In pairs, discuss your ideas for the following task. Who would you describe and what would you write?

Describe a person who is important to you. [25 marks]

- 11 Here is Mona's response to the task in Activity 10. Read it and make notes on:

- the things she shows her grandfather doing
- the details about his appearance
- why her grandfather is important to Mona.

My grandfather

My grandfather is an older man now, but he's still a very important person in my life. He lives with my family. Most mornings he can be found sitting in his favourite chair, the gentle sunlight streaming through the window and cascading down his face. He looks so content, his kindly, smooth hands holding the newspaper he loves to read. He is very good at crossword puzzles, his mind still as sharp as it ever was and he will happily give you an argument on any topic you choose.

He is the most well-dressed man I know. Even in the house he wears a suit with a matching tie and handkerchief in his top pocket. My grandmother told me that he once saved three months' wages to buy a pair of handmade shoes. He's a stylish man and still attracts people's attention when he walks through the town. On these outings he seems to glide along. He's very light on his feet. My mother told me he used to be a fine dancer when he was a young man, and I can imagine him elegantly moving

across a parquet dance floor in some glorious ballroom of yesteryear.

Sometimes, my grandfather falls asleep in the afternoon. I like secretly watching him when he does. He looks so peaceful. His shoulders relax, his breathing deepens and sometimes his eyes twitch as if he's remembering something from long ago. I imagine he's reliving some exciting adventure in some foreign place, or the time he travelled the world with nothing more than the clothes he stood up in. He's not always sitting down, however. When my little sister is in a mischievous mood, my grandfather springs into life and plays like he's a four-year-old boy. In that moment, his eyes twinkle and the years roll away. My grandfather is important to me because he is the centre of our home. He can make me laugh and is the most caring man I know. He's like a second father to me. He's the anchor that holds our ship steady.



- 12 In pairs, discuss and evaluate Mona's response. Use the following grid to help you. Is this a high level, mid-level or low level response?

High level	Mid-level	Low level
• complex content that appeals to the reader • coherent structure • wide range of vocabulary • wide range of accurate sentence structures • accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar	• relevant content that may interest the reader • generally well structured • straightforward vocabulary • range of generally accurate sentences • spelling, punctuation and grammar are mostly accurate	• short with simple content • some attempt to structure ideas • simple vocabulary • some simple sentences used • spelling, punctuation and grammar are sometimes accurate

- 13 Now write your own response to the task in Activity 10. Bear in mind all the techniques you have learnt in this chapter. Write 350–450 words.

PROJECT

In groups, you are going to make your own collection of excellent descriptive writing. Find printed and online texts that contain descriptions that really capture the sense of a place, an event or a person. You can use fiction or non-fiction texts. You could choose whole paragraphs or just sentences, but whatever you choose should be memorable and interesting. Each person in the group should find three examples. Once you have made your selections, copy them into a printed or electronic document that you can share with the rest of the class. The purpose of this project is to provide your class with writing that inspires them. Use pictures to make the document attractive and memorable.



EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

EITHER

Describe a time when you were surprised by someone or something.

OR

Describe a friend or sibling and what they mean to you. (25 marks)

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How confident do you feel about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter?
Rate yourself from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident), then answer the question to prove it.

Now I can . . .	Confidence rating (1–5)	Prove it
use figurative language to describe places, events and people		Using examples, explain how you can use figurative language in your descriptive writing.
use different points of view and perspectives		Explain the difference between first-person and third-person writing and the effects each creates.
plan and think of ideas for descriptive writing		Give three ways you could plan and generate ideas when you plan descriptive writing.
write a variety of engaging opening sentences		Give three different ways you could write an opening sentence.
use sense descriptions to develop the content of my writing		Using examples, explain how you could use visual, aural and tactile images in your writing.
make effective verb choices to describe characters		Write three sentences about a character using a different verb in each one to suggest the character's personality or actions.



› Chapter 9

Narrative writing

LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- use different techniques to generate and plan story ideas
- write a range of different story openings
- use different sentence types for variety
- create engaging characters and give them dialogue
- use different techniques to shape and structure a story
- write effective story endings.



> Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn techniques to develop your narrative writing skills. You will practise different ways to tell and structure stories, explore how to write openings and endings, and learn how to create effects such as tension.

GETTING STARTED

In groups, tell each other **anecdotes** – short stories about things that have happened to you or people you know. For example, your anecdote could be something funny that happened to you as a child, a scary event or something mysterious. As you tell your anecdote, focus on delivering it in a way that keeps your listeners interested.

KEY TERM

anecdote: a short account of an interesting or humorous incident

SKILLS FOCUS

Narrative writing is a composition task, which assesses specific reading and writing skills. In a single response, you will need to:

- express thoughts, feelings and imagined situations
- use appropriate structures for your response
- use a range of appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures
- make accurate spelling, punctuation and vocabulary choices.

> 9.1 Generating and planning story ideas

At its simplest, a story can be defined as a series of connected events – a sequence of things that a character experiences. Here are four common aspects of stories.

They focus on a main character and how that character develops or changes over time.

The main character faces a problem or challenge.

There is a significant event or moment that alters how the character acts or feels.

The events of the story build to an ending which is either happy or sad.

- 1 In pairs, make a list of three stories you have enjoyed that fit the patterns on the previous page. They could be from novels, plays, films or TV shows. Then discuss the details of the stories using the following questions.
 - Why did you find them interesting – was it the characters, events or something else?
 - What type of problem or challenge did the character face and how did they overcome it?
 - What was the most exciting, sad or dramatic moment in the story?
 - Were you surprised by the ending or not?



Getting creative

Ideas are at the heart of stories: the starting point for any narrative text is a basic idea about a character or event. Yet many people, even the best writers, can experience ‘writer’s block’ – the inability to come up with a workable, interesting idea for a story. It can also be difficult to think of completely *original* ideas. However, always remember that your ideas do not have to be entirely original – most stories are based on familiar ideas or character types. The key is to present them in new ways. Sometimes, a picture, a character name or a setting can spark an idea for a story.

- 2 In pairs, talk about what stories could be generated from Figure H. Consider the following questions.
 - a Who is the man? What job does he do, how old is he, what sort of character is he – hero or villain?
 - b Why is he there in the middle of the night? Why has he stopped? Where has he been? Where will he go next?
 - c What is/was in the boot of his car?
 - d Is this an image from the beginning, middle or end of a story? What happens before/after?

In the Getting started activity, you concentrated on keeping your reader interested as you told an anecdote. Remember that storytelling is about entertainment. Your aim is to keep your reader interested and help them connect emotionally with your writing. You can engage your reader in various ways – for example, by manipulating their sympathy for a character, creating a sense of mystery, introducing danger or using humour.



Figure H

Planning a story is an essential part of the writing process. You may remember from Chapter 6 that the simplest way to write a story plan is to think about the beginning, middle and end of the narrative. Reducing the main events to a series of brief statements can help you develop a clear sense of what happens. Later in this chapter you will look at story structure in more detail, but for now think of a plan as a basic account of a character or situation as it develops or is changed.

Beginning	the introduction of a character/situation
Middle	something happens to suggest mystery, or a problem(s) creates difficulty for the character
End	how the problem is (or is not) resolved

Here is a student's outline plan for a story based on Figure H:

- Man parks on isolated road at night.
- He seems mysterious – switches headlights and phone off then climbs out of car.
- Reader given hints that there is something valuable in the boot that he can only use at night.
- Police car arrives.
- Police seem suspicious, man looks worried.
- He is made to open the boot.
- It's revealed that there's a telescope in the boot – man is a stargazer.

- 3 In pairs, look again at Figure H and discuss what you think is the main source of interest generated by the picture. Then, using your discussion, work together to plan a story outline inspired by the picture.

WRITING TIP

Start at the end

When planning a story, you might find it useful to begin by deciding what happens to your character by the *end* of the story: do they succeed or fail? From that point you can work backwards in your planning to decide the stages on their journey through the story.

- 4 There are other ways to generate ideas for stories and to improve your creative skills. Sometimes an interesting opening line, a character description or basic plot idea can generate a story idea. In groups, brainstorm some ideas based on these starting points.

Opening lines

- They eventually found her diary locked in a cupboard.
- His voice sounded happier than ever as he answered the phone.
- Everyone has secrets.

Character descriptions

- Geoff, a very wealthy but cruel young man.
- Sinhala, a teenage girl with an amazing talent.
- Abbas, a highly intelligent but very shy boy.

Basic plot idea

- A secret recording has been made that could cause serious problems.
- Two very competitive brothers have an argument.
- Two former friends meet each other for the first time in 20 years.



Choosing a genre

You will have been exposed to many stories during the course of your life. Every time you hear a news report, read a book, watch a TV show or listen to a friend's account of what they did last night, you are experiencing the art of storytelling. In doing so, you absorb the conventions of this form of expression and, in particular, the features of different genres, almost without realising it.

Knowledge of genre is a significant aid when writing stories: knowing the rules of a genre will not only give you ideas for your stories, but will also tell you what readers expect from them, especially from the ending. It can be satisfying to give readers what they are expecting, but you could equally decide to create an unexpected ending.

- 5 Copy and complete the table below to describe four key genres of narrative writing.

Genre	Central character(s)	Setting(s)	Typical events	Ending
Comedy	from a 'normal' background (rather than privileged or powerful) amusing and likeable resourceful	recognisable, 'normal' places such as family homes or workplaces	character faces a series of problems often the character falls in love funny situations and mistakes	happy ending – the character achieves their ambition or succeeds in some way
Tragedy				
Mystery				
Fantasy				

- 6 When you looked at Figure H in Activity 2, you may have immediately thought of a mystery story. This is a perfectly good idea and could work very well. But sometimes less obvious choices can be more interesting.

In pairs, write down three ideas for a story based on Figure I. They should be based on the genres of:

- a mystery
- b romance
- c fantasy.

Which idea do you prefer and why?

- 7 Choose any of the ideas from this session, or an idea of your own, and write a story based on it. See this as a way of understanding your current strengths as a writer and which areas you could develop more. Start by planning a story outline. Decide on a title when you have finished writing. Write about 300 words.



Figure I

REFLECTION

Think about the process you experienced as you wrote your story.

- What did you enjoy about it?
- What did you find difficult?
- Which aspects of story writing would you like to practise more?

> 9.2 Story openings

The opening of a story usually introduces a situation or character – it sets up the plot. It is important to engage the reader and capture their interest in the opening paragraph, so focus on presenting information in an interesting or unusual way. Always remember that your aim is to keep the reader reading!

Creating mystery and intrigue

One method of opening a story is to orientate the reader by giving them a sense of place and/or character.

- 1 Read the opening to a short story called ‘Sunset on Massamba’ and make brief notes on:
 - a what you find out about place and character
 - b what, if anything, makes you want to read the next part of the story.

Text 9.1

As the sun slowly dropped in the sky, it cast a red glow over the rooftops of Kinshasa. The rosy light found its way inside the cramped attic room on Massamba, where Emmanuel sat at his desk, his pen hovering over an empty sheet of paper. Normally, he liked writing letters; he was, after all, an author and made a living from writing. But this letter was different. If he phrased it wrongly, the consequences could be serious for many people – terrible, in fact. But, thought Emmanuel, as far as he was concerned that wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing. In fact, it might be a good thing and could make him very wealthy indeed. A plan started to form in his head.

The text above shows how a sense of intrigue can be effective in an opening paragraph – teasing your reader with the idea that there is something they do not know is a good way to create interest in a story. You can create an even greater sense of mystery by withholding more information. In Text 9.1, a number of questions are raised about the situation that arouse the reader's interest. For example, why is the letter so important? What ‘terrible consequences’ will it lead to? What plan is Emmanuel hatching and why?

- 2 Another way to intrigue your reader is through using **pronouns** to withhold information. In pairs, read the opening of a story called 'Lost Things' below and discuss:
- a where the pronouns 'it', 'they' and 'she' are used in the text
 - b how these pronouns help to engage the reader.

Text 9.2

It only moved when night fell. They had been looking all day for it, with no luck. Even the heat-seeking device couldn't locate it. It was too small and too good at hiding. Slowly, it emerged from the undergrowth in the darkness and looked cautiously into the gloom. They had gone. It started to make its way south across the rutted field, pausing frequently. At the other end of the telescope, a woman held her breath. She had found it. Finally.

KEY TERMS

pronoun: a word that stands in for a noun to avoid repetition; pronouns can be subject personal pronouns ('I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'it', 'we', 'they'), object personal pronouns ('me', 'you', 'him', 'her', 'it', 'us', 'them') or possessive pronouns ('mine', 'yours', 'his', 'hers', 'ours', 'theirs', 'its')

in medias res: literally 'in the middle of things' – when a story starts without preamble, in the middle of a plot

Starting in the middle

Stories often start 'quietly' – they introduce characters and set the scene before the plot develops to include conflicts and problems. However, some writers take a different approach and start their story **in medias res**, as if the reader is joining part-way through a narrative.

- 3 Read Text 9.3, another short story opening. In pairs, discuss the following questions:
- Do you find openings like this, *in medias res*, effective? Why, or why not?
 - You have read three different story openings in this section. Which do you prefer? Explain your reasons.

Text 9.3

The whole thing collapsed. Afterwards, I tried to explain to the authorities what had happened next, but it remains a blur. Certain things stand out, of course: the loud crack, the sirens and then the dust, but otherwise, I think I blanked out the rest. I didn't know it at the time, but I was lucky. We all were. No one was injured, but what happened that day changed all of our lives for ever.

- 4 Text 9.4 is the opening of 'The Reservoir', a short story by Janet Frame. It is set in New Zealand during the summer holidays and is told from a child's point of view. Read the text, then discuss the following in pairs:
- a the approaches and techniques used to introduce the setting and situation
 - b what the time setting (a very hot summer holiday) adds to the story
 - c the hints of danger and potential problems
 - d what this opening leads you to expect will happen in the rest of the story – how does the writer hint at possible future events and problems?

Text 9.4

The Reservoir was the end of the world; beyond it, you fell; beyond it were paddocks of thorns, strange cattle, strange farms, legendary people whom we would never know or recognize even if they walked among us on a Friday night downtown. [...] The Reservoir haunted our lives. We never knew one until we came to this town; we had used pump water. But here, in our new house, the water ran from the taps as soon as we turned them on, and if we were careless and left them on, our father would shout, as if the affair were his personal concern, 'Do you want the Reservoir to run dry?' That frightened us. What should we do if the Reservoir ran dry? Would we die of thirst [...]?

[...] At times, there would be news in the paper, discussed by my mother with the neighbours over the back fence. Children had been drowned in the Reservoir. 'No child,' the neighbour would say, 'ought to be allowed near the Reservoir.' 'I tell mine to keep strictly away,' my mother would reply.

And for so long we obeyed our mother's command, on our favourite walks along the gully simply following the [...] creek which we loved and which flowed day and night in our heads in all its detail – the wild sweet peas, boiled-lolly pink, and the mint growing along the banks [...]. We knew where the water was shallow and could be paddled in, where forts could be

made from the rocks; we knew the frightening deep places where the eels lurked and the weeds were tangled in gruesome shapes; we knew the jumping places, the mossy stones with their dangers, limitations, and advantages; the sparkling places where the sun trickled beside the water, upon the stones; the bogs made by roaming cattle, trapping some of them to death; their gaunt telltale bones; the little valleys with their new growth of lush grass where the creek had 'changed its course', and no longer flowed. [...]

For so long, then, we obeyed our parents, and never walked as far as the Reservoir. Other things concerned us, other curiosities, fears, challenges. The school year ended. [...]. High summer came. [...] The days became unbearably long and hot. [...] We swam. We wore bathing togs all day. [...] Everything exhausted us. Cracks appeared in the earth; the grass was bled yellow, the ground was littered with beetle shells and snail shells; flies came in from the unofficial rubbish-dump at the back of the house [...]. The days were still long, with night face to face with morning and almost nothing in-between but a snatch of turning sleep with the blankets on the floor and the windows wide open to moths with their bulging lamplit eyes moving through the dark.

From 'The Reservoir' by Janet Frame

- 5 Read the three tasks below. Write the first paragraph of a response to each task, using a different opening technique for each one.

A: Write a story featuring a fast car journey.

B: Write a story set in the future.

C: Write a story in which an older person makes an amazing discovery.



LANGUAGE FOCUS: VARYING SENTENCES

In Chapter 4, you explored how compound and complex sentence structures could be used in summary writing. Using a variety of sentence structures is key to effective descriptive and narrative writing too. Mixing up all different types of sentences – minor, simple, compound and complex – will add interest to your writing and can be used to create different effects.

Look at this example from Text 9.2:

- They had gone. It started to make its way south across the rutted field, pausing frequently. At the other end of the telescope, a woman held her breath. She had found it. Finally.

Notice how the short, simple sentences 'They had gone' and 'She had found it' are used at points of increased tension or mystery. The compound and complex sentences add detail, and the final minor sentence is an effective way to break the usual rules of writing to create an intriguing effect. Together, the combination of sentence types add a rhythm to the story. The variety provides interest for the reader and contributes to the drama of the events.

As you practise your narrative writing skills, try to introduce this kind of variety, always considering carefully what kind of effect you want a sentence or paragraph to have on your reader.

- 6 Look back at Texts 9.1 and 9.3. In pairs, identify the different sentence types in each opening and how they have been used to create certain effects.
- 7 Re-read the openings that you wrote in response to Activity 5. How effectively have you varied your sentences? Try rewriting your paragraphs, experimenting with the placement of different types of sentences. Show your finished draft to a partner and ask them for some feedback on the effectiveness of your choices. Do they add anything to the feel of the story?

> 9.3 Characters and situations

Characters are the driving force of stories – in a good narrative, a reader is always interested in what happens to the main character. Most of the time, main characters are ‘good’ characters – they embody moral values or have some positive qualities that the reader responds to and identifies with.

Writing engaging characters

It is important that you create and develop your own characters so your reader engages with them and wants to know what happens to them in the end.

- 1 In pairs, discuss characters from stories or films that you found engaging. Talk about the following:
 - What made you interested in the character.
 - Your main emotional response to the character. Did you find them amusing? Did you pity them or feel scared for them?

Share your thoughts with the class.

As in real life, characters in stories often have flaws – things about them that are less admirable. For example, in *Macbeth*, William Shakespeare shows how the central character is loyal and brave, but he is also ambitious, and his ambition leads him to commit terrible acts.

Having a main character with a flaw can be a useful way of bringing them to life and making them more believable. Most people recognise feelings of jealousy or anger, and a flawed character can be more interesting than one who is simply good. However, always be careful to make sure your flawed characters have redeeming features – if your reader does not like your main character, they will lose interest in the story.

- 2 Note down some possible story ideas for the characters below. What situations might they find themselves in, and what stories could result?
 - a A young man who cares deeply for the environment. He is generally kind and well-liked, but can be very stubborn and confrontational at times.
 - b A teenage girl who is incredibly intelligent but very loud and abrasive.
 - c A happy and popular student who has a tendency to be lazy and sometimes forgetful.



Choosing a situation for your character

As with descriptive writing, placing a character in an unusual or stressful situation can result in interesting stories. Some characters are ‘outsiders’ – they feel that they do not belong in the situations they find themselves in. The feeling of being out of place is one everybody recognises and it can evoke strong emotions.

- 3 In pairs, write down some ideas for stories that might be generated by the following scenarios. Think about how a story could develop and how it could end.
- a A teenage student has to move to a school in a different part of the country. At his new school, everybody acts and speaks a little differently to him.
 - b A quiet, shy girl has been sent by her parents to study drama after school. As part of her studies, she has to perform on stage.
 - c A young teacher wants to teach lessons in a lively, unusual way, but the head teacher has warned him not to.
- 4 Write a paragraph outlining the plot of a story featuring a character who feels out of place. Give a brief account of:
- the main character
 - the situation they find themselves in
 - what happens in the main part of the story
 - how the story ends.

Creating conflict

Conflict is an essential part of any story. Without a conflict or a problem, there is nothing to drive the character. Some conflicts are based on situation, such as a teenager facing an important and difficult exam, but often stories feature conflict between the main character (sometimes called the **protagonist**) and an **antagonist** – a ‘bad’ character who temporarily prevents the protagonist achieving their aims.

- 5 In pairs, write down the following:
- A list of antagonists you know of from books and films.
 - The qualities of each antagonist – what makes the reader or viewer dislike them?
 - The ways in which they cause problems for the protagonist.
 - What happens to the protagonist and antagonist at the end of the story.

Characters are largely presented by how they act and what they do, so there will be times when you need to describe an antagonist and suggest their negative qualities. Look at this description of a woman called Miss Murdstone from Charles Dickens’ novel *David Copperfield*.

Text 9.5

It was Miss Murdstone who [...] arrived, and a gloomy-looking lady she was; dark [...] and with very heavy eyebrows, nearly meeting over her large nose [...]. She brought with her two uncompromising hard black boxes, with her initials on the lids in hard brass nails. When she paid the coachman she took her money out of a hard steel purse, and she kept the purse in a very jail of a bag which hung upon her arm by a heavy chain, and shut up like a bite. I had never [...] seen such a metallic lady [...] as Miss Murdstone [...].

Adapted from *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens

KEY TERMS

protagonist: the main character in a story – the one who is trying to achieve something or overcome a problem

antagonist: the character who opposes the main character or causes a problem, often a ‘bad’ character

- 6 In pairs, discuss the effect of the following aspects of this description. How do they contribute to a reader's understanding that this is an antagonist?
- the way Miss Murdstone's physical appearance is described
 - the references to hardness
 - any language techniques used.
- 7 Write a paragraph in which you describe an antagonist. Start by thinking about their appearance and clothing, and decide on a situation to place them in. Perhaps they are simply walking down a street, driving a car or confronting a protagonist. Write about 80 words.



Using dialogue

LANGUAGE FOCUS: DIALOGUE

Dialogue is a useful device in storytelling. Not only does it show the way characters talk and what they say, it can also help to tell a story – key information is often revealed through dialogue. Consider these two versions of the same event from a story:

- A** Alain looked at Dan and Pietro. He told them he was leaving the band. For a moment, they were silent, then they got angry.
- B** 'There's no easy way to say this,' said Alain, as he looked at Dan and Pietro.
- 'Say what?' Dan replied, his voice suddenly nervous.
- 'I'm done,' murmured Alain. For a moment, all was silent.
- 'What?' exploded Pietro, as a dam of anger burst in him.

Although both versions describe the same event, they have different effects.

Version A is much more compact. This kind of dialogue is effective if you want to create an air of tension and mystery – to withhold information from your reader.

Version B is more detailed and uses direct speech. It tells the reader the precise words the character uses and reveals the way those words are spoken. The choice of **speech tags** and reporting verbs (for example, 'he said', 'murmured Alain', 'exploded Pietro') can help to suggest characters' personalities and emotions.

When using dialogue in your narrative, it is important to punctuate it accurately. Remember to:

- put a new speaker on a new line
- put the words spoken inside speech marks
- capitalise the first letter inside the speech marks
- include a punctuation mark before the closing speech mark.

KEY TERMS

dialogue: conversation between two or more people or characters, written as direct speech

speech tags: the verbs and adverbs used to describe the way characters speak in direct speech



- 8 Practise using dialogue to tell a story by rewriting the following paragraph. It is told by a narrator called Emma. Switch to the third person and report the dialogue between Miss Derby and Emma. Before you start, remind yourself of the rules for using direct speech, especially where punctuation marks are placed.

I ran all the way to school but still arrived a minute late, panting and soaked to the skin by the downpour. Miss Derby stood at the gate. She was not happy. She reminded me of all my other misdemeanours and although I tried to explain what had happened, she didn't want to listen. I groaned inwardly when she told me what my punishment would be.

WRITING TIP

Choose reporting verbs carefully

Be careful not to use too many varied reporting verbs and speech. Very often, 'said' is a simple choice that is most appropriate. Use more adventurous speech tags when they are needed. There are also times when no speech tag is needed at all, especially when it is clear who is talking. A lot of writers omit speech tags to speed up the dialogue at moments of tension.

> 9.4 The art of storytelling

The words 'narrative' and 'story' are often used interchangeably, but there is a key difference between them. Story refers to the events that take place, whereas narrative is about how the story is told. When you do narrative writing, you are concentrating on the art of storytelling: the *way* you tell a story.

Shaping a story

In the Getting started activity at the beginning of this chapter, you focused on keeping your listener interested as you told an anecdote. This is a key part of narrative writing – shaping the events to entertain your reader. The following four-stage structure is a useful starting point when planning the phrases of a narrative:

Exposition: The opening of the story, where a setting, characters (and sometimes a problem) are introduced.

Complication: A problem is made worse or where tension increases.

Climax: The point in a story when the tension or drama reaches its peak.

Resolution: the part where events are brought to an end and things are settled.

You should think carefully about the *order* of events. Often writers present the events in the order they happen, but sometimes they deliberately play with the order. For example, they might start with a dramatic moment (perhaps *in medias res*) and then go back in time to recount the events that led up to it. This technique is known as a **flashforward**.

Another key decision is which events are the most significant – which will you focus on? These will probably be the moments of drama, and you may find that other things only require a brief mention or no mention at all. For example, in a story about a disastrous event, you will probably want to spend most time on the build-up and moment of disaster, and little or no time explaining what the character involved in that disaster had for breakfast!

When shaping your story, consider things from the reader's position. What do you want them to know, focus on and feel at different points? For example, many stories rely on the management of tension – that is, the writer deliberately includes details or events that gradually build and make the reader increasingly concerned for the main character. To do this effectively, a writer will establish a problem in a story and keep returning to it, adding just a little more danger, worry or jeopardy each time.

At some point in your story, the tension must be released. In short stories, this usually happens near the end, when the plot either resolves in a positive outcome or a more negative and tragic ending. (You will see an example of this later in the chapter.)

KEY TERM

flashforward: part of a story that goes forward in time to show something that happens at a future time

WRITING TIP

Make your story immediate

Longer stories may take a while to build the drama; however, on your Cambridge O Level English Language course, your narrative writing will usually be shorter. So, it may be a better approach to make your story immediate – shape it so the problems are established quickly and the main part concerns how things are (or are not) resolved.



1 Look at this narrative writing task.

Write a story set in a large building. Write 350–450 words. [25 marks]

In pairs, brainstorm some ideas. Talk about:

- who the main character(s) could be
 - in what type of large building you might set the story
 - what would happen
 - what the dramatic or unexpected event could be.
- 2 Now read 'The Hospital', a sample student's response to this task. After you have read it, make some notes on:
- a the main events in the story – summarise what happens in each paragraph
 - b the roles of the four characters – which ones are most important and how they develop in the story
 - c your thoughts about the way the story is shaped – the parts you found engaging and why
 - d suggestions for how the story could be improved.

Compare your notes with a partner.

The Hospital

We walked down the hospital corridor again. I looked at my mother and father as we walked silently down those long, white passages. My dad was deep in thought and my mother looked like she hadn't slept. We were all worried. My grandmother had been in hospital for two weeks now and we had visited her every day. I just hoped she would come home soon, but none of us really thought that was likely.

Before we entered the ward, a doctor stopped us. He was tall and had a serious face. He told us that he'd like to speak to all of us together soon and said he would come to my grandmother's bed. My father thanked him and the doctor walked off quickly down the long corridor. I could see tears starting in my mother's eyes, so I held her hand and we went through the door and into the ward.

My grandmother was sleeping. She looked old and frail. We sat quietly and didn't really know what to say to each other. Before long, the doctor reappeared.

'Your grandmother is fine,' he said. 'She can go home.'

We looked at each other and smiled. It was great news. We had been fearing the worst. My grandmother woke up. She must have sensed our happiness. Once she was dressed, we took her home.



The process of redrafting

As a developing writer, you should expect to redraft and improve your stories. The easiest type of redrafting involves proofreading and changing minor phrases. However, if you feel like these kind of changes are not having the effect you want, you may need to consider rearranging the structure of your story to give it more impact.

- 3 The example of a student's narrative in Activity 2 is competent. It is clearly phrased and tells a story with a clear structure. It is narrated in the first person and in **chronological sequence**. However, it could be improved. Read 'The Hospital' again and complete the following tasks in pairs.
 - Identify the four story phases (exposition, complication, climax, resolution).
 - Discuss how effectively each of these phases has been written – which ones seem less well developed?
- 4 Here is the advice the teacher gave to the student in order to improve:

I liked the idea of this story. You have written clear and accurate English. You could improve the content and structure of this story by doing the following:

- Spend some time improving your description of setting, characters and feelings. Use some of the techniques you learnt about descriptive writing.
- Try to give your story more shape – you could use some repeated phrases or non-chronological features such as a **flashback**.
- Spend more time building the tension to a climax.

In pairs, discuss points 2 and 3 in the teacher's advice. Write down some ideas for the following.

- a A flashback in the story – what could you include in the story that explains something in the past (before the events described in the story)?
 - b Building the tension – how could you make the story seem more dramatic and make the reader feel more worried for the grandmother?
- 5 Here is a redrafted version of the story. Notice how the student has changed the title to 'The Corridors', which is more mysterious than 'The Hospital', and which is used as a repeated idea throughout the writing. In pairs, read the redrafted story and note down the other key differences and improvements between this version and the earlier draft.

KEY TERMS

chronological sequence: presented in the order in which the events occurred by time

flashback: a part of a story set in a time earlier than the main story

The Corridors

The corridors seemed to go on forever. We had walked along them so many times in the last two weeks. [1]

And every time I walked down these corridors, I always felt as if I was being squeezed through a long, dark tube. The air was heavy with the institutional scent of tasteless dinners mixed with anonymous medical smells. At the end of the corridor was a ward that I just didn't want to enter. I suppose I was frightened to think what the future might hold. We all were. Especially today. For today was the moment when the doctor would give us the test results. [2]

We walked on in silence. My mother looked careworn. Her eyes heavy and shoulders slumped, she had the look of a woman who had been broken but was trying to be strong, probably for my benefit. My father's face was inscrutable. He was play-acting, trying to be the strong father figure holding the family together, but I knew as I looked into his blue eyes that inside, he was worried. We walked on in silence. There was nothing to say we hadn't said already about the tests and what they could mean. [3]

We entered the ward and there she was. My beautiful grandmother, sleeping. Her thin, grey hair was swept back over her face and her breathing was laboured. I saw the doctor at the other end of the ward. He looked across but neither smiled nor acknowledged us. It seemed to me that time was slowing down and the nurses all knew something. [4]

When I was eight, my grandmother took me on holiday. Like most childhood memories, I remember it as a series of images and feelings preserved in time: the blinding sunlight on the beach; the red-hot pavements; the scent of foods I never ate at home; the sunset of the final evening. My grandmother was at the heart of everything when I was young. And now here she was, in a warm, sterile room facing . . . well, who knew what. [5]

As the doctor sat down, his body language was constrained. He perched on a plastic chair and made brief small talk with my parents. To me, his voice sounded like it was coming down the end of a long tunnel. I couldn't focus on what he was saying. I do remember him opening a folder and pointing to some scans.

And then he told us. My mother said something and shed a tear.

I remember that part vividly. I don't think I'll ever forget his rich, deep voice giving us the news we had longed for. [6]

Sometimes, corridors seem to go on forever. But eventually, journeys end and new ones begin. We had walked these particular corridors so many times in the last two weeks. But this time, we emerged into crisp sunlight. Alongside me was my gran. [7]

[1] I like the way you start with this description of setting and repeat it at the end – it gives the story a sense of circularity.

[2] There's some effective sense description here and you have started to build the tension about the test results.

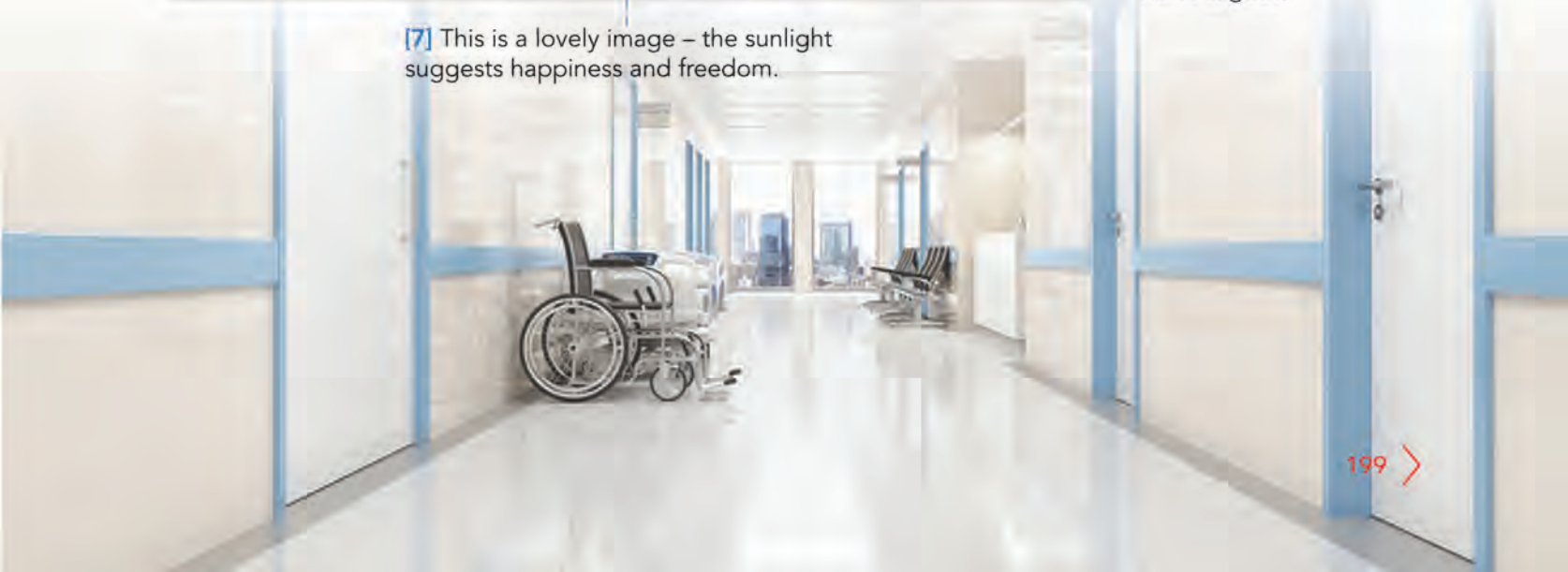
[3] The characterisation of the parents works well here and the growing tension is effective.

[4] There's a good contrast between the sleeping grandmother, the distant doctor and the narrator's worries about what comes next.

[5] This is a really effective flashback that helps to characterise the grandmother and the narrator's relationship with her. It helps the reader understand the narrator's feelings even better.

[6] I like the way you have introduced the happy ending, using a series of short sentences and a subtle confirmation that the news is good.

[7] This is a lovely image – the sunlight suggests happiness and freedom.



- 6 Read the teacher's annotations on 'The Corridors'. Make sure you understand why the teacher is impressed. Notice particularly how the flashback adds some detail about the relationship between the narrator and her grandmother, and helps to increase sympathy. You should also pay attention to the way the tension increases each time the results or the doctor are mentioned. The tension is only released in the penultimate paragraph.

Use the annotations here to write a list of useful tips and reminders about the ideas and techniques for shaping a successful story. Refer back to these tips as you complete the next activities.

Practising your storytelling skills

Look at the brief plan below for a story called 'The Letter'.

The Letter – story plan

- A boy is waiting for a letter containing very important information.
- The letter is accidentally delivered to a neighbour's house.
- Eventually, the boy receives the letter and opens it.

- 7 In pairs, write down some ideas for different ways in which you could tell this story. Consider:
- a the person and perspective you could write from
 - b how you could develop and describe the characters and setting
 - c ways you could build tension
 - d any ways to make the structure interesting
 - e what feelings might emerge at the end of the story.

WRITING TIP

Plan your perspective

When planning which person and perspective to write from, think about how it affects the level of knowledge the characters and reader have. For instance, if you choose to write in the first person, always consider what that character (and reader) knows about a situation at different points in the story.

- 8 Write a 350–450-word story using your ideas for 'The Letter' or another idea of your own. Remember to structure the story in a way that engages the reader. Refer to the ideas and tips you noted down in Activity 7.
- 9 In pairs, read each other's stories and give feedback on:
- which parts are most engaging
 - the way the story has been structured
 - the accuracy of spelling and phrasing.

WRITING TIP

Write fluently

Remember that your fluency of expression – the way you say things – is as important as your ideas. Always find time to check and proofread your spelling and phrasing. Correcting and redrafting your work with a dictionary and others' feedback is an essential part of becoming a better writer.



> 9.5 More about narration

In Section 9.4, you learnt how to structure a story. You also considered how to increase tension and use flashbacks. In this section, you will look in more detail at ways to control and sequence a narrative.

Narrowing your story

It can be challenging to tell a whole story in under 500 words. In a full novel, writers have the opportunity to develop several major and minor characters, include a variety of events, and tell a story spread across several years and settings. Obviously it is not advisable to try and do all that in a short story! Here is some advice about short story writing.

Focus on a key moment – tell the story of a certain point in time.
Use flashbacks to fill in information.

Make a plan and then ask yourself if there is a specific part of the story you could focus on – cut your plan down if necessary.

Only feature one main character – two at most. If you do bring in other characters, make sure they are only minimally involved.

Focus on one or two main settings and quickly establish the first setting – let the reader picture the scene early in the story.

Use dialogue sparingly – only when it really helps the story.

Essentially, it is sensible to 'narrow' your story – choosing to focus on one interesting or dramatic idea.

- 1 Here is a student's plan for a piece of narrative writing, in response to the task of writing a story containing the line 'Finally, we went home.' In pairs, discuss the student's plan.

- Which part of the story would it be best to focus on?
- How could they tell the story?

	Story plan (genre: fantasy)
	• Twins have been separated in a shipwreck.
	• One twin (female) arrives in a strange but friendly land.
	• The other twin (male) is missing.
	• Several years pass and the female twin remains on the island.
	• By chance, the male twin arrives at the island.
	• The twins are reunited.

- 2 Now plan your own story that contains the sentence 'Finally, we went home'. Before you start, remind yourself of the advice at the beginning of this section, then use what you have learnt in the whole chapter so far to help you plan – for example, think about genre and typical story patterns.

Once you have an overall idea, try to narrow it – decide where the most interesting focus of the story is and how you can tell it. Write a bullet-point outline for your story and brief notes about characters and setting.

- 3 In groups, present your story plans to each other. Take time to explain the idea, setting and characters. Justify your ideas to the group; explain why you made the choices you did. Give each other feedback, particularly on:
- what the most interesting part of the story is
 - whether the story is narrow enough to be written in under 500 words.

Withholding information

As well as deciding what information to reveal, you need to decide what you *do not* tell your reader. Withholding information is part of the art of telling a story (look back to Section 9.2). Information can be withheld from the reader until the resolution of a story. For example, a lot of mystery stories only reveal the secret at the very end.

As part of the process of shaping your story, you need to decide where the **revelations** occur – when to give more details to your reader. For example, here is what was revealed in each paragraph of the student's response 'The Corridors' from Section 9.4.

KEY TERM

revelation: the moment in a story where a piece of information is revealed to the reader



- The narrator was walking down a hospital corridor and someone was going to be given some test results.
 - You find out that the narrator is with their family and they are all worried about the results.
 - You discover that the person they are worried about is the narrator's grandmother and that the nurses probably know the test results.
 - The flashback scene reveals how close the narrator and their grandmother are.
 - The doctor arrives but nothing is immediately revealed.
 - The doctor gives the results but you are not told what they are.
 - You find out that the doctor has given good news to the family.
 - The family leaves and you find out the grandmother is leaving hospital too.
- 4 Read 'Behind the Walls' (Text 9.6), a short story set in the near future. Copy and complete the table, tracking what you find out in each paragraph and what information the writer withholds.

Paragraph	What the reader finds out	What is kept from the reader

Text 9.6

Behind the Walls

He was sure he could see it from where he sat. There, behind the walls. He'd read about that place in the Old Books. Well, that wasn't quite true. He'd heard about it from a Sensor who'd read about it in the Old Books. Obviously, that was before all the books had been burnt. Just before he had disappeared, his brother had become obsessed by the idea of getting behind the walls. But then Ezra vanished and he was brotherless. Brotherless. Was that even a word? It was how he defined himself these days. Still, a new life was possible ...

The bus rumbled on and Kai snapped back to reality. The guard at the front had sensed that someone was thinking Bad Thoughts. The technology wasn't so advanced that the guard could read his mind yet, but it could sense negative energy in a small space.

'Face forward and think Good Thoughts,' intoned the guard mechanically. The artificial eyes built into the guard's helmet flickered and scanned the bus, taking in the grey excuses for humanity that occupied the seats. Kai was one of those grey humans. Dressed in **monochrome** rags and part of the obedient workforce that took this same route every day, Kai gazed at the scenes outside the window. Concrete everywhere. Tall grey towers on the horizon belching out dark smoke. Nature was dead. But could that really be right? If what the Sensor had told him was true, then ... he tried

monochrome: in black and white

to put these thoughts from his mind for now, but there were the walls in the distance. Soon he'd know.

The bus pulled in to the station and the workers shuffled off, their helmets completely airtight to protect them from the **hazardous** air. Soon, they were inside the lift and preparing to go under the earth once more. Except Kai.

His escape had been planned **meticulously**. He'd memorised the air **ducts** and sewers from the map he had hidden behind the loose brick in his quarters. It was now or never. Death or glory. He would soon be behind the walls and then he'd know. In an hour, he'd know.

When he did emerge from the duct, he blinked in the golden sunlight. Was this it? He rubbed his eyes and then he knew. The beautiful trees were in blossom and the sound of birdsong filled the air. A stream trickled by and he felt warmth. Not just heat, but a sense of belonging.

'So you made it then,' said a voice. Kai looked up and saw Ezra sitting on a branch, smiling at him.

hazardous:
dangerous

meticulously: with
precision

duct: a tube or
passageway

- 5 In pairs, discuss the overall effect of the choices you listed in your table. How would the reader react at each stage of the story?

Writing a character's journey

One of the main structural decisions a writer makes is how to *use* their characters in the story. This means thinking about how a character progresses – the metaphorical journey that they go on, how they change and develop. However, many stories feature literal journeys too, where characters move from one place to another.

- 6 Think about the events shown in Text 9.6. Make notes on:
- The literal journey that Kai makes – how are the two settings represented?
 - The metaphorical journey that Kai makes – what is implied by the ending?
- 7 In Chapter 7, you looked at how colons and dashes can be used for effect in writing. Other forms of punctuation can also be used as storytelling devices. For example, look at the use of **ellipses** and **asterisks** in Text 9.6. How do they help to suggest situation and time? Discuss this with a partner.

KEY TERMS

ellipsis: a set of three dots (. . .) used to indicate that words have been left out

asterisk: a symbol (*) used in a text for a variety of reasons, including to indicate footnotes and to separate sections



8 Look at this writing task.

Write a story called 'The Escape'. Write 350–450 words. [25 marks]

Use your planning skills to devise a story that can be told in 350–450 words. Think about how and when you will reveal key information. Then write the full story.

WRITING TIP

Be literal or metaphorical

When you are given a title to work from, remember that you can treat the idea contained in it literally or metaphorically. Often, a metaphorical treatment of titles such as 'The Journey' or 'Abandoned' can lead to more subtle stories.



- 9 Share your story with a partner. Give each other feedback. Focus on:
- how engaging you found the story – did you want to read to the end?
 - how information was revealed – did it feel like revelations were given at the right time?

REFLECTION

How do you feel your narrative writing skills have developed? Which skills have improved and what has made the difference? Share your thoughts with a partner.

> 9.6 Endings

Readers come to expect certain types of ending. In general, story endings are either happy or sad. This rounding off of a story provides the reader with a definite sense of closure: they find out what happens to a character and feel that the story comes to an end, and no major questions or problems remain. The genre you choose to write in will often influence how a story ends. For example, in a fantasy story a reader would expect a character to eventually succeed in completing a quest of some kind and this sense of meeting expectation contributes to a feeling of satisfaction.

However, you might decide to entertain your reader by giving them an unexpected ending. For example, an open ending could be effective – one in which the plot is not fully resolved and some questions remain. Readers may feel curiously satisfied with this, as the story may stay with them and they may enjoy wondering what might happen to the character after the end of the events in the story. It is best to choose the type of ending that best fits the story you have told.

Building towards your endings

In this chapter, you have read two stories with uplifting endings. Here are the final sentences from them.

The Corridors

Sometimes, corridors seem to go on forever. But eventually, journeys end and new ones begin. We had walked these particular corridors so many times in the last two weeks. But this time, we emerged into crisp sunlight. Alongside me was my gran.

Behind the Walls

The beautiful trees were in blossom and the sound of birdsong filled the air. A stream trickled by and he felt warmth. Not just heat, but a sense of belonging.

'So you made it then,' said a voice. Kai looked up and saw Ezra sitting on a branch, smiling at him.

- 1 Write a short paragraph explaining how different types of image (visual, aural, tactile) help to create an uplifting feeling and sense of joy for the reader in each of these endings.

Endings may be unexpected or surprising, but the reader should always be *prepared* for them. This means making sure the main part of your story hints at the ending, even if things are left open. For example, it would feel very unsatisfying for an entirely new character to be introduced in the final paragraph who then solves all the problems or for the main character to wake up and discover they had been dreaming.

At the end of 'Behind the Walls', Kai finds a place of nature and is reunited with his brother. If this was completely unexpected, it would feel very strange and unsatisfying for a reader, so the writer has planted references and clues in the story to prepare for this ending:

- The title of the story suggests there is another place other than the main setting.
- The narrator tells the reader that Kai is looking for something – a mysterious place.
- The narrator's brother is mentioned in the middle of the text.
- Kai's sadness at his brother's disappearance is established.

A different type of ending, such as a **cliffhanger**, would have a completely different effect.

- 2 In pairs, read the alternative ending to 'Behind the Walls'. Discuss:

- the effect that is created
- whether you prefer this alternative version or the original.

The beautiful trees were in blossom and the sound of birdsong filled the air. A stream trickled by, but the warmth felt somehow artificial.

'So you made it then,' said a rasping voice. He looked up and saw Ezra slumped unconscious against a tree. The pair of guards on either side of his brother looked menacingly at Kai.

KEY TERM

cliffhanger: a dramatic ending that leaves the reader in suspense

Writing the last lines

The final sentences of a story are important, so it is worth spending time drafting them carefully. Whether a story ends happily, sadly or surprisingly, the final lines often have a sense of completion, as if the tale is being brought to a rest.

- 3 Read texts A–D, which are the final lines of different stories. In pairs, talk about:

- the feeling each example creates
- how words and images are used and the effects created
- the way in which sentence types contribute to the overall feeling.



A Once she reached home, she kicked off her boots and lay down on her bed. Before she knew it, she was asleep. She was finally safe.

B The plane climbed in the sky. He looked down at the green squares of land below as they became increasingly smaller. His eyes prickled. The woman he loved was somewhere down there. They'd never meet again.

C Irani stood on the banks and watched the sunlight glint on the slow-moving river. She did have a future after all.

D But just when he thought it was over, the door swung open. The ending was mercifully quick.

4 In this chapter, you have written three full stories. Look back at the endings of each of them and answer these questions.

- Have you prepared your reader for the ending?
- Do the final lines have a sense of completion?

5 Choose one of your three stories and redraft the ending. Polish your final lines so they have a sense of completion in the way that examples A–D have.

6 Use this final task to practise all the things you have learnt in this chapter. Your narrative should be 350–450 words long.

Write a story that includes the words 'He wasn't sure if he would ever return.'
[25 marks]

PROJECT

You are going to form a book group with three other class members. The purpose of the group is to discuss and introduce each other to interesting fiction, both short stories and novels. The first meeting will occur in a lesson, then you can decide how and where to carry on your group in your own time. For example, you could hold future meetings online or your teacher might suggest it as a homework activity.

For your first meeting, each group member should bring along a short story or novel that they have enjoyed. Take turns to introduce the novel and read a short section from it. Explain to the group why the story is engaging. Towards the end of the session, swap books and spend some time reading.

REFLECTION

Think about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter.

- What has been the most useful tip or skill you have learnt?
- Which has been your most successful story and why?
- What do you still need to work on to develop your narrative writing skills?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Use this task to practise the skills you have learnt in this chapter.
You should write 350–450 words.

Either: Write a story with the title 'Abandoned'.

Or: Write a story containing the sentence: 'When we finally arrived, it was such a disappointment'. (25 marks)

WRITING TIP

Key advice

Remember the following key advice for tackling narrative writing tasks:

- Spend time thinking creatively before you write.
- Plan a sequence and structure for your story.
- Decide on perspective and when you will give key information to your reader.
- Open your story in an engaging way, perhaps with a sense of mystery or drama.
- Make sure something happens in your story – some type of conflict must occur.
- Bring your story to a rest in a way that satisfies your reader and seems appropriate to the genre.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How confident do you feel about what you have learnt and practised in this chapter?
Rate yourself from 1 (not confident) to 5 (very confident), then answer the question to prove it.

Now I can . . .	Confidence rating (1–5)	Prove it
use different techniques to generate and plan story ideas		Using examples, explain ways you can generate ideas for stories.
write a range of different story openings		Using examples, explain different ways you can open a story.
use different sentence types for variety		Write a short paragraph from a story about a dramatic event using a variety of sentence types.
create engaging characters and give them dialogue		Write a short piece of dialogue between two interesting characters who are having an argument.
use different techniques to shape and structure a story		Using examples, explain ways you can structure a story.
write effective story endings		Using examples, suggest three ways you can end a story.

› Chapter 10

Writing practice



> Introduction

Use the tasks in this chapter to practise your directed writing and composition skills. Try to apply all the techniques and knowledge you have learnt from these chapters.

> Directed writing

Read both texts, and then answer the question.

Text A

A Real Education

Thirty years ago, my parents did something unusual and brilliant. They took me out of school and educated me at home. I was 12 at the time and wasn't enjoying school. The people were nice, but I was falling behind in my studies. So my mother gave up work and taught me.

5 Every day, we studied all the usual subjects. But we also did other things. We went to museums, concerts and galleries. We studied creatures in the local woodland. My mother wasn't an expert on everything, and we both struggled a bit with maths, but in the end, my results were excellent.

One of the best things about being educated at home is that you can decide your own timetable. You can decide what you learn, when, and for how long. There'd be times when I studied physics all day for instance. You can't have that flexibility in school. You also get someone's undivided attention.
10 It's incredibly easy to learn when you have one-to-one tuition and no other distractions.

I missed some of my friends, but we stayed in touch and still played sport together. I also met new friends – other boys and girls who were being homeschooled – so I never felt isolated. I'm really glad I was educated at home.

Text B

The Best Days of Your Life

I will finish school next year and I know I will miss it. I enjoy learning and I also enjoy the social side of school. My parents often tell me that school days are the best days of your life, and I'm pretty sure they're right.

I've met some of my best friends through school. When you see the same people every day, you form strong bonds with them. You learn how to interact with people, how to laugh at yourself and also how to
5 compromise. As I've matured, I've learnt the importance of other people. I love learning in pairs and groups. It really helps you to talk about things and get new ideas. I think it would be impossible to learn some subjects on your own.



I'm really lucky to have excellent teachers who know their subjects and can explain them well. I know that they will help me achieve excellent results. It's been good to have a range of teachers, both male and female. 10 They all have different styles of teaching, but that's what makes things interesting.

I'm glad to have been educated at a nice school. I like the busy, friendly nature of school. My cousin was educated at home and I sometimes think he has missed out on lots of experiences like school trips and sports matches.

Write an article for a local newspaper about the topic of homeschooling.

In your article you should:

- evaluate the views and opinions in both texts
- give your own views about whether students benefit from being educated at home or not.

Base your article on both texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

[25]

> Composition

Write about 350–450 words on one of the following questions.

EITHER

Descriptive writing

Write a description of a place that is very special to you.

Or:

Describe a journey through a mysterious town. Describe the feelings you experienced.

OR

Narrative writing

Write a story with the title 'A Long Road Ahead'.

Or:

Write a story that contains the sentence: 'That was when I knew I was in trouble.' [25]

> Glossary

active voice	where the subject of a sentence is the person or thing performing the action
alliteration	use of the same sound, especially consonants, at the beginning of several close-together words
anecdote	a short account of an interesting or humorous incident
antagonist	the character who opposes the main character or causes a problem, often a 'bad' character
antonym	a word opposite in meaning to another word
argumentative writing	writing that puts forward a view supporting it with facts, evidence and logic
asterisk	a symbol (*) used in a text for a variety of reasons, including to indicate footnotes and to separate sections
auditory imagery	language used to appeal to the sense of sound
bias	being in favour of, or against, an idea or cause
biased	prejudiced for or against a particular person, group or idea – sometimes unfairly
chronological sequence	presented in the order in which the events occurred by time
cliffhanger	a dramatic ending that leaves the reader in suspense
climax	the most exciting or important part of something
command word	a word, usually at the beginning of a sentence, that helps you understand how to answer the question (e.g. 'identify', 'give', 'explain', 'suggest')
concise	brief or short
connotations	the ideas, feelings and associations that a particular word evokes in a reader, in addition to the main meaning of the word
context	the situation within which something exists or happens
conventions	the 'rules' of how a story is told or a piece of writing is set out
convey	make known or reveal to the reader
coordinating conjunction	a word such as 'and', 'but', 'or' that joins two words or two main clauses in a sentence
dialogue	conversation between two or more people or characters, written as direct speech
direct speech	the exact words a person says, marked by speech marks
discursive writing	writing that explores a topic and offers an argument backed up by evidence
ellipsis	a set of three dots (. . .) used to indicate that words have been left out
emotive language	language designed to appeal to a reader's emotions
evaluating	judging information, assessing its worth and responding to it
explicit meaning	ideas and details that a writer states directly
fiction	stories about imaginary characters and events
figurative language	words and phrases used not with their basic meaning but with a more imaginative meaning to create a special effect; figurative language techniques include simile, metaphor and personification
first person	where a story is narrated using 'I'
flashback	a part of a story set in a time earlier than the main story

flashforward	part of a story that goes forward in time to show something that happens at a future time
foreboding	a sense that something bad is going to happen
foreshadowing	a hint or suggestion of something that happens later
formality	the extent to which a piece of writing follows standard English conventions
genre	the type of story, or category of story, such as comedy, tragedy or mystery
gist	the general or overall meaning of a text
greeting (or salutation)	the words used to address someone at the start of a letter (e.g. 'Dear Sir' or 'Hi Irani')
gustatory imagery	language used to appeal to the sense of taste
hook	an opening sentence or statement designed to grab the reader's attention so they want to read on
hyperbole	exaggerated statements
implicit meaning	ideas and details that readers have to work out for themselves
<i>in medias res</i>	literally 'in the middle of things' – when a story starts without preamble, in the middle of a plot
infer	to work out a meaning by applying evidence and reasoning
informative text	a text which informs the reader about a specific topic through factual knowledge
literal	describing something in a straightforward way, using the original, direct meaning of words
metaphor	a type of comparison that describes one thing as if it is something else
minor sentence	a sentence that does not contain a main verb
narrative non-fiction	a type of non-fiction text that is written in the style of a fiction story
narrator	the person telling a story
non-fiction	writing that is about real events and facts
nuance	a subtle difference or shade of meaning or expression
olfactory imagery	language used to appeal to the sense of smell
omniscient	the ability to see everything – where a narrator can explain any part of the action in any location
onomatopoeia	words that sound like the thing they describe (e.g. 'sizzle', 'boom')
overview	a brief explanation or summary of the topic or content of a text
paraphrase	to express the meaning of a text using different words
passive voice	where the verb is before the person or thing, so the verb acts upon the subject
pathos	a quality that evokes sadness or pity in the observer
personification	a type of figurative language in which an object is described as if it has human characteristics
perspective	the 'angle' that a story or account is told from – whose eyes the reader sees it through
persuasive text	a text where the main purpose is to present a point of view and persuade the reader
pronoun	a word that stands in for a noun to avoid repetition; pronouns can be subject personal pronouns ('I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'it', 'we', 'they'), object personal pronouns ('me', 'you', 'him', 'her', 'it', 'us', 'them') or possessive pronouns ('mine', 'yours', 'his', 'hers', 'ours', 'theirs', 'its')
protagonist	the main character in a story – the one who is trying to achieve something or overcome a problem
register	the level of formality in a piece of writing

relative pronoun	a word such as 'who', 'whom', 'whose', 'which' or 'that' used to connect a relative clause or phrase to a noun or pronoun in a sentence
reported speech	a speaker's words reported rather than stated directly, using changes of person and tense and governed by a reporting verb (for example, 'he <i>said</i> ', 'she <i>stated</i> ')
revelation	the moment in a story where a piece of information is revealed to the reader
scanning	reading quickly to locate specific information in a text
sensory image	an image that appeals to the reader's senses: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell
shades of meaning	the small, subtle differences between words with similar meanings
sign-off or valediction	the words used to end a letter (e.g. 'Yours sincerely', 'Yours faithfully' or 'Kind regards')
simile	a type of figurative language in which one thing is compared to something else using the words 'as' or 'like'
skimming	reading a text quickly to get a general overview of the topic and content
speech tags	the verbs and adverbs used to describe the way characters speak in direct speech
stimulus	a text or image intended to stimulate ideas for a new piece of writing
subordinate clause	in grammar, a clause that cannot form a sentence alone but adds information to the main clause
symbolism	using a literal object to stand for or represent something else
synonym	a word or phrase with the same or similar meaning to another word or phrase
synthesising	combining or drawing together similar points
tactile imagery	language used to appeal to the sense of touch
third person	where a story is told as if the narrator is not present in the action
tone	the way that someone speaks or how a piece of writing sounds, which helps suggest mood and feelings
visual imagery	language used to appeal to the sense of sight
voice	the way a particular character speaks or thinks in fiction, or the writer's tone and point of view in non-fiction



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