GUIDE TO WRITING

A STUDENT TOOLKIT

Adam Kealley & Fabrice Wilmann

insight
▶ innovative ▶ engaging ▶ evolving

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INTRODUCTION

Insight's *Guide to Writing: A student toolkit* is a comprehensive resource on writing, tailored specifically to Australian middle-years students. We hope that you find this book valuable in both your secondary school career and beyond.

Designed for students at all stages, from beginner to aspiring author, this book explores the four main types of writing (imaginative, persuasive, interpretive and analytical), as well as the text types you are most likely to encounter in the classroom or in an exam setting. While not every text type imaginable is included in this book, the 'How to write …' chapters in each section provide the key knowledge and tools you can use to produce complete pieces in a variety of forms and genres. A section on editing and proofreading is also included, showing you the step-by-step process to refine and fine-tune your work.

Within this book you will find several useful features, including:

- detailed explanations of foundational elements of each writing type
- tips and strategies to help you produce specific text types
- annotated examples of student writing
- activities that will consolidate your skills and guide you to write complete pieces
- tools and checklists to edit and proofread your work
- prompts and topics to practise and hone your writing skills.

While we hope that *Guide to Writing: A student toolkit* facilitates success in your English studies, above all we hope that it helps you to develop a love for and confidence in the art of writing.

Adam Kealley and Fabrice Wilmann

IMAGINATIVE WRITING

Imaginative or creative writing can be a fun and liberating way for you to explore your thoughts and ideas. There are many ways to do this, from building unique worlds and developing a cast of zany characters, to simply describing your day using poetic language.

Some students love bringing stories to life on the page; others have exciting ideas but struggle to turn them into a cohesive story; and there are those who find the whole experience a bit daunting. No matter where you sit along this spectrum, this section will guide you through the necessary steps to become a confident and courageous creative writer.

The types of imaginative writing explored in this section include short stories, play scripts, screenplays and poetry.

1.1 BRAINSTORMING STORY IDEAS

For many writers, brainstorming story ideas is the hardest part of imaginative writing. But it can also be a fun challenge. And once you have an idea you're passionate about, making it come to life on the page can feel natural and easy.

- **Start with what you know**. Do you have a particular area of interest or knowledge you could use as a basis for your story? Alternatively, think of a specific experience from your life and try turning it into a story idea by adding a twist.

- **Use writing prompts**. Writing prompts, which can be found on apps like Daily Prompt, can be a good place to start if you are struggling to come up with ideas.

- **Ask 'What if' questions**. Compelling 'What if' questions are at the heart of great storytelling. For example:

  › What if a teenager discovered they had a dangerous magical ability?

  › What if a pandemic killed 99 per cent of the world's population?

  › What if robots inhabited Earth before humans?

- **Try stream-of-consciousness writing**. Put pen to paper and write whatever comes out. Don't worry about writing eloquently; just focus on emptying your mind onto the page.

- **Look to others for inspiration**. Use familiar plot points, character templates and settings to inspire new perspectives: for example, 'What would the *Harry Potter* series look like if it was set in outback Australia in the 2010s?'

1 List three interests or past experiences. Add in an exciting new element for each one to create three distinct story ideas. The first one has been done for you.

Interest 1: _going to a rural town with family every year_

Story idea 1: _A family goes to visit Echuca for their annual getaway, only to find that a cult leader has taken control of the town._

Interest 2: _____

Story idea 2: _____

_____

Interest 3: _____

Story idea 3: _____

_____

2 Suggest a story idea based on the following prompt: *I think I just met the happiest person in the world.*

_____

_____

_____

3 Write three interesting 'What if' questions of your own.

What if _____?

What if _____?

What if _____?

4 In your notebook, write out whatever comes to your mind for three minutes, then highlight any ideas you've written that you think could be turned into a story and list them below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.2 CREATING ENGAGING CHARACTERS

Characters are at the heart of any story, but before you can write about them in a meaningful way you need to have a clear understanding of who they are: what they look like, how they act, where they come from, and their goals, dreams and fears.

- **Draw on people you know**. Look at those around you for inspiration. Choose interesting traits from a number of people and combine them to form a new complete character.

- **Develop a detailed backstory**. Build a time line of your character's life events leading up to the main narrative, focusing on relevant moments that directly inform the plot.

- **Establish your character's primary goal**. This is what they aim to achieve over the course of the story. An effective plot includes obstacles that the characters must overcome to achieve their goal. These can be:

  › *external obstacles*, such as a villain or a puzzle to solve

  › *internal obstacles*, such as those created by self-doubt or greed.

- **Make your characters complex**. Your characters need both strengths to draw on *and* flaws that threaten to derail them.

- **Create a physical profile for your characters**. Have a strong idea of what your character looks like and how they interact with the outside world. Consider including personal objects that recur throughout the story (see 'motifs', p.14).

BREAKING TRADITION

Mirtha looked down at the crumbling ruins of her home. A tear rolled down her ashen cheek as she watched the firefighters put out the last remaining embers of Kirribilli House. She closed her eyes and tightly clutched the piece of amethyst whose deep violet hue matched the streak in her hair. As the memory of how the fire started came flooding back to her, she began to whisper a prayer. Dropping the crystal into her lap, Mirtha began tracing over the tattoo of the seven chakras along her left forearm. These were the only things that could calm her when she was on the brink of a panic attack, even though the tattoo was a permanent reminder of her mother's scorn. On reaching the pinnacle of politics, Mirtha's mum now despised her only child's beliefs.

A specific mannerism, linked to a personal object (i.e. a crystal) that will recur later in the story, helps to establish the character's identity.

The character's physical appearance is uniquely described so that readers will easily remember her.

Highlights how the character overcomes an internal conflict.

Allusion is made to the character's backstory.

1 Based on the passage on the previous page, describe what you think might be the main character's primary motivation and the obstacles she might face in achieving her goal.

_____

_____

_____

2 Complete the character profile template below for a character from one of the story ideas you brainstormed on page 3.

CHARACTER PROFILE TEMPLATE

_____
Character's name

What does the character look like?	What is the character's main motivation and what are the obstacles stopping them from achieving their goal?
	What are three positive traits and three negative traits of the character?

3 Create a short time line of this character's past, focusing on five key events leading up to the action of the story.

Event 1 _____

Event 2 _____

Event 3 _____

Event 4 _____

Event 5 _____

1.3 BRINGING CHARACTERS TO LIFE

Strong character development is one of the most important aspects of imaginative writing. Readers relate to characters who are well drawn. They should be complex, memorable and, above all else, believable.

- **Start with an empathetic character**. Empathy refers to understanding and feeling what someone else is going through; when readers can empathise with the struggles of a character, they want to read on to discover what happens to them.

- **Draw on backstory**. Don't fall into the trap of sharing your character's entire past at the start of the story. It will be more engaging for readers if information is revealed as it becomes relevant to the situation.

- **Show, don't tell**. Use indirect characterisation (i.e. describing through characters' thoughts, actions and speech) to reveal your protagonist's personality. For example, instead of saying that your character is rude, you could depict them blowing cigarette smoke in someone's face.

- **Use secondary characters**. Secondary characters can either help the main character overcome obstacles (complementary) or be an obstacle (oppositional).

- **Show your characters' development arc**. Most characters undergo significant change over the course of a story. Elements of a traditional character arc include:

  › *the goal*, which drives the characters

  › *the lie*, which hinders them from achieving their goal

  › *the truth*, through which they either succumb to or overcome the lie.

Mirtha wiped away her tears as she watched the only place she had ever called home fade from view behind the clouds in the sky. She thought back to how she and her mum used to be, painting together, volunteering at the local nursing home, joking about and debating everything from politics to *Big Brother*. Now everything her mum did or said was about poll numbers and headlines. And the destruction of Kirribilli House, for which Mirtha was somehow being blamed, had made her mum so angry she'd sent Mirtha as far away as possible. Her mum wasn't this mad at her when she accidentally knocked over and smashed a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the ashram, but of course that incident didn't interfere with her political career, so what did she care. Mirtha grasped her amethyst so hard she could feel its sharp edges digging into her flesh. This was all so unfair, but what could she do? Her mother had become so lost; but now, stuck on the other side of the world, how could Mirtha make her realise it?

Shows the main character in an empathetic light.

Backstory, including a sympathetic detail about Mirtha's life, is woven into the narrative.

The use of an oppositional secondary character reveals the challenges facing the main character.

Simple use of indirect characterisation reveals the character's emotions.

The character's primary goal is highlighted.

ACTIVITIES

1 What does the use of indirect characterisation in the passage above reveal about the main character?

_____

_____

2 How does the secondary character in the passage above help to develop the main character?

_____

_____

3 Map out a possible arc for your main character using the outline below.

The goal: _____

The lie: _____

The truth: _____

4 Write a short scene involving your main character. Include one or two details about their backstory in the scene.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.4 DEVELOPING SETTING

Setting refers to the backdrop against which the characters act out the story. It includes all aspects of place and time and is one of the most important elements of a compelling story. While setting most commonly relates to physical locations, such as buildings, towns or streets, it also encapsulates social and cultural surroundings.

- **Know the world of your story inside out**. If your story is set in a real place, watch videos or look at photographs to help you envision the setting. If you are writing a fantasy story, you may choose to create a map of the landscape.

- **Consider the context**. Try to evoke the kind of society in which the characters live by incorporating details that reveal its attitudes and conventions.

- **Use sensory details**. In addition to how a setting looks, it is important to describe how it sounds, smells, feels and even tastes. For example, you could describe a chill in the air to create an eerie mood or the tapping of a tree branch on a window to evoke tension.

- **Focus on memorable details to create atmosphere**. For example, you could describe a tree by saying that the root of the trunk looks like a rope twisted into a thousand knots.

- **Use action to develop setting**. Remember that readers are drawn to stories to find out about what is happening to the characters, and that lengthy descriptions of setting should not get in the way of the action.

Mirtha picked up the week-old copy of *The Sydney Morning Herald* and stared at the headline on the front page: 'PM's disgraced daughter shipped off to Canada'. Tossing the paper aside, she made her way to the balcony of her new apartment suite in the neo-futurist Vancouver House, from which she could see the North Shore Mountains rising like dragon's teeth from the belly of the earth. The cold air and cloudy skies of Vancouver were a far cry from warm and sunny Sydney, but Mirtha could think of worse places to be in exile. At least here she could enjoy the silence and sereneness, away from the flashing lights and constant sleuthing of the political paparazzi. She shuffled back into the apartment, slumped onto the floor beside the velvet couch and wiggled her toes in carpet pile as soft as a poodle's coat. Pulling herself into a lotus position, Mirtha began her daily meditation ritual. But just as her mind began to empty, a piercing electronic beep shot through the apartment, followed by a familiar click as the door unlocked. A chill breeze swept through the apartment as the front door swung open.

This opening line develops the political and familial context that challenges the main character.

This description shows an understanding of the setting and geography.

A memorable detail creates a vivid image.

The expensive decor of the apartment is revealed through the actions of the character.

Description focuses on senses other than sight to evoke a particular mood.

1 How does the passage on the previous page paint a picture of the setting for the reader?

_____

_____

_____

2 Select a location you are familiar with and describe it using sensory details – what it looks, feels, sounds and smells like.

_____

_____

_____

3 Imagine a setting for your story and describe it using one or two memorable details.

_____

_____

_____

4 Choose one of the settings below, then write a short scene describing how your character from page 5 would react if placed there.

- a burning building
- an ancient forest
- a psychologist's office

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.5 WRITING CONVINCING DIALOGUE

Dynamic, believable and lively dialogue is a key aspect of imaginative writing. The way in which characters express themselves and interact with others verbally helps to develop characterisation, advance the plot and create an engaging story for readers.

- **Mimic the voices of real people**. Listen to conversations among family and friends, at cafes and on public transport and observe how the discussion ebbs and flows.

- **Give each of your characters a unique voice**. Just as people in real life have a unique way of communicating, so too should each of your characters have a distinctive style of speech.

- **Break up conversation with narration**. Long passages of dialogue can feel inauthentic and tiresome, so try breaking it up by interspersing speech with descriptive narration.

- **Use action tags**. Using dialogue tags ('he said', 'she said') can become repetitive, so try indicating the speaker by having them perform an action. For example:

  › 'Are you sure you want to do that?' Markus cocked an eyebrow.

  › Sergio collapsed onto the bed. 'I can't believe I told June I love her.'

- **Read your dialogue aloud**. You will be able to tell much more easily if your dialogue flows when you hear it spoken aloud.

A woman in a pressed purple pantsuit strode in, holding a briefcase emblazoned with an oversized maple leaf.
    'Ms Blake, very happy to make your acquaintance.
    Mirtha's toes curled as the stranger approached, hand outstretched. 'Who … Who are you?'
    The woman's smile faltered, and she withdrew her hand. 'My name is Kiara and I have orders from the Australian Prime Minister's office to get you settled here in Vancouver.'
    Mirtha opened her mouth, ready to unleash a tirade, but stopped as she felt the amethyst in her pocket pressing into her side. She took a deep breath, went to the kitchen and, in one swift motion, downed a shot of dandelion tea that was sitting on the bench.
    'I'm sorry about the intrusion, Ms Blake. Your mother insisted I come and ensure you weren't getting into trouble.'
    Mirtha's face began to contort, like a TikTok gone wrong. She poured another shot of tea, lit a stick of Palo Santo and hummed deeply as woody smoke filled the apartment.

Each new line of dialogue is marked by a paragraph indent, unless it is accompanied by an action tag.

Action tags are used to add motion to the scene.

The motif of the crystal recurs to further characterise Mirtha, who requires the object to temper her anger.

There is a clear difference in the way each character speaks, with Kiara speaking in a more formal tone.

Descriptive narration is interspersed among dialogue.

1   Can you follow who is speaking in the passage on the previous page? Do you find this presentation of dialogue without the use of dialogue tags more engaging or more challenging to understand?

_____

_____

_____

2   Think back to the last memorable conversation you had. Write this conversation out as dialogue, using action tags where appropriate.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3   Write a short scene that includes a conversation between your main character and a secondary character in which they discuss an obstacle to the main character's goal. Remember to aim for a balance between dialogue and narration.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4   Read your answer to Question 3 aloud, paying particular attention to the flow of the conversation and how the voices of each character differ. Make any changes you feel will improve the dialogue.

1.6 USING EFFECTIVE DESCRIPTION

Descriptive language is an integral part of imaginative writing and helps readers to form memorable mental images. The way you choose to describe certain elements of your story, such as the characters or the setting, reveals a lot about you and how you see the world – and this can be a way to invite readers in.

- **Use descriptive verbs and nouns**. You can help your readers better envision the scene by replacing stale or basic words with more exciting or precise ones.

- **Use sensory details**. Don't just rely on what a character can see; consider sounds, smells and sensations as well.

- **Use similes and metaphors sparingly and with originality**. Comparing things too often can detract from your writing, as can using clichéd comparisons such as 'as fast as a bullet'.

- **Don't rely too heavily on one type of language device**. Other types of figurative language you can use include hyperbole, irony, personification, onomatopoeia and synecdoche (see Glossary, p.40).

- **Focus on carefully selected details**. Rather than providing a long list of items to represent the scene, rely on a few interesting details that are well described.

Mirtha went out of the apartment and rushed towards the bay, the smell of incense following her like the flash of paparazzi cameras. She could see a string of yachts, several anglers baiting their hooks and pelicans bobbing gently on the water, but with Kiara hot on her heels, she could barely enjoy the picturesque view. She tried to outrun Kiara, but she felt as if she was suffocating, like a fish entangled in a plastic bag.

Kiara came up behind Mirtha and locked her arms in a vice-like grip. 'Please, I'm only here to look out for you.'

'Do you know how ridiculous that sounds?' Mirtha writhed and moved her legs about in protest. 'You're basically working for the next Pol Pot! Except my mum's a thousand times worse than that genocidal dictator.' She slumped to the ground.

'You have no idea of the things my mum has done, Kiara. No idea.'

This simile cleverly relates back to an aspect of the main character's life.

Carefully selected details, rather than a list of everything that might be there, helps to paint the scene.

This simile links to the bay setting that is described earlier in the paragraph.

Use of hyperbole reveals Mirtha's overdramatic nature.

Precise verb suggests not only that Mirtha falls, but that she feels dejected.

1 Highlight two verbs in the passage on the previous page and replace them with more exciting or precise ones.

2 Do you think the similes in the passage make the story more engaging for the reader? Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 Write a unique simile or metaphor to describe your main character and setting.

Main character: _____

_____

Setting: _____

_____

4 Write short descriptions of your main character and setting that incorporate two or three carefully selected details.

Main character: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Setting: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.7 DEVELOPING THEMES

A theme is a central idea or issue that an author wishes to explore in their writing. Themes aren't directly stated; rather, they are communicated through the way characters interact, the kinds of conflict a text describes and the overall outcome of the narrative.

- **Consider universal themes**. In literature, there are several recurring themes to which readers can easily relate. A few of these are listed below.

ambition	friendship	injustice	redemption
conflict	gender roles	loss	revenge
courage	growing up	love	survival
family	identity	power	war

- **Match themes to characters' goals**. If a character's main goal is to become a celebrity, then themes might include ambition and sacrifice.

- **Develop themes through character arcs**. Consider who your characters are at the beginning of the story, the internal conflicts they will experience and how their response to these conflicts changes them.

- **Use motifs**. Motifs recur throughout a story to reinforce a key theme (e.g. the motif of winter could represent hardship and danger).

- **Use symbols**. Symbols are objects that represent something beyond their literal meaning. For example, snakes represent evil, while red roses represent love.

1 Fill in the two empty boxes below with other themes explored in *Breaking Tradition*. Explain your choices briefly in each box.

Expectations
Mirtha struggles to live up to her mother's expectations now that she is PM.

THEMES IN *BREAKING TRADITION*

Family
Mirtha has a tense relationship with her mother, who takes issue with Mirtha's interests.
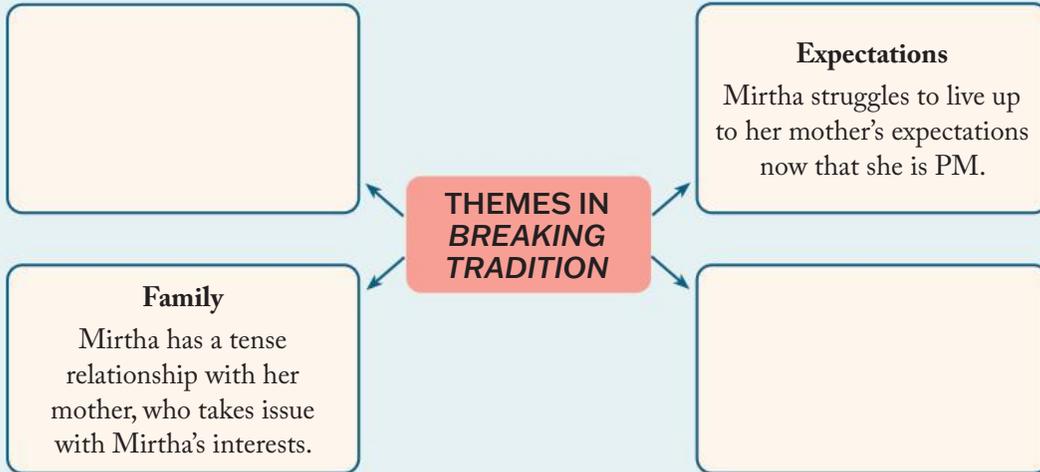
2 How are the themes of *Breaking Tradition* conveyed in the narrative?

_____

_____

_____

3 Identify your main character's primary goal and suggest a theme that could be derived from this.

Character's goal: _____

Theme: _____

4 Complete the mind map below with potential themes for your story.
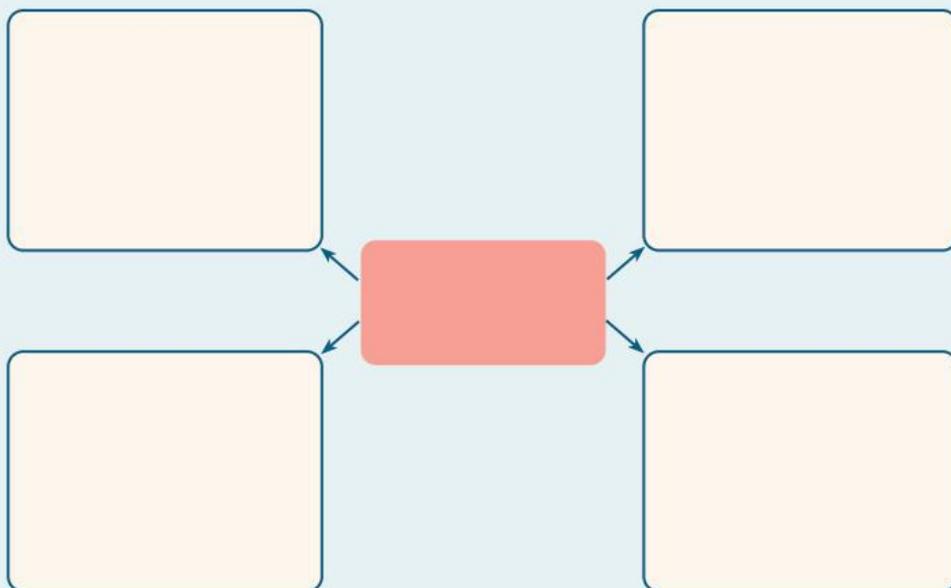
1.8 PLOTTING AN ENGAGING STORY

Plot is the sequence of events that makes up a story. A strong plot centres on key moments that challenge the main character, who must try to overcome these challenges in order to achieve their goal. A traditional plot structure includes the elements in the diagram below.

③ **Climax**
What happens at the most exciting point of the story?

② **Rising action**
What problems or conflicts will the main characters face?

④ **Falling action**
How might the characters solve the problem or conflict?

① **Exposition**
Where is the story set?
Who are the main characters?

⑤ **Resolution**
What happens to the characters at the end of the story?
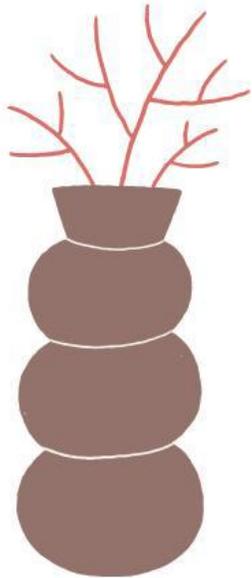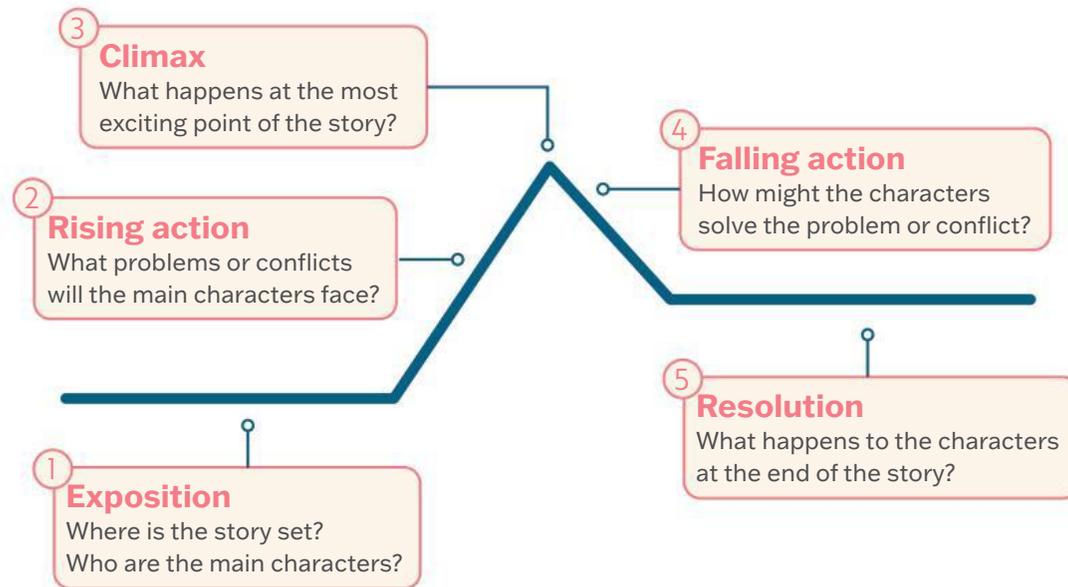
- **Begin with an exciting opening scene**. In addition to introducing your characters and the setting, the exposition should include an incident that sets up the main conflict.

- **Build tension through rising action**. Raise the stakes for your main character by giving them obstacles of ever-increasing intensity.

- **Write an engaging climax**. This will be the emotional height of your story, where your main character must confront their inner turmoil.

- **Include a brief scene of falling action**. The immediate aftermath of the climax should show the main character dealing with the consequences of their actions.

- **End with a satisfying resolution**. Your ending should leave the reader feeling that the conflict introduced at the beginning of the story has been resolved.

'Are you sure you want to do this?' Kiara gestured at Niamh Li, premier political correspondent for *CBC Vancouver News*.

'Of course, I'm sure.' Mirtha instinctively touched the chakra tattoo on her forearm.

As Niamh read a formal welcome from the autoprompt, Mirtha took her seat and shook the host's hand.

'So, Mirtha, everyone's dying to hear from the daughter of Australia's third female Prime Minister. What can you tell us?'

Mirtha took in a deep breath and clasped the crystal bracelet on her wrist.

'Thank you, Niamh. I have consulted with my spirit muses and I have to let the truth out. I didn't burn down Kirribilli House. Well, at least not on my own.' Niamh's eyebrows shot up, journalistic senses tingling.

'My mum orchestrated the whole thing. The election is coming up and she can't win without sympathy votes.' Mirtha could feel her heart thumping in her chest. 'My mum is a good person, but even good people do terrible things sometimes.'

Opening hints that this is going to be a climactic scene.

Reference to Mirtha's chakra tattoo links neatly with the beginning of the story, while also suggesting complexity of character (showing both confidence and a need for reassurance).

Mannerism of touching crystals hints that Mirtha is going to reveal something significant.

The climax is directly related to the opening passage (the burning of Kirribilli House) and reveals a secret the main character has been withholding from the reader.

ACTIVITIES

1 How have the previous passages built to this climax?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Write a short scene that imagines the resolution to the climax of the passage above.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 In your notebook, map out a plot structure for your story based on the template on the previous page.

2.1 WRITING SHORT STORIES

In contrast to novels, which are significantly longer and have a deeper and broader scope, short stories usually focus on one core plot, one or two main characters, one setting and one central theme.

2.1.1 Deciding on a point of view

Before writing a short story, you must decide from whose perspective the story will be told – the protagonist, a secondary character or an objective narrator – and how information will be communicated to the reader – through either a first-person or third-person voice. (The second-person voice is rarely used in imaginative writing.)

Point of view	Features
First person	Using first-person pronouns ('I', 'me', 'we', 'us'), the narrator – usually the protagonist of the story, though sometimes a secondary character – speaks directly to the reader from personal experience. The story is limited by what this character knows, and descriptions of events and people are coloured by the narrator's biases.
Third person	Using third-person pronouns ('he', 'she', 'they'), the narrator – who exists outside of the story – relates the experiences of the characters. The narration can be focalised through one character (third-person limited point of view) or the narrator can be all-knowing and able to reveal as much as they want to the reader (third-person omniscient point of view).

- **Consider who would have the most interesting narrative voice.** Is it the protagonist, a secondary character, an unexpected character or an objective narrator?

- **Determine the desired distance between reader and narrator.** If you want to create a sense of intimacy, use the first person. If you want the reader to be more of an observer of events, use the third-person omniscient voice.

- **Consider how much information you want readers to have.** If you want them to make discoveries at the same time as the narrator, use the first person. If they need more information for the sake of the story, use the third person.

Point of view	Example
First person	I gazed up at this extremely tall specimen of a man, who was looking down at me with the most peculiar expression I had ever seen. Everyone in town said he was a strange fellow and that it was best to steer clear of him, but there was something endearing about his big bright eyes and shaggy mane.
Third-person limited	Deep down Olga knew, even before the thoughts could crystallise in her mind, that there was something about this man, something that she wanted in one way or another. He stared down at her, and she was sure she could see a glint in his eye. She smiled knowingly in response.
Third-person omniscient	Ulrich was more giant than man. He had grown up in the mountains, raised by wolves, but had always wondered about life in the towns. Olga had never met a man like him in her life, and she couldn't take her eyes off him. Nor could he take his eyes off her. In the tavern across the street, the townspeople had gathered together, trading in whispers, gossip and all things vile.

1   Which point of view do you think best suits the story being told in the above examples? Why?

_____

_____

_____

2   Select your favourite book that uses the first-person point of view. Do you think the story would work as well if it used the third-person point of view rather than first person? Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3   In your notebook, write two short scenes, one from the first-person point of view and a second in the third person, in response to the following prompt: *An aspiring singer meets their celebrity idol for the first time*. (You may choose to tell the story from the perspective of the aspiring singer, the idol, an unexpected third character or an objective narrator.)

4   In your notebook, brainstorm ideas for a short story (or use one of the story ideas you brainstormed on p.3). Choose one of these ideas, decide who will tell the story and explain which point of view you think will work best.

ACTIVITIES

2.1.2 Developing a story

A good short story drops readers into the action and keeps them engaged the whole way through. While you may choose to follow the traditional narrative structure as outlined on page 16, you could also consider experimenting with the alternatives outlined below.

- **Use a compact narrative.** The 'tick' narrative structure is simple but effective, and is ideal in an examination setting.

4 **Resolution.** Bring your story to a satisfying climax, or experiment with an ambiguous ending.

1 **The hook.** Engage your reader by beginning with action.

3 **Rising action.** Develop the conflict and increase tension. Build your character along the way.

2 **Backfill.** Provide the background detail that led to the opening scene. This can be done through flashback, dialogue or character recollection.

- **Begin *in medias res* – that is, in the middle of the narrative.** Skip over the exposition and bring the reader immediately into the conflict by showing your main character in some sort of crisis.

- **Begin at the end.** Open your short story with your final scene, creating a sense of mystery and intrigue as the reader wonders how the character came to be in this situation. Then slip back in time and take your reader on the character's journey.

- **Make every sentence count.** Regardless of which structure you choose for your story, ensure that each sentence progresses the plot – either through action or significant backstory – and contributes to the mood or feeling you are trying to evoke.

THE ELSPETH RETIREMENT COTTAGE

Florence sat in the well-worn patchwork lounge chair in her favourite corner of the Elspeth Retirement Cottage Recreation Room. She watched as her contemporaries attempted to play bridge, crochet a wearable jumper or scarf, or listen to the nurses reading Dickens or Plath to them in a plainly condescending tone.

The slightly facetious tone sets the mood for the story.

None of these activities much appealed to Florence. She had never been one to sit idly by or do 'normal' grandmotherly duties. She couldn't knit or sew, and she hated cooking and baking. What she did love was the hustle and bustle of people, the scandalous stories that passed between them, unknowingly, in the darting of the eyes or the twitching of the hands. She was an expert at decoding such signs.

The use of third-person limited narration, focalised through Florence's point of view, helps in characterisation.

But staring at Mohammed, who was mumbling furtively to one of the nurses on the other side of the room, Florence wondered if she had lost her touch. There was something nefarious going on, of that she was sure, but she couldn't put her finger on exactly what that something was. No matter – she was prepared to do whatever it took to find out the truth.

A mysterious secondary character is introduced to add tension and intrigue.

The end of the opening scene leaves readers in a state of curiosity, wondering what will happen next.

1 What type of opener is used in the story above? Do you think this opener works for the type of story being told? Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

2 Select a narrative structure described on the previous page that you would use for the following story idea: _A mother loses her eight-year-old son when their home is invaded by marauders from a neighbouring village, and she only finds him again twenty years later._ Explain your choice.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 In your notebook, write a short opening for the short-story idea you brainstormed on page 19.

2.1.3 Ending strongly

While the start of your story might convince people to read on, how you choose to end it will determine whether readers are left satisfied or disappointed. The four most common types of ending are outlined below. Regardless of which ending you choose, aim to achieve a sense of completion, one that complements and fulfills the purpose of the story.

- **Resolved ending.** All the questions raised throughout the story are answered and all plotlines are tied up. It is clear how the characters might live on into the future.

- **Ambiguous ending.** It is not clear what exactly happens after the events of the climax. The audience is left in a state of anxiety, asked to reflect on the meaning of the story and imagine what might come next.

- **Unexpected ending.** A plot twist at the last possible moment adds excitement and tension. Clues scattered throughout the story enable readers who reflect on the plot to have an 'Aha!' moment. Possible twists include:

  › a character coming back from the dead

  › a hero revealing themselves as the villain.

- **Tied ending**. The reintroduction of some elements from the beginning of the story can evoke a sense of completion. The story might end where it began or it might be a metaphorical return home for the characters.

Florence slipped into Mohammed's room, quiet as a mouse. She had never done anything like this in her life but, she figured, why not try something new at ninety-two?

The room did not look as she expected. Based on her previous interactions with Mohammed, she had imagined a dark interior with gruesome paintings, things littered about in a haphazard manner and a rocking chair where he presumably sat wasting his hours cursing the staff at the village.

But no – instead Florence found herself in a spectacularly colourful den of creativity. There were posters of jazz singers and feminist icons plastered on all four walls, a saxophone, a violin and a harmonica collected in one corner, and a large table filled with arts and crafts supplies and several completed sculptures and models. Staring at the inventive designs before her eyes, including a miniature replica of the Elspeth Retirement Cottage that must surely have taken months to complete, she caught sight of her name emblazoned on a love heart made of metallic sheets.

Just as she picked up the object, the door to the room opened and in walked Mohammed. The two stared at each other, lost for words, as the love heart Florence was holding seemed to beat in anticipation of what would come next.

The stakes are raised as Florence becomes a more active character.

Details are provided to help the reader imagine the backstory.

An intriguing and unexpected element builds tension and helps to keep the reader engaged until the last moment.

The story ends on a slightly ambiguous note, so the audience is unsure what will happen next between the characters.

ACTIVITIES

1 How does the ambiguous ending make you feel as a reader? Would you have preferred a different ending? Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Select one of your favourite books or short stories and discuss what you like (or don't like) about the ending.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 In your notebook, write a short ending to the short-story idea you began on page 21.

2.2 WRITING PLAY SCRIPTS

A play script is a piece of imaginative writing that is designed for actors to perform on the stage. It includes stage directions that indicate how actors should say their lines and how the director should stage the play. Play scripts are usually divided into acts and scenes; they focus on a short period of time and rely heavily on character speech and actions.

2.2.1 Deciding on a type of play

Before you begin writing, you must first decide what type of play (or drama) is best suited to the story you want to tell. Each type of drama – tragedy, comedy and tragicomedy – has its own unique characteristics, as outlined in the table below.

Type of drama	Features
Tragedy	A tragedy deals with a serious situation and involves a protagonist (or tragic hero) who is brought down by their flaws. Common motifs include death, insanity and jealousy.
Comedy	Often filled with witty dialogue, unusual characters and strange circumstances, the primary aim of a comedy is to make the audience laugh. Subcategories of comedy include satire and black comedy.
Tragicomedy	A mixture of tragedy and comedy, a tragicomedy can either be sad with a happy ending or serious with some elements of humour throughout.

Regardless of the type of drama you decide to write, it should still follow the typical structure of a stage play: three acts, each comprising a number of scenes. Each act should include a set-up, a confrontation and a resolution, while each scene in an act should represent action occurring in one place at one time.

1 Complete the table below with story ideas for each type of drama.

Type of drama	Example	Story idea
Tragedy	In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the two star-crossed lovers are destined for misfortune because of the feud between their families. The play ends with their suicides.	
Comedy	Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a satire of Victorian social norms. The protagonists maintain fictitious identities to escape social conventions such as marriage.	
Tragicomedy	Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* details the struggles of the adolescent Jo and her relationship with her irresponsible mum, Helen, but includes moments of comical relief and humorous banter.	

2 How does a play script differ from a short story? How do these differences affect the type of story you would want to tell using each form of writing?

_____

_____

_____

3 Complete the outline below for one of the story ideas you brainstormed in Question 1.

Act 1 – Set-up: _____

_____

_____

_____

Act 2 – Confrontation: _____

_____

_____

_____

Act 3 – Resolution: _____

_____

_____

_____

2.2.2 Writing stage directions

While dialogue (see p.10) makes up the majority of a play script, stage directions are also integral to this form of imaginative writing. Stage directions are instructions written into the script of a play, indicating the movement, position or tone of an actor, the elements of the set, and other elements of a production such as sound effects and lighting.

Though they appear in the play (in brackets), they are not spoken and are only there to relate the playwright's intention to the cast and crew.

- **Set the scene.** Each scene should begin with directions that briefly describe the physical components of the stage. For example, this could include the location, the furniture or the time of day.

- **Include directions for actors.** You should indicate when and where an actor enters or exits the stage, as well as how you envisage them delivering their lines – for example, angrily or sarcastically. (There is still scope for the actors to offer their own interpretation of dialogue and directions, but it helps to include your intended vision.)

- **Make the stage directions concise.** Excessive directions can make it hard to distinguish between important and insignificant instructions, so avoid providing unnecessary details. For example, 'Bella picks up a book' is a clearer direction than 'Bella picks up the heavy, leather-bound first edition of *1Q84*'.

- **Understand the limitations of the stage.** Unlike most films, a play is centred primarily on conversations between people. The focus needs to be on what the characters say and how they interact with one another; avoid trying to include explosive action scenes or visual imagery in your stage directions.

IS IT ME?

ACT I, SCENE i

Seiko is sitting at the bar, waiting impatiently. Dishan enters.

SEIKO: Stop! Stop right there!

DISHAN: *(freezes, mid-movement, with one leg in the air)* Who, me?

SEIKO: Yes, you. I'm supposed to be meeting Dishan Kumar.

DISHAN: *(waves, one leg in the air)* That's me. You must be Seiko Tanaka.

SEIKO: No.

DISHAN: No?

SEIKO: You can't be Dishan.

DISHAN: Why can't I be Dishan? I should be able to be Dishan if I want to be Dishan.

SEIKO: This is all wrong. You were supposed to be taller. *(gets up and starts pacing)* And … and not be wearing… a clown nose?

DISHAN: And Mum said no-one would get the clown reference!

SEIKO: You're sure you're Dishan Kumar?

DISHAN: As sure as I am about Kim and Kanye being together forever.

SEIKO: I can't go out with you.

DISHAN: You can't?

SEIKO: You're not the Dishan Kumar I was wanting.

DISHAN: Are you sure you ordered the right Dishan Kumar? Maybe you made a mistake at the checkout.

SEIKO: I hope you're not terribly mad.

DISHAN: Not at all. I think I might have ordered the wrong Seiko Tanaka at the checkout too. Toodles.

Dishan exits. The lights go down.

Each scene should begin with stage directions that briefly describe what and who will be on the stage.

Directions for the actors are clearly described.

The quick back-and-forth between characters develops a humorous tone.

The final line of dialogue comically ties the scene together.

Directions intended for the stage crew are separated from dialogue and placed on their own line.

ACTIVITIES

1 What type of drama is the scene above? What are the features of this type of drama?

_____

_____

2 How do the stage directions in the scene above contribute to the tone of the play?

_____

_____

_____

3 Using stage directions and dialogue, write an opening scene in your notebook for the story idea you outlined in Question 3 on page 25.

2.2.3 Building dramatic tension

Dramatic tension is how you keep an audience engaged with the story of your play. It is about creating and maintaining an audience's involvement in the journey of your characters.

- **Plant questions in the mind of the audience**. Hook your audience in from the beginning of the play by presenting them with a scenario and characters that inspire the audience to consider what is going to happen next.

- **Know the inner story of your characters**. Consider the psychological conflicts they are facing. These conflicts are not explicitly stated, but they should be evident in the characters' dialogue and decisions throughout the play.

- **Upset the status quo**. Ensure that something happens early on to upset the world of your protagonist, launching them on a mission to set things right.

- **Create a cause-and-effect structure**. Make each moment and scene lead to the next, and present your protagonist with setbacks, whether internal or external, that become more difficult as the play progresses.

- **Use dramatic irony**. Find ways to let the audience know something that one or more of the characters on stage do not, and which the audience members eagerly (or anxiously) wait for the characters to discover. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the audience knows that Juliet is only sleeping but Romeo does not; and he kills himself, thinking that she is dead.

ACT I, SCENE ii

Seiko sits at the bar, alone. Marie rushes in.

MARIE: *(manic)* OMG! How did it go? Didn't you just love Dishan? I knew you would. A match made in heaven. Can I get my cupid wings now do you think?

SEIKO: Oh … yes, he was very … *(pause)* festive?

MARIE: He's the best, isn't he! What is your favourite part about him? It's his fashion sense, isn't it?

SEIKO: Yes … his fashion sense was also very ... *(pause)* festive?

MARIE: I know, right! So, what else?

SEIKO: We, ummm, had a lot to say to each other.

MARIE: *(sits down and looks into Seiko's eyes)* Tell me everything.

SEIKO: Well … *(pause)* we talked about our interests – he really likes clowns. And we had an in-depth discussion about celebrity culture and the social convention of marriage.

MARIE: Wowie! That sounds like some first date. I mean, I knew I was a good matchmaker, but I had no idea I was this good!

SEIKO: Yep, you're the best …

MARIE: So, big question then. When are you guys going out next?

SEIKO: *(shuffles in her seat)* I'm just waiting to hear back from him.

MARIE: Boys! I'll talk to him; get him to set up a second date ASAP.

SEIKO: No! No, no. I think I should call him, actually.

MARIE: Look at you. The smitten kitten. Okay, I'll leave it with you.

SEIKO: *(worried expression)* Uh-huh, leave it all with me.

The opening of this scene leads the audience to wonder how Seiko will respond to her friend, who is very enthusiastic about Dishan.

The repetition of 'festive' highlights Seiko's internal struggle to admit the truth to her friend.

The seriousness with which Marie approaches the topic is contrasted with Seiko's ambivalence towards Dishan, of which only the audience is aware, creating dramatic irony.

Seiko's intentional misrepresentation of her meeting with Dishan adds humour to the scene.

Verbal irony (saying the opposite of what is meant) highlights the contradiction between reality and fantasy.

The end of the scene sets up a clear obstacle that Seiko must face.

ACTIVITIES

1   How is dramatic tension created throughout the above scene?

_____

_____

_____

2   Imagine the next scene in this play – a second meeting between Seiko and Dishan – and describe how you would create dramatic tension in the scene.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3   Using the elements of dramatic tension outlined on the previous page, write another scene for your play in your notebook.

2.3 WRITING SCREENPLAYS

A screenplay is the script for a film, including acting instructions and directions for other action, cameras, lighting and soundtrack. Screenplays are written in a specific format to distinguish between characters, action lines and dialogue.

2.3.1 Developing a short-film concept

A short film is, as its name suggests, a shorter version of a feature film. Short films are generally used as a platform to showcase talent and secure funding for future full-length films. While short films have the same general structure as a feature film (i.e. a distinct beginning, middle and end), they usually have a clearer focus and are more economical in their storytelling.

- **Focus on a simple premise**. With a limited time to tell your story, focus on a clear, concise and compelling concept. Give your main character a very specific goal and a short time frame for achieving it.

- **Be economical with characters and backstory**. Try to limit your cast to one or two characters and only delve into as much backstory as is needed to make the characters' journeys believable.

- **Keep locations to a minimum**. A short film won't have time to convey to audiences the nature and significance of multiple locations, so try to set your film in one or two key places.

- **Familiarise yourself with screenplay formatting**. Before you begin writing, develop a strong understanding of how to present your story in the correct format – use the example below as a guide.

THE BEST LAID PLANS

1. INT. BANK VAULT - NIGHT

URSULA and BOLIN, dressed in their school uniforms, slump down against the wall in a dimly lit bank vault. Piles of hundred dollar notes surround them.

            URSULA *(deflated)*
        This is all your fault, Bolin.
        You do realise that, don't you?

BOLIN stands up, balls up his fist to control his anger and walks to the other side of the vault without saying a word.

The scene number, the setting (INT. = interior, EXT. = exterior) and the time of day are stated in the scene heading.

Character names are always presented in capital letters.

Action is expressed in the present tense.

Each new piece of dialogue is presented with the character's name above, and any directions for the actor in parentheses. Character names and dialogue are centred.

```
        URSULA
   All you had to do was stand guard and
   make sure the vault didn't close in on us.

        BOLIN
   Why is everything always my fault?
   This whole thing was your idea, Urs.
   You're the one who needs the money, not me.

 URSULA stands up and faces off against BOLIN.

        URSULA (trembling)
   How dare you …
   You know why I need that money.
   Without it, my grandpa won't … He won't …

 URSULA bursts into tears. In the background,
 police sirens blare.
```

Backstory is only briefly alluded to.

Outside elements are alluded to, but the film is set in one primary location (i.e. a bank vault) and focuses on the relationship between two characters.

ACTIVITIES

1 When turning a screenplay into a film, the director must consider on-screen visual elements such as lighting and the setting, sound elements such as the dialogue and the music soundtrack, and the way the film will be shot – the cinematography. Describe how you would direct the above scene, focusing on these elements of film style.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Describe a short-film concept that focuses on one or two main characters and is set in one location.

Main characters: _____

_____

Setting: _____

Film concept: _____

_____

_____

3 In your notebook, write an opening scene based on your film concept from Question 2.

2.3.2 Writing a treatment

A screenplay is usually preceded by a treatment – that is, a document that presents the most important information about your film. This includes a title, a logline, a plot summary and a breakdown of key characters. A treatment can function as an outline for your film, providing you with a clearer idea of the specific elements of the story.

- **Start with a title**. Think of an original title that will draw audiences in. Consider the characters, the setting or the premise of your film for inspiration.

- **Write a brief logline**. This should be a sentence or two that describes the general premise of the film. It should include who the protagonists are and the main conflict of the story.

- **Describe the main characters**. List only the main characters and give readers a general sense of who they are.

- **Outline the plot**. Describe the opening scene, briefly summarise the climax and conclude by stating how the narrative will end.

OPENING SCENE

Who is the film about and what is the inciting incident that will make the audience want to watch on?

CLIMAX

What is the main crisis and how do the characters respond to it?

FINAL SCENE

How does the narrative end? What happens to the characters and what have they learned?

THE BEST LAID PLANS

The title appears at the top of the treatment.

Logline

Two students in Melbourne, Ursula and Bolin, rob a bank to help Ursula's grandfather but lock themselves in the vault.

The logline is short and succinct, and summarises the essence of the film.

Characters

Ursula is a strong-minded yet sensitive school student who is trying to help her sick grandfather by getting rich quickly.

Bolin is Ursula's quiet and sensitive friend, who has put himself in danger to help Ursula achieve her goal.

Each of the characters is briefly described.

Plot summary

Opening scene – We see Ursula and Bolin in the moments after they've accidentally locked themselves in the bank vault.

Climax – Ursula and Bolin argue over who is to blame for the situation in which they find themselves.

Ending scene – Ursula embraces Bolin in response to his sacrifice; the screen fades to black and the police arrive.

Main elements of the plot are briefly summarised to give the reader a sense of the arc of the film.

1 How can writing a treatment help a screenplay writer better envision the story they are trying to tell? What other elements could be beneficial for the writer to consider at this stage (e.g. cinematography)?

_____

_____

_____

2 Complete the treatment template below for your short-film concept.

TITLE

Logline

Characters

Plot summary

ACTIVITIES

2.3.3 Writing scenes

Every screenplay consists of a series of interlocking scenes that form a complete narrative. A scene is a section of a film that generally takes place at a specific location and time; if one of these changes, a new scene has begun.

- **Start in the middle of the action**. Rather than starting a scene with a character leading up to an incident, such as walking into a room, get straight into the inciting action. This helps to build tension and engages the audience straight away.

- **Ask yourself the GODD questions**. Each scene needs to contain the four elements below in order to develop character and drive the narrative forward.

   › **G**   What is the **goal** your characters are trying to achieve?

   › **O**   What is the **obstacle** stopping them from achieving it?

   › **D**   What mounting **dilemma** are your characters facing?

   › **D**   What **decision** do your characters make to address their dilemma and achieve their goal?
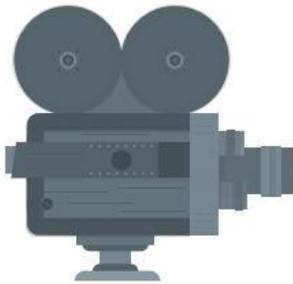
- **Reveal only one new piece of key information**. This is the overall point of the scene. You can still explore nuances of character and themes, but these should revolve around the key revelation.

- **Use visual action**. Remember that film is a visual medium and that you can use imagery to communicate information. Try to find a balance between visual action and dialogue in your scenes.

```
2. EXT. BANK VAULT - DAY

   AERIAL SHOT of Melbourne. PUSH IN towards a
   string of police cars hurtling towards the
   bank.

   CUT TO:

3. INT. BANK VAULT - DAY

   URSULA drops to the ground, hands hiding her
   face from view. BOLIN slowly makes his way to
   her, drops down and wraps his arms around his
   friend.
```

Visual action, rather than dialogue or characterisation, is used to depict the tense situation.

This is a note for the film editor to transition from one shot to another in the course of a frame.

This scene follows from the events of the first scene (pp.30–1), which began in the middle of the heist – the climax of the action.

```
        BOLIN
    I'm sorry. I shouldn't have yelled.
    I actually think you're really brave for
    doing this. I just got scared, that's
    all.
        URSULA
    You're a good friend. I know how
    hard it was for you to do this,
    what with your brother and all.

BOLIN stands up and turns away from URSULA.

        BOLIN
    I should take the heat for both of us.
    You're eighteen now - you could be sent
    to jail.

URSULA stands up, stares at BOLIN's back.
Police sirens echo through the vault and the
screech of car tyres can be heard.

        POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
    You're surrounded.

URSULA runs up to BOLIN and hugs him from
behind as screen fades to black. We hear
sirens and the crunch of police boots.
```

This action addresses an element of GODD – dilemma. Bolin must decide whether to take the heat for his friend.

O.S. refers to action that takes places 'off-screen' or dialogue that is spoken without the character being shown on screen.

1 What do you think of the decision to begin *The Best Laid Plans* after the characters had already failed in their primary goal? How might the story have been different if it was set when the decision to rob the bank was being made?

_____

_____

_____

2 Complete the GODD outline below for the second scene of your short film.

Goal: _____

Obstacle: _____

Dilemma: _____

Decision: _____

3 In your notebook, write the final scene for your short film. Try to include visual action to tell part of your story.

ACTIVITIES

2.4 WRITING POETRY

Poetry is a type of imaginative writing that conveys a thought or tells a story through the lyrical arrangement of words. Poems are often structured with a regular pattern of rhyme and rhythm (stress or beat), which governs the number and arrangement of syllables in each line.

2.4.1 Deciding on the form

Poetry can be written in many different forms, the most common of which are outlined in the table below. The form you choose plays an integral role in how readers will respond to your poem.

- **Identify theme and purpose.** Consider themes that interest you as a poet (e.g. love, family, equality), as well as what you are hoping to achieve (e.g. to entertain, to challenge, to inspire). This will help determine the form of your poem.

- **If your purpose is to entertain, consider a structured poetic form.** The rhyming form can be a fun way to create a cohesive poem that has a light and playful tone or to add musicality to your poem.

- **If your focus is storytelling, consider the narrative form.** Narrative poetry tells a story in a poetic way. Like short stories, narrative poems should have at least one main character and include a beginning, a middle and an end.

- **If you want freedom to express ideas and create original rhythms, experiment with unstructured forms.** These forms of poetry generally do not dictate the number of lines and syllables or a set rhyme scheme.

Forms of poetry	Features
Rhymed verse	This form is made up of lines that rhyme. There are countless rhyme schemes to choose from; the most common are ABAB and AABB.
Haiku	A haiku is three lines long. The first line is five syllables, the second line is seven syllables, and the third line is five syllables.
Narrative poem	This form tells a complete story, including elements such as character, setting and action. It does not require a rhyming pattern but often has a metre (rhythm).
Epic	An epic poem is a long narrative poem that describes the adventures of a historical or mythological figure. It is often written from the third-person omniscient point of view.
Free verse	Free verse does not have a consistent rhyme scheme or a metrical pattern, allowing greater freedom for the poet.
Confessional	A confessional or autobiographical poem is generally written in the first person and explores the personal experiences or feelings of the poet. It could be rhymed or in free verse.

FOR NOW

Thoughts come easy, alone in the dark
Yet not so, once the sun rises in the sky
It brings warmth and light, but dims my spark
And to my creativity, for now, I must say goodbye

This rhymed verse follows an ABAB rhyme scheme.

1 Rewrite the poem above using an AABB rhyme scheme.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Identify which poetic form you think would be most appropriate for the poem ideas below.

- a poem about Hercules, a hero from Roman mythology _____

- a description of a river _____

- a poem about loss and grief _____

- an expression of self-identity _____

- a poem about two friends who have a fight _____

- a poem about a clown _____

3 Write a short poem using one of the poetic forms listed on the previous page.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.4.2 Using poetic devices

A poetic device uses words and sounds to convey meaning. More specifically, it combines literal meanings with connotative meanings, creating a memorable effect for the reader or listener. It is important not to overuse these devices in your poems; don't allow flowery or excessively poetic language to obscure the intended meaning of your words.

The table below outlines some poetic devices you might choose to employ in your poems. Other devices include metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia and synecdoche (see Glossary, p.40).

Poetic devices based on sounds	Definition
Alliteration	the noticeable repetition of initial consonant sounds in successive words
Assonance/ Consonance	the repetition of vowel or consonant sounds in words near each other
Dissonance	the creation of discomfort through jarring sounds and uneven rhymes
Enjambment	the continuation of a sentence beyond a line break, couplet or stanza without an expected pause
Poetic devices based on meaning	Definition
Allegory	the portrayal of abstract ideas through characters and events
Allusion	an indirect reference to a person, place, text or idea
Connotation	the use of a word to suggest an association different from its literal meaning
Imagery	the use of the five senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) to create vivid images
Irony	an outcome that is not what was expected, used to emphasise an idea
Oxymoron	the placing of two contradictory ideas side by side to emphasise a point or add dramatic effect

DRAUPADI, HEROINE OF A HINDU EPIC

From the sacrificial fire, she
Appears, fully grown, fire in her eyes,
Fire in her belly, ready to scorch
The Earth, the sky, anyone
Who defies the Hindu princess of Mahabharata.

Haze of smoke trails behind her, withered
Leaves underfoot crunch into decay, flies drop
Like lotus petals, gently, into
Blackened soil, while flames stretch
Across the land, submerging all.

With beauty she blinds them,
With song she beguiles them,
With wit she confounds them,
With fire she burns them,
till there is nothing left but ash.

She is of the fire – it does not harm her, for she
Is greater than the phoenix, that which
Rises from the ashes that she scatters across the lands.
She is the fire princess, and to the
Fire she will one day return.

The use of enjambment fosters fluidity and creates complexity, as ideas are not confined to individual lines.

Senses are used to create vivid images.

Simile is used to enhance imagery.

The motif of fire is contrasted with the verb 'submerge' (i.e. an oxymoron).

The use of repetition reinforces the heroine's positive attributes.

The repetition of 's' sounds is an example of consonance.

1 Select a poem and identify some of the poetic devices used. How do these devices enhance your experience as a reader?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 In your notebook, rewrite the poem you wrote for Question 3 on page 37 by adding some poetic devices.

3 Do you think adding more poetic devices improved your poem? Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

4 In your notebook, write a poem on a character from mythology using some of the poetic devices listed on the previous page.

GLOSSARY OF IMAGINATIVE TERMS

Backstory: the story of a character's life before the narrative begins

Characterisation: the method used to make a character in a story seem like a real person

Cliché: any situation or phrase that has been used so many times in literature, it has lost meaning or impact

Climax: the moment of greatest intensity in a work of fiction

Conflict: the overarching opposition fuelling the plot of a story

Denouement: the final outcome or wrapping up of the plot (also known as falling action)

Dramatic irony: when the reader becomes aware of something important of which the characters in the story are unaware

Exposition: the first stage of a plot, in which necessary background information is provided

Figurative language: an expression that does not mean exactly what it says but instead requires readers to make their own associations (e.g. a metaphor)

Flashback: a short narration that breaks a story's linear time sequence by showing the past

Foreshadowing: hints and remarks that prepare readers for important revelations that occur later in the story

Genre: a category of fiction (e.g. romance, mystery, fantasy)

Hyperbole: a figure of speech that describes something as better or worse than it actually is by way of extreme exaggeration

Imagery: description that causes readers to create a mental image

In medias res: Latin for 'in the middle', meaning beginning a story in the middle of things

Irony: expression of meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect

Metaphor: a figure of speech that suggests a resemblance between two things that are not literally similar (e.g. 'Life is a roller-coaster.')

Motif: an image or phrase with thematic significance that is repeated throughout a story

Narrative: the telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator

Onomatopoeia: words that imitate, sound like or evoke the thing they name (e.g. buzz, hiss)

Personification: attributing human characteristics to something that is not human

Point of view: the angle/stance from which a story is told or narrated

Protagonist: the character who is the main focus of the story

Resolution: the part of the story where the protagonist solves the main problem

Satire: a way of using humour to show that someone or something is foolish

Simile: a figure of speech comparing two different things using 'like' or 'as' (e.g. 'He roared like a lion.')

Symbol: a character, setting, image or other motif that represents an abstract idea

Synecdoche: a figure of speech in which a part represents the whole, or vice versa (e.g. 'heels' meaning high-heeled shoes)

PERSUASIVE WRITING

Persuasive writing presents logical arguments with emotional appeals in an attempt to position an audience to respond in a particular way – to change their beliefs, develop a new understanding or perform an action, for example.

Persuasive writing gives you the opportunity to express an opinion about issues you are passionate about, and this section provides guidance on how to build a strong persuasive argument by supporting your points of view with reasons, evidence and persuasive language and argument techniques.

The types of persuasive writing explored in this section include speeches, letters to the editor and debates.

3.1 CONSIDERING AUDIENCE, PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Before writing a persuasive piece of writing, you must consider who you are writing it for, why you are writing it, and where and how it will be published or presented.

- **Consider your intended audience.** The audience of a text is the person or group of people it is aimed at (e.g. students at a school, a member of parliament, residents of a town).

  › What do I know about my audience (e.g. their ages, backgrounds and interests)?

  › How much do they know about the topic I will be writing on, if anything?

- **Consider the purpose of your text.** You must have a clear understanding of *what* you want your audience to take away from your text, and *why*.

  › How do you want readers to feel as they read your text (e.g. inspired to take action on the issue, challenged)?

  › What kinds of supporting reasons and language choices will help you to achieve your purpose?

- **Consider the context.** Context refers to the background and circumstances surrounding a persuasive text.

  › What is happening around your readers that might affect how they will respond to your text?

- **Consider the form.** Form refers to the type of persuasive text in which a writer presents their argument (e.g. blog post, email, letter to the editor, speech).

Issue: representation of beauty in the media			
Context	**Purpose**	**Audience**	**Form**
A young woman is tired of seeing unrealistic depictions of beauty on Instagram.	to convince Instagram to implement changes that will address the issue	CEO of Instagram	social media post
A plus-size model believes that the media is making progress in showing different views of beauty.	to show that corporations are learning, and to encourage young people not to dismiss the media	students at a school	speech
A young man shares how depictions of beauty in the media played a role in his body dysmorphia.	to persuade readers to agree that what the media chooses to depict can be dangerous	newspaper readers	letter to the editor

1   Using the example on the previous page as a guide, complete the table below.

Issue: the effects of reality television on contestants and society			
Context	**Purpose**	**Audience**	**Form**
Former reality-television competitors discuss their respective experiences – one positive, the other negative.			debate
	to convince people to stop watching reality television	television viewers	
Reality-television fan explains how watching these types of shows helped get them through lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.			letter to the editor

2   Imagine yourself in the following situations and describe how you might try to persuade your audience in order to achieve your purpose. The first example has been done for you.

- You are a customer writing a letter of complaint about rude customer service.

   I would persuade the management team (audience) to address my concerns and to reprimand the staff member who was rude (purpose) by detailing my personal experience and explaining why the behaviour of the staff member was unacceptable.

- You are writing an advertisement for a new brand of sneakers.

   _____

   _____

   _____

- You are a climate-change activist giving a speech at the UN calling for action.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3.2 DEVELOPING A POINT OF VIEW ON AN ISSUE

A point of view (or viewpoint) is an opinion on an issue. A person's point of view can be influenced by factors such as their background, their life experiences, their knowledge of an issue and whether or not they are personally affected by or involved in the issue. When you present your point of view as a logical argument using reasons and evidence, you can summarise it in a single sentence, known as a **contention**.

Note that a persuasive point of view is very different from a narrative point of view (see p.18).

- **Understand the issue.** Before developing a point of view on an issue, you must have a clear understanding of what that issue is. An issue is an important topic people discuss, debate and form reasoned opinions about, such as:

  › free speech vs censorship

  › universal healthcare.

- **Consider possible approaches to the issue.** A point of view doesn't need to be an extreme position (e.g. 'People should have the right to say whatever they like, whenever they like'.). It can be, and often is, more nuanced (e.g. 'While freedom of speech is important, it is not an absolute right and should have limitations placed on it.').

- **Recognise any biases you have towards an issue.** There is no such thing as a completely objective (unbiased) opinion; however, it is important to recognise some of the factors that affect your point of view.

- **Base your point of view on reasoning.** A point of view is more than just a preference; it is an opinion based on reasoning. Ensure you select a point of view that you can support with reasons that your audience will be persuaded by.

THE ETHICS OF HORSERACING

The question of whether horseracing is ethical or not is an issue that has long been debated by Melbournians, especially when Melbourne Cup weekend rolls around. The recent spike in deaths of racehorses has led to even more scrutiny of this issue.

While the rise in deaths is definitely something that needs to be addressed, I do not believe that horseracing, as a whole, is unethical.

The racing of horses is not just a case of humans using animals for entertainment purposes; the horses benefit from this relationship too. They are well fed, allowed to play with their peers, given access to first-class veterinary care and loved dearly by their owners. And when their racing days are over, they usually find second careers as pleasure horses.

The issue of whether horseracing is unethical is clearly outlined and linked to recent examples.

The writer's point of view on the issue is clearly stated. The phrase 'as a whole' adds nuance to the argument, recognising that there are problems that need to be addressed.

Reasons why the writer has this point of view are mentioned.

1   Circle the three items below that are issues.

- the environmental effects of palm oil

- whether art is beautiful

- whether Nicki Minaj should be in movies

- whether cafes should be required to offer vegan options

- flag burning

- whether broccoli belongs in salads

2   Outline two opposing points of view on each of the issues below. The first one has been done for you.

Contention: Eating meat is unethical.

For	Against
Eating meat is unethical because the animals suffer pain and torment.	Meat is a source of essential nutrients that the human body needs to survive.

Contention: Yearly driving tests should be mandatory past age 65.

For	Against

Contention: Books should never be banned.

For	Against

3   In your notebook, brainstorm an issue that affects you personally (e.g. mobile-phone use in classrooms) and state your point of view on this issue. Explain the factors that might have shaped your view on this issue (e.g. past experiences, personal beliefs).

3.3 SUPPORTING A CONTENTION WITH REASONS

For a point of view or contention to become an argument, it needs to be reinforced by supporting reasons. A reason explains *why* a writer holds a particular point of view on an issue. In a persuasive piece of writing, you should aim to give at least three distinct, specific and valid reasons that support your contention.

- **Consider reasons that will appeal specifically to your audience.** While reasons drawn from personal experience can be an effective persuasive tool, remember who your intended audience is and include reasons that speak to their experience.

- **Select the reasons that most strongly support your contention.** You may have many reasons for holding a particular point of view on an issue, but you should only elaborate on the ones that are most likely to persuade your audience to agree with your contention.

- **Research potential reasons.** If you can only think of one or two reasons that directly support your contention, do some research to see what other people think about the issue.

- **Present each reason separately.** In a written piece, devote a separate paragraph to each reason, using words such as 'firstly', 'secondly', 'next' and 'finally' to help signal the logical flow of your argument.

PLANNING SHEET

ISSUE: Should the British Royal Family have so much influence?

INTENDED AUDIENCE: everyday British people

CONTEXT: an opinion piece in a British newspaper

POINT OF VIEW: The British Royal Family should not have so much influence, and the monarchy should be abolished.

REASON 1: The Royal Family wields too much power and influence for an unelected body; having a monarchy is in opposition to the principles of democracy.

REASON 2: The Royal Family is supported by funding from ordinary taxpayers, with this money being used to maintain their life of luxury.

REASON 3: The existence of a Royal Family automatically creates subclasses among the general population, with an individual's worth determined by the family they are born into.

The issue is topical and invites various points of view.

The intended audience and context are factors in deciding which reasons to include.

The point of view expressed is clear; it also considers the broader issue of the existence of the monarchy.

This reason focuses on a major discussion point: democracy vs monarchy.

These reasons speak directly to an audience of people who might feel that it is unjust for unelected figures, who are merely born into power, to receive funding from taxpayers.

1   Do you think the reasons listed in the planning sheet on the previous page are the strongest reasons that could have been selected to support the point of view? Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

2   Provide two reasons in support of the opposing point of view: *The British Royal Family is important, and the monarchy should not be abolished.*

Reason 1:_____

_____

Reason 2: _____

_____

3   Complete the planning sheet below for one of the issues on page 45 or an issue of your own choosing.

ISSUE: _____

INTENDED AUDIENCE: _____

CONTEXT: _____

POINT OF VIEW:

_____

_____

_____

_____

REASON 1:

_____

_____

_____

_____

REASON 2:

_____

_____

_____

_____

REASON 3:

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.4 SUPPORTING REASONS WITH EVIDENCE

Reasons will be more persuasive if they are backed up by evidence. While evidence is usually presented in the main text of a persuasive piece of writing, it can also appear visually in the form of graphs, tables or photographs. The main types of evidence are outlined below.

- **Facts:** pieces of information that have been published somewhere reliable, such as an encyclopedia or a journal, and can be proved to be true.

- **Statistics:** numerical facts that tell the audience about a group of people or a set of data. They summarise information and help to present an overall picture. Your audience will be more likely to trust the statistics you provide if they come from a reputable source, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

- **Opinions from experts:** these include statements or information from people or organisations considered to be experts on a particular subject, and most often take the form of quotes.

- **Examples:** these are usually drawn from the personal experience of the writer or someone the writer knows. When selecting examples, it is important to recognise that your experience of an issue might not necessarily reflect those of your intended audience.

YOUNG DRIVERS, PLEASE SLOW DOWN

This opinion piece by Tamera Evans was published online for the Unheard Voices *website.*

Just this week there was another horror high-speed crash on our roads involving a teenage driver. Another senseless death. Another promising life lost to the cult of speed. More must be done to ensure young drivers adhere to the speed limits.

> The main reason in support of the contention is expressed.

Last year, 208 people aged 17 to 25 lost their lives in car accidents. Speed was a contributing factor in over 70% of those crashes. Males are vastly overrepresented in both categories. These facts, from the National Road Safety Strategy, do not tell the full story, however.

> Facts and statistics from a reputable source are provided to support the contention.

We must not forget that behind each of those numbers is a human life that is lost. It is a devastating blow to the family and friends of those individuals. I should know. I lost my teenage son in a horror crash, and these numbers can't begin to explain the pain and anger I felt over something that was so needless and catastrophic.

> A personal example, presented using emotive language, is used to highlight the personal cost if this issue is not addressed.

That is why I am imploring all young drivers to respect speed limits and stop speeding.

> Evidence is linked to the writer's point of view.

So many of you don't realise the impact that speeding can have. Dr David Harkey, president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) in the United States, explains that 'higher speed limits cancel out the benefits of vehicle safety improvements like airbags and improved structural designs'.

It is time for you to face up to the reality that speed kills. Whether it is about shaving a few minutes off your journey, or the thrill of planting your foot on the accelerator, the speeding has to stop. What if next time it is your mate, or your partner? What if next time it's you? Yes, your time is precious but so are your lives. It's time for you to take responsibility.

A quote from an expert on the issue is provided to add further weight to the writer's argument.

These rhetorical questions (see p.52) force the reader to consider the implications of speeding for their own lives.

ACTIVITIES

1 How does the inclusion of evidence in the passage above make you, as a reader, feel about the issue?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Select one of the contentions below, then provide one piece of each kind of evidence to support it.

☐ It is unethical to keep birds in cages.

☐ Smoking in public should be illegal.

☐ Security cameras infringe on our right to privacy.

Fact: _____

_____

Statistic: _____

_____

Expert opinion: _____

_____

Example: _____

_____

3 In your notebook, write a persuasive paragraph on the first reason you listed on page 47. Include at least three pieces of evidence that support this reason.

3.5 USING ARGUMENT STRATEGIES

Argument strategies are used by writers of persuasive texts to manipulate the reader's attitudes towards particular arguments and even towards the individuals who present those arguments. Some common argument strategies are explained below.

Strategy	Example	Effect
anecdote: a short, personal story	I had to wait for almost two hours before a doctor was available to attend to my ill child. Our healthcare system needs urgent attention.	can be emotive, entertaining or humorous, and the personal angle engages the reader
appeal to a sense of justice: based on the idea that everyone deserves fair treatment	Not considering someone for an employment opportunity because of their age is ageist and unjust.	arouses anger at a perceived injustice and can make the audience feel sympathetic towards a person or group
appeal to fear: makes the audience feel afraid by focusing on harmful effects of something	If we don't change our laws on this now, then it's just a matter of time before we're the next victims of cyber identity theft.	makes the audience want to reduce the threat to themselves by taking the writer's advice
appeal to financial self-interest: makes people focus on how the issue affects their personal finances	We are paying top dollar for this streaming service, and yet we don't even get half of the programs that appear on overseas versions. Highway robbery!	can make the audience annoyed about paying too much, or pleased about getting value for money
attack: an attempt to damage the reputation or credibility of a person or argument	There is no worse coward than a keyboard warrior. These online losers hide behind faceless avatars to spew hate. It's beyond embarrassing.	leads the audience to feel negatively about a person or an argument
call to action: an appeal to the audience to take a specific action to achieve the aim being recommended	Take your foot off the accelerator. Tell your mates to slow down. Leave earlier if you have to be somewhere at a specific time. But whatever you do, slow down. Please.	encourages the audience not only to agree with the point of view being expressed but also to actively get involved to ensure that things change
rebuttal: identifies faults or weaknesses in the opposition's argument and provides evidence to contradict it	The opposition would like you to think that their plan to build more schools is in the interest of students, but what they fail to mention is how they will gut funding to schools that already exist to fund their vanity project.	undermines the validity of the opposing point of view

1 Select two of the argument strategies on the previous page that you think would most effectively persuade an audience of students to agree with the contention 'Teachers' performance should be measured regularly with evaluation tests'. Explain your choices.

Argument strategy 1: _____

_____

Argument strategy 2: _____

_____

2 Write one or two persuasive sentences for each of the argument strategies and contentions below.

Strategy	Contention	Example
anecdote	Students should not have to wear school uniforms.	
appeal to fear	Video games are too violent for children.	
call to action	Plastic straws are harmful to the environment.	
rebuttal	Television is harmful to children.	

3 Write a persuasive paragraph on the second reason you listed on page 47. Use at least three different argument strategies (outlined on the previous page) to persuade your audience to agree with this reason.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.6 USING PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

Persuasive texts are written in language that is carefully selected by the writer to evoke particular emotions in the audience and to position the audience to agree with the writer's point of view. Some common persuasive language techniques are explained below.

Technique	Example	Effect
connotation: association or implied meaning of a word	Frontline health workers are doves at heart, even when faced with bull-headed patients who think they know better.	draws on extra meanings associated with a word to indicate a particular attitude to a person or idea
emotive language: deliberately strong words used to provoke specific emotions in the reader	We should all be ashamed for allowing this travesty to occur on our watch. How can we sleep knowing that our precious Earth is on fire?	encourages the audience to respond emotionally rather than logically, in a way that leads them to agree with the writer's viewpoint
exaggeration: inflates or overstates the true situation for dramatic effect	If we don't stop using plastic bags at the supermarket, all our efforts to limit climate change will have been for nothing, absolutely nothing.	attracts the audience's attention through a surprising or extreme claim; can increase feelings of alarm or concern
inclusive language: involves the reader directly in the issue by using such words as 'we' or 'us'	We have all been students at one point in our lives. We have seen the effects of bullying. As a society, we should know better. We should strive for a world of kindness.	makes audience members feel that they are part of a group and therefore should hold the same point of view as others in the group
repetition: repeating words, phrases or ideas for emphasis	It only takes one person to take a stand. One person to speak up. One person to demand change.	emphasises a particular point and captures attention
rhetorical question: a question that doesn't require an answer because the response is implied	How can we allow homeless people to suffer right before our eyes? How can we keep failing to help our fellow Australians?	positions readers to agree by assuming their answer will be the same as the writer's
tone: the mood or feeling of a piece of writing that reflects the writer's attitudes towards a topic	I think we should all be appalled at the grotesque and inhumane treatment of asylum seekers at the hands of our government.	uses language choices (e.g. forceful language can produce an aggressive tone) to draw a specific emotional response from the reader

1 Match the contention to the most appropriate tone for presenting it. The first one has been done for you.

Professional athletes are grossly overpaid.		dramatic
Texting while driving is dangerous.		enthusiastic
Bullies should be kicked out of school.		critical
Humans should colonise Mars.		thoughtful

2 Fill in the blanks to contribute to the critical tone. The first two examples have been done for you.

There's no question that professional athletes are paid too much. *How is it fair*

that someone who tosses a ball or swings a racquet earns exponentially more than

_____? Compared to doctors and teachers,

who _____ , professional athletes are

_____.

Therefore, it's time that _____.

3 Write one or two persuasive sentences for each of the persuasive language techniques and contentions below.

Technique	Contention	Example
exaggeration	Students should not have to wear school uniforms.	
emotive language	Video games are too violent for children.	
rhetorical question	Plastic straws harm the environment.	
repetition	Television is harmful to children.	

4 In your notebook, write a persuasive paragraph on the third reason you listed on page 47. Use at least three different persuasive language techniques (outlined on the previous page) to persuade your audience to agree with this reason.

4.1 WRITING SPEECHES

Speeches are a common form of persuasive text. Whether delivering political speeches, motivational speeches or even infomercials, speakers aim to get their audience to support one side of an argument. The speaker typically expects some outcome from the audience. This may be that they will change a belief or behaviour, adopt a viewpoint or take action.

It is important to remember that speeches are meant to be heard, rather than read. Because the audience usually only has one opportunity to listen, the speaker's argument must be clear and easy to follow.

Persuasive speeches usually use one of three main types of persuasion indicated in the table below. Which type is appropriate depends on the subject matter and the nature of the argument.

Type of persuasion	What it does	Example
factual claim	aims to argue that something is true or not	arguing that Australia is in a state of climate crisis
policy claim	outlines a problem or issue and suggests appropriate solutions	arguing that fossil fuels are a major concern and suggesting alternative energies as a solution
value claim	offers a value judgement about something, such as whether it is morally right or wrong	arguing that it is our responsibility to protect the environment for future generations

4.1.1 Hooking in your audience

Beginning a speech with an effective hook grabs the audience's attention and generates interest. The hook could be:

- an intriguing quote that captures the topic
- a provocative statement or question to get the audience thinking
- an anecdote to personalise the issue
- an emotive example of the problem.

Following the hook, a speech will usually set out the main **contention**, or the point of view the speaker is trying to persuade the audience to accept. This should be clearly stated and unambiguous.

SPEECH ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Target audience: Students in Years 9 and 10

Good afternoon, everyone. Pretty warm out, right? Who gave a big sigh of relief as they walked into this assembly and felt the cool aircon on their faces? Well, you'd better get used to that heat because it's not going away any time soon. Not unless all of us here decide to take action against climate change.

The hook uses a question to engage the audience as well as encourage reflection on the impact of higher temperatures on them personally.

The contention is clearly stated, in this case as a specific action required of the audience.

ACTIVITIES

1 Identify whether this speech extract is an example of a factual, policy or value claim. Explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

2 Do you find the opening paragraph engaging? Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 This speech is intended to be delivered to students at a school assembly. How might the target audience respond to this opening?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 In your notebook, write the opening paragraph of a speech to your fellow students on one of the topics below. Remember to include a hook to engage your audience and a clear contention in response to the issue.

- Should school uniforms be mandatory?
- Should graffiti be considered an art form?
- Does social media damage self-esteem?

4.1.2 Deciding on the right structure

The structure of the main body of your speech depends on the type of argument you wish to make. Importantly, each point in your argument must be clear and concise, and the sequence of the points should be well signposted. Your audience must be able to easily follow your train of reasoning. Some potential structures you might decide to use are listed below.

- **Problem-solution:** outline a problem and then offer clear solutions.

- **Cause-effect-proposal:** outline the causes of an issue, several effects and a proposed action.

- **Need-plan-benefits:** convince the audience they have some need, offer a plan for fulfilling that need and outline the benefits that will come from doing so.

- **Pros-cons-advice:** offer a proposal, outline the advantages, then the disadvantages, before advising which side is preferable.

- **Comparison/contrast:** outline the topic, examine various alternatives and highlight their similarities and differences, before advising which choice is preferable.

The conclusion needs to reiterate your contention. It also needs to outline exactly what outcome you want from the audience. Ensure you make clear to your listeners what you believe and what you want them to think, do or feel.

2020 proved to be Australia's fourth hottest year on record. 2019 was the hottest on record, full stop, at more than 1.5 degrees above average. In fact, eight of the ten hottest years ever recorded in Australia occurred between 2013 and 2020. In case you can't do the maths – that's all of them. Dr Sarah Perkins-Kilpatrick, a climate scientist at the University of New South Wales, says the trend is here to stay. 'We are seeing each year come in to the top ten,' she told *The Guardian* newspaper, 'and each year will shift ever warmer.'

Now, 1.5 degrees hotter doesn't sound like much, but consider this: a 2019 report by NASA states that a global temperature change of just 1.5 degrees will result in more severe heatwaves, more persistent droughts and more likely water shortages. Bushfires will become more common. Just look back to the horrifying fires that ravaged the east coast of Australia last summer. Imagine that becoming an annual event!

Despite the horrifying future we may be facing, there are simple steps that we can take to prevent our climate crisis worsening. If everyone here made just a few small adjustments to our daily lives, we can massively reduce our collective carbon footprint.

This speech uses a problem-solution structure, starting by outlining several problems associated with global warming.

Expert sources are included to make the speech credible.

A tricolon (a series of three parallel words, phrases or clauses) adds emphasis to the problems of global warming.

This example relates to the audience's context, reminding them of a national catastrophe.

After the problem, the switch to solutions is clearly identified, along with a call for action. Note the emotive language used here, contrasting a 'horrifying future' with 'simple steps' and 'small adjustments'.

1   Which of the structures listed on the previous page would you use for the body of the speech you wrote an opening for in Question 4 on page 55? Explain your choice.

_____

_____

_____

2   Which persuasive structures do you think would be most appropriate for the following speech topics?

- deciding on the location of a new wind farm

_____

- promoting good hygiene practices in a school

_____

- encouraging equal support for arts, sport and technology activities for students

_____

- highlighting the problem of littering in a local community

_____

3   Outline a brief call to action for one of the above topics, encouraging your intended audience to act in some way.

_____

_____

_____

4   For another of the above topics, compose a brief description or anecdote that supports your argument and leaves a lasting image in the minds of the audience.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.1.3 Developing your main points of argument

Each point of argument that you make, whether it is explaining a reason for your belief, offering a solution or appealing to an audience's values, needs to have substance. Your audience will not be persuaded to agree with you unless your arguments are credible. Each point needs to be clearly stated, be supported by evidence (see p.48) and appeal to the audience. You should also aim to use argument strategies (see p.50) and persuasive language techniques (see p.52) in your writing.

You could also use mnemonic devices (techniques that aid memory retention) to help your audience remember your key ideas. Some examples are listed below.

- **Repetition:** repeat your main contention, phrasing it in a snappy way.

- **Motif:** use a recurring image or theme throughout your speech.

- **Acronym:** create an acronym to help your audience remember multiple key points, such as your proposed solutions to a problem.

- **Alliteration:** use words that begin with the same sounds in important phrases such as your contention.

- **Time:** pause after a key point to let it sink in. You might even invite the audience to think about it a little.

- **Visuals:** emphasise key points with visual stimuli, such as props or slide shows.

Firstly, limit our technology use. I know that mobile phones are virtually a necessity these days, but how many other devices do we need? Our houses are full of televisions, gaming consoles, tablets and computers. We buy smart speakers just so we can ask Alexa or Google questions we are too lazy to look up ourselves. All of these devices, even on standby, chew up massive amounts of electricity – electricity that is still largely produced using fossil fuels.

Another strategy is to walk to school or use public transport. Every day, our school driveway is bumper to bumper with cars each only driving just one or two kids to school. At the same time, obesity is becoming an increasing problem in our society. Let's kill two birds with one stone and ride or walk to school. If you have to be driven, try to carpool with someone who lives near you. It's that simple!

Transition markers signpost the structure of the argument, helping the audience to follow it easily.

The examples clearly relate to the audience's context, suggesting that listeners are part of the problem but can be part of the solution too.

Reduce, reuse, recycle. I know we have heard that slogan a million times, but that's for good reason. Buy only what you need and try to repurpose or pass on things you no longer use. Charity shops are only too happy to take unwanted goods and you might just find yourself a unique treasure while you're there.

Another tricolon, using alliteration, helps the audience remember these simple steps.

Value-adding: additional benefits that would appeal to the audience are included to enhance the argument.

1   Not every persuasive language feature used in this speech has been identified in the annotations. Highlight two more and explain their effects.

_____

_____

2   Write a brief paragraph offering an additional solution. Make sure you state the solution clearly, include evidence or an example and appeal to the audience.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3   For the speech you wrote the opening to for Question 4 on page 55, outline three key arguments that support the main contention you listed.

_____

_____

_____

4   Using one or two of the mnemonic devices listed on the previous page, write a short paragraph on one of your key arguments from Question 3.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.1.4 Crafting an engaging voice

Creating a voice that engages your audience is especially important with a speech. Think about your listeners, the kind of people they are, the kind of language they would use, the examples that they would recognise and arguments that are relevant to their context. You want to be relatable to this audience, while also sounding knowledgeable and trustworthy.

Additionally, in real life people are rarely completely still when they speak. You will engage your audience more if you make eye contact with them and use body language, such as nodding or gesturing, at appropriate times.

- **Talk directly to your audience.** If you know the kind of people who are in your audience, you should be able to predict what they will find interesting and, conversely, what might bore them.

- **Consider the rhythm of your speech.** Factor in pauses in places where listeners might need to digest information, and build momentum towards your final conclusion.

- **Use colloquial language and humour sparingly.** Use casual language to be relatable to your audience, but not so much that you lose credibility in their eyes. Jokes and funny comments can similarly engage your audience, but make sure they do not distract from the seriousness of your argument.

- **Rehearse your speech.** Do this several times so that you are fluent and expressive. You don't want to simply read at your audience.

- **Record one of your rehearsals and listen back to it.** Look for opportunities to improve your speech for your audience.

There is even more we can do. Plant more trees around the school to help capture carbon. Recycle food waste to create compost to feed them. Divert grey water from the changing rooms to water them. Yes, it might cost a little up front, but that's nothing compared to the cost later on if we choose to do nothing about the climate crisis.

Adults often tell teenagers that we are selfish or careless. All we care about is looking cool, getting the highest score on a computer game or collecting likes on social media. Sometimes, too, we think that there's nothing we can do, that climate change is too big an issue for us to solve. Well, let's prove them wrong – and ourselves, while we're at it. As I've explained, there's a lot we *can* do. And if we all make even this small effort, the future will be a much cooler place to be.

This is a rhetorical device called prolepsis: the speaker anticipates an opposing argument – the financial cost, in this case – and counters it immediately.

The conclusion uses a call to action by appealing to the audience's desire to feel powerful or to disprove misconceptions about their character.

A pun on the word 'cool' creates a memorable finish.

1 Identify three ways the writer has, over the course of the speech, crafted a voice that is relatable to the audience of teenagers; underline where these occur in the speech.

_____

_____

_____

2 Read the speech aloud in its entirety (starting from p.55). Consider how you might use intonation (or expression), pace and pauses to emphasise the key points for the listener.

3 Write a conclusion to your speech. Remember to restate the contention and leave your listeners with a strong impression.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 Read your speech aloud to an audience, remembering to engage your listeners by using gestural cues and pauses. Ask your audience for feedback on your presentation. Alternatively, have a member of the audience film your speech so that you can identify areas for improvement yourself.
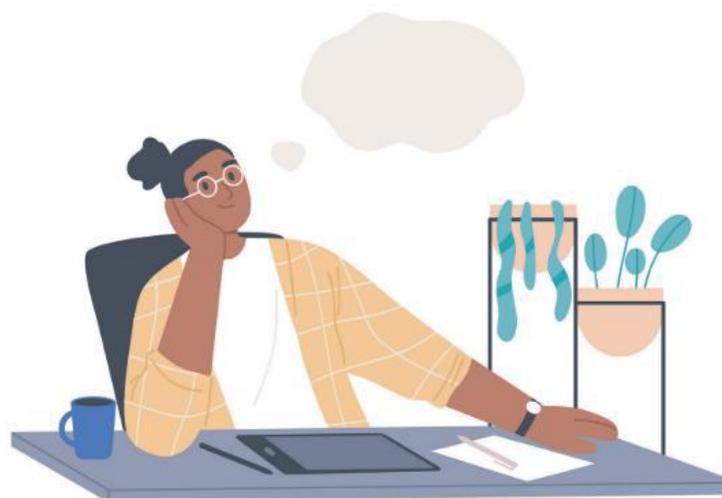
4.2 WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A letter to the editor is a type of persuasive text that is addressed to the editor of a newspaper or magazine and intended for publication. Usually, these letters are in response to a current issue or recent article in the publication (which may already have been the subject of other letters to the editor). Writers of these letters share their opinions on the topic and try to persuade both the editor and other readers to agree with them.

Letters to the editor are required to be succinct, meaning they are usually quite short and to the point. The writer needs to make their opinion clear and give reasons why they believe others should agree. The most effective letters will include some kind of evidence or examples to support the writer's opinion, and clearly explain their reasoning.

4.2.1 Explaining why the issue is important

If you are writing a letter to the editor, you probably feel quite strongly about the issue at its heart. However, not everyone who reads the publication you are writing to will necessarily feel as passionately as you. It is important that you clearly establish why this issue is important not only to you, but to others.

- **Share new information.** Reveal additional details or perspectives that were overlooked in the publication's own reporting or previous letters on the issue.

- **Add a personal touch.** Explain your own experience with the issue in a way that is relatable to other readers, who might realise that they could find themselves in a similar situation.

- **Make predictions.** Consider consequences or future problems that others might not have thought about yet.

- **Give a reality check.** Point out the difference between people's typical beliefs or actions around the issue, and the reality.

- **Offer a vision of a better world.** Describe how bright the future might look if this issue were addressed or resolved.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to David Brightwater's article in yesterday's edition of *The Western Gazette*, 'Alcohol manufacturers target teens in ads for hard sodas'. The marketing of alcohol to children and young adults, whose still-developing brains can be permanently scarred by alcohol use, is a reprehensible act by large companies that already earn huge profits from the sale of alcohol. It is high time that the government stepped in and imposed greater restrictions on alcohol advertising and imposed penalties on marketing that clearly targets young people.

Both the issue and, in this case, a specific article that the writer is responding to are referred to in the opening statement.

Here, the writer clearly states their opinion, why the issue is important and their desired course of action.

ACTIVITIES

1   Search the Letters to the Editor section on the website of one news publication. Identify the range of issues addressed across the various letters and tally how many letters respond to each issue.

2   Pick one of the issues addressed. Choose one that you already know a little about, or research the background online. In the following table, make note of three different opinions expressed in letters by different writers.

Letter	Opinion	Why the issue is important
	The writer believes …	*because …*
1		
2		
3		

3   Write down your own opinion on this issue as if you were going to include it in a letter of your own. Try to express it clearly and succinctly.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4   Using two of the strategies listed on the previous page, write a short paragraph in your notebook that highlights why this issue is important.

4.2.2 Giving evidence to support your claims

In your letter to the editor, you will need to make clear statements of belief. These are your opinions, but they need to be supported by evidence in order to be credible. Some of the forms of evidence you might include are listed below.

- **Facts and statistics:** these should come from reputable sources. Because letters to the editor are brief, include the facts and statistics that can be explained quickly and simply.

- **Real-world examples:** particularly if they are local, they can help bring the issue home to your readers.

- **Quotes from experts:** don't just expect your readers to take your word for something. A key quote or two from a respected professional is likely to persuade readers that your opinion is well informed and backed by others.

- **Anecdotes:** writers of letters to the editor often include their own personal experiences, particularly if they feel that they have been let down in some way.

- **Analogies:** when offering solutions, try to draw analogies or parallels to situations where similar solutions have worked.

According to Queensland Health, studies have shown that drinking as a teenager can result in physical changes to the brain, including a smaller or less functional hippocampus, a region of the brain that plays a key role in memory. You know what else the hippocampus and memory are important for? Learning. That's right, alcohol can impede the very thing that teenagers are tasked with doing – getting an education. And with around 17% of secondary school students reporting alcohol consumption in the last seven days, this is a far bigger issue than many of us realise. Unscrupulous alcohol manufacturers are actively targeting teenagers in their advertising campaigns for hard sodas, despite the clear proof that alcohol damages developing brains. Since they won't change their ways without a tough line from the government, the sooner such ads are banned, the better. Young peoples' futures depend on it.

Robert Strzlecki
Brisbane

In this paragraph, the writer uses a respected expert source to support their point that alcohol consumption is dangerous for young people.

A rhetorical question helps to engage the reader, while the one-word sentence has dramatic impact.

Statistics are used to support the opinion that teenagers' alcohol consumption is a significant problem.

The conclusion restates the writer's opinion and sums up their argument.

A final sentence reiterates the importance of this issue.

1 Identify an issue that is topical at the moment within your local region. Try to pick one that has some relevance to you.

_____

2 Brainstorm three different reasons this issue is so important that others should be made aware of it.

_____

_____

_____

3 Consider your own opinion on this issue. What do you think, feel or believe about it? Why do you feel this way?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 Plan three different points of argument you might make in support of your opinion. Suggest evidence that could be used to support each point; try to use different types of evidence from the list on the previous page for each point.

Argument 1 _____

_____

_____

Argument 2 _____

_____

_____

Argument 3 _____

_____

_____

4.2.3 Stating your opinion

Your letter is less likely to be taken seriously by readers, or even to be published, if it is simply a rant or an exercise in venting your emotions. You need to suggest possible solutions or courses of action.

- **Be reasonable.** The courses of action that you suggest must be achievable, at least in principle. It is not practical to suggest, for example, that we ban all cars next week.

- **Be specific.** Avoid simply generalising that the issue needs to be fixed. If you want your local council to support homeless people in the area, you need to offer some specific suggestions for what they might do.

- **Think your suggestions through.** Consider the courses of action that you are suggesting and make sure that they aren't going to create other, potentially bigger, problems.

- **Encourage support.** Offer ideas that other readers are likely to agree with; propose actions that they could be expected to participate in and calls for action to which they can add their voices.

- **Watch your tone.** No-one likes to be lectured by a know-it-all. Avoid talking down to your readers or criticising them too harshly.

Dear Editor,

I read with dismay an article in Wednesday's edition of *The West Australian* claiming that inexpensive fresh produce in our supermarkets encourages people to waste food ('Cheap prices to blame for food waste'). It is true that we enjoy affordable fresh fruit and vegetables in Perth and that a terrible amount ends up rotting in landfill, generating 8% of the greenhouse gases affecting our atmosphere. However, to suggest supermarkets increase their prices to discourage shoppers is not the answer. Imagine the impact this would have on low-income families or pensioners. We are supposed to be encouraging healthy eating habits, not pricing nutrition out of the reach of vulnerable people. Instead, those with excess produce should consider donating it to OzHarvest, who distribute leftover food to struggling Australians. OzHarvest has experienced a 46% increase in demand for its services, which could be alleviated if everyday families donated unwanted food. Furthermore, local councils can collect food waste separately, diverting it from landfill and creating organic fertilisers for parks and road verges. Take a leaf out of the City of Melville's book, which has been collecting FOGO (Food Organics, Garden Organics) since 2017 – 66% of food and organic waste was recycled, and 80% of residents believe the initiative is worthwhile. Food waste is a significant issue, but hitting hardworking families in the hip pocket is not the solution.

L Woodacre
Melville

The opening statement clearly identifies the issue and references the article to which the writer is responding.

The writer respectfully acknowledges the viewpoints of others.

The writer's own point of view is stated clearly and succinctly.

Here the writer points out flaws in the opposing argument.

An alternative solution is offered, made credible by using statistics.

This second solution gives a real-world example of where the suggested course of action has already been successfully used.

The concluding statement reiterates the writer's contention.

1   Think about the issue you identified in Question 1 on page 65. Write down two different solutions or courses of action that you think might improve the situation.

_____

_____

2   Share your ideas with a partner. How do they feel about your solutions? Do they agree with your reasoning? Note down their feedback.

_____

_____

_____

3   Undertake research online to learn a little more about your issue. Try to find:

- local examples of the issue

- examples of other peoples' viewpoints on the issue

- quotes from an expert or other credible sources that support your contention

- some useful facts and statistics

- a similar issue that has been resolved or has courses of action already in place

- other possible solutions and who could implement them.

4   Brainstorm persuasive language features that you could use to help persuade your reader. Three examples have been included for you.

rhetorical questions   _inclusive language_   _short sentences for impact_

PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE FEATURES

5   In your notebook, draft a complete letter to the editor on your chosen issue.

4.3 PREPARING FOR DEBATES

A debate is a formal, structured argument about a topic conducted by two opposing individuals or teams – the affirmative side and the negative side. They are typically controlled by a moderator (in classroom debates, most likely a teacher), who maintains order during the discussion. A debate allows an audience to hear different viewpoints and arguments before they decide which side they think was more convincing.

4.3.1 Approaching the topic

You won't be able to address every point you brainstorm within the time frame you have – each speech will be limited to around five minutes, depending on the rules for your debate. So it is important to narrow down your argument to a clear, logical and focused case. In determining an overall case, you should consider the key factors outlined below.

- How do you **define** the topic? Some topics can be ambiguous, so define key words and decide which interpretation will be most engaging and effectively argued.

- What is the **context**? What is topical or current in relation to this topic?

- Who are the **stakeholders**? Who is directly affected by this topic and what matters to them?

- What are the **principles** you believe in? What are your beliefs or values?

PLANNING SHEET

Topic: Computer games should be taught as a text type in English.

Define the topic
- Computer games are complex games played on computers and gaming consoles, but not phones or tablets.
- Only narrative-based, rather than sport-based or simple skills-based games, are worthy of being studied in English.
- Teaching involves analysing the text in the same way as a film or novel.

> Key words from the topic are defined and framed in a way to suit the affirmative team's argument – in this case, the types of games that might be good for teaching.

Explain the context
- The production and consumption of computer games is a multi-billion-dollar industry, with significant career options, prize money and international competitions, even for teenagers.
- Many computer games are complex forms of narrative texts.
- The English syllabus encourages the teaching of complex multimodal texts.
- English teaches students to be critical consumers of texts, and these texts are very popular among teenagers.

> Real-world factors that might influence this debate are identified – in particular, reasons why teaching computer games is valid or even essential.

Identify the stakeholders

- Teachers – who want to engage their students while teaching meaningful texts.
- Students – who play computer games and could be taught to appreciate them critically.
- Parents – who want to know their children are being taught appropriate content.

Different stakeholders are identified, along with what matters to them. Importantly, thinking about the desires of teachers and parents here allows for other viewpoints to be considered.

State your principles

- Education should be fun and engaging.
- Computer games deserve respect as complex forms of storytelling.
- Education should be relevant to students' own world.

Clear principles are established that will help frame the affirmative team's case. Limit these to just a few to keep your argument focused.

ACTIVITIES

1   Imagine you are arguing the negative side of this debate (i.e. 'Computer games should *not* be taught as a text type in English.'). How might you challenge the affirmative side's definitions to suit the negative argument?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2   What issues in today's context could be used to argue against teaching computer games? For example, you might consider the impact of too much screen time on teenagers.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3   Can you think of any additional stakeholders in this topic? What might matter to them?

_____

_____

_____

4   Write down two principles that the negative side might use to frame their case.

_____

_____

4.3.2 Deciding what and how to argue

As in all persuasive texts, debate speeches will include some appeals to the audience's emotions. However, successful debates rely more heavily on logic and reasoning. Cases must be clearly explained, credible and relevant to the audience. Speakers are judged on matter, manner and method.

- **Matter** is *what* you say: the points of argument you make, along with the evidence you provide, and how logical and relevant they are. This is how you *convince* the audience.

- **Manner** is *how* you say it: your tone of voice, pace, volume, clarity, eye contact and how well you use your palm cards. This is all about *engaging* the audience.

- **Method** refers to how you *organise* your argument and structure your points.

Matter	Manner	Method

• Identify clear, succinct points of argument.
• Include evidence that is credible and illustrative.
• Appeal to the audience with examples relevant to their context and values.
• Relate each point back to your overall case.
	• Speak clearly, fluently and with confidence.
	• Communicate with expression and conviction in your voice.
	• Try to maintain eye contact with your audience.
	• Avoid looking at your notes or palm cards too often.
	• Avoid overly exaggerated movements or tones of voice.
		• Create a logical structure in your argument, such as:
		  ❯ identifying a problem and offering solutions
		  ❯ identifying causes and effects of an issue
		  ❯ comparing two options and evaluating the best
		  ❯ offering a definition and evaluating whether an example meets that definition
		  ❯ outlining a linear or causal process.

THE AFFIRMATIVE CASE

Computer games are more than just shoot-em-up massacres. They are more than mindless chomping on glowing dots in a maze. Today's computer games offer rich and complex narratives in a far more interactive and engaging format than any novel or film. Consider the game *Papers, Please*, in which, taking the role of a border security officer in a war-torn country, players have to engage with moral dilemmas. Players must decide whether they are prepared to help a young mother and child who are using fake passports, or try to recognise whether a clean-cut businessman is actually an arms dealer. Or consider *The Last of Us*, which requires players to actively craft the story of two complex characters on a road trip through a post-apocalyptic American landscape. Students are able to study the themes of such games, their narrative conventions and the uniqueness of their interactive format.

Specific examples are provided to illustrate the speaker's point.

Tricolon, or rule of three, is used to draw attention to key features of computer games that make them worthy of being taught.

Other learning areas are already turning to computer games for educational purposes. History teachers are using *Assassin's Creed* to explore important eras in our past, while *Sim City* is used for teaching civil engineering and environmental awareness. It is clear that educators in other learning areas see the value in computer games, so it is a logical next step that English teachers see their value too. Computer games have been proven to be engaging, complex and valuable texts for study.

The second point continues on the same theme – that computer games are worthy of study – by giving examples of how other teachers use them.

High modality language creates a confident and authoritative voice. (Modality is how certain you are about something: low modality indicates being uncertain, while high modality signifies being very certain.)

A tricolon provides an emphatic conclusion to the point of argument.

1 List six additional persuasive language techniques that a debater might include in their speech.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

2 Choose three of these techniques and use them in a persuasive paragraph that argues the negative case on computer games.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 Provide some advice for the speaker of the extract above. How could they make their speech more persuasive? Give specific suggestions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.3.3 Rebutting the opposing viewpoint

A rebuttal is a challenge to the opposing team's argument. This needs to be more than simply disagreeing with the opposing team; an effective rebuttal will point out flaws, inconsistencies or a lack of evidence in their points of argument, or suggest that they are irrelevant.

It is important to realise that you don't have to argue that the opposition is wrong. You just need to undermine the audience's confidence in their argument. You might acknowledge that their point is valid but show how your own team's argument is stronger. Below are some suggestions of ways to frame a rebuttal.

- **Assumptions presented as facts:** point out instances where your opponent has offered an opinion or an assumption but stated it as if it were fact.

- **False dichotomy:** suggest the opposition is trying to create an 'either/or' or 'black and white' argument when the reality is more complex.

- **Correlation rather than causation:** identify where the opposition has suggested a link between two points or events but does not prove that one actually led to the other.

- **Straw man:** a straw man argument is an intentionally misrepresented proposition that is set up because it is easier to defeat than an opponent's real argument. Expose the opposition if they use a deliberately exaggerated or sensational example of your own argument to try to undermine you.

- **Hypothesis versus reality:** ask the audience to consider the reality or practicality of your opponent's suggestions.

The negative team would have you believe that introducing computer games into the classroom would result in students suddenly switching off and turning into mindless zombies, absorbed in their flickering screens. They base this simply on the assumption that because teenagers play these games for fun, they will be unable to consider them as texts for study in the classroom. However, this argument simply doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Teenagers watch movies, but we are able to critically analyse them in class. Teenagers are exposed to advertising every day but are successfully taught to analyse those too. Some teenagers – shock, horror – even read novels for fun but are able to study those in a classroom context. It is illogical to suggest that computer games should be any different.

This is an example of a 'straw man' rebuttal, in which the speaker addresses the negative side's exaggerated example of students becoming zombies, unable to focus on their learning, if they were taught computer games.

Exposes an assumption that is presented as obvious or self-evident.

The speaker uses logic to rebut this argument, pointing out that students are already taught other popular forms of text without this problem occurring.

1 Write a rebuttal to one of the points made in the affirmative speaker's argument on pages 70–1. Use one of the strategies explained on the previous page.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Plan a case for either the affirmative or negative side in response to one of the following topics. Make sure your case includes several points of argument that contribute to a clear overall theme.

- that all Australian television productions should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and migrants

- that schools should provide lunch for all students

- that solar panels should be mandatory on all new houses

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 In your notebook, draft a three-minute speech that expands on two points of argument listed in your response to Question 2.

4 Anticipate an argument your opposition might make and draft a rebuttal to it in your notebook.

5 Find a classmate who has worked on the same topic as you, but is arguing the opposite point, and practise debating against each other.

GLOSSARY OF PERSUASIVE TERMS

Argument: a set of connected reasons that support and justify a particular point of view, usually about an issue or question that has two sides

Argument strategies: tools that are used to manipulate a reader's attitudes towards particular arguments (see p.50)

Audience: the person or group of people a text is aimed at

Contention: a statement that expresses the writer's point of view on an issue

Context: refers to the background and circumstances surrounding a persuasive text, as well as the place it is published

Evidence: information that indicates whether a belief or proposition is true or valid

Example: a reference to personal experience, demonstrating that the writer has firsthand knowledge of the issue they are addressing

Expert opinion: statements or information from people or organisations considered to have specialised knowledge of a particular subject

Facts: information that can be proved to be true

Hook: an opening that grabs the audience's attention

Issue: an important topic that people discuss and debate because it provokes different opinions

Logic: a reasoned argument or way of thinking about something

Mnemonic device: a tool that aids memory of an idea or phrase by using a pattern of letters, numbers or relatable associations (see p.58)

Persuasive language: a specific style of language that is carefully selected by the writer to evoke particular emotions in their audience

Point of view: an opinion on an issue from a particular angle

Prolepsis: a rhetorical device whereby the speaker anticipates and articulates an opposing argument then immediately counters it

Purpose: what a writer or speaker seeks to achieve with their text

Reasons: the ideas that support a contention with some kind of logic, evidence or justification

Rebuttal: a reply contradicting and intended to show faults in an opponent's argument

Rhetorical questions: questions that imply what the answer should be; used for effect, not to elicit an answer

Statistics: numerical facts that tell the reader something meaningful about a group of people or a set of data

Tricolon: a series of three parallel words, phrases or clauses used to emphasise a point

INTERPRETIVE WRITING

Interpretive writing allows you to explore your impressions and understandings of the world around you. Such writing covers a range of nonfiction text types, using interesting and purposeful language to share ideas with others.

This section will guide you through different kinds of interpretive writing – informative texts, reflections and opinionative writing – and will help you to develop a sense of your own personal voice, allowing you to communicate your views and experiences effectively and elegantly.

The types of interpretive writing explored in this section include information reports, news reports, autobiographies, critical reflections, reviews and feature articles.

5.1 CONSIDERING PURPOSE, AUDIENCE AND CONTEXT

When writing for informative purposes, your primary intention is to increase the knowledge of your audience. Focus on communicating facts, explanations and processes explicitly to reveal the how and why of a situation.

Before starting an informative piece, consider these three key factors: purpose, audience and context. Your purpose is *why* you are writing; audience refers to those *who* you are aiming to inform; and context refers to the *circumstances* in which your text will be delivered.

- **Know your purpose.** Consider why you are writing in the first place. What is the point of your text? Perhaps you want to inform readers about a local event or explain how state government functions. Having a clear purpose will help you plan your text effectively.

- **Know your audience.** What are their interests? How much background knowledge of your topic are they likely to have? What do they need to know? Carefully considering who your readers are should help you to create a text that will interest as well as inform them.

- **Know your social context.** A good writer is aware of what is going on in the world. What are the current circumstances around your topic? Can you incorporate some real-world examples that show the importance of your topic?

- **Know your publishing context.** Are you writing for a particular publication, such as a local newspaper or a YouTube channel? Is your text going to be printed as a poster, recorded as a podcast or posted on a webpage? Knowing these circumstances – whether real or hypothetical – is essential to ensuring the style of your text is appropriate and it includes the right type and level of detail.

1   Imagine you are reporting on a fundraising challenge at your school, such as the 'World's Greatest Shave' for the Leukaemia Foundation. Identify the details you would focus on to suit the following informative text forms.

a letter to the foundation to explain what your school is doing to support its cause	an article in the school newsletter to inform parents of the event	a letter to the principal asking for permission to host the event

2   Think of a job you find interesting. Plan an informative text in which you describe a day in the life of someone working in this role by answering the questions below.

- Who might the audience of your text be?

  _____

- What would the purpose of this text be?

  _____

- In what ways would this text be relevant to your audience?

  _____

  _____

3   List three details you would include to make this text both informative and interesting for this audience.

  _____

  _____

  _____

4   Imagine this text is going to be added to your school's Careers webpage. What features could you add to make it suit this publishing context?

  _____

  _____

  _____

5.2 CRAFTING A CREDIBLE VOICE

In writing, voice refers to the personality that you create and project in your text. In most informative writing, the voice tends to be objective and pithy. This simply means that it gets to the point quickly and clearly without expressing too much emotion.

Importantly, the voice you craft needs to be credible – that is, believable. If your audience doesn't have confidence in your knowledge of the topic, they might disregard what you have to say or remain unconvinced.

- **Avoid too much emotion.** Your audience will take your informative text more seriously if you stick to the facts and avoid getting too emotional or opinionated.

- **Use formal English.** Using too many contractions (like *she's* or *isn't*) or colloquial language can undermine the sense of authority you are trying to communicate.

- **Keep topic sentences short and succinct.** While subsequent explanatory sentences can be detailed, key points should be expressed as clearly as possible.

- **Pay attention to diction.** Diction refers to your particular choices of words and phrases. Try to be precise. What is the most accurate word to describe a scene? Will one nuanced word be clearer than three less precise ones?

- **Include relevant technical terminology.** You will sound knowledgeable about your topic if you use the appropriate subject-specific language.

- **Be approachable.** Coming across as a know-it-all can alienate your reader. Make sure you keep your audience in mind and try to appeal to them through your language choices.

Disposable coffee cups are a significant issue for our waterways. In Australia alone, almost a billion disposable coffee cups are thrown away each year, according to Clean Up Australia. Richard Fine, founder of biodegradable utensils manufacturer BioPak, estimates that 90% of these end up in landfill. Many of these cups are lined with plastic, meaning that they are not biodegradable and pose a serious environmental problem. This plastic lining remains in the ecosystem as microplastics, polluting waterways and ending up in the stomachs of marine life. As a result, Greens Senator Peter Whish-Wilson has described the ocean as 'a plastic soup' that poses a threat to humans who both swim in it and eat the seafood it produces. Disposable coffee cups, along with plastic beverage bottles, are a major source of these microplastics.

Topic sentence is succinct.

Adjectives are carefully chosen to emphasise the importance of the issue without being emotional.

Facts are favoured over opinions.

Technical terminology is used to present information accurately and to indicate knowledge of the topic.

Explanations are clear and logical.

Formal language is used throughout.

1 Rewrite the following paragraph to make it more formal, factual and objective.

This morning, a ginormous white pointer shark was seen swimming off the beach up the coast a bit. People were screaming and swimming frantically back to shore when they saw its giant fin sticking out of the water. There have been lots of shark sightings, but this was by far the biggest. Some paddleboarders reckoned it was as big as a car. It could've attacked the many swimmers at the beach but thankfully it didn't.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Review your rewritten paragraph or compare it with that of a fellow student. What changes were made to improve the credibility of the voice?

_____

_____

_____

3 Identify three additional details the writer could include to inform their readers more thoroughly.

_____

_____

_____

5.3 USING FACTS AND SUPPORTING DETAIL

It may seem obvious, but including facts and supporting evidence in your informative text is essential. Don't just tell your audience about the topic, *show* them by providing a variety of supporting details that explain the who, what, when, where and how of your topic.

- **Include quotes from stakeholders.** Quotes can come from experts on your particular topic, but these don't just have to be professionals in the field. Credible quotes can also come from eyewitnesses, people who have been affected by an issue or those likely to be affected.

- **Give real-world examples.** Where possible, give your audience concrete examples so that they can visualise your topic and understand its importance to their lives.

- **Source documentary evidence.** This refers to evidence found in letters, diaries, articles, interviews or archival footage – anything that has been documented.

- **Offer anecdotal evidence.** At times, personal stories or experiences can be used to support your explanations.

- **Cite your sources.** Always explain where your evidence has come from. If quoting someone, give their name and, if appropriate, their title or position. Aim to use facts and statistics from reputable sources.

According to the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, refugees are people who have 'fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country'. This definition is based on the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, an international treaty signed by 146 countries. Australia is one of these signatories, yet the Refugee Council of Australia believes we need to do more to address the refugee crisis. In 2017, over 25 million people were considered refugees, yet Australia resettled just 23 111 of them, according to Red Cross Australia. In contrast, Turkey accepted 681 000 refugees. The Department of Home Affairs reported that, at the end of 2017, 1285 people were held in immigration detention centres such as those on Nauru, though not all of these were people seeking asylum. Refugees such as Hafez Abdullah, whose wife and children remain in Afghanistan, can wait up to three years for their claims to be processed, a situation Hafez says is 'inhumane and cruel'. Until that happens, they remain in detention. The Refugee Council of Australia has recommended that the government's Humanitarian Program be expanded to support 30 000 refugees and to settle them in communities rather than detention centres.

Quotes from credible sources are included – in this case, the United Nations.

Detail is provided to explain the treaty.

Statistics are provided from a credible source: Red Cross Australia.

Rather than mislead readers, the writer explains that this statistic includes non-refugees.

A real-world example is provided.

Quotes from stakeholders are included.

Sources of facts are cited.

1   Select a topic for an informative text. If you need some ideas, choose one of the topics listed below.

- how ice-cream is made
- my favourite author
- an endangered animal
- how to give a great speech

_____

2   Identify three stakeholders associated with your topic who could be a relevant source of quotes.

_____

_____

_____

3   Write down three facts that you already know about your topic.

_____

_____

_____

4   Identify three questions whose answers you would need to research before writing on your topic.

_____

_____

_____

5   Write a short anecdote that shares a personal experience related to your topic.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6.1 WRITING INFORMATION REPORTS

An information report provides structured knowledge about a topic. Typically, this information is gathered through research, and the report is designed to share it with others unfamiliar with the topic. A report is often organised into sections, each with a clear heading. An overall conclusion is used to draw the information together, providing a clear and succinct overview of your research findings.

6.1.1 Researching a topic

It's tempting to dive straight into researching your topic, perhaps by visiting a library or jumping onto the internet. But you can very quickly be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information you find. Instead, take the time to plan your approach so that your research efforts are clearly focused and you don't waste time on unnecessary details.

- **Think of your purpose, audience and context.** What is it you are trying to address in your report? Who is your audience and what is their likely prior knowledge? What is happening in the world around you that is relevant to this topic?

- **Construct a KWL chart.** A KWL chart is a simple three-column table where you identify what you already **K**now, what you **W**ant to know, and then (after your research) what you have **L**earned about the topic.

- **Write research questions.** Your research will be much more efficient if you know exactly what you are looking for. Use your KWL chart to identify specific questions you need answered. These could include:

  › What is the history of this topic?

  › Who are the stakeholders associated with the topic?

  › What problems or issues exist in relation to this topic?

  › What solutions or outcomes might be possible?

  › What are the effects or impacts of this topic?

  › Why is this topic important or interesting?

- **Do your research.** Begin reading, viewing and listening to sources of information. Use skimming and scanning techniques to quickly look for answers to your research questions. Read relevant sections of the text more closely.

- **Use a variety of sources.** Gain different perspectives on your topic by examining more than one source. You might even interview people yourself. Make sure your sources are credible, and record bibliographic details for your list of references.

1   Identify three different avenues for acquiring information when researching. The internet is an obvious one, but from where else could you gather information?

_____

_____

_____

2   Look at the following research questions prepared by a student to learn about the background to Zana Fraillon's novel *The Bone Sparrow*. The novel is about Subhi, a Rohingya boy born in an Australian detention camp for refugees. Identify which research questions are helpful because they are clear and specific, and which are too broad or general.

Research question	Helpful? Y/N
Who are the Rohingya people of Myanmar?	
What is the background to *The Bone Sparrow*?	
What are the differences between immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers?	
What is Australia's policy on refugees and asylum seekers?	
What are the issues and solutions around migration?	

3   Think of your own research topic. In your notebook, brainstorm ideas that might be worth exploring. Write the best of your topics here.

_____

4   In your notebook, create a KWL chart to refine your research topic.

What do I KNOW?	What do I WANT to know?	What did I LEARN?

5   Use the points in your 'WANT to know' column to frame a series of five research questions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6.1.2 Developing a logical structure

Information reports are very clearly structured and ordered. They usually include the elements listed below.

- **Begin with an introduction.** Sometimes called a classification, this opening paragraph outlines the parameters of your research. Clearly explain to your reader both the topic and scope of your research, and define key terms.

- **Use a series of paragraphs to clearly explain your research.** Each should start with a clear topic sentence that succinctly identifies a point, followed by further sentences that expand on this point and provide supporting evidence.

- **Arrange material in a logical manner.** Look for relationships between the pieces of information you have collected and use one of the following structures for your report:

  › chronological (in time sequence)

  › compare and contrast (similarities, differences)

  › causal relationships (e.g. problem/solution; cause/effect)

  › description (factual logical account).

- **Use relevant subheadings.** These can help to organise your information and help readers to locate specific details easily.

- **Offer a conclusion.** More than a summary, a good conclusion should reflect your research findings and explain the significance of your topic. In a way, you are sharing with your reader why you undertook the research in the first place.

The context of *The Bone Sparrow*

The Bone Sparrow is a 2016 novel by Australian author Zana Fraillon. It is about Subhi, a Rohingya boy born in a detention camp for refugees. The novel explores the issue of mandatory detention of refugees in Australia and gives readers an insight into how the Rohingya people became refugees.

The Rohingya people

The Rohingya are a Muslim ethnic group from Myanmar who were not allowed to become citizens, according to a 1982 law. Kofi Annan, former head of the United Nations, described the Rohingya as one of 'the largest groups of stateless people in the world'. In 2017, 740 000 Rohingya people fled increasing conflict to Bangladesh.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Refugees are people who have 'fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country' (UNHCR 2021). Asylum seekers are refugees who have 'sought protection as a refugee, but whose claim for refugee status has not been assessed' (Refugee Council of Australia 2020).

The introduction to this report outlines the context clearly, explaining the topic of the Rohingya people and refugee issues as part of understanding the novel.

Simple subheadings are used throughout to organise information.

Facts, statistics and quotes are used to support explanations.

Each section provides researched information on different aspects of the novel's context.

Sources of information are cited.

Asylum seekers in Australia

Australia's treatment of asylum seekers is routinely criticised by human rights organisations. A 2013 report prepared by Janet Phillips and Harriet Spinks for the Parliamentary Library explains that Australia has had a policy of 'mandatory detention' since 1992, which means that unless asylum seekers are granted a bridging visa, they are put in detention. Many organisations protest against this policy.

Sources used are credible.

Conclusion

The issue surrounding asylum seekers in Australia is complex. The current policies are meant to keep Australia's borders safe, but there are many vulnerable people, including children, who suffer as a result. Zana Fraillon explores this human element in *The Bone Sparrow*, which shows why many agencies feel more needs to be done to help refugees.

The conclusion provides an overview of findings and makes a comment on them.

References

Fraillon, Z 2016, *The Bone Sparrow*, Hachette, Sydney

Phillips, J & Spinks, H 2013, *Immigration Detention in Australia*, Parliament of Australia, Canberra

UNHCR 2021, *What is a refugee?* United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Available at: https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/what-is-a-refugee.html

This sample shows how to list references. There are different ways to format references; this report uses an author-date reference style.

ACTIVITIES

1 Connect the following topics to an appropriate structure. The first one has been done for you.

explaining why water pollution is reducing fish numbers in a river		problem and solution
evaluating single-sex vs co-educational schools		chronological
outlining different aspects of a zookeeper's job		cause and effect
describing a local band's rise to national success		description
explaining that the city is running out of landfill space		compare and contrast

2 For the research topic you selected for Question 3 on page 83, what would be an effective structure or order of points? Explain your choice in your notebook.

3 In your notebook, complete an information report on your chosen topic. Remember to use subheadings to help organise information, and include a reference list.

6.2 WRITING NEWS REPORTS

Unlike feature articles, which provide discussions of news stories developed through further investigation and research, news reports or articles are succinct and written in plain English. They are largely objective, which means they stick to the facts and avoid including the writer's opinion. They may include quotes from people involved, and the choice of whose quotes are included can reveal bias in the reporting. This style of writing is known as reportage.

6.2.1 Developing a news story

Before writing a news report, you must first decide on the story or event you want to write about. Once you have an idea in mind, collect information on the topic so that you can accurately report on it to your readers.

- **Select a story that is newsworthy and appeals to the intended audience.** Ask yourself the following questions to determine whether your idea is worth reporting on.

  › Is the story or event new or recent?

  › Does the issue affect your audience on a personal level or reveal something significant about the state of the world in which they live?

  › Does it contain a human element to which your audience can relate?

- **Go to the scene.** If the event you are reporting on occurred (or is occurring) somewhere that you can physically get to (e.g. a courthouse, a business, your school), go there and take notes.

- **Conduct interviews.** If there are people involved in the incident at the scene, interview them to get a sense of what happened and to collect quotes that you can use in your news report. You can also interview people who have a view on the topic such as witnesses, experts, politicians and others who will be affected by the issue.

- **Do research.** While the bulk of your news report will be about the events that transpired, you should also aim to include facts that give your readers the context around the event.

1   Imagine you are the editor of a newspaper for your school or another community to which you belong. List three stories you think would interest and be relevant to your readers.

_____

_____

_____

2   Select an event that has occurred (or is occurring) at your school or local community on which you could write a news report for your school or local newspaper.

_____

_____

3   Explain why this event is newsworthy or important to your readers.

_____

_____

4   Determine the who, what, when and where of your event.
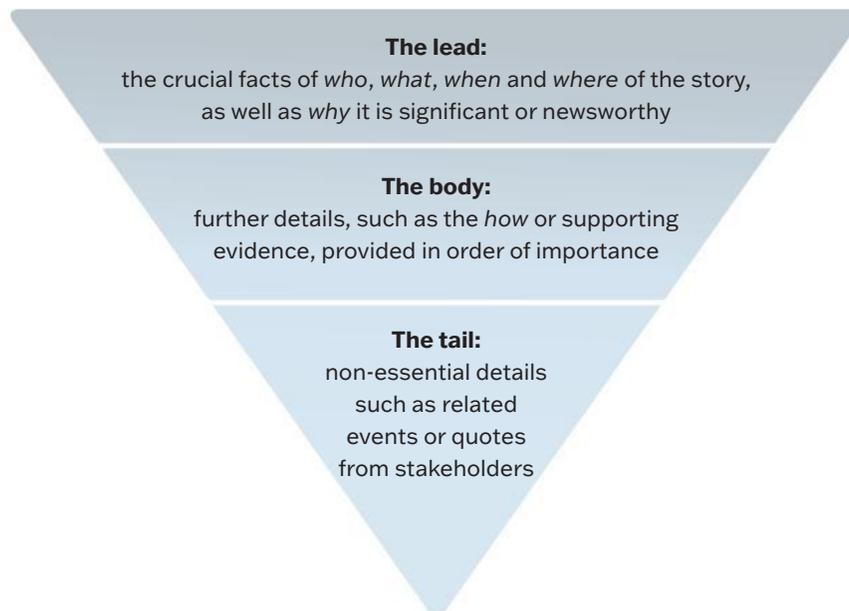
- who: _____
- what: _____
- when: _____
- where: _____

5   Go to the scene of the event and conduct interviews with participants or witnesses. If this is not possible, collect as much information as you can through research. Record your findings in your notebook.

6.2.2 Using the inverted pyramid structure

News reports almost always follow the 'inverted pyramid' structure. This is designed to provide audiences with the most crucial information at the beginning of the report. If it interests them, they may then read on. If not, they can easily glean the basic facts of the story then move on to the next report.

- News reports begin with a **headline**, a catchy and succinct title. For smaller news items, this is usually quite literal, but bigger stories may use puns, alliteration or other examples of wordplay to be clever and intrigue the reader.

- This is followed by a **by-line**, which names the reporter who wrote the story.

- The structure of the report itself provides details in order of diminishing importance.

The lead:
the crucial facts of *who*, *what*, *when* and *where* of the story, as well as *why* it is significant or newsworthy

The body:
further details, such as the *how* or supporting evidence, provided in order of importance

The tail:
non-essential details
such as related
events or quotes
from stakeholders

Students experience sinking feeling on return to school

By Eric Mann, 22 March 2021

Students at Hollyoak High School were shocked today when they returned to school to find a giant sinkhole had opened up on the school oval. The car-sized sinkhole, which swallowed two goalposts, is thought to be the result of a burst water pipe causing a large section of ground to collapse.

No classrooms were affected, but a section of fencing was damaged along with the goalposts. Students were in no immediate danger, according to the school.

The headline uses a pun to engage readers.

The by-line states the reporter's name.

The lead paragraphs answer the who (students), where (Hollyoak High School), when (today), what (a sinkhole opening up) and why (potential impact on students).

Principal Ellen Carmichael said she had been notified of the sinkhole late last night, when the SES called to notify her of the problem.

Students were both fascinated and disappointed by the phenomenon. 'Footy training was cancelled and we can't do our PE lessons,' said Year 9 student Greg Rees.

Evelyn Moorhouse, a Geography teacher, said it would provide an interesting opportunity for her class to discuss problems of urban geography.

Sinkholes are created when the ground collapses into a cavity under the surface. The incident follows a similar sinkhole that opened up in a Bunnings carpark in Treedale last October. That sinkhole was created when a water main burst underground.

Water Corporation spokesperson Aminda Perera denied there was any cause for concern. 'The Water Corporation routinely checks our network of pipes and closely monitors any sudden changes in pressure that could indicate rupture.'

Repairs to the oval are anticipated to take several weeks.

Stakeholders are interviewed and quoted, providing different perspectives on the event.

Further details are included to explain the topic and refer to related examples.

An official response to the issue is included. Because of its general nature, the quote appears late in the report.

Because this detail lacks immediacy, it is placed last to conclude the report.

1 Draft the lead paragraph for the news story you outlined in Question 4 on page 87. Make sure you include the who, what, when and where.

2 Identify three supporting details or quotes from people involved that you might use in the body of your report.

3 Come up with a catchy headline for your report. Try to make it engaging as well as informative.

4 In your notebook, draft the rest of your news report following the inverted pyramid structure.

ACTIVITIES

7.1 REFLECTING ON PAST AND CURRENT EVENTS

To reflect means to look back to the past and consider the effects of events or the impact of particular choices. Reflective writing can consider how past events have shaped the present, or it can look back on a text and consider the choices its creator made. When writing about past or current events, you will need to really engage your memory: re-create the event in your mind, thinking about the people and places involved.

- **Record the major details.** Identify the who, what, where and when of the experience. Often the important moments in our lives involve our connections with others, so record who shared this experience with you.

- **Highlight some fine details.** Home in on memorable sensory details of your experience. For example, you might recall a song you were listening to at the time, the scent of someone's perfume or the flavour of a particular ice-cream you were eating.

- **Record your immediate reactions.** What did you think and feel at the time? What was running through your head? Be honest. Holding back won't help you to reflect.

- **Identify the lasting impressions.** What have you taken away from this experience? How has it changed you? What did you lose or gain as a result?

- **Take a break.** Let some time pass. This will allow you to reflect thoughtfully before starting to write your reflective piece.

I remember the first time I heard Greta Thunberg speak. It was a Monday afternoon last February. I was in my Social Science class, trying not to doze off. Then our teacher played Greta's speech to the United Nations challenging them to act on climate change. At first I kind of rolled my eyes. I had heard so much about Greta in the media, but I had never actually listened to her speak.

Here she was, a young girl in a pink shirt talking to a room full of adults. I would have been terrified to do that. But she stood there, eyes blazing, and let them have it. She said that adults had failed us. They had betrayed young people all over the world. Her voice wobbled from time to time but mostly she was on fire, passion in her voice and written plainly on her face. I was glued to the screen.

It was the first time I realised that being young doesn't have to stop you making a difference. If Greta could start a world-wide campaign and end up speaking to the UN, why had I done nothing? I can't imagine becoming as famous or powerful as Greta, but it made me think about what I could do in my own community. Greta has shown me that young people can create positive change. We don't have to wait until we're grown up. After all, by then it might be too late.

The 'W' questions are answered: who, what, where and when.

Specific details are added to reveal what was memorable to the writer.

*The writer's immediate reaction is included.*

The passage takes a reflective tone as the writer reveals their lasting impressions.

Self-reflection is honest.

1   Reflect on a time when you felt proud of an achievement. What happened? What did you learn about yourself as a result?

_____

_____

_____

2   No matter how 'ordinary' our day has been, we can often still find something new, surprising or worthwhile to take away from it. If you were to write a diary entry about today, what significant events or thoughts would you record?

_____

_____

3   Think of a time when you visited a friend or relative's house. Try to recall the sensory details associated with that visit, such as the smell of cooking or the background sounds that characterise the location. Add details to the mind map below.
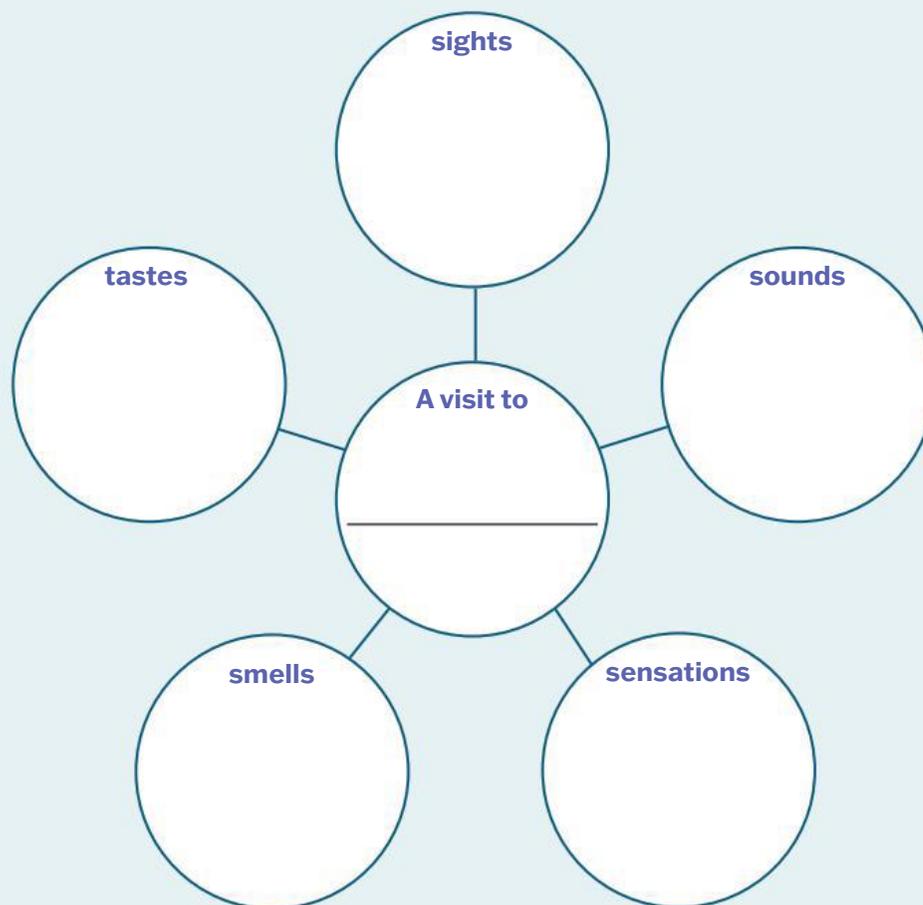
4   Think of a current social issue or event that has made you think about yourself in some way. In your notebook, write a brief diary entry on what you realised about yourself by reflecting on this event or issue.

7.2 REFLECTING PERSONALLY ON A TEXT

Sometimes you will be asked to reflect on the texts you have studied or even those you have chosen for yourself. This requires you to explain your personal response to the text – what it made you think and feel, and why you responded in this way. You might consider the following elements.

- **The text's themes, ideas or arguments:** what did the text make you think? Which ideas resonated with you the most?

- **Its genre:** we all have favourite genres, whether it is the escapism of fantasy, the thrill of a mystery, or the peek into other people's lives that we get from reality television. Did this text meet your expectations of its genre?

- **Its affective qualities:** in other words, the mood or emotion the text created in you. Did it make you happy, amazed, melancholic or irritated?

- **Its values:** texts can appeal to us because they reinforce those ideals that we believe are important. Sometimes, too, they can challenge us because they offer viewpoints that are unfamiliar or disagreeable.

- **Your personal takeaways:** what did you learn from the text? This may be something you came to understand about texts and how they work, certain ideas about the world and its people, or even a better understanding of yourself.

- **Your own context:** importantly, reflect on why you have engaged with the text on a personal level. For instance, maybe it represented an aspect of your own identity or was about an issue that affects your family.

> I read Will Kostakis' novel *The Sidekicks* as part of a reading circle focusing on different perspectives. The novel features three main characters who aren't exactly mates but are brought together when a mutual friend dies in an accident. Each character narrates a third of the book from their perspective, so I thought it would be a great choice for the task.
>
> What I didn't realise was how much this book was going to get to me. Seeing how these three guys learned to cope with the loss of a friend was incredibly moving, and at times I found myself getting a little tight in the throat. They were really different people, but they fought for their friend to be remembered, rather than his death being hushed up. I really admired them for it.

The student explains their initial intention (why they read the book) and their expectation of the experience.

The student offers an emotional response to the main theme of the novel.

As well as that major conflict, each character is going through other issues of their own. Ryan got to me the most, as he spends most of his chapter afraid others will find out he's gay. When he is outed, it's Harley who steps up and becomes a supportive friend – which was unexpected as Harley was this blokey, tough sort of character. But he recognised how afraid Ryan was and stood by him. It's something I felt I had in common with Ryan, and his story made me even more appreciative of my own friends who supported me when I came out.

The student also draws parallels between the novel and their own context, explaining why this character resonated strongly with them.

One thing it did make me re-evaluate was how I might have dismissed some people in my class because I had stereotyped them. Harley was always seen as a thoughtless troublemaker, yet he was the one who defended Ryan. It made me wonder whether I'd kept some of the guys in my year at arm's length because I didn't give them enough credit.

The student explains their key takeaway from the novel: how reading it has made them re-evaluate their own behaviour.

Overall, *The Sidekicks* is a very sensitively written book and it really moved me. It has a lot to teach readers about grief, but for me the biggest takeaway was the empathy I felt for Ryan and the realisation that maybe I have judged some people based on my own stereotypical views of masculinity.

The conclusion sums up the student's overall affective response and key takeaways.

ACTIVITIES

1 Choose a book you have read recently and summarise your overall personal response to it in one or two sentences.

_____

_____

2 Fill in the following table, developing your reflection further.

Which theme, idea or argument stood out to you most?	
How did the book make you feel and what prompted this emotion?	
Did it challenge or reinforce particular values of yours? Why?	
What did you appreciate or admire about the way it was written?	

3 Take one of the aspects of your reflection from the table and write a brief paragraph in your notebook explaining your reaction clearly to a fellow student. Make sure you include the reason *why* you responded in this way.

7.3 USING LANGUAGE TO EVALUATE

When we evaluate something, we often say things like 'That was a great movie!' or 'That lesson was really boring'. These comments are quite subjective or opinionative; they don't really give much of a clue about *why* the movie was great, for example.

While you can use some personal opinions in your reflections, you should aim to make clear and meaningful judgements. Aim to use some or all of the following language features in your evaluative writing.

- **Adjectives:** these describe nouns and include words such as original, thoughtful, effective, impressive, repetitive, clichéd and dry.

- **Adverbs:** these describe verbs and include words such as clearly, consistently, well, extremely, frequently, carefully, almost and slowly.

- **Comparisons:** judgements can become clearer if you draw comparisons between two things, such as explaining why one paragraph is more effective than another.

- **Concessions:** you make a concession, or concede, when you realise and admit that an opposing view is wholly or partly true. Concession is shown through using words such as although, however and but.

- **Modality:** modality refers to the degree of certainty expressed in your writing. High modality language includes adverbs and verbs such as absolutely, must, definitely, very, would and never. Low modality language includes words such as might, maybe, perhaps, somewhat and possibly.

- **Figurative language:** devices such as similes, metaphors and hyperbole (see Glossary, p.40) can help you present your opinions in colourful and evocative ways.

ORAL PRESENTATION REFLECTION

My oral presentation on gender stereotypes in deodorant advertisements today was quite successful.

I made five accurate points to explain how the ad I chose represented men as successful only if they were sporty, good-looking, clean-cut and fit. I was able to link these points clearly to multiple visual and written language features in the ad, such as the costuming, facial expression, slogan and symbols that suggested the male's success and attractiveness. I made sure that my explanations were thorough and my PowerPoint presentation explicitly highlighted each feature as I spoke about it to help guide the audience through my discussion.

Although 'successful' is a positive adjective, it is moderated by the adverb 'quite'.

Specific language is used to provide clear evaluation of what was successful.

Adjectives and adverbs highlight strengths.

Although the analysis part was good, my speaking skills let me down. I was really nervous, and I spoke too quickly sometimes and then lost my place, so there were some awkward pauses until I found it again. My voice was flat and expressionless and I said 'um' way too many times. I didn't make sufficient eye contact with my audience, unlike the student who went before me who spoke directly to the class and didn't look at their notes much.

It wasn't a total disaster, but I could definitely improve if I rehearsed more so that I was less anxious.

Concession acknowledges that there were flaws.

Adjectives and adverbs describe flaws specifically.

Comparison helps to illustrate the evaluation.

High modality language is used to show certainty that improvements can be made.

ACTIVITIES

1 Sort the terms below into positive and negative language.

accurate   well-written   uninspired   unclear   difficult

impressive   creative   interesting   repetitive   poorly expressed

Positive	Negative

2 Write a brief statement in which you evaluate the quality of the above example of a reflection. Use some of the language features suggested.

_____

_____

_____

3 Think of a hobby. Write two short evaluative statements for your chosen hobby, one positive and one negative.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 In your notebook, create a word bank of evaluative terms that you could use in your reflective writing.

8.1 PRODUCING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING

Autobiographical writing details incidents of the writer's own life. These can take a variety of forms, from accounts of amazing exploits to reflecting on a quiet yet meaningful life. All sorts of people use the autobiographical form to share their experiences of overcoming adversity or achieving success, or just to tell the story of the interesting life they have had. What these writers have in common is a desire to share with readers the lessons they have learned.

8.1.1 Crafting an autobiographical narrative

Autobiographical writing is a form of narrative. Use these guidelines to craft an interesting narrative of your own life story.

- **Establish a clear narrative perspective.** Decide the perspective from which you are telling your story. Are you writing from the present, looking back on past events with the benefit of hindsight? Or will you write as if you are back in that moment, unaware of the events that are about to unfold?

- **Establish time and place.** Convey a sense of where and when events occurred, using descriptive language and sensory details.

- **Treat yourself as a character.** While you may know yourself inside out, your reader doesn't. Use dialogue, actions, thoughts and interactions with others to reveal your personality.

- **Use conflict to drive the narrative.** All stories revolve around conflict: conflict between people, conflict within a person, or conflict between a person and their environment. It's how people face those conflicts that makes a reader invest in their story, so make sure you explore the problems you faced and overcame.

- **Manage time transitions.** It can be easy to confuse readers when you are writing about the past, particularly if you use flashbacks or are narrating from the point of view of the present. Clearly signpost transitions between events and time periods.

I've always loved performing. Right from primary school when we staged pieces for the school assembly, I got excited about being on stage. The scent of Mum's make-up, pulling costumes together from bits and pieces around the house, the heat of the spotlight – I loved it all. But what I loved most was how proud my dad was every time I took to the stage.

My dad works FIFO. That stands for 'fly in, fly out'. He's gone for weeks at a time, working on a mine site far away. When he's home, though, he always tries to make time to share in the things my brother and I enjoy doing.

Narrative perspective reveals that the narrator is recounting a childhood event from the perspective of a later point in time.

Sensory details help to bring the story alive.

Background details are supplied so the reader understands why this is important to the writer.

Five years ago, I had a part in the end-of-year play. We were putting on *The Wizard of Oz* and I was super excited. I'd spent weeks rehearsing in the drama room, which smelled of paint from the backdrops and was stacked with crazy props and costumes. All I could think about was being out there in the lights, looking out into the audience and seeing my parents in the crowd.

But then my dad's shifts were changed, meaning he was going to be away right when we were performing. I cried and cried. Mum said she would film it for Dad, but I really wanted him there. Looking back, I guess I should have been happy that Mum would be in the audience, cheering me on, but I was just so upset that my dad wouldn't see me perform.

Time transitions are clearly signposted.

Sensory details help to bring the story alive.

Conflict is introduced.

Specific details help the reader get to know the writer.

ACTIVITIES

1   Select a moment in your life that would make a good subject for a brief autobiographical passage. If you are stuck for ideas, one of these suggestions might help:

  • The first time I ever …

  • I've never been so embarrassed as when …

  • An unexpected lesson I learned was …

2   Which narrative perspective would work best for this idea? Would you write as your older and wiser self now, or would you write as yourself at the time?

3   What is the central conflict in this situation?

4   Pick three qualities about yourself that you would like your reader to understand. Then identify three ways you could reveal this through characterisation.

Quality	How I could show this

5   In your notebook, construct a brief plan showing how you would sequence your autobiographical passage.

8.1.2 Interpreting past events for an audience

Recording experiences for a personal record such as a diary or journal is quite different from writing about them in an autobiographical piece. This is because autobiographical writing must take into account the needs and expectations of the reader.

- **Be selective.** Not everything that happens in your life is going to interest others. Choose experiences that were significant in shaping who you are today, that will be relatable to other people or that you think reveal important lessons from which others might learn.

- **Provide background detail.** The reader didn't share the experience with you, so you will need to fill them in. Explain what led to the event or experience you are writing about.

- **Communicate your emotions through tone.** Careful word choices will help communicate the right emotion, so the reader will understand just how you felt.

- **Share the significance of the event.** Explain what you learned or gained from the experience and why it was important.

- **Remember your audience.** Keep your autobiographical piece moving along. Balance reflection with action and keep your writing engaging. A little humour, suspense or quirkiness can also keep your audience's interest.

The show must go on, as they say, and I eventually pulled myself together enough to wave Dad off at the airport. I had to grow up and realise that Dad had to work, and that he was as disappointed as I was.

Soon the big night arrived. I was excited, but as Mum smeared greasepaint over my face and helped me into my costume, I couldn't help feeling that just a little of the usual thrill was missing. I thought Mum must have been feeling the same, as she was a bit quiet as she drove us to the hall.

I waited in the wings. The lights went down, then coloured lights sparkled across the stage, and Dorothy and Toto romped out to start the play. When it was my turn I capered out into the glare of the lights, screeching in my best monkey voice, chasing the Cowardly Lion around until the audience roared with laughter. But somehow, my heart wasn't in it quite as much as it should have been. Don't get me wrong, I still hammed it up alright, scratching my armpits and hooting for all I was worth.

Well, you know how it ends. A house lands on the witch and Dorothy makes her way back to Kansas. To the sound of thundering applause, the troupe of Year 6 kids walked back on stage, holding hands and beaming, to take our bow.

Background details are included to give context to the event. More background details are evident in the first part of this text on pages 96–7.

The tone of disappointment is created and sustained through careful choices of words and phrases.

Humour is used to engage the reader.

The audience is acknowledged, showing awareness of writing for others.

The writer is selective. Details of the whole performance are not needed, as the focus is on the relationship with her father.

And that's when I saw him. My dad, right there in the third row, next to Mum and with the biggest grin on his face. I had to bite my lip to stop myself from crying, but I still had tears in my eyes. I found out later he'd managed to swap shifts and had flown home early just to see his daughter in the school play. It didn't matter that I was a hairy monkey with lopsided wings and not Dorothy, the star of the show. He was there to see me doing what I loved.

Today, as I prepare to take on the lead role in our high-school production of *Legally Blonde*, I know that my biggest fan will be there, cheering me on from the audience, supporting me as I follow my dream.

The significance of the event is made clear to the reader.

ACTIVITIES

1 Brainstorm different words to describe tones you might use in an autobiographical piece of writing. Here are four to get you started: amused, wistful, self-deprecating, tense.

_____

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_____

2 Think of the autobiographical extract you planned on page 97. What is the significance of the situation? What theme or message do you want your audience to take away?

_____

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3 Note down three ways you might make this significance clear to the reader.

_____

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_____

4 In your notebook, draft your autobiographical passage.

8.2 WRITING CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

A common part of many writing tasks is to complete a critical self-reflection. Sometimes you might be asked to review another student's work instead. This is a useful part of the writing process, as it allows you the opportunity to consider the choices you or others made when composing a text, to think about how successful they were and to provide insights that you can put into action next time.

8.2.1 Critiquing your own and others' work

It is important that your reflection is clearly focused on the nature of the task. Some strategies you might consider are listed below.

- **Look back at the task requirements.** Does the text fulfil all aspects of the task? For example, if you were asked to write a short story on the theme of friendship, does the story clearly reveal an idea about the nature of friendship?

- **Refer to the marking key or assessment criteria.** If you were provided with these, look at the description for each criterion and compare it to the text you are reviewing.

- **Think about choices made.** Consider the chosen form of writing and its conventions, as well as the choices of language and structure. Were they appropriate for the task?

- **Evaluate overall success.** Does the text achieve what the writer intended? How effective, engaging and original is it?

- **Consider what you found challenging.** Which parts of the task or the text did you find difficult? What steps could you take next time to make things easier?

- **Importantly, consider the positives.** Which aspects of the text are you happy about or think worked well?

Critical reflection on my autobiographical narrative

For this task, we were asked to compose an autobiographical narrative reflecting on someone who has made a positive impact on our lives. I chose to write about my dad, who I don't see as often as I would like because of his work. I chose to focus on how he has supported my dream of being an actor. I believe this theme comes through clearly in the story of the lengths my dad went to in supporting me.

One of the criteria was to use descriptive and figurative language features for effect. I used some descriptive language when writing about being onstage, such as 'coloured lights sparkled across the stage'. However, I could have used more of this sort of language to describe my dad, since he is so important to the story. I could also have described the butterflies in my stomach before I go onstage, although since that's a cliché I would need to think of an original metaphor.

The introduction outlines the set task.

Provides an overall statement evaluating the success of the written text.

The student uses key criteria to reflect on the quality of specific aspects of their writing.

The student notes what they did well.

Areas for improvement are identified.

Specific comments show the student is reflecting critically on their choices.

Another criterion is about cohesive text structure. I worked hard to make the timeline clear, using transition markers such as 'five years ago' and 'soon after' to show shifts in time. I struggled to summarise the plot of *The Wizard of Oz,* and I knew it wasn't essential to my story. I thought my idea of addressing the reader, saying 'you know how it ends' then jumping to Dorothy's return to Kansas, was a neat way to avoid summarising the play, and I was able to cut a long and distracting section of my original draft.

I found it was challenging to focus on just one incident, and I spent a lot of time cutting out ideas so that I could write a manageable narrative within the word limit. It's shown me how important planning is for future tasks.

Overall, I believe my text is quite successful. Although it could use more characterisation of my dad, I feel it communicates my theme clearly. You can tell how important my dad is to me – and how much I love acting!

The student uses key criteria to reflect on the quality of specific aspects of their writing.

The student notes what they did well.

Specific comments show the student is reflecting critically on their choices.

The student reflects on the process of creating the text.

The comment highlights what the student will take away from the process of self-reflection.

The conclusion offers the student's overall evaluation of their text and includes some positives.

ACTIVITIES

1 Use the information about autobiographical writing on pages 96–9 to create a five-point checklist of features you might reflect on to evaluate autobiographical writing.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Evaluate the sample autobiographical passage on pages 96–9 using your checklist. To what extent do you agree with the writer's self-reflection above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 Evaluate your own autobiographical passage. In your notebook, identify three strengths and two areas for improvement.

4 Swap autobiographical pieces with a partner and ask them to evaluate your writing. Did they identify the same strengths and areas for improvement? Compare the advice you gave each other.

8.2.2 Writing effective feedback

Effective feedback will highlight three key elements:

- what worked well
- what could be improved
- what steps can be taken for next time.

Use the following guidelines whether you are summarising feedback for yourself after critiquing your work, or providing it for someone else.

- **Be specific**. Comments like 'good expression' or 'improve structure' aren't clear or precise enough to be helpful. Identify specific areas for praise or direction.
- **Be targeted**. Focus on a few key areas for growth that are specifically related to this task. Too much feedback can be overwhelming.
- **Be gentle**. No-one likes being ripped to shreds, so be sensitive in your language.
- **Don't get personal**. Comment only on the work itself or the process undertaken to create it.
- **Be practical**. Identify steps that could be taken for improvement, or suggest examples of the genre that could provide inspiration or guidance.
- **Find the positives**. Don't just highlight the problems; identify strengths of the work too.

I really enjoyed how your story turned out. I think you managed to create some real tension as I wondered how your character was going to survive in the desert after his car broke down, particularly when the pack of hungry dingoes started following him. The twist in the ending, when the police arrived to save him and I suddenly realised that he was a criminal on the run, also made the story effective. I'd started to feel sympathy for him and you really surprised me.

To improve, I think you could use dialogue better. It seems a little unrealistic and not how people talk in real life. You could read some crime fiction to see how other writers create dialogue between criminals and police.

Another way you could improve your work is to vary your paragraph structure. Most paragraphs begin with the character doing something. That's fine mostly but it probably gets a bit repetitive for readers. Maybe you could have some paragraphs just describing the desert more or revealing your character's thoughts.

Next time, leaving more time to edit and improve your story could help iron out these bumps.

Positive aspects of the work are highlighted.

Specific aspects of the text are identified.

Just two areas for growth are targeted.

Comments on areas for improvement are specific.

Practical strategies to improve are suggested.

Feedback stays focused on the work and the process, not the student.

1   Look back at one of the writing samples in the Imaginative Writing section (pp.1–40). Write a short piece of feedback that you might provide to the writer of one of these pieces. Aim to identify at least one positive aspect and two areas that could be improved.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2   Think about feedback you have received from your teacher in the past. What sorts of comments have you found most useful?
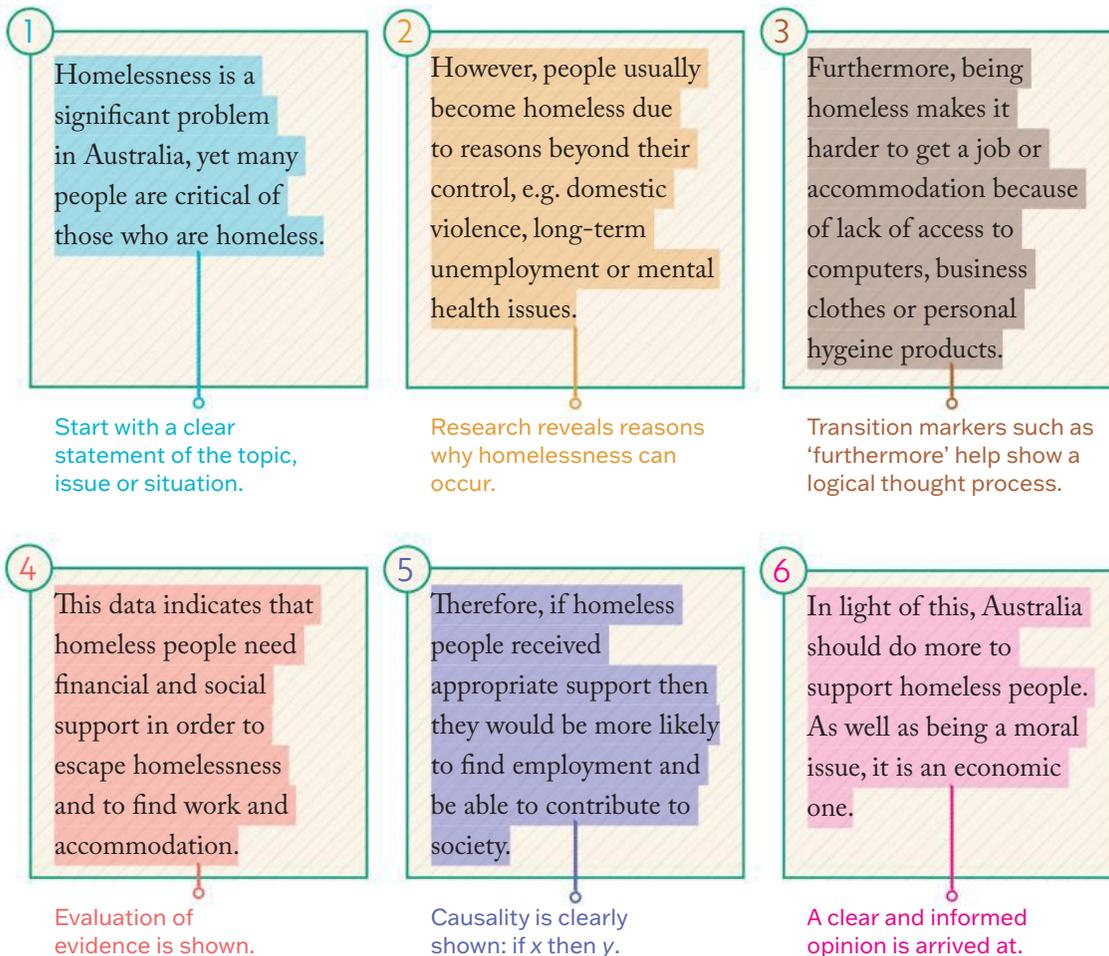
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3   Take a piece of writing you have produced for an activity in this book. Swap it with a partner. In your notebook, write a detailed piece of feedback for your partner, like the example on the previous page, where you reflect on their work to identify what's working well, what could be improved, and steps that your partner could take to get there. Exchange feedback with your partner.

9.1 DEVELOPING AN INFORMED OPINION

An opinion is much more likely to be accepted by the reader if it is an informed one. This means that it is based on logic and reason rather than emotion or simple gut instinct. An informed opinion reveals a sound understanding of the topic and explains why you think and feel the way you do. The following tips will help you to make your opinion an informed one.

- **Understand your initial reactions.** We generally form strong opinions about topics or issues that are important to us. This can sometimes mean that we are reacting emotionally. Think about why you feel what you do.

- **Ask questions.** Use a KWL chart (what do I **K**now, what do I **W**ant to know, what have I **L**earned) to look at your topic rationally and identify gaps in your knowledge.

- **Do your homework.** Make sure that you are fully informed about your topic. Even if you are writing about a personal experience, show that you have considered the experiences and viewpoints of others who are involved.

- **Use reason and logic.** Construct a flow chart, like the one below, to explain the reasoning behind your opinion. Use transition markers to signpost connections between ideas.

1 Homelessness is a significant problem in Australia, yet many people are critical of those who are homeless.

Start with a clear statement of the topic, issue or situation.

2 However, people usually become homeless due to reasons beyond their control, e.g. domestic violence, long-term unemployment or mental health issues.

Research reveals reasons why homelessness can occur.

3 Furthermore, being homeless makes it harder to get a job or accommodation because of lack of access to computers, business clothes or personal hygiene products.

Transition markers such as 'furthermore' help show a logical thought process.

4 This data indicates that homeless people need financial and social support in order to escape homelessness and to find work and accommodation.

Evaluation of evidence is shown.

5 Therefore, if homeless people received appropriate support then they would be more likely to find employment and be able to contribute to society.

Causality is clearly shown: if *x* then *y*.

6 In light of this, Australia should do more to support homeless people. As well as being a moral issue, it is an economic one.

A clear and informed opinion is arrived at.

1 Describe your initial reaction to one of the following topics.

- Single-use plastics such as takeaway cutlery should be banned.

- Energy drinks should be banned for people under the age of sixteen.

- Camping is the best way to holiday.

_____

_____

_____

2 Complete the first two columns in the KWL chart below for the topic you wrote about in Question 1.

What do I KNOW?	What do I WANT to know?	What have I LEARNED?

3 Do some research to answer the questions you listed in the second column in Question 2. Report your findings in the third column of the chart.

4 Complete the flow chart below for your topic.

1	2	3
4	5	6

9.2 COMMUNICATING YOUR OPINION

Chapter 7.3 (p.94) explored ways to use language to evaluate, and these skills come in handy here, as similar language features are used to communicate your opinion to others.

- **Know your audience.** Think about your audience's context, and shape your writing to suit them and their likely opinions.

- **Be clear.** For your opinion to be clear to others, it needs to be expressed in a straightforward way. This doesn't mean it needs to be simplistic, it just needs to be stated concisely. Aim to summarise it in a sentence or two.

- **Be confident and assertive.** If you sound hesitant or unsure, people are less likely to accept your opinion. If you have thought about why you think what you do, you should be able to explain it confidently using high modality language (see p.94).

- **Explain your reasoning.** Give clear reasons for your opinion and explain them in a logical fashion.

- **Respect others' opinions.** Other people will have different viewpoints. Acknowledge that others might not think and feel the way you do, and always be respectful in your language.

Although I live in rural Victoria, I go to a boarding school in Melbourne. Every time we head into the last couple of weeks of term, I begin the countdown to that day when I jump on the bus and return home. Some of my school friends ask me why I ever want to go back to the country. They don't understand how peaceful it is here, how free I feel when I'm roaming the paddocks where I've grown up or splashing about in the creek with Rusty, my red kelpie. The crowded streets of the city can be exciting, sure, but they've got nothing on the wide-open plains, the rocky hillsides and tree-filled gullies where we live. Seeing a mob of kangaroos grazing at sunset fills my heart in a way that hordes of coffee-sipping shoppers and office workers never will. I feel more connected to the land where I can dig my toes into the dirt than to the concrete that coats the ground in the city. I might love coming to school where I can catch up with friends, go shopping in the city or head to the beach on a weekend, but it will never replace what my rural home means to me. It's where I belong.

The opening establishes the writer's context and shows an awareness of the audience.

Reasons are provided for why this writer believes the country is better than the city.

Others' opinions are respected by acknowledging that the city can be exciting.

The writer's opinion is stated clearly in confident and assertive language.

ACTIVITIES

1 Express your own opinion on whether the city or the country is better.

_____

_____

2 Identify your perspective. What is it about your background that makes you feel this way? What other factors shape your viewpoint?

_____

_____

3 Think of three reasons for your opinion that you might explain to others. Express these in clear and confident language.

_____

_____

_____

4 Think of an opinion that is different from yours and note down what you might say in response.

_____

_____

_____

5 In your notebook, use these details to write a 200-word piece that presents and explains your opinion on whether the city or the country is better.

9.3 CONSIDERING YOUR AUDIENCE'S VALUES

Values (e.g. family, freedom, kindness) are the qualities or ideals that we regard as important. Your opinions are often a reflection of your values, which shape the way you see the world. A key aspect of anticipating your readers' likely response to your opinion is to consider their values.

- **Reflect on who your readers are.** Consider their age, gender, background, culture and so on.

- **Think about your readers' aspirations.** What are their likely hopes and dreams? What motivates them?

- **Identify readers' values.** Use the above thoughts to identify your readers' likely key values. Do they believe in personal freedom or social responsibility? Are they concerned about the natural environment or economic development?

- **Understand that values can be in competition or even contradictory.** For example, many people value their individuality but also value fitting in. Understanding these conflicts can help you appeal to your audience.

- **Determine your position.** Think about whether you might appeal to or challenge your reader's values. Consider if your opinion is likely to align with theirs or whether you will have to work a little harder to get them to listen to you.

Is there anything more wasteful than single-use plastics? Think of the energy and resources used to make billions of plastic straws, cups and cutlery that get just a few minutes of use before ending up in landfill. People love them because they're convenient and cheap, but I think they are creating one of the biggest environmental problems we consumers face.

I work at a takeaway counter in a shopping centre. It's a busy place, full of families pausing during their grocery shopping and local workers grabbing a cheap lunch. Every shift I hand out dozens – if not hundreds – of little plastic-wrapped packets with a little plastic fork, a little plastic knife and a little plastic spoon. Half the time, people don't even touch the knife or spoon, using just the fork to eat their special fried rice or Singapore noodles. Then, at the end of the meal, two pieces of perfectly good cutlery and one slightly used one are tossed in the bin. Along with a greasy plastic plate, I might add. They're pretty flimsy too, those forks, so sometimes they'll snap as a customer stabs a particularly crispy piece of sweet and sour pork. Then they'll come back and ask for a replacement, and I hand over another little packet. Yep, that's right, another knife and spoon to be thrown away, unused. Convenient? Cheap? Maybe right now, but just think of the cost of fixing this future environmental disaster.

The writer identifies the audience's values of convenience and economy.

The writer's opinion is stated clearly and assertively.

The writer shows they have thought about their audience's lives.

Situations that are familiar to the audience are included to reinforce the writer's opinion that single-use plastics are wasteful.

The writer comes back to the audience's values and suggests that we are sacrificing our environmental values and future convenience and economy, thus appealing to their values but reframing them.

1 List three key values that you hold.

_____

_____

_____

2 Imagine three key values for an audience that believes energy drinks should be banned for people under the age of sixteen.

_____

_____

_____

3 Imagine your school is going to invest a large amount of money in building a new sports facility. There will be disruption during building, plus budget cuts will be made to other areas such as excursions and camps to help fund it. Write your opinion on this topic in three slightly different ways to appeal to three school leaders who hold the following values.

a leader who values progress and developing the school's infrastructure	
a leader who values the health and physical wellbeing of students	
a leader who values school community and bringing together staff, students and families	

10.1 WRITING REVIEWS

Reviews are a common form of opinionative text. Many people read reviews to help them make informed choices about which products to buy, restaurants to visit or films to see.

Reviews give readers factual information about the subject, but they also provide some evaluation of the subject and share the writer's personal opinions.

10.1.1 Reviewing a text or event

A good review will offer a thoughtful evaluation of the merits or successes of its subject. Evaluation is a complex skill. It requires you to reflect on your initial reactions and work out why you feel the way you do. It is not enough to just give your opinion; you must also justify it, explaining *why* you think what you do. Keep in mind the following.

- **Note your initial reactions.** Write down the different thoughts and feelings you have about the text or event. Try to connect these to specific aspects, such as the characters in a novel or particular experiences you had.

- **Analyse your reactions.** Consider what prompted your reactions. Did the character resonate with you? Did the story keep you guessing? Was the experience better than you were expecting? Did your initial reactions change at all?

- **Consider both positives and negatives.** A balanced review will consider both strengths and weaknesses. Think about the aspects you liked or thought were effective and those you didn't.

- **Make comparisons.** For example, comment on the quality of a text by comparing it to other works by the same author or filmmaker, or other texts in the same genre.

- **Use a wide vocabulary.** Be specific when communicating your opinion. Move beyond simple positive and negative descriptors such as 'great' and 'boring'. For example, a film may be great because it was action-packed, thrilling, evocative, moving or revelatory.

Imagine a world without hatred and violence, where everyone is equal and conflict is unknown. In the opening scenes of *The Giver*, directed by Phillip Noyce, I found myself wishing that I could live in this calm, black-and-white world. That was until I came to realise the sacrifice such a world requires.

The Giver is an intriguing story about what it means to be human. Originally a novel by Lois Lowry, it is now an appealing and well-crafted dystopian film. It is set in 'the Communities', a beautifully

The hook explains the writer's initial reactions to this seemingly utopian society. The 'sacrifice' is not explained, making the reader intrigued and want to read on.

Adjectives are used to provide clear indications of the writer's opinion as they examine various aspects of the film.

designed society where a secretive Council of Elders forcefully eliminates any whisper of violence or unhappiness. Between daily pills and memory-blocking technology, people are kept docile and emotion is mostly erased. That is, until one young man discovers the truth.

Jonas, ably played by Australian actor Brenton Thwaites, has been chosen to become the Receiver of Memory, and learns about the mysterious 'time before'. Noyce cleverly uses unsettling black and white to film the early scenes, which gives way to dazzling colour as Jonas has his eyes opened to the variety of human emotions. It is an effective symbol, but it is spoiled by the fact that Jonas seems to easily adapt to what would surely be an earth-shattering revelation.

Adverbs also provide clear indications of the writer's opinion.

Adjectives are used to provide clear indications of the writer's opinion as they examine various aspects of the film.

Concession is used to suggest a criticism.

High modality language suggests strength of the reviewer's thought.

ACTIVITIES

1 Think about the last film you watched. What did you like about it? What could have been more enjoyable? Write two different sentences, one evaluating the film using positive language and another using negative language.

_____

_____

_____

2 Use a thesaurus to find five alternatives for describing something as either great or boring.

Great	Boring

3 Identify your favourite book or television show. Explain why you enjoy it so much, using some of the words from your table to describe your experience.

_____

_____

_____

_____

10.1.2 Structuring a review

Reviews have four key elements to them. Although the following points relate to a book or film review, they can be adapted to relate to almost any subject being reviewed, such as a restaurant, sporting match, hotel or tourist activity.

- **Open with a hook.** Include an interesting an intriguing opening statement to engage the reader. Usually this highlights a key aspect of the subject that you found interesting or thought-provoking.

- **Provide general information.** Usually in a single paragraph, inform the reader about key details: the title, author or director, as well as a plot summary – without giving away the ending.

- **Discuss key aspects.** Evaluate key aspects of the text, such as the genre, setting, characters, key moments in the plot and themes. A good review will consider how these have been constructed, giving opinions on the writing style or cinematography, for example.

- **Share your overall opinion.** Conclude your review by offering your overall opinion. You might encourage readers to read or see the text for themselves – or to avoid it.

Somewhat predictably, Jonas must evade capture while attempting to free his brainwashed friends, although the fact that a teenage boy was driven by his desire to protect a little baby made for an original touch.

The excitement builds while Jonas is on the run, with a series of fast-paced scenes where he is chased by security guards on sleek, futuristic motorbikes, and a drone piloted by his best friend, Asher. While it seems strange that no-one in the Communities thought to question why such security measures exist, the action sequences are undeniably thrilling. The climax, when Jonas faces off against the drone and begs Asher to trust him, actually had me holding my breath.

The Giver uses its unnerving dystopian setting to full advantage, making audiences question ideas about individuality, freedom and human nature in our own society. Against the backdrop of Jonas' forbidden desire to protect a child at all costs, the film's message is effectively communicated. As this thought-provoking film shows, emotions might lead to passion, and passion can cause conflict as well as love, but it is these very qualities that make us human.

After all, what is life worth if we have no emotions to experience it?

Low modality language highlights that the predictability is not too big a problem for the writer.

Key plot features are discussed.

A concession ('although') and positive adjectives ('original') reveal the writer's favourable opinion.

Comments about specific aspects of the film and its construction are included, while language choices reveal the writer's positive opinion.

In the final paragraphs, the film's title and genre are mentioned again.

An overall opinion is offered.

Themes are addressed, so the reader has a good sense of what the film is about.

1 Think of a film, book or computer game you are familiar with. Note down its title and creator.

_____

_____

2 List five words you would use to describe your opinion of the film, book or computer game you selected. Connect these five words to specific aspects of the plot or construction.

Words	Aspects of plot or construction

3 Now write down two things you felt were effective or engaging, followed by two things that could have been improved.

What was effective?	What could be improved?

4 Who do you think this text would most appeal to? This will be your target audience.

_____

5 In your notebook, use these notes to write a brief review that shares your opinion with this audience.

6 Swap reviews with a partner. Using what you learned in the previous chapter about evaluating others' texts, consider how effective the review is at presenting and justifying the writer's opinion.

10.2 WRITING FEATURE ARTICLES

Feature articles appear in newspapers, magazines and online news sources. They provide more detail than a news report, demonstrating further research into and exploration of a topical issue or subject. While they may include a variety of facts and opinions, feature articles are shaped to promote the writer's personal slant or perspective.

10.2.1 Finding the narrative in your topic

The best feature articles tell a story. Even when exploring an issue, feature writers can bring material to life for readers by drawing on a knowledge of narratives to entice readers.

Some techniques you might use are listed below.

- **Focus on a key 'character'.** Help readers connect with the issue or subject by focusing on a main 'character' – a stakeholder who can be the face of your article.

- **Use anecdotes.** Anecdotes, or short, personalised stories, are another way to incorporate narrative elements.

- **Establish conflict.** Readers will want to know how the conflict will be resolved and what will happen to the people involved.

- **Connect the dots.** Create a clear narrative arc that takes the reader on an emotional journey towards understanding the topic more thoroughly.

- **Offer a resolution.** If you have been successful in making readers invest in your article, there needs to be a satisfying resolution that answers their questions.

MY FEATURE ARTICLE PLAN

Topic: school excursion to the Construction Futures Centre for our Careers program

1. A bunch of slightly bored Year 10s go on a Careers excursion to the Centre to learn about the building construction industry. It's a cold winter morning.
2. Explore different features of the Centre, showing how it aims to interest visitors in the construction industry.
3. Provide details of what I learned about becoming an electrician and about women in the electrical field.
4. Reveal my excitement at discovering my future career.
5. Finish by making a pun, referring back to the cold temperature in the Centre and how I've warmed to a new career.

The opening will set the scene, just like you might in a narrative. Morning suggests the start of something.

A sense of plot develops as the writer conveys a sense of the Centre's mission and scope through the lens of their own growing interest in what they learned.

The writer's journey is resolved with the discovery of the future career they want to pursue – the personal journey allows the writer to explore an important function of the Centre in a relatable and engaging way.

1 Narratives in feature articles often follow one of seven archetypal plotlines, such as 'the quest', 'overcoming the monster' and 'rags to riches'. Search 'seven basic plots' online to find the remaining four common plotlines, and list them here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 Imagine you are going to write a feature article about each of the following topics. Suggest which of the above plots you would use for each topic.

an endangered animal	
overcoming an illness	
the importance of family	

3 Think of three different stories from your own life that could be used as a springboard to explore a topic or issue in society. For example, you might explore your family's decision to create a vegetable patch in the backyard as the basis for an article on sustainable living.

_____

_____

_____

4 Take one of these ideas and plan the structure of your article in your notebook. How would you begin in a way that hooks your reader? How would you use different stages in the story to bring in facts and evidence that you might research? What opinions or ideas will your story communicate to the reader?

10.2.2 Structuring a feature article

Most feature articles have a similar structure.

- **Begin with a headline, subhead and by-line.** Headlines are designed to catch attention and sum up the article. The subhead provides a clearer indication of the subject of the article, while the by-line identifies the writer.

- **Open with a hook.** Begin with an interesting opening sentence that keeps your reader's attention. You might begin with a quote, observation or even a question.

- **Provide a clear introduction.** The first paragraph, known as the lead, clarifies the subject matter of the article.

- **Develop the body of your discussion.** Include facts, evidence, quotes and examples, as well as your own informed opinions.

- **Offer a conclusion.** Your final paragraph should reinforce your overall opinion on the subject.

- **Include other generic features.** Use photographs with captions to illustrate your article, and pull-out quotes to highlight key ideas.

Sparking Interest in a Construction Career

A day at the Construction Futures Centre was an electrifying experience, writes Billie Faber. Wednesday 14 July 2021

One cold, drizzly morning in June, the Construction Futures Centre (CFC) opened its doors to a bunch of yawning, shivering Year 10s on a Careers excursion.

An initiative from the Construction Training Fund (CTF), the CFC is an interactive learning facility dedicated to revealing the range of career options in the building and construction industry. It's been a hit with students and their teachers. After our trip, I can now see why.

It uses virtual and augmented technologies, as well as full-scale models, videos, games and displays. On our tour, my initial indifference quickly evaporated as I became fascinated with operating a giant virtual crane and exploring the hidden layers of building a house.

Virtual experiences at the CFC

The headline uses alliteration and a pun to catch readers' attention.

The combined subhead and by-line give a clearer picture of what the article is about.

The hook sets the initial tone for the article and works to establish setting, typical of narrative writing.

Facts and examples are included to support the writer's opinion.

The first main paragraph clearly outlines the subject of the article and reveals the writer's opinion.

Positive language conveys the writer's favourable opinion of the CFC.

Pictures and captions are included to illustrate the article.

And it's not just toys for the boys. 'With a national skills shortage, there's no better time for women to consider a future in construction,' says CTF Director, Mr Eamon Moore.

While some of the girls in my class were attracted to hands-on displays where they could design interiors, I found myself drawn to a video profile of Lorena, a young woman doing an electrical apprenticeship. She was involved in many different and interesting projects, from smart-wiring a house to making sure the lights come on in entire office buildings.

Our informative guide, Takarah Stokes, said the industry was working hard to attract more women, although they still only make up 10% of the electrical trades workforce.

Takarah also showed me how to find out about pathways into the career, such as a pre-apprenticeship course at TAFE. I could even begin it while I'm still at school. Thanks to Takarah, I'm super excited about learning more about this career. CFC's ability to educate and inspire students in this way makes it a must-visit excursion destination.

Without a trip to the Construction Futures Centre, I don't know if I ever would have considered becoming a sparky. But their helpful staff and very cool activities opened my eyes. Despite the chilly weather, I really warmed to my future career and no doubt I won't be the last student to be similarly inspired.

Exploring the possibilities

Quotes are included to support the writer's opinion.

Positive language conveys the writer's favourable opinion of the CFC.

Personal experiences further support the writer's opinion.

The conclusion reiterates the writer's opinions about both their choice of career and the CFC.

Pictures and captions are included to illustrate the article.

1 Looking at the example feature article above, identify three techniques or language choices that communicate the writer's opinion.

_____

_____

_____

2 Using your feature article plan on page 115, construct a KWL chart in your notebook to identify what you already know and what you want to know.

3 Conduct your research, making sure you find relevant facts, statistics, opinions, quotes and examples. Record this in your KWL chart.

4 Use your research, along with your personal experience of the topic, to draft your own feature article in your notebook.

GLOSSARY OF INTERPRETIVE TERMS

Anecdote: a short story about a real person or event, usually serving to make the audience laugh or ponder over a topic

Archetypal plotlines: the seven basic plots that inform all stories

Audience: the people to whom a piece of writing is directed

By-line: gives the name of the writer of an article in a newspaper

Classification: the opening paragraph of an information report, which outlines the parameters of the research

Documentary evidence: evidence found in letters, diaries, articles, interviews or archival footage

Evaluation: the process of judging or calculating the quality, importance, amount or value of something

Headline: a heading at the top of an article or page in a newspaper or magazine

High modality language: words expressing a high degree of certainty (e.g. definitely, never)

Hook: an interesting opening sentence that captures the reader's attention

Inverted pyramid structure: a writing structure designed to grab the reader's attention as quickly as possible, presenting the most important details in the lead paragraph

KWL chart: a simple three-column table that identifies what you already **K**now, what you **W**ant to know and what you have **L**earned about the topic

Logic: thinking or argument based on reasoning

Low modality language: words expressing uncertainty (e.g. possibly, somewhat)

Newsworthy: considered interesting and relevant enough to be published in the media

Opinion: a thought or belief about something or someone

Publishing context: where and in what medium a particular piece appears (e.g. an article in a print newspaper)

Purpose: the point of a particular piece (i.e. *why* it is being written)

Reason: a statement offered in explanation or justification

Reflection: looking back to the past and considering the effects of events or the impact of particular choices

Research: the investigation of a subject and study of sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions

Social context: the real-world events or circumstances surrounding the topic being discussed

Stakeholder: a person or group with an interest in or concern about a particular topic

Subhead: in journalism, a heading given to a subsection of a piece of writing – sometimes referred to as a subheading

Values: the qualities or ideals that people regard as important

Voice: the personality that a writer creates and projects in their text through their choice of language, sentence structure and content

ANALYTICAL WRITING

Analytical writing discusses how a text is constructed and why it communicates certain meanings or moves its audience in particular ways. By carefully examining a text and answering questions such as 'why?', 'how?' and 'so what?', this type of writing evaluates strengths and weaknesses, makes reasoned judgements and draws conclusions based on evidence.

This section provides guidance for writing analytically on both media and literary texts. Analysing media texts requires you to home in on how argument and language are used by the writer to try to persuade their audience. Analysing literary texts, on the other hand, allows you to show your understanding of and interest in the world of a literary text – its genre, contexts, perspectives, themes and ideas.

The types of analytical writing explored in this section include analysis of media texts and analysis of literary texts.

11.1 STRUCTURING YOUR ANALYSIS

The first step in analysing a media text is to read the text carefully, highlighting and annotating examples of persuasive elements. Before you start writing your analysis, plan your essay using the following template as a guide.

The examples in the template below are an analysis of the persuasive text on pages 48–9.

Introduction	In your introduction (see p.122), you should identify the following details: • title of the text • text type • the writer • where the text was published • the issue • the intended audience • writer's main contention • main persuasive strategies/techniques. **Example:** In her opinion piece 'Young Drivers, Please Slow Down', published online for the *Unheard Voices* website, Tamera Evans tackles the issue of young drivers speeding. Directing her message at the young drivers mentioned in the title, she implores her audience to adhere to speed limits in order to save lives. She employs emotional language, a personal example, and facts and statistics to position her audience to agree that speeding causes far too many deaths and that young drivers urgently need to change their behaviour.
Body paragraphs	For each body paragraph, discuss a persuasive element used by the writer, such as the presentation of argument (see p.124) or language choices (see p.126). You can use the **PEE** structure below for your body paragraphs. 1. Begin by identifying a **P**ERSUASIVE ELEMENT. 2. Give an **E**XAMPLE. 3. Discuss the intended **E**FFECT on the audience. **Example:** Evans supplements emotive language and a touching personal example with the use of statistics. This is achieved through the inclusion of facts such as '208 people aged 17 to 25 lost their lives in car accidents' and 'Speed was a contributing factor in over 70% of those crashes'. The combined effect of these positions the reader to consider the writer's viewpoint as not only emotional but also logical, and influences them to drive more carefully and with greater regard for the speed limit.
Conclusion	Summarise the writer's opinion and overall approach. **Example:** In her opinion piece arguing for young drivers to slow down, Tamera Evans balances emotional appeals and a story of personal suffering with a reasoned tone supported by evidence. This is intended to make readers believe her point of view is thoughtful, sensible and well-meaning, and to influence them to feel that slowing down is the only commonsense approach to this issue.

This chapter will lead you through an analysis of a media text entitled 'The World Is Healing. We Are the Virus.', the beginning of which appears below.

Background information: The following is an opinion piece by Maximillian Chu that appeared in *Down Under Gazette* on 12 December 2020. It discusses the environmental impact of lockdowns and other restrictions due to COVID-19.

The World Is Healing. We Are the Virus.

What happened in 2020 is simply astounding. The canals of Venice ran clear for the first time in years. Dolphins returned to the Mumbai docks. Citizens in Northern India saw the Himalayan mountain range for the first time in their lives. All these wonders were made possible by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent quarantining of multitudes of the human population. But while we marvelled at the beauty of nature during lockdown, have we done anything meaningful to preserve it?

The effect of restrictions on human activity has shown us how the environment can thrive when humans step aside. We know what's possible; all we need now is to choose to change our behaviour to help heal the world.

1   Read the media text above. Highlight and annotate instances where you, as the reader, feel persuaded to side with the writer's point of view.

2   What is the writer's main contention?

_____

_____

3   What is the writer's tone? Is it angry, humorous, thoughtful, condescending?

_____

11.2 OUTLINING THE ISSUE AND MAIN CONTENTION

The first thing to do when analysing a media text is to identify the features of the text, the intended audience, the issue the text is about and the writer's opinion about the issue (their main contention). These elements, explored in more detail below, will comprise the introduction of your analytical essay.

- **Features of the text:** the title of the piece, the name of the writer, where the piece is published (or delivered, if a speech) and the date of publication.

- **The intended audience:** the group of people to whom the writer is addressing their piece. It is important to recognise and understand the intended audience, as this will determine why particular argument and persuasive language techniques have been used by the writer.

- **The issue:** the topical debate that the writer is discussing or debating (e.g. whether there should be a tax on junk food), as well as the context surrounding it. Possible ways to introduce the issue in your analytical piece are listed below.

  › The text concerns the issue of …

  › In this piece, the writer considers …

- **The main contention:** the writer's opinion on the issue (e.g. 'We should tax junk food to ensure the health of our children.'). Possible ways to incorporate the main contention in your analytical piece are listed below.

  › The writer's main contention is …

  › The article presents the argument that …

The following is the introduction to an essay that analyses Maximillian Chu's opinion piece, which begins on page 121.

In his opinion piece 'The World is Healing. We Are the Virus.', published in *Down Under Gazette*, Maximillian Chu explores the environmental impacts of COVID-19 restrictions. He begins his piece in an optimistic tone, supported by positive language such as 'astounding', 'wonders' and 'beauty', and short active sentences. Directly addressing those concerned about the environment, Chu asks his readers to marvel at nature and beseeches them to recognise how restricting human activity can help heal the natural world. He employs rhetorical questions and a call to action to position his audience to see the positive lessons that can be learned from lockdowns and to agree that change is needed.

The text type, the title of the text, the place of publication and the writer's name are mentioned.

The issue is described.

The intended audience is identified.

The writer's main contention is stated.

Persuasive elements are referred to.

ACTIVITIES

1 While the media texts you analyse in class will often come with background information, when analysing real-word examples you may have to deduce this information yourself. Select a media text (e.g. letter to the editor, opinion piece) on a topical issue and outline the key information about it below.

Title of the text: _____

Text type: _____

The writer's name: _____

Where the text was published: _____

When the text was published: _____

The issue: _____

The intended audience: _____

2 What is the writer's main contention in the media text you selected?

_____

3 Using the example introduction above as a guide, write a short introduction analysing your selected media text.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11.3 ANALYSING ARGUMENT

Each body paragraph in your analytical essay should include an analysis of key arguments made by the writer. Focus on:

- the order of the arguments
- how the media text begins and ends
- the reasons used to support the arguments
- the evidence used to back up the writer's claims
- argument strategies / persuasive techniques
- how the above elements position the audience to agree with the writer.

The table below provides sample analyses of the examples of argument strategies on page 50.

Strategy	Sample analysis
anecdote	The anecdote about having to wait for hours for a doctor adds a personal element to the writer's argument, and encourages the reader to feel that the healthcare system needs urgent reform.
appeal to a sense of justice	The writer creates an appeal to justice by calling out ageism in the workplace, which is intended to arouse feelings of outrage in the audience.
appeal to fear	The phrase 'just a matter of time' suggests that falling victim to cyber identity theft is inevitable if laws are not changed, thereby leading readers to consider their own safety and to agree that this course of action is indeed necessary.
appeal to financial self-interest	Use of phrases such as 'top dollar' and 'highway robbery' are directed at the audience's sense of financial self-interest. This is likely to incline the audience to feel cheated and potentially to abandon their subscription to this service.
attack	The writer uses strongly attacking words such as 'coward', 'losers' and 'embarrassing', as well as modifiers such as 'no worse' and 'beyond', to evoke negative emotions in the reader and position them to feel animosity towards keyboard warriors.
call to action	A pleading tone is used to highlight the seriousness of speeding and the need for action on the part of readers, who are positioned to reflect on the emotional nature of this issue and change their behaviour.
rebuttal	By describing the flaws in the opposition party's plan to build more schools with forceful language such as 'gut funding' and 'vanity project', the writer depicts the opposing point of view as unjust and morally wrong, positioning readers to question support for this party.

The positive effects resulting from restrictions on human activity have been numerous: cleaner waterways, reduced noise pollution and improved air quality. In China alone, emissions of harmful gases and other pollutants dropped 25% at the start of 2020 and the quality of air improved up to 11.4%. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that these changes saved 50 000 lives.

Another key point of progress has been the emergence of wildlife into human settlements. The number of animals in metropolitan areas has noticeably increased, with some particularly intriguing cases, such as pumas prowling the streets of Santiago in Chile. Scientists around the world have begun researching how our time in lockdown can provide invaluable insights into the way in which we interact with wildlife.

Now no-one is suggesting that we all return to lockdown just so that we can have some furry visitors enjoy our towns and cities. That would completely discount the economic and mental health suffering caused by COVID-19 restrictions – suffering that we have all shared in. But there are lessons to be learned here. Professor Martin Wikelski, Managing Director of the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour in Radolfzell, Germany explains that 'we may discover that relatively minor changes to our lifestyles and transport networks can potentially have significant benefits for both ecosystems and humans'.

1 Highlight and annotate argument features (e.g. order of arguments, reasons selected, argument strategies) in the above article.

2 Select three of the argument features you identified in Question 1 and explain how they position the reader to feel about the argument.

Argument feature 1: _____

Positions the reader: _____

_____

Argument feature 2: _____

Positions the reader: _____

_____

Argument feature 3: _____

Positions the reader: _____

_____

11.4 ANALYSING LANGUAGE

In addition to analysing how a writer presents their argument, you must also analyse the ways in which the writer has used language to support their argument, and the intended effects of this on the specific audience at which the text is aimed.

The table below provides sample analyses of the examples of persuasive language techniques on page 52. (This is not an exhaustive list.) Furthermore, you can analyse language use without linking it to a specific technique, simply by focusing on particular word choices and explaining what these words are likely to make an audience feel or think.

Technique	Sample analysis
connotation	The writer describes frontline health workers as 'doves at heart', a phrase with a positive connotation of peace and gentleness that encourages the reader to feel warmly towards this group. This is contrasted with the negative connotation of 'bull-headed', which suggests stubbornness and a lack of intelligence, to describe the patients they sometimes deal with.
emotive language	Highly charged words such as 'ashamed' and 'travesty' are used to manipulate the reader into feeling ashamed of their actions, while the alarming image of 'precious Earth … on fire' positions readers to seek to change their behaviour or work to address the issue.
exaggeration	Through the use of exaggeration, the writer dismisses the multiple ways that climate change is being addressed as 'for nothing' if plastic bags are not banned. This is intended to elicit concern in readers and position them to feel that urgent action on this issue is required.
inclusive language	By alluding to the shared experience of being a student, the writer reminds readers of the trauma of bullying that many students experience. While the reproach of 'we should know better' attempts to arouse feelings of shame in readers, the writer's use of inclusive language ('we', 'as a society') invites them to share optimism about a kinder future.
repetition	The repetition of 'one person' emphasises the power of the individual to make a change in the world, thereby positioning readers to feel empowered and encouraging them to initiate positive change.
rhetorical question	The use of rhetorical questions full of emotive language ('suffer right before our eyes', 'keep failing to help') positions the reader to feel that the inhumane treatment of homeless people is unacceptable and morally wrong.
tone	The admonishing tone used by the writer – achieved through forceful language choices such as 'appalled', 'grotesque' and 'inhumane' – works to elicit disgust in the audience, positioning them to share in collective shame over the actions of the government.

The coronavirus crisis helped remind us not only of how our consumer lifestyles affect natural wildlife but also of the urgent action that is needed to tackle the environmental challenges facing our planet. At the height of the pandemic, climate scientists were hopeful that carbon emissions would decrease dramatically as a result of the steepest downturn in human activity since World War II. Their hopes were initially realised, with global emissions of CO_2 falling by 7% at the peak of the crisis.

However, the length of lockdowns was too short to reverse decades of destruction. And we have simply returned to our old ways. Climate levels have returned to pre- lockdown heights. In its annual emissions gap report, the United Nations environment programme said the impact of the lockdown was 'negligible'.

While the response to COVID-19 may not have solved the issue of climate change, it showed us a glimpse of *how* we can achieve this goal. By modifying our behaviour – for example, limiting air travel, vehicles on the road and industrial processes that burn fossil fuels – we can turn the negatives of life during a pandemic into a positive for the planet. If we don't act now, then the Earth will continue hurtling towards destruction. We owe it to our children and our children's children to leave them a world worth living in.

ACTIVITIES

1   In your notebook, add three more entries for each of the columns in the tone word bank below.

Positive	Negative	Neutral
approving	aggressive	balanced
enthusiastic	condescending	calm

2   What tone word best describes the tone in the passage above?

   _____

3   Highlight and annotate persuasive language use in the above article. Remember, these can be specific techniques or simply words or phrases that have a significant impact on the reader.

4   Select two of the language choices you identified in Question 3 and explain their intended effect on the audience.

   Language choice 1: _____

   Effect on the audience: _____

   _____

   Language choice 2: _____

   Effect on the audience: _____

   _____

11.5 ANALYSING VISUAL ELEMENTS

Many persuasive texts are accompanied by visual elements – such as cartoons, illustrations, photographs, graphs, diagrams and charts. An analysis of visual elements should consider how particular features, like those outlined below, are used to position the audience.

- **Context:** be sure to read any information accompanying the visual so that you know what the main issue is and how the visual helps to present a position on it.

  › Is it a stand-alone image or is it part of another text?

  › What is the message being conveyed?

- **Composition:** consider the specific components in an image that make it a cohesive, coherent whole.

  › What do you notice first? Are particular elements given more prominence by being placed in the foreground and/or at the centre, or are they relegated to the margins or background?

  › How does written text (e.g. captions, speech bubbles) contribute to the image?

- **Colour:** examine how the use of colours and/or shading help to create a particular mood or a specific meaning.

  › Are the colours used associated with particular ideas? For example, green might evoke associations with nature.

  › Are there areas of light or shadow that suggest ideas or emotions? For example, dark shadows might suggest danger.

- **Symbolism:** some images, such as cartoons and illustrations, include objects or people that stand for something else, usually an idea. For example, flourishing trees could represent rebirth.
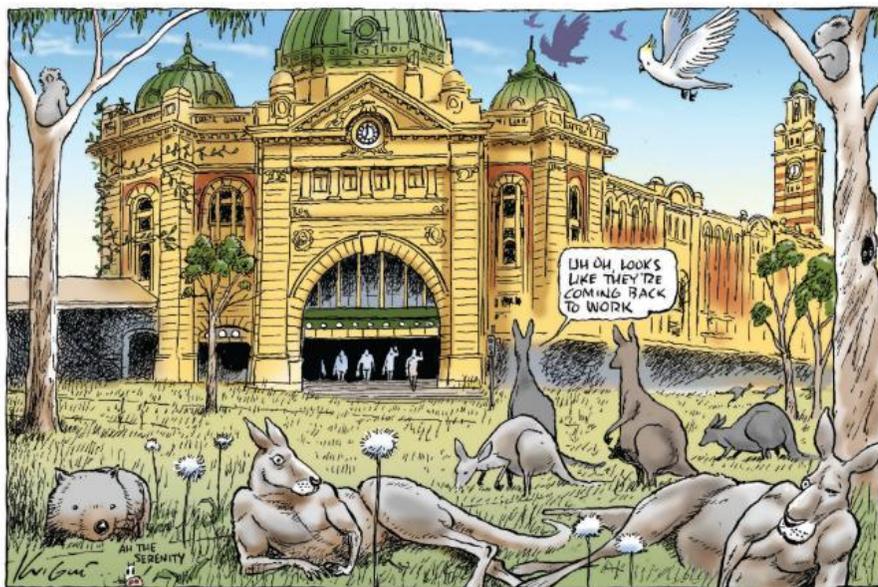
The following text analyses the use of visual language in Mark Knight's cartoon on the previous page.

Mark Knight's cartoon from the *Herald Sun* presents an image of Flinders Street Station in the Melbourne CBD at the end of lockdown restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 during 2020. Instead of the usual throngs of bustling people and traffic-filled roads at this site, there is serenity. Greenery is flourishing and animals are enjoying spaces without humans, suggesting that lockdown has been a positive experience for the natural world. Native Australian fauna are depicted in the foreground of the image, showing them as the primary focus. In contrast to the humans in the background, who are faceless and nondescript, the kangaroos, wombats, koalas and wallabies are anthropomorphised (given human features and the ability to speak). The combined effect of this positions the audience to pay particular attention to the animals, which they may not have otherwise done if those figures were relegated to the background. It also positions the audience to recognise how nature has thrived in the absence of humans. The speech bubble 'Uh-oh, looks like they're coming back to work' signals that the return of humans post-lockdown will adversely affect the environment. This seeks to elicit unease and sadness in the audience, who may feel torn between the joy of coming out of lockdown and the knowledge that their actions limit the freedom of Australia's flora and fauna.

The opening sentence details the text type (cartoon), the author of the text (cartoonist Mark Knight), the place of publication *(Herald Sun)* and the context of the image.

The cartoonist's main contention is outlined.

Visual terminology is embedded throughout the response, showing understanding of the form.

Specific visual techniques are described in relation to how they position the audience to feel about the issue.

1 Write a sentence or two analysing another aspect of the cartoon not mentioned in the analytical passage above.

_____

_____

2 Select a cartoon (or another persuasive visual element) from a newspaper or news website and comment on the following aspects.

Message: _____

Context: _____

Composition: _____

Colours: _____

Symbols: _____

3 Based on your responses to Question 2, write a short paragraph in your notebook analysing how the author of the visual text attempts to persuade their audience.

11.6 ANALYSING MEDIA TEXTS AS A WHOLE

It is important to take a holistic approach to your analysis of media texts: that is, to consider the whole picture, not just individual parts. You must therefore explore how argument, language and visuals work together to form a cohesive media text, as well as how this combined effect works to position the reader.

- **Identify purpose and audience.** Being clear about the writer's purpose and audience will help you understand why the writer has taken a certain approach.

- **Consider the writer's overall approach.** Think about the overall angle, argument and strategy in response to the topic, as well as the ways in which argument and language work together to make their audience feel and think in certain ways.

  › What does the writer want their intended audience to feel and think?

  › Which arguments and language choices are used to achieve this?

  › Is the approach predominantly logical or emotional?

- **Relate the visual material to the written text.** If a written text includes a visual element, determine how the visual supports or extends the writer's argument, or (less commonly) how it contradicts it. If the text is multimodal, consider visual and written elements together.

- **Focus on the intended effects.** It is not enough to simply identify persuasive elements; you must examine how a writer uses these to position readers to agree with them. (The PEE structure outlined on p.120 and used in the example on the following page will help to ensure you discuss the intended effects.) Below are some phrases you can use to write about how writers position their audience.

  › This persuasive technique positions the reader to consider …

  › The order of the argument is likely to incline the reader to reject …

  › This use of language is intended to arouse feelings of … in the reader.

The following text analyses the use of language and argument in Maximillian Chu's opinion piece, which begins on page 121.

Chu begins on a positive note, arguing that the COVID-19 lockdowns had a beneficial effect on the environment. He explains that the decline in human activity at the start of 2020 led to 'cleaner waterways, reduced noise pollution and improved air quality'. By beginning with this line of argument, and using a reasoned and thoughtful tone, Chu prepares his audience to accept that restrictions were beneficial for the environment, even though they may have been harmful to their own lives. He attempts to undercut the links in his readers' minds between lockdowns and their own personal suffering by using playful language ('particularly intriguing cases', 'furry visitors'). Furthermore, he uses facts and statistics to quantify the positive benefits of lockdown. The fact that an estimated 50 000 lives were saved is included to sway readers to accept the real-world implications of reducing human activity.

Chu anticipates a potential line of questioning from those who might misinterpret his argument, and he rebuts this immediately, saying 'no-one is suggesting that we all return to lockdown'. He acknowledges the economic and mental health effects of restrictions, using emotive language such as 'suffering' and 'completely discount' that presents him as sympathetic to his audience. The use of inclusive language ('suffering that we have all shared in') shows that he has similar experiences to his readers, further positioning them to respect and side with his point of view.

Chu ends his piece with an emotional and pleading tone as he discusses the more serious issue of climate change. By choosing to end with this more alarming concern, he seeks to instil fear in his reader. He provides realistic measures, learned from lockdown, to address the issue ('limiting air travel, vehicles on the road and industrial processes that burn fossil fuels') and couples this with emotive language ('hurtling towards destruction', 'We owe it to our children …') to influence his audience to take immediate action.

Persuasive element: the first main point of argument is discussed.

Example: includes a quote stating some positive effects.

The analysis identifies the writer's tone and explains how it helps to present the argument.

Explanation: explores the order of reasons and the effect of this order on how the audience responds to the overall argument.

The intended effects of the writer's persuasive techniques and strategies on the reader are embedded throughout the analysis.

Specific examples of persuasive language are discussed in relation to the arguments of the writer.

Specific examples of the writer's argument choices are included throughout the analysis.

Identifies a change of tone and how it corresponds to a different aspect of the argument.

Though argument and language are discussed in relation to one another in an implicit way throughout the analysis, there is also an explicit mention of how both are used to position the audience.

1 In your notebook, write a conclusion to the above example.

2 Using the PEE structure outlined in the template on page 120, write two body paragraphs in your notebook that analyse how argument and language (including, if appropriate, visual language) are used together to position the audience of the media text you selected on page 123.

ACTIVITIES

11.7 COMPARING TWO TEXTS ON AN ISSUE

You will sometimes be required to analyse and compare the use of argument and persuasive language in two media texts on the same issue. The authors of each text may have similar points of view but argue about them using different persuasive elements, or they may have opposing points of view.

Use the following questions to guide your analysis of two media texts.

Element	Questions
point of view	• Do the authors have the same or an opposing opinion on the issue? • Do the authors consider other points of view or only their own?
audience, purpose and context	• Are both texts addressed to the same audience? • Do both texts have the same purpose (e.g. a call to action)? • Are the two texts published in the same place (e.g. in a newspaper)?
text type	• Are you comparing two different text types – for instance, an opinion piece and a social media post, or a letter and a cartoon? • How does this affect the way the writers present their argument?
argument	• Where do the main contentions appear in each text – at the beginning, at the end, or repeated throughout the piece? • Are the reasons given by each author similar or contradictory? • What sorts of evidence does each author present?
language	• Does each author use mostly logical or mostly emotive language? • What is the main tone of each piece?

The following text compares the use of language (written and visual) and argument in Maximillian Chu's opinion piece, which begins on page 121, and Mark Knight's cartoon, which appears on page 128.

Whereas Maximillian Chu favours reason and logic in his opinion piece, Mark Knight's cartoon contrasts humour and menace through compositional elements.

In a largely measured tone, Chu supports his reasons for adopting measures forced on society during lockdown with facts, statistics and quotes from experts, thereby positioning his audience to regard his argument as logical and achievable.

In contrast, Knight tackles the issue with humour and subtext. Although he gives the kangaroos and wombats comically human

Comparative language is used to draw links (in this case, differences) between the two texts.

The primary difference between the two texts is immediately outlined.

The opening of each body paragraph alludes to how each writer approaches the topic.

Persuasive elements used by each author are explored.

The way in which these elements position the audience is still the focus of the analysis.

features and the ability to talk, a sinister tone is created through the depiction of the humans in the background. The fact that they are faceless and walking menacingly towards the innocent animals aims to elicit anxiety and panic in the reader. The contrast between the colourless humans and the greenery and liveliness at the forefront of the image further positions the audience to reflect on how the behaviour of humans negatively impacts nature.

Although both Chu and Knight have similar viewpoints about how the end of lockdown will adversely affect the environment, they approach the issue in very different ways.

Persuasive elements used by each author are explored.

The way in which these elements position the audience is still the focus of the analysis.

A general statement of comparison is included to tie the analysis together.

1   In your notebook, write another paragraph that compares the use of persuasive elements used by Chu and Knight in their respective texts.

2   Select a visual or aural media text on the same issue you selected for the media text in Question 1 on page 123. Use the planning sheet below to compare these two media texts.

The issue:		
	Text 1	**Text 2**
title of the text		
writer		
context		
main contention		
main tone		
argument features		
language elements (written or visual)		

3   Using the planning sheet above as a guide, draft a paragraph in your notebook that compares your two selected media texts. Remember to focus on how each author seeks to position their audience through argument and written or visual language choices.

12.1 DEVELOPING A CONTENTION IN RESPONSE TO A TOPIC

A contention or thesis statement is a sentence that clearly states the specific argument you are making. Each point you make in your essay should clearly link to this overall argument. As your essay analysing a literary text will nearly always be in response to a given topic, your first step should be to carefully read the topic and work out your approach.

- **Identify the key words in the topic.** Make sure you understand what the topic requires you to discuss. Annotate the key words and use them as the focus of your contention. Check with your teacher if you are unsure about what the topic is asking.

- **Apply the key words to your text.** For example, if the topic asks you to identify a theme, consider the specific themes of your novel. If it specifies a theme, think about which characters and events are used to explore that theme.

- **Think critically.** Consider the different ways you could approach the topic. If the topic expresses an idea about the text, do you agree with it? Do you need to add a qualifier (specific circumstances) to the topic to explain why you partially agree?

- **Make your contention specific.** When writing your contention, make sure that it is particular to your text, not generalised. A good rule of thumb is to replace any general key words from the topic with specific ones that relate to your text.

- **Redraft your contention until it is clear and concise.** Refine your contention, redrafting it to make it unambiguous and to-the-point, while making sure it thoroughly addresses the topic.

Example 1

The question 'how' requires me to describe in detail or outline a process. Here I need to show the ways figurative language works to reveal Dawe's attitudes towards war.

Figurative language includes similes, metaphors, personification and symbolism. Which of these techniques does Dawe use?

Attitudes refer to specific ways of thinking about something, in this case, war. How does Dawe feel about war?

How does Bruce Dawe use figurative language to reveal his attitudes towards war in his poem 'Homecoming'?

What do I know about Bruce Dawe and his context? What experiences of war did he have? Which war is 'Homecoming' about?

The contention takes a position on the topic, incorporating the key words into a clear statement:

Bruce Dawe's 1968 poem 'Homecoming' uses similes, metaphors and symbols to reveal his highly critical attitude towards war, specifically his outrage at the loss of Australian soldiers' lives during the Vietnam War.

Example 2

People are powerless to change what has already happened. What past events have happened in the novel that cannot be changed?

Do I agree that the text suggests that people *must* move on to be happy? What does 'happiness' look like for characters in the novel?

'You can't change the past. Only when individuals move on can they achieve happiness.'
Discuss this in relation to your understanding of *The Story of Tom Brennan.*

To 'move on' could mean to leave the past behind, to look ahead, to get over or forget about the past.

Discuss means to explore the topic. How is this idea evident in the novel? How do different characters 'achieve happiness'? Do they all 'move on' from the past?

The contention takes a position agreeing with the topic, before qualifying it or adding a condition:

In J C Burke's The Story of Tom Brennan*, the characters of Tom and Kylie show us that while we can't change the past, we must come to terms with it before we are able to move on and achieve happiness.*

1   Annotate the topic below, identifying its key words. If you are unsure of the meaning of any, look them up in a dictionary.

'Literature promotes compassion, allowing us to walk a mile in the shoes of people different from ourselves.' Discuss this in relation to your understanding of a text you have studied.

2   Think of a text you have studied. Does it represent the experiences of someone who is different from you? If so, does it promote compassion for others?

3   Do you fully agree, partially agree or disagree with the topic? In your notebook, draft a contention that makes your position on the topic clear.

12.2 DEVELOPING A PLAN

In an analytical essay, you must compose a sustained argument. This means an argument that stays strong throughout the essay, where all the points are relevant and connected in a clear and logical way. Thoughtful planning will ensure you select the best points and examples to support your contention and write a rock-solid essay.

- **Begin by brainstorming.** The best way to come up with good ideas is to brainstorm lots of ideas and throw away the bad ones. Spend some time jotting down anything you can think of that might be relevant to your topic.

- **Refine your contention.** From the range of ideas you have brainstormed, review your contention. Does it still hold true? Does it need refining or tweaking? Are some ideas taking you in a new direction?

- **Select the best ideas.** The best ideas are likely to be ones:
  - › that most strongly support your contention
  - › for which you have clear examples
  - › that you feel most confident explaining.

- **Decide on the best order.** Create a logical sequence of ideas. You might consider the following structures:
  - › a **hierarchy** of points, so that you move from the most significant point to the least, such as discussing three key symbols in the text in order of importance
  - › a **chronological order**, such as discussing how narrative structure develops throughout the text
  - › a **causal** relationship, such as identifying how conflict in the text leads to a particular theme emerging
  - › a **comparison** or **contrast** between points, to highlight similarities and/or differences between or within texts, such as comparing two characters.

- **Identify your evidence or examples.** Before you commit to writing, make sure you have the evidence to support each idea. Take a moment to select the best examples from your text.

For an in-class essay, your plan should be an abbreviated version of the structure shown in the example below.

Topic: 'You can't change the past. Only when individuals move on can they achieve happiness.' Discuss this in relation to your understanding of *The Story of Tom Brennan*.	
Contention	In J C Burke's *The Story of Tom Brennan*, the characters of Tom and Kylie show us that, while we can't change the past, we must come to terms with it before we are able to move on and achieve happiness.
BP 1	Tom and his family 'move on' to another town after Daniel's car accident, but Tom remains angry, guilt-ridden and unhappy. • At least our home in Mumbilli had given us some kind of sanctuary, some silence for our private guilt. • I just couldn't get in step with life here.
BP 2	With the help of his uncle Brendan, Tom confronts the anger and guilt he feels towards Daniel. Only then is Tom able to find happiness with Chrissie and make plans for his future. • Maybe I was finding my ticket out of the past. • 'Yeah,' I answered. 'It's slow, but I can see ahead now, if you know what I mean.' • I was actually happy. It was hard to wipe the smile off my face.
BP 3	Kylie, on the other hand, refuses to visit Daniel and keeps her own guilt buried. She isn't able to find happiness. • 'I feel so . . . so guilty,' she wept. 'Like it was all my fault.' • Now I understood why her anger was still so raw. She'd tried to be tough, but inside she'd been cracking up.

A plan should include your contention.

The idea that will form your topic sentence is included for each body paragraph.

Different pieces of textual evidence that you might use are included.

1 Identify the sequence of ideas in the three main body paragraphs above.

2 Using the contention you developed in Question 3 on page 135, brainstorm three points of argument you could make to support it, using your studied text.

3 In your notebook, list two or three quotes or examples from your studied text that you could use as evidence for each point.

4 Using the list on page 136, identify the most appropriate order for your points.

ACTIVITIES

12.3 WRITING A SUCCINCT INTRODUCTION

Your introduction is probably the most important paragraph of your essay. It sets out your contention, providing a road map for the rest of your essay. It also gives the reader their first impression of both your analytical skills and your writing ability.

A good introduction will give your reader a clear sense of where you are going with your argument. It should be confident, thoughtful and clearly expressed.

- **Begin with a global statement.** The first sentence should engage the reader by introducing the general topic of your essay. You might begin with a general observation about the text in relation to one of the key words. Alternatively, you might use a quote relevant to the topic, or a provocative statement or question that gets readers thinking about the topic.

- **Introduce your text.** Next, introduce your text by title and author (or director). Provide a very brief overview of the text to set the scene for your argument. Make sure you frame the overview in a way that reveals the relevance of your text to the topic.

- **State your contention or thesis.** Conclude the introduction with your contention, setting the direction for the rest of your essay.

In *The Story of Tom Brennan*, a tragic past makes happiness hard to find for the main characters. J C Burke's novel explores the aftermath of a fatal car crash for not just the victims but also their families, friends and the wider community. Drink-driving, Daniel, the elder brother of Tom and Kylie, kills two friends and leaves his cousin paralysed. The entire town directs their anger and grief at the Brennan family, who must confront their own guilt over the accident before they can begin to live their lives again. In this novel, the characters of Tom and Kylie show us that, while we can't change the past, we must come to terms with it before we are able to move on and achieve happiness.

A global statement introduces readers to the text as well as the topic idea: that it is not easy to move on from the past.

The author of the text is introduced and a brief synopsis given. The overview clearly shows the relevance of this text to the topic.

The introduction ends with the contention.

1 Brainstorm ideas for a global statement to begin your introduction for the essay you planned on page 137. The topic raises ideas about compassion, empathy, the past, the future and personal growth, so you might consider how these apply to your chosen text.

2 Share your ideas for a global statement with a partner. Ask for their feedback on which they thought was the most interesting or engaging, and why.

3 Practise summarising, in one or two sentences, what your text suggests about the topic.

_____

_____

_____

4 Draft a succinct introduction that incorporates your preferred global statement, introduction of the text and your contention.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5 Using your skills of self-reflection, review your introduction and evaluate how well it addresses the topic.

12.4 WRITING AN EFFECTIVE BODY PARAGRAPH

Each body paragraph should offer a single clear point in support of your contention, contributing to a well-sustained overall argument.

While several different acronyms are used to describe them, analytical paragraphs tend to follow the same structure: each one offers an individual point of argument, provides relevant evidence and explains how that evidence supports the point.

The structure described in the following list is known as TEEEL.

- **Topic sentence:** state an individual point of argument in clear, concise and precise language. Signpost your argument by using key words from the question.

- **Elaboration:** add detail by explaining your point further and referring to specific parts of your texts, such as characters or events.

- **Evidence:** provide a clear example from your text that supports this point. Use direct quotes where possible, or thorough descriptions of an example.

- **Explanation:** this is where you show your reasoning, and is often combined with the evidence. Show how your evidence supports the point you made in the topic sentence. You should examine aspects of the text such as its structure and language features.

- **Link back:** conclude your paragraph by drawing a link back to your overall contention.

Transition markers are words and phrases that show connections between ideas. You can use them between sentences in a paragraph to indicate your train of thought. You should also use transition markers in your topic sentences to show the relationship between paragraphs. Below are examples of transition markers showing different types of relationships.

Relationship	Transition markers
to introduce a new idea	next, secondly, furthermore, moreover, additionally
to give an example	for example, this is evident when, for instance, as seen when
to show cause and effect	as a result, subsequently, therefore, thus, in light of this, because
to conclude	therefore, in conclusion, in summary, finally
to compare or contrast	similarly, on the other hand, in contrast, likewise

Although Tom and his family try to 'move on' to another town after Daniel's car accident, Tom remains depressed and guilt-ridden. He feels that Daniel's actions have destroyed his life, and he also feels partially responsible for letting Daniel drive even though he knew his brother was drunk. Tom starts at a new school and begins playing rugby again but is completely miserable. A metaphor is used to reveal his depression when he describes a 'black curtain' that has descended over him. Despite trying to live normally, Tom notes he 'just couldn't get in step with life here', an image that suggests his difficulty in moving on. This is because he has not faced up to the past and his guilt over the accident. Until he begins to confront both his and Daniel's past actions, Tom is unable to find happiness in Coghill.

The topic sentence makes a clear link to the essay topic. It is expressed in a clear and succinct way.

An elaboration sentence adds specific detail to the topic sentence.

An example is provided and quotes included as evidence.

The explanation includes references to language features (metaphor and image).

The linking sentence uses key words from the essay topic to conclude the point and make its connection to the contention clear.

ACTIVITIES

1 In your notebook, create your own word bank of transition markers. Use a thesaurus or search online for more examples. You might like to add extra categories to the table, such as 'to add emphasis' or 'to concede a point'.

2 Using the first point of argument for the essay you planned on page 137, compose a body paragraph in your notebook.

3 Draw square brackets around each of the five parts of your paragraph, identifying the topic sentence, elaboration, evidence, explanation, and linking sentence.

4 Use this checklist to review your paragraph, or swap with a partner and assess each other's.

Body paragraph checklist	
Have I used the TEEEL structure?	
Is my topic sentence clear and succinct?	
Does my elaboration sentence logically build on my topic sentence?	
Have I used clear and relevant examples as evidence?	
Have I used appropriate transition markers?	
Does my linking sentence clearly connect to my contention?	
Have I used formal language?	

5 Once you are satisfied with your first main body paragraph, draft the next two. Make sure you use appropriate transition markers as necessary.

12.5 EXPANDING ON YOUR POINTS

High-level responses do more than just provide a simple point supported by one example before moving on. Construct more detailed and complex points by considering the following strategies.

- **Provide detail.** Ask yourself where, when, how or why, to develop further or more specific detail. For example, if you note that Shakespeare uses the symbol of blood in *Macbeth*, explain where, when, how and why he does so.

- **Add subordinate clauses and phrases.** Pack additional detail into your sentences by incorporating subordinate clauses and phrases.

- **Use tricolons.** Widen the scope of your points by using the rule of three. Rather than just saying Macbeth is ambitious, you might say Macbeth is ambitious, cruel and arrogant. This will give you more to explore in your paragraph.

- **Consider 'yet' and 'but' arguments.** Add complexity to your points by qualifying your argument. For example, you might argue that Macbeth was ambitious and arrogant *but also* naive. He was a violent murderer *yet* undeniably devoted to his wife.

- **Analyse evidence thoroughly.** Show how multiple techniques work together within your example to create meaning. For example, you might explain how diction, alliteration *and* simile are used in a line of dialogue to suggest Macbeth's arrogance.

- **Bring in a second example.** Showing that your point is not limited to an isolated example can reveal a more comprehensive understanding of your text. For example, showing how Macbeth's self-doubt creeps in at two or three different points in the play might strengthen your argument.

- **Consider the context.** Reflect on what you know about the author and the time and place in which they were writing. How does the text seem to respond to this context? For example, at the time Shakespeare was writing, kings claimed a divine right to rule. Killing Duncan, therefore, is not just a political crime but a religious sin as well.

With the help of his uncle Brendan, however, Tom confronts his misery, anger and guilt over the past, clearing the way for him to find happiness. Brendan takes Tom running up a local hill, and during their runs they speak about the accident and its impact on Tom. One day, Tom discovers that they had 'reached the top of the ascent … without even realising'. The hill symbolises the internal conflict he had been struggling with yet was able to overcome by talking through his feelings with Brendan. As Tom says, 'It's slow, but I can see ahead now, if you know what I mean'. This dialogue suggests Tom himself is beginning to see a future in which the accident will not consume his life. Another example that shows people can move on from the past only when they confront it is when Brendan asks Tom to join him on a mountain trek in Nepal. Tom realises 'we've got to leave our ghosts behind'. This metaphor shows us that we can move on from the past, but only once we have come to terms with it. Tom is then able to begin a relationship with Chrissie, to whom he has grown close, and plan the trip to Nepal. His growth from depression to happiness with Chrissie becomes clear when Tom tells the reader, 'I was actually happy' and 'It was hard to wipe the smile off my face'. His journey suggests that people do find happiness when they move on from the past, but it can be a difficult process.

A tricolon provides three different emotions to explore.

Subordinate clauses add further specific detail to the sentence.

Short quotes are kept succinct and embedded into the grammar of the essay writer's own sentence.

Techniques are clearly identified.

A second example provides further evidence and shows the significance of the topic to this novel.

Rather than simply arguing that the novel suggests we can move on from the past, a qualifier is added: that we can only move on from the past *if* we come to terms with it first.

ACTIVITIES

1   Explain what you think the second example adds to this writer's argument.

2   Pick one of the body paragraphs you drafted in the activity on page 141. Identify three strategies from the list on page 142 that you could use to expand on your point. Explain how you could use them.

3   In your notebook, redraft the paragraph you chose for Question 2 to include the suggestions you have outlined there. Evaluate the extent to which they improve your original paragraph. You might like to ask a partner for further feedback.

12.6 WRITING FORMALLY

Analytical essays require a formal style of writing. This means using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar, as well as maintaining a formal register and a serious tone.

- **Use the formal register.** Avoid being conversational or using colloquialisms (slang). Spell out words rather than using contractions such as 'isn't' and 'can't', and avoid abbreviations such as e.g. and etc.

- **Use the active voice.** Generally speaking, academic writing uses the active voice, which means putting the subject of the sentence first. For example, 'The symbol of a spider suggests a web of grief' as opposed to (passive voice) 'A web of grief is suggested by the symbol of a spider'.

- **Use high modality language.** Modality refers to the degree of certainty you express. High modality language expresses a high degree of certainty, as in 'this quote clearly reveals the character's anger' as opposed to 'this quote could suggest the character is angry'. Terms such as 'might' and 'possibly' can make you sound uncertain about your argument.

- **Use metalanguage.** Metalanguage (literally, 'language used to describe language') refers to the technical terminology of the subject of English. Use the formal terms for the language devices and structural features you analyse, such as metaphor, foreshadowing, tone and characterisation.

- **Use the third person.** Generally, analytical essays do not use the first person, as in 'I believe that …'. The use of first person is sometimes acceptable, though, especially when the topic asks for your personal response to a text or a discussion of your own context.

- **Use a balanced mix of sentence types.** Avoid using too many simple sentences; add to the formality and complexity of your writing by also using complex and compound sentences (see Glossary, p.166) and varying their length.

- **Refer to authors by their surnames.** You are not on first-name terms with the writers or directors, so refer to them by their surnames in your essay.

The character Kylie, however, does not resolve her guilt and anger over the past and remains unhappy. Like Tom, she feels some responsibility for the accident, as she had provoked Daniel before he drove off. While Brendan helps Tom to overcome his guilt, Kylie refuses to talk about hers until she breaks down and cuts off all her hair. Tom realises that 'she'd tried to be tough, but inside she'd been cracking up' because she felt 'so guilty'. Kylie tries changing her appearance because, as she tells Tom, 'I don't want to be Kylie Brennan', but she just ends up being miserable. Her dialogue reveals her inability to move on. Tom tells her the accident was not her fault, and he explains that things will get better. He says that life will 'never be the same, but that doesn't mean it has to be bad. Just different.' However, because this happens at the end of the novel, the reader never sees Kylie find happiness. This reinforces the point that people cannot move on and be happy until they confront the past.

Metalanguage is included.

High modality language makes the writer seem confident in this statement.

Active voice is used, emphasising Kylie as the subject of the sentence.

A variety of sentence types are used. This one is a complex-compound sentence (a compound sentence with a subordinate clause attached).

This is a more formal phrase than, say, 'Kylie changes her look'.

The writer uses a compound sentence instead of two simple ones.

Third person is used, rather than saying 'you cannot move on from the past.'

ACTIVITIES

1 Rewrite the following sentences more formally.

- Kylie seems pretty messed up by the accident.

  _____

- J C writes about 'the horrible realities' the people in her novel face.

  _____

- I reckon Tom is a great guy who takes care of his sister.

  _____

- You wouldn't want to go through what the Brennans did.

  _____

2 Rewrite these sentences in the active voice:

- Whether Kylie overcomes her guilt or not is never known by the reader.

  _____

- The line 'it was all my fault' is said by Kylie.

  _____

3 Review the analytical essay paragraphs you have written for the activities in this chapter. Highlight and annotate where improvements could be made to the formality of your writing.

12.7 DRAWING TO A CONCLUSION

The conclusion is a very important part of your essay. It is the final thought you will leave with your reader, so it needs to draw your argument together and make a lasting impression.

- **Sum up your argument.** Quickly recap your main points of argument. Limit this to a sentence or two.

- **Reiterate your contention or thesis.** Without simply repeating the same sentence you used in your introduction, remind your reader of your overall contention or thesis. The points you made in your body paragraphs should clearly lead to this statement.

- **Provide a final comment.** Show your reader that you have really considered your topic by providing a thoughtful final comment. This might consist of an evaluation of your topic, a statement connecting your specific argument to the overall themes or genre of the text, or making a connection to a real-world issue or concern. For example, if you were writing about the representation of women in *Romeo and Juliet*, you might comment on the play's engagement with the broader theme of gender equality. On the other hand, if you were writing about characterisation in *Wonder,* you might comment on the ways in which the characters function to encourage empathy for others.

In *The Story of Tom Brennan*, a family is devastated by the consequences of a fatal car crash caused by Daniel Brennan. While Tom confronts both his anger at Daniel and his own guilt, his sister Kylie does not. As a result, Kylie is not able to move on and find happiness, while Tom plans a future and falls in love. By comparing these two characters, readers see that people can move on from the past and find happiness, but only if they first confront their feelings head on. The coming of age of these two characters, and Tom in particular, reveals the importance of dealing with traumatic past events in order to develop a healthy and happy identity.

The overall argument is summarised.

The contention is reiterated rather than simply repeated using the same words.

A final comment connects this argument to the overall themes of the novel.

1 The conclusion on the previous page makes a connection between the essay's main argument and the novel's overarching coming-of-age themes. What do you think this suggests to a marker about the essay writer's critical reading of the text?

_____

_____

_____

2 Look back at the essay topic for this sample essay: *'You can't change the past. Only when individuals move on can they achieve happiness.' Discuss this in relation to your understanding of* The Story of Tom Brennan. How well do you think this conclusion answers the question? What feedback would you give the essay writer?

_____

_____

_____

3 Think critically about your own topic for your practice essay. List three ideas for final comments that show your own critical thinking.

_____

_____

_____

4 Draft your own conclusion following the format on the previous page.

_____

_____

_____

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_____

5 Look at the essay topic again: *'Literature promotes compassion, allowing us to walk a mile in the shoes of people different from ourselves.' Discuss this in relation to your understanding of a text you have studied.* Evaluate how well your conclusion addresses the question. You could even ask a partner to review your conclusion and provide you with feedback.

12.8 COMPARING TWO TEXTS USING COMPARATIVE LANGUAGE

When comparing two texts, you are asked to identify similarities and differences between the two. When it comes to writing a comparative response, there are words and phrases you can use to clearly signal to the reader whether you have identified a similarity or a difference.

It is rare that two texts will be entirely similar or completely different, however. It is important to explain the *extent* to which they are similar or different.

Similarity	Difference	Extent
similarly	on the other hand	quite
likewise	in contrast	significantly
in the same way	on the contrary	to a degree
in a similar fashion	however	to an extent
comparably	unlike	largely
equally	conversely	somewhat
just as	yet	mostly
identically	instead	very
also	differently	clearly
as well as	alternatively	slightly
too	whereas	entirely
along the same lines	but	marginally

In both 'Weapons Training' and 'Homecoming', Bruce Dawe clearly suggests that soldiers lose their individuality. Their unique identities are taken away by their training and can be lost forever in death. In 'Weapons Training', the persona shouts at several different soldiers, referring to them all as 'you', saying to one 'if you had one more brain it'd be lonely' and to another 'you in the back row with the unsightly fat'. This pronoun makes it difficult to distinguish between the soldiers, and the insulting language used by the drill sergeant suggests they are being deliberately dehumanised. In 'Homecoming', however, Dawe uses a list of hairstyles to show the soldiers' dehumanisation. Instead of a generalised pronoun, soldiers are referred to as 'curly-heads, kinky-hairs, crew-cuts, balding non-coms'. The alliteration also blends them into a single mass, despite their different hairstyles. In the two poems, soldiers are similarly reduced to random body parts instead of being considered as fully formed humans. Despite their quite different techniques, they make an obviously comparable point about war taking away an individual's identity.

Similarity between the texts is revealed through the terms 'both', 'similarly' and 'comparable'.

These terms highlight the extent of the similarity and difference between the poems.

Comparative language is used to indicate contrasts between the texts.

1   Use a thesaurus or search online for additional terms to add to the table of comparative language on the previous page.

2   Think of two of your current favourite songs. Write two statements – one identifying key similarities and one identifying key differences between them. You might consider their genre, mood, theme or artist. For example, *Both songs belong to the hip-hop genre.*

_____

_____

3   Now combine the statements into a pair, using appropriate comparative transition markers. For example, *Both songs belong to the hip-hop genre; however, one is by an Australian artist while the other is American.*

_____

_____

4   A Venn diagram is often used to plan a comparison of texts. Think of a second text that you could use to compare with the one you wrote about in your practice essay on page 137. Create a Venn diagram identifying similarities and differences in the way they encourage us to 'walk a mile in the shoes of people different from ourselves'. You might consider features such as point of view, characterisation, genre conventions, structural features and language choices.

Text 1   Text 2
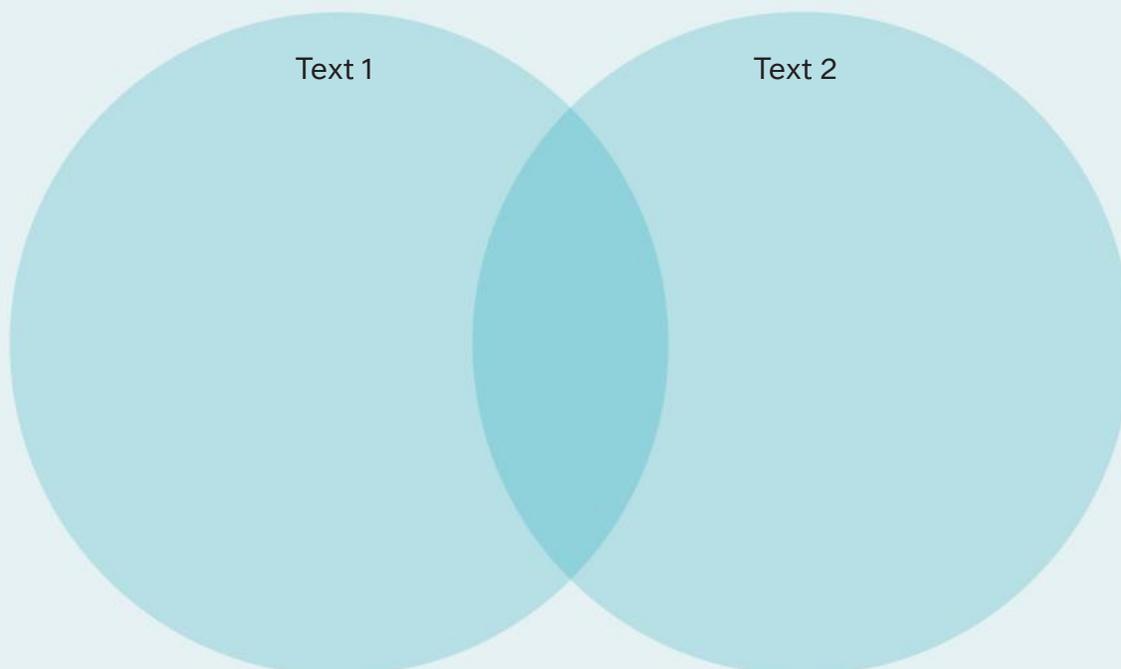
5   In your notebook, write a contention for the same topic, using the information from your Venn diagram.

12.9 Deciding on a Structure for Comparing Two Texts

There are three common methods for structuring a comparative argument: alternating, block and integrated. Which structure is the best to use largely depends on what it is you are being asked to compare.

- **Block structure:** discusses all of the points for your first text, then all the points for your second text. This is best used when you are comparing holistic aspects of your texts, such as the development of a theme.

- **Alternating structure:** switches between your two texts, discussing one text in each alternating paragraph. This structure is useful if you are comparing larger elements of the text, such as characterisation, which need a whole paragraph to explain.

- **Integrated structure:** each paragraph makes comparisons between the two texts. This is appropriate if you are comparing fine details, such as the use of metaphors in the two texts.

Whichever structure you choose, it is important that both your introduction and conclusion offer an overall comparison of the two texts and that you give equal attention to both texts throughout your essay.

	Alternating	Block	Integrated
Body paragraph 1	Text A	Text A	Texts A&B
Body paragraph 2	Text B	Text A	Texts A&B
Body paragraph 3	Text A	Text B	Texts A&B
Body paragraph 4	Text B	Text B	Texts A&B

Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War was condemned by many Australians. Bruce Dawe's poems 'Homecoming' and 'Weapons Training' both reveal his highly critical attitudes towards war; however, they do so in significantly different ways. 'Homecoming' is an elegy that uses repetition, symbolism and irony to express the tragedy of war and the loss of individual identity of the soldiers who died. 'Weapons Training', on the other hand, is a monologue from the perspective of a drill sergeant, in which Dawe uses an aggressive and cruel tone to show how young recruits were bullied and desensitised to violence. These two poems, despite being in different forms and using different poetic techniques, are equally critical of the dehumanisation caused by war.

This introduction mentions both poems and makes an overall comparison between them, highlighting differences.

Transition markers emphasise the differences between the poems.

The contention suggests that a block approach might be best here, because each poem is quite different, despite communicating a similar attitude.

1   Based on your Venn diagram and contention on page 149, decide which of the three comparative structures described above would be best suited to an essay.

_____

2   Explain the reason for your choice.

_____

_____

_____

3   Write a succinct introduction that compares your two chosen texts in response to the following topic: *Compare how two texts encourage us to walk a mile in the shoes of people different from ourselves.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4   Highlight your use of comparative language, ensuring that your introduction makes clear the extent of similarity and difference between the two texts.

5   In your notebook, complete the rest of your comparative essay.

GLOSSARY OF ANALYTICAL TERMS

Active voice: a sentence in which the subject performs the action stated by the verb

Argument: a set of connected reasons that support and justify a particular point of view

Argument strategies: tools that are used to manipulate a reader's attitudes towards particular arguments

Audience: the person or group of people a text is aimed at

Body paragraph: part of an analytical essay that explains and develops a particular point in support of the main contention

Composition: the way individual parts within a frame combine to form the final image

Conclusion: the final paragraph that brings an essay to a satisfying and logical end

Contention: a statement that expresses the writer's point of view on an issue or essay topic

Context: the background and circumstances surrounding a text

Evidence: information that indicates whether a belief or proposition is true or valid

Formal register: the level of formality used in academic writing such as essays, in which rules of grammar and spelling are strictly followed

Intended effects: how a writer intends their use of argument features and language choices to position readers to agree with them

Introduction: the opening of an essay, which typically identifies the topic, sets out the main contention and provides a road map for the argument to be presented

Issue: the topical debate that the writer is discussing or debating

Key words: significant words in an essay topic that must be defined and addressed in the essay

Metalanguage: the technical terminology of the subject of English

PEE: an acronym that stands for **P**ersuasive element, **E**xample, **E**ffect; a system for structuring body paragraphs that analyse persuasive texts

Persuasive language: a specific style of language that is carefully selected by the writer to evoke particular emotions in their audience

Point of view: an opinion on an issue from a particular angle

Purpose: what a writer or speaker seeks to achieve with their text

Quotations: a short statement taken from a longer text, often used as a form of evidence

Reasons: the ideas that support a contention with some kind of logic, evidence or justification

Rebuttal: a reply contradicting and intended to show faults in an opponent's argument

Symbolism: the use of symbols to represent a deeper meaning

Task words: directions in an essay topic (e.g. 'Analyse', 'Discuss') that tell you how to answer a question

TEEEL: an acronym that stands for **T**opic sentence, **E**laboration, **E**vidence, **E**xplanation, **L**ink; a system for structuring of body paragraphs that analyse literary texts

Topic sentence: a sentence that summarises the main idea of a paragraph

Transition markers: words and phrases that show connections between ideas (e.g. 'furthermore', 'however')

EDITING AND PROOFREADING

Editing and proofreading are key skills that every writer should take the time to develop. This section guides you through each of these processes, which are distinct from one another and should be undertaken separately for each piece of writing you complete.

Editing is focused on the bigger picture; it helps you to improve your piece as a whole, ensuring it is well organised, clear and concise. Most importantly, editing helps to ensure that your piece achieves its intended purpose. Proofreading is the methodical close reading of your work to check for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Key strategies to keep in mind as you edit and proofread your work are listed below.

- When possible, leave some time between writing and editing or proofreading so that you review your work with fresh eyes.

- Read your work aloud to listen for errors and areas for improvement.

- Try to allow time to read over your work more than once.

- Don't try to check every element of your piece in a single reading.

This section provides guidelines for checking and improving the structure, style, spelling, punctuation and grammar of any type of writing.

13.1 IDENTIFYING STRUCTURAL AND CONTENT ISSUES

Before worrying about expression, you must first identify and address any structural and content issues in your piece – this process is known as structural or developmental editing.

When editing an **imaginative** or **creative** piece, ask yourself the following questions.

Plot and pacing (see p.16)	• Does the beginning make the reader want to read on? • Does the story build to a climax? • Does the ending tie everything together?
Character (see p.4, p.6)	• Are your characters three-dimensional and authentic? • Are the goals of the protagonist clear and achievable? • Are the relationships between characters well developed?
Setting (see p.8)	• Will the reader be able to picture locations clearly? • Is the passage of time clearly conveyed?
Dialogue (see p.10)	• Does the dialogue sound believable? • Is there a balance between dialogue and narration?
Writing style (see p.12)	• Does the style of writing suit the form and genre? • Are sensory details and figurative language included?
Voice (see p.18)	• Is the voice of the narrator and each character consistent? • Does the point of view suit the story being told?

Below is the opening scene of an imaginative piece of writing, with annotations identifying structural areas for improvement.

I think about my life. I've been out in space for almost two years now. My parents are gone, presumed dead. And I need to find them. That's why I asked Stefanos to find me a space suit. So that we could explore different areas of space and hopefully find them. But the suit he got me doesn't fit because I'm really big. Stefanos is next to me now, with an annoying look on his face.

'I am annoyed, Stefanos. Why did you get the good space suit? Why did I get the old one? I do not like this.'

'Hurry up. I do not want another light explosion to be missed by us. It is very rare. So, hurry up. I will not say it again.'

Stefanos has perfect hair. It's blonde and dreadlocked and moves about like it's a wave or something. I turn away from him and look out of the window. I can see a bright star in the middle of black space. It's similar to the one that exploded right after we were saved by the Wanderers. I need to get there. It's not even a question. So I yank with all my force and finally manage to get the space suit on. I look directly at Stefanos and tell him that we are going to find our parents.

The beginning of the story is uninteresting, revealing too much backstory in place of action.

Dialogue is stilted, with little distinction between each character's voice. The conversation also doesn't move the plot forward or convey any important new information.

More specific or interesting figurative language could enhance the description.

Pacing is erratic, jumping from a description of hair to action within two sentences; setting is inadequately fleshed out.

Instead of *telling* readers of a conversation between characters, the writer could *show* it with dialogue, especially as this is a key moment in the plot.

When editing a **persuasive or an analytical** piece, ask yourself the following questions.

Content	• Does the piece respond fully to the topic or issue and consider a variety of angles and ideas?
	• Should more ideas be included, or some be developed further?
	• Is each idea supported by relevant reasons and/or evidence?
	• Are all examples relevant to and supportive of your ideas?
Structure	• Does the introduction outline the approach to the topic/issue?
	• Is each idea expanded on in separate body paragraphs?
	• Is the information in each body paragraph presented in a logical order (e.g. using PEE, p.120 or TEEEL, p.140).
	• Does the concluding paragraph sum up the main points?
Writing style	• Does the terminology/metalanguage used match the form and purpose of the piece?
	• Are key words and concepts defined?

Below is a body paragraph of an analytical piece of writing, with annotations identifying structural areas for improvement.

Topic: 'The Netflix original film *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* highlights the importance of family.' Discuss.

One of the main big moments in *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* is Kitty invading her sister's privacy, sending off Lara Jane's old letters without telling her. When the fact that Kitty sent the letters that led to heartache is revealed to Lara Jean, she is enraged and starts chasing Kitty. The reason Lara Jean is so angry is because she has fallen for Peter, who got one of the letters, and she gets hurt when she thinks he has betrayed her trust and slept with his ex-girlfriend Gen, who also happens to be her ex-best friend, making things much worse. Lara Jean and Kitty's older sister, Margot, must jump in and act like an umpire to make peace. She is able to talk Lara Jean down, convincing her to forgive their younger sister. This highlights how family can come together and overcome obstacles. Meanwhile, Peter and Lara Jean must get over their own struggles.

> The topic sentence does not address the topic, failing to discuss the key word 'family'.

> Metalanguage for analysing films should be included in the paragraph to show an understanding of the form and how this contributes to meaning.

> Too much focus on summarising the plot rather than analysing it.

> Specific details and quotations from the film would provide stronger support for the point.

> The main contention is only alluded to towards the end of the paragraph.

> This sentence digresses into a discussion of an unrelated point.

Highlight and annotate structural issues in pieces you wrote for one of the activities in each of the following sections:

• an imaginative piece in the Imaginative Writing section (pp.1–40)

• a persuasive piece in the Persuasive Writing section (pp.41–74)

• an analytical piece in the Analytical Writing section (pp.119–52).

ACTIVITIES

13.2 REDRAFTING YOUR WORK

Based on the areas for improvement you identify during the structural editing stage, you may need to rewrite certain sections of your piece or reorganise content so that it is clear for your reader and achieves your intended purpose.

Follow these steps when redrafting your work.

- **Determine whether content needs to be cut.** Identify and remove content that does not serve the purpose of the piece. For example, if your imaginative piece doesn't become exciting until the third paragraph, delete the first two paragraphs.

- **Decide if particular points or elements are better placed elsewhere in your piece.** If a reason or piece of evidence in one paragraph better supports an idea in another, move it there. Similarly, you might move a plot element to an earlier place if it would clarify the story for readers.

- **Rewrite paragraphs or scenes.** If a section in your piece does not make sense or is illogically ordered, rewrite it from scratch.

- **Add more detail or explanation.** You may have identified particular arguments or scenes that could be strengthened by being fleshed out. Add as much information and detail as is needed to ensure your piece is as clear or as vivid as possible.

Below is a revised draft of the imaginative piece on page 154, with changes to improve structure and content.

I pull the nylon as hard as I can, but still I can't get the space suit to fit my big shoulders, arms, legs and chest.

'Where did you find this raggedy thing? Earth?' I say.

Stefanos looks at me, not in a nice way, as he swishes his blonde dreadlocks like dandelions in the wind. He had managed to get into his tailored and clearly superior space suit with ease.

'Just hurry up, would you. I don't want another light explosion to be missed by us,' he says. His dreads, magical tendrils of a Greek god, continue to swish about. 'You, of all people, know how rare this is.'

I stop tugging and stare out of the window of our small space in the Euphora Twelve Space Station. There is the brightest star I have ever seen. It's in the middle of black space. It's brighter even than the supernova that engulfed our planet system. That happened moments after we were rescued by the Wanderers.

'Pipe down, pretty boy,' I say. I yank with all my force and yell as the suit slides over my thick thighs. 'We're not missing this one. Our parents could be out there, and if they are, we're gonna be the ones to find them.'

The story begins with the protagonist performing an action, immediately drawing the reader in, and a humorous line sets the tone.

Narration is used to break up dialogue and develop characterisation.

More evocative figurative language is used to create vivid images for the reader.

Setting is described in more detail, giving the reader a better idea of where the characters are situated.

Dialogue is used to *show* rather than *tell*, and is varied to help distinguish between characters' voices.

Below is a revised draft of the analytical piece on page 155, with changes to improve structure and content.

Even though the Covey sisters have a few tiffs throughout the film, their ability to get over these together shows why family is so major. Conflict between Lara Jean and her younger sister Kitty is suggested early, when Kitty invades her sister's privacy and mails Lara Jane's old love letters without telling her. This sets off a chain reaction that drives the narrative of the film, with Lara Jean falling for Peter, who got one of the letters, and getting hurt when she thinks he has betrayed her trust and slept with his ex-girlfriend Gen, who also happens to be her ex-best friend, making things much worse. When the fact that Kitty sent the letters that led to this heartache is revealed to Lara Jean, she is enraged, telling Kitty 'I'm gonna kill you,' before chasing her around her bedroom. It is only when Margot, who was equally upset with Lara Jean for writing her ex-boyfriend Josh a love letter, gets involved and acts like an umpire that the sisters sort out their drama: 'So if I can forgive you for writing my boyfriend a love letter, do you think you could forgive Kitty for sending them?' The funny back-and-forth between the sisters is shown in Lara Jean's response to Kitty: 'You owe me braid crowns for the rest of your life.' This interaction is followed by a scene of the whole family together opening Christmas gifts, with a pan across the living room that shows the Covey family bathed in warm colours reinforcing the idea that family is at the heart of the film.

The topic sentence now clearly addresses the topic.

An appropriate structure (TEEEL) is used in this body paragraph, with the main idea elaborated on before evidence and explanation are provided.

Evidence is suitably embedded into the essay.

Appropriate metalanguage for discussing film (e.g. 'pan', 'warm colours') is included.

This links back to the contention, neatly drawing the paragraph to an end.

1   Explain how you think the changes made to the examples on pages 154 and 155 improved the pieces.

Imaginative piece: _____

_____

_____

Analytical piece: _____

_____

_____

2   For the pieces you annotated for the activity on page 155, decide whether cutting, reorganising and/or rewriting content is required. Explain your reasoning in your notebook.

3   In your notebook, redraft your pieces based on your annotations and your response to Question 2.

13.3 EDITING FOR STYLE

After you have completed structural changes to your piece, it is time to focus on making improvements at the sentence level. This type of editing is referred to as copyediting or sentence-level editing.

 Consider the following questions when copyediting your work.

- **Register:** do the word choices reflect a formal or an informal style of writing, and does this match the form and purpose of your piece? For example, should slang words and contractions be removed to ensure a formal register?

- **Clarity:** is each sentence clear and complete? Have you broken down overly long, awkward sentences into shorter ones?

- **Sentence variety:** do your sentences begin in different ways? Do they have varied structures – that is, a mix of simple, compound and complex sentences (see Glossary, p.166)?

- **Active voice:** do the subjects of your sentences perform the verb (active voice)? Is the passive voice used where appropriate – for example, when the person who performed an action is unknown or when you are stating a general truth such as 'rules are made to be broken'?

- **Unnecessary words/phrases:** are there repetitive or redundant words or phrases that could be eliminated (e.g. 'due to the fact that')?

Below is a revised draft of the imaginative piece on page 156, with changes to improve writing style.

I pull the nylon as hard as I can, but still I can't get the space suit to fit my lumberjack frame.

'Where did you find this raggedy thing? Earth?'

Stefanos looks at me with a smirk as he swishes his perfect golden dreadlocks like dandelions in the wind. He had managed to get into his tailored and clearly superior space suit with ease.

'Just hurry up, would you. I don't want us to miss another light explosion.' His dreads, magical tendrils of a Greek god, continue to swish about. 'You, of all people, know how rare this is.'

I stop pulling and stare out of the window of our shoebox-sized containment unit in the Euphora Twelve Space Station. There, in the middle of infinite darkness, is the brightest star I have ever seen, brighter even than the supernova that engulfed our planet system moments after the Wanderers rescued us.

'Pipe down, pretty boy.' I yank with all my force and let out a howl of triumph as the suit slides over my thick thighs. 'We're not missing this one. Our parents could be out there, and if they are, we're gonna be the ones to find them.'

Dialogue tags are removed as they are not needed for clarity and add nothing of interest to the reader.

More precise language is used to describe the characters and the setting.

The active voice is used in place of the passive voice, helping to add excitement and movement to the narrative.

A compound-complex sentence contributes to a variety of sentence structures, improving the flow of the writing.

Below is a revised draft of the analytical piece on page 157, with changes to improve writing style.

Even though conflict arises between the Covey sisters throughout the film, their ability to overcome obstacles together shows why family is so significant. Conflict between the protagonist, Lara Jean, and her younger sister, Kitty, is foreshadowed towards the beginning of the film, when Kitty invades her sister's privacy and sends off Lara Jean's love letters without her knowledge or permission. This sets off a chain reaction that drives the narrative of the film: Lara Jean falls for Peter, one of the recipients of the letters, and is hurt when she thinks he has betrayed her trust and slept with his ex-girlfriend (and her ex-best friend) Gen. When Lara Jean discovers that Kitty sent the letters that led to this heartache, she is enraged, telling her 'I'm gonna kill you,' before chasing her around her bedroom. It is only through mediation by their older sister, Margot, who was equally upset with Lara Jean for writing her ex-boyfriend Josh a love letter, that the sisters reconcile: 'So if I can forgive you for writing my boyfriend a love letter, do you think you could forgive Kitty for sending them?' The humorous banter that characterises the relationship between the sisters is shown in Lara Jean's response to Kitty: 'You owe me braid crowns for the rest of your life.' This interaction is followed by a scene of the whole family together opening Christmas gifts. The pan across the living room, showing the Covey family bathed in warm colours, reinforces the idea that family is at the heart of the film.

A more formal register (e.g. 'conflict' instead of 'tiff', 'overcome obstacles' instead of 'get over') better suits the form of an academic essay.

An overly long sentence is shortened, with the help of a colon, and an unnecessary phrase is removed.

The active voice is used to emphasise the actor rather than the action.

A long sentence is broken up by adding in a simple sentence, providing a greater variety of sentence types in the paragraph.

1 Explain how you think the changes made to the examples on pages 156 and 157 improved their readability or made the writing style more appropriate to the form.

Imaginative piece: _____

_____

_____

Analytical piece: _____

_____

_____

2 In your notebook, redraft another of the pieces you wrote for a previous section of this book, making structural changes and editing for style.

ACTIVITIES

14.1 CHECKING SPELLING

It is often said that English is one of the hardest languages to learn to spell. Use the 'look, say, cover, write, check' method to help you learn to spell new words, and flashcards to help you memorise technical terms or difficult words. If you are unsure of the spelling of a word, look it up in a dictionary.

- **Check for homophone confusion.** It is easy to mix up words that sound alike, such as 'there', 'they're' and 'their'; 'practise' and 'practice'; and 'affect' and 'effect'.

- **Check for correct use of suffixes and plurals.** Some of the most frequently misspelled words are those that have suffixes, such as '-ation', '-ly' or '-ed'.

- **Check for words with silent letters**. Words with unpronounced letters, such as in 'play**w**right', 'mor**t**gage' or '**p**sychology' are also commonly misspelled.

- **Check for accidental phonetic spellings.** Phonetic refers to the sound of speech. Spelling a word the way we hear it is not always correct. Examples include 'contraversy' instead of 'controversy' and 'enviroment' instead of 'environment'.

- **Check spelling of technical terms.** Make sure you know how to spell technical terms used in English, such as 'rhetoric' and 'simile'.

- **Check you have used Australian spellings.** Beware of spell check software autocorrecting to American spellings, such as 'meter' instead of 'metre'.

Florence sat in the well-worn patchwork lounge chair in her favorite corner of the Elspeth Retirement Cottage Recreation Room. She watched as her contemperies attempted to play bridge, crochay a wearable jumper or scarf, or listen to the nurses reading Dickens or Plath to them in a planely condesending tone.

None of these activities much appeeled to Florence. She had never been one to sit idely by or do 'normal' grandmotherly duties. She couldn't knit or sew, and she hated cooking and baking. What she did love was the hussle and bussle of people, the scandalous storys that passed between them, unknowingly, in the darting of the eyes or the twitching of the hands. She was an expert at decoding such signs.

But staring at Mohammed, who was mumbleing furtively to one of the nurses on the other side of the room, Florence wondered if she had lost her touch. There was something nefarious going on, of that she was sure, but she couldn't put her finger on exactly what that something was. No matter – she was prepared to do whatever it took to find out the truth.

US spelling: favorite instead of favourite.

Phonetic spelling: contemperies instead of contemporaries, appeeled instead of appealed.

Silent letter: crochay instead of crochet, condesending instead of condescending, hussle and bussle instead of hustle and bustle.

Homophone confusion: planely instead of plainly.

Incorrect rules applied for adding suffixes and plurals: idely instead of idly, storys instead of stories and mumbleing instead of mumbling.

1   Circle the correct spelling of these frequently misspelled words.

- achieve / acheive
- arguement / argument
- independant / independent
- embarrass / embarass
- separate / seperate
- writting / writing
- soldier / solider
- definitely / definately

2   Find and correct the six spelling errors in this passage. Write the correctly spelled words below.

Cyber-bulling is becoming a prevelent issue in Australia. Today, more than 30% of adolescence report being harrassed online. Spychologists say this is having a detrimental affect on mental health.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

3   Review the last piece of work you received back from your teacher. Note any incorrect spellings that were identified. Make a list and use the 'look, say, cover, write, check' method to learn the correct spellings.

4   Make a set of flashcards to learn the correct spelling of English terminology associated with your current unit of work. Alternatively, you can download free flashcard apps to create digital flashcards.

5   Use the internet to locate ten important spelling rules. Create a table to record these, following the model below.

Rule	Examples	Exceptions
'i before e, except after c'	believe receive ceiling	not when 'ei' is pronounced 'a': e.g. neighbour, beige Other exceptions: ancient, weird, glacier, seize, albeit, science, forfeit, height

14.2 CHECKING GRAMMAR

These are some of the most common grammatical errors you should check for when proofreading.

- **Check sentence structure.** Ensure each sentence is complete, with a subject and a verb. Look for sentence fragments (incomplete sentences) and run-on sentences (where two or more sentences are accidentally combined, often with a comma).

    › Fragments:
        - Incorrect: Running for the bus.
        - Correct: I was running for the bus.

    › Run-on sentences:
        - Incorrect: The writer includes an expert opinion, this adds credibility to their argument.
        - Correct: The writer includes an expert opinion. This adds credibility to their argument. OR The writer includes an expert opinion, adding credibility to their argument.

- **Check subject-verb agreement.** In a sentence, the subjects and verbs must agree in number. (Note that 'they' is often used as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun.)

    › Incorrect: The friends *was* enjoying their holiday.
    › Correct: The friends *were* enjoying their holiday.

- **Check tenses.** A common error is to switch between past and present tense.

    › Incorrect: Beth *included* figurative language in her novel. She *uses* a simile to describe the bedroom as 'like an Aladdin's cave'.
    › Correct: Beth *includes* figurative language in her novel. She *uses* a simile to describe the bedroom as 'like an Aladdin's cave'.

- **Check use of pronouns.** When you use a pronoun, such as 'he', 'she', 'they' or 'it', ensure that the noun to which it refers is clear.

    › Unclear: Rizad told Tom that he got the highest mark.
    › Clear: 'I got the highest mark,' Rizad said to Tom.

- **Check for dangling modifiers.** When including a descriptive phrase within a sentence, ensure that it clearly relates to the correct noun.

    › Unclear: Thrilling and original, the writer is sure to have a hit.
    › Clear: Thrilling and original, the writer's latest novel is sure to be a hit.

The challenge of dealing with disposable coffee cups is a significant issue for our waterways, in Australia alone almost a billion disposable coffee cups are thrown away each year. According to Clean Up Australia. Considered unacceptable, Richard Fine, founder of biodegradable utensils manufacturer BioPak, wants this statistic to change. Many of these cups are lined with plastic, meaning that they are not biodegradable and posed a serious environmental problem. This plastic lining remains in the ecosystem as microplastics, polluting waterways and ending up in the stomachs of marine life. As a result, Greens Senator Peter Whish-Wilson has described the ocean as 'a plastic soup' that poses a threat to humans who both swims in it and eats the seafood it produces. They are a major source of these microplastics.

Run-on sentence: two complete sentences are joined with a comma.

Sentence fragment: a subordinate clause is missing a main clause.

Dangling modifier: incorrect position of the modifier suggests that it is Richard Fine, rather than the statistic, that is considered unacceptable.

Tense shift: present tense used for 'are' but then past tense for 'posed'.

Subject-verb agreement: 'humans' is plural, so the verbs should be 'swim' and 'eat'.

Unclear pronoun: 'They' here seems to refer to the humans as a source of microplastics, rather than the coffee cups.

1 Find and highlight the three sentence-structure errors in the following passage. Write the corrected passage in your notebook.

> Marty hurried round the corner, he was running late for school. He slowed as he approached his classroom. Listened at the door. If everyone was talking, he might just be able to sneak in. No chance, he thought. He was the teacher, everyone would know he was late.

2 Draw a line to match the example to the type of error it represents.

Cloudless and sunny, Alfie enjoyed his day at the beach.		subject and verb do not agree
The library were grateful for the generosity of the students' fundraising.		dangling modifier
The poem was about jealousy. It includes several metaphors to describe the emotion.		unclear pronoun usage
Ella said Liz loved the new bike she got for Christmas.		inconsistent tense

3 Non-standard syntax – or the deliberate use of incorrect sentence structure – can be used by writers to create particular effects in their writing. Read a short passage from your class novel or another text you are reading. In your notebook, note down three examples of non-standard syntax and the effects they create.

14.3 CHECKING PUNCTUATION

You should also proofread closely to ensure accurate punctuation. After all, 'Let's eat Grandma' is quite different to 'Let's eat, Grandma'!

- **Capital letters for proper nouns:** the names of people, places and organisations require initial capital letters.

- **Punctuating dialogue:** dialogue should be enclosed within speech or quotation marks and begin with a capital letter, unless it is a continuation of a sentence begun prior to the speech tag.

  › For example: 'Take a jacket,' Mum called, 'so you don't catch a chill. It's freezing outside!'

- **Use of apostrophes:** apostrophes are used to indicate possession (e.g. Chad's lunch) or to indicate missing letters in contractions (e.g. wouldn't = would not).

- **Its and it's:** 'its' is a possessive pronoun, just like 'his' or 'hers', while 'it's' is a contraction, short for 'it is'.

- **Commas:** commas are used in several ways, the most common of which are described below.

  › to separate items in a list – e.g. 'We had to revise the names, nationalities, publications and awards of several authors.'

  › to separate a subordinate clause or phrase – e.g. 'Waiting for the bell, I began tapping my foot impatiently. Mrs Siddartha, who was trying to teach English, glared at me.'

  › to indicate when you are directly addressing someone – e.g. 'Jackson, you should be paying attention.'

  › to separate dialogue from a speech tag – e.g. 'Jackson replied, "I can't miss the bus."'

It is important to note that many writers deliberately break the rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing in order to create particular effects. Such choices must always be purposeful and are not an excuse to mask poor writing skills.

In *The Story of Tom Brennan*, Tom and his family try to 'move on' to another town after Daniel's car accident. Tom is unable to let go of the past and remains depressed angry and guilt-ridden. He feels that Daniels actions have destroyed his life. He also feels partially responsible for letting Daniel drive even though he knew his brother was drunk. Tom starts at a new school and begins playing rugby again but is completely miserable. A metaphor is used to reveal his depression when he describes 'a black curtain' that has descended over him. Despite trying to live normally Tom notes he just couldn't get in step with life here because he has not faced up to the past and his own role in the accident. Until he begins to confront both his and Daniels past actions, Tom is unable to find happiness in coghill.

Comma usage: there is a comma missing (between 'depressed' and 'angry') to differentiate between items in the list.

Apostrophe: an apostrophe is needed to indicate that the actions are Daniel's.

Quotation marks: these are needed around this direct quote from the text.

Comma usage: this subordinate clause should be separated by a comma.

Capitalisation: as this is a proper noun (a place), a capital letter is needed (i.e. Coghill).

1   Find and correct the five punctuation errors in this passage.

> Ilona chewed her fingernail worrying at it until it bled. She was dreading the moment mrs Gerritson from next door came home. The woman was going to seriously freak, when she saw all the shattered glass. More importantly, Ilona was worried her neighbour wouldn't give back the skateboard that had smashed it's way through her front window. What would Ilona do then.

2   Research the following complex punctuation marks and complete the table.

Punctuation mark	Usage	Examples
Ellipsis …	Used to indicate words have been omitted, such as within a quote, or at the end of a sentence to indicate a pause or trailing off.	• Marquez writes, 'Today … was a historic moment.' • I used to think that way, but now …
Semicolon ;		
Colon :		
Dash –		
Hyphen -		
Parentheses ( )		

GLOSSARY OF EDITING AND PROOFREADING TERMS

Active voice: the subject of the sentence performs the action stated by the verb

Complex sentence: a sentence that contains an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses

Compound sentence: a sentence that has at least two independent clauses that have related ideas and are joined by a coordinating conjunction

Coordinating conjunction: a word that joins two elements of equal importance in a sentence (e.g. 'and', 'but', 'so')

Copyediting: focuses on making changes at the word and sentence level to improve readability

Dependent clause: a clause that is embedded inside another clause (and which cannot stand alone as a sentence)

Grammar: the study or use of the rules about how words combine with other words to express meaning

Independent clause: a clause that can stand alone as a sentence (i.e. it expresses a complete thought)

Mark up: the act of annotating or correcting errors in a text

Passive voice: a sentence in which the subject is acted on by a verb

Proofreading: the final stage of checking a text before it is published or shared, focused on correcting grammar, punctuation and spelling errors

Punctuation: the marks – such as full stops, commas and apostrophes – used in writing to separate sentences and their elements and to clarify meaning

Redrafting: the process of producing a new draft by making the changes identified during the edit

Simple sentence: a sentence that consists of just one independent clause

Spelling: forming words from letters according to accepted usage

Structural editing: also known as developmental or substantive editing; involves making structural changes to a piece of writing

Style: the distinctive way that a writer expresses themselves in a work

Syntax: the order or arrangement of words and phrases to form proper sentences

Typo: a mistake, such as a misspelled word, in typed or printed text; short for typographical error

APPENDIX: WRITING PROMPTS/TOPICS

Imaginative prompts

Using what you have learned in the Imaginative Writing section (pp. 1–40), write complete imaginative pieces in response to the prompts below.

- Story starter: In that moment, I knew we would be friends forever.
- A character is on the brink of giving up when a glimmer of hope presents itself.
- Something mysterious falls from the sky and is discovered by a group of friends, who fight among themselves to possess it.
- Story starter: He awoke with a start. He could already tell he was not where he was supposed to be. This was not his country.
- A fire burns through a local town, devastating the native flora and fauna.
- Story starter: No-one believes me, but I know what I saw.
- Imagine a remote future that resembles a long distant era of human history.
- A stranger arrives in town. Soon thereafter the townspeople start disappearing, one by one.
- A group of unlikely friends band together to protest an injustice.

Persuasive topics

Using what you have learned in the Persuasive Writing section (pp.41–74), write complete persuasive pieces in response to the topics below.

- Should students study art and music at school or only in their own time?
- 'Entertainment industry award ceremonies should not have separate categories for men and women.' Do you agree?
- Have smart phones made things better or worse for humankind?
- Is the idea of a perfect world or utopia unrealistic?
- Does dieting cause more harm than good?
- 'Protesting is futile when governments have so much power.' Do you agree?
- Should remote/distance learning become the new norm?
- 'Indigenous characters and issues should be given more prominence in mainstream Australian television shows.' Do you agree?
- 'It is unfair for Hollywood to appropriate stories from other cultures.' Do you agree?

Interpretive topics

Using what you have learned in the Interpretive Writing section (pp.75–118), write complete pieces in response to the topics below.

- Write an informative piece on a social media trend from the last five years.
- Write an information report on Australia's Indigenous history.
- Write a news report or feature article about access to education around the world.
- Write a news report or feature article about Australia's relationship with one Asian nation.
- Write a personal reflection on a young adult novel you have read.
- Write a personal reflection on your experience with country, either the one where you were born or one you migrated to.
- Write an autobiographical account of a connection you made through play.
- Write a critical reflection on one of the imaginative pieces you wrote in response to a prompt on the previous page.
- Write a review of *Guide to Writing: A student toolkit.*

Analytical topics

Using what you have learned in the Analytical Writing section (pp.119–52), write complete analytical pieces in response to the topics below.

- 'Superhero narratives don't focus enough on female characters.' Do you agree?
- Discuss the role of place in a book you have read recently.
- How does friendship help characters in a book you have read recently to overcome their struggles?
- How does fear motivate the actions of the characters in a film you have watched recently?
- Analyse the use of argument and language in one of the persuasive pieces you wrote in response to a prompt on the previous page.
- To what extent are the lives of characters in a young adult novel you have read recently limited by social or family expectations?
- How does the narrative structure of a text you have read recently affect the audience's understanding of events?
- Compare the importance of belonging in a book and film of your choosing.
- How do stories and the way we tell them shape the lives of characters in a book you have read recently?

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