

# Using basic reading skills



Learner guide

Ready for work

**Pre-employment skills**

# **Using basic reading skills**

Version 1.2

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### Using basic reading skills

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# Words and texts

All around us, every day we see words. All the words you read together are texts. A text is a piece of writing. Here are some examples of texts.

## What it looks like



A sign



A book



Something written just for you, like a card or email



Something written for many people, like a newspaper, magazine, blog or website

## The purpose of texts

To read and understand a text properly you need to know why it was written. When you know the purpose, it is easier to read the text.

Here are some examples of different texts:

- Some texts give instructions or directions for how to do something. For example, a recipe could tell you how to bake a cake.
- Other texts want to persuade or convince you to do something. For example, an advertisement could tell you how a new model of car is safe and efficient.
- Some texts give you information and facts about something you want to know. For example, an online article could tell you who won the football.
- Other texts describe something to you. For example, a story could tell you about a beautiful beach.

## Activity 1

Look back at the words or texts you have read today. Think about their purpose.

1. Did any words give you instructions about how to do something? If so, what were the instructions telling you to do?

---

---

2. Did any words try to persuade you to do something? If so, what?

---

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3. Did any words give you important or interesting facts? If so, what was the information about?

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4. Did any words describe something? If so, what was being described?

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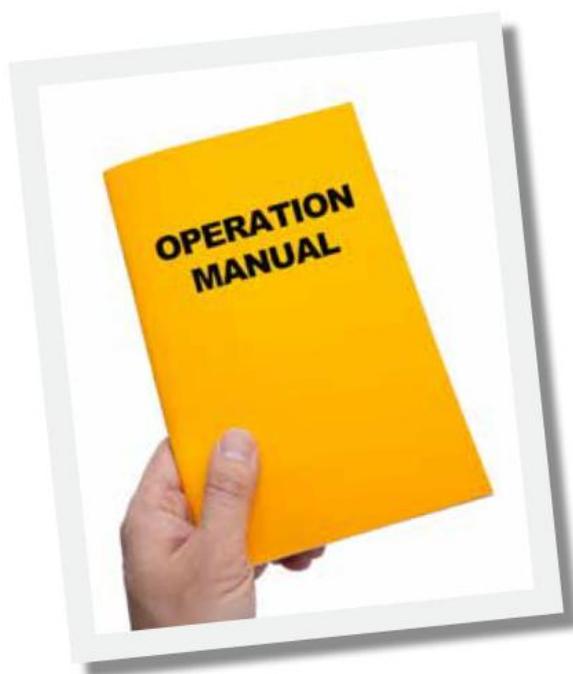
[Click to complete Activity 1](#)

# Reading instruction texts

Texts that tell you how to do something are called instruction texts.

Here are some types of instruction texts:

- Recipes
- TV and DVD manuals
- Washing instructions on clothing labels
- Cooking directions on packets of food
- Directions for how to take medicine
- A list of jobs someone wants you to do
- Forms about how to register to vote in an election
- Work, TAFE or school rules about what to do if you are sick



## Activity 2

1. Have you read any of the instruction texts listed? If so, write them here.

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---

---

2. Can you think of any other types of instruction texts? Write them here.

---

---

---

[Click to complete Activity 2](#)

Some instruction texts tell you what you can't do.



Instruction texts are sometimes written in lists. They may also have photos or diagrams showing you what to do. These instruction texts must be written carefully and in the right order. They should also not contain any unnecessary words.

When you have read an instruction text you should be able to follow the instructions and do what they say in the correct way.

### Activity 3

Here are the washing instructions for a jumper. Read them, then answer the questions that follow.

#### **Washing instructions**

Hand wash only in cold water

Line dry

Do not tumble dry

Iron with cool iron

1. Can you wash the jumper in a washing machine?

---

2. Can you wash the jumper in hot water?

---

3. How should you dry the jumper?

---

4. How hot should the iron be?

---

[Click to complete Activity 3](#)

## Reading persuasive texts

Some texts try to persuade or talk you into doing something or buying something. Others may try to persuade you to think a certain way.

Most advertisements (ads) are persuasive texts. They want you to buy something. You may see persuasive texts:

- on billboards
- in social media
- in newspapers and magazines
- on packets of food
- on the side of trams, trains, buses and taxis
- on leaflets put into your letterbox.

This example shows a persuasive leaflet from a gardening company.



**Green Fingers Gardening**

For all your gardening maintenance  
call us on:

3456 7890

**Reliable**  
**Responsible**  
**Affordable**  
**We do the best job!**

**Voted #1 in your area.**



Persuasive texts often use exclamation marks! They may use CAPITAL LETTERS to try to catch your eye. Some persuasive texts also have some words in **bold**, to make them stand out.

Persuasive texts also use words and phrases such as terrific offer, great bargain, super deal, unbeatable or treat yourself.

Here is an advertisement. It is a persuasive text.



This ad is trying to persuade you to buy shoes. It is persuading you to buy the shoes while they are on sale. Did you notice the exclamation mark and capital letters?

Another type of persuasive text tries to make you think a certain way; for example, a pamphlet put out by a political party. They want to persuade you to vote for them. Be aware that persuasive texts may:

- only give you some of the facts
- use lots of emotional words like trustworthy, truthful, terrible or dishonest
- only give you one point of view or one way of looking at an issue or problem
- only tell you what the writer thinks about the matter, but not what anyone else thinks about it.

When you have read a persuasive text, you need to think carefully about whether you agree with the words. Do you really want to do what it is trying to get you to do? You can 'shop around' to find out what other businesses offer, or do research to find out what other people think.

Remember, you don't have to rely on one source – you can get the facts for yourself.

## Activity 4

Find a printed advertisement. It may be from a newspaper or a pamphlet in your letterbox.

1. What is your ad trying to persuade you to buy or do?

---

2. How is it trying to persuade you? What words does it use?

---

---

3. Does it use an exclamation mark anywhere?

---

4. Does it use capital letters?

---

5. How could you find out whether this offer, product or service is right for you?

---

---

[Click to complete Activity 4](#)

# Reading information texts

Information texts inform you about the facts. Information texts may be as short as a notice, or as long as a book.

Information texts may:

- be in lists – like a dictionary
- be in tables – like train timetables or a calendar
- be in graphs – like a rainfall chart
- include drawings – like maps.

Some pages in the newspaper contain information texts, like the details about what movies are showing. Libraries have thousands of information texts.



## Activity 5



**OPEN: 10 AM – 6 PM DAILY**  
ADULTS: \$15  
CHILDREN: \$9  
FAMILY: \$40 (2 ADULTS, 2 CHILDREN)  
LOCATION: 12 THOMAS STREET, WATERVILLE  
PH: 3256 4879  
WEB: [WWW.WWAQUARIUM.COM.AU](http://WWW.WWAQUARIUM.COM.AU)

Write down at least five pieces of information from this text.

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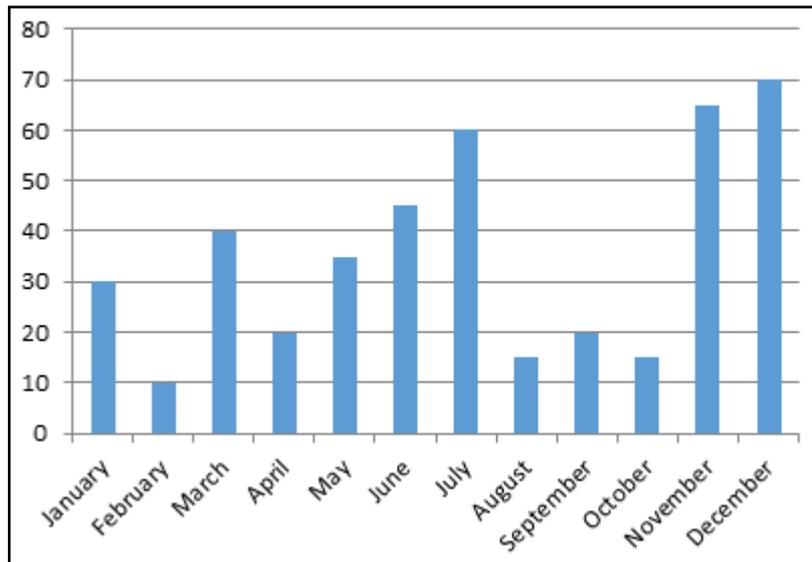
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[Click to complete Activity 5](#)

Graphs and tables are information texts too. They give information in a visual form. They also show information that contains numbers or that needs to be compared.

The graph below is about rainfall. A person collected information to make this graph. It shows how much rain their garden was getting and allows them to compare the amount of rain each month.



The numbers down the left-hand side of the graph show how many millimetres (mm) of rain fell.

The months are at the bottom of the graph. In January only 30 mm of rain fell on the garden.

## Activity 6

Use the graph about rainfall to answer the following questions.

1. How many millimetres of rain fell in February?

---

2. How many millimetres of rain fell in March?

---

3. Which month got the most rain?

---

4. Which month got the least rain?

---

[Click to complete Activity 6](#)

Sometimes you need to search an information text to find the information you want. For example, if you are using a dictionary, you need to search for the first letter of a word, and then maybe the second and third letters, and so on.

For example, you may want to find the meaning of the word 'reptile' in a dictionary. You begin by finding the words that start with 'r'. Then you move further to the words that start with 're'. There are lots of them, so you need to go a few more pages further to find words that begin with 'rep'. Finally, you'll get to the word reptile and its meaning.

When you read an information text – whether it is in words, a table, a graph or a diagram – you should be able to pick out the pieces of information you are looking for.

## Activity 7

Here are two texts about Maggie's Apple Pies. One is a persuasive text and one is an instruction text. Can you tell the difference? Read the two texts and answer the questions that follow.

### Text A

#### **Maggie's Apple Pies**

Heat the oven to 180° C.  
Put pies in the oven to cook for 10 minutes.  
Cool for 5 minutes before cutting.  
Serve with ice-cream and/or cream.  
Cost: \$5.95

### Text B

*Maggie's Apple Pies*  
Treat the whole family to a  
**GREAT DESSERT!**  
Maggie's pies heat up in only  
10 minutes.  
Served with cream, these  
pies are a **DELICIOUS** treat  
the kids will love!  
A bargain at only \$5.95.

1. Which text is a persuasive text?

---

2. Why do you think it is a persuasive text? What does it do?  
What doesn't it do?

---

---

3. Why do you think the other text is an instruction text?

---

---

**Click to complete Activity 7**

# Reading describing texts

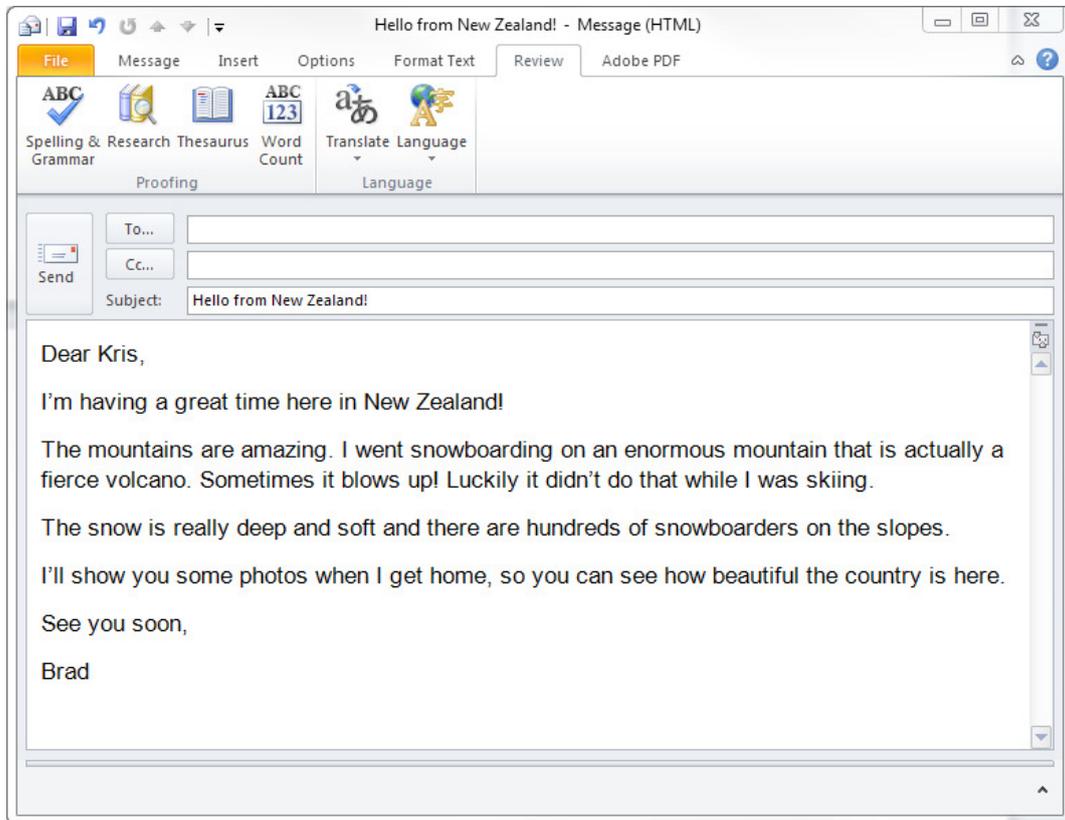
Describing texts tell you how something looks, sounds, feels, smells or tastes. The aim of a describing text is that you can imagine what is being described.

A describing text may be an email from a friend telling you what their new house is like. Another kind of describing text is a novel. A novel tells a long story and wants you to imagine the people and places in it.

Describing texts often use a lot of describing words called adjectives and adverbs.

Word	Examples
Adjectives describe nouns (naming words).	<p>Here are some examples where the adjectives have been bolded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His <b>new</b> motorbike is <b>red</b> and <b>silver</b>.</li> <li>• Roger Federer is a <b>great</b> tennis player and is very <b>fit</b>.</li> <li>• Those <b>gold</b> medals are really <b>beautiful</b>.</li> </ul>
Adverbs describe verbs (doing words).	<p>Here are some examples where the adverbs have been bolded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He <b>dangerously</b> drove his motorbike.</li> <li>• She shouted <b>angrily</b> at the dog when it <b>quickly</b> ran through her garden.</li> <li>• The rock group played <b>loudly</b> and sang <b>well</b>.</li> </ul>

Here is an email from Brad to his friend Kris. Brad is describing what a great time he is having on holiday in New Zealand. He uses these adjectives: amazing, great, enormous, fierce, deep, soft, beautiful.



## Activity 8

Here is some describing text from a travel book. Read the text, then answer the questions that follow.

Brazil is a country of great beauty. It has unexplored rainforests, islands with tropical beaches and great rivers, including the mighty Amazon.

The weather is very warm, so people spend a lot of time outdoors. Brazilians are very friendly, happy people. They like being with other people and talking a lot. More than half the people in Brazil live in a city. They like to sit in cafés, drink coffee and watch people pass by. They also enjoy dancing, going to the beach, playing and watching sports, and spending time in the sun.

1. What does the writer want you to imagine?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How would you describe the people of Brazil after reading the text?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Are the people where you live like the Brazilians? Say how they are the same or different.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Would you like the weather in Brazil? Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_

[Click to complete Activity 8](#)

## What you have learnt

Put a ✓ in the box when you have learnt these things.

- A text is a piece of writing.
- There are different types of texts including instruction, persuasive, information and describing texts.
- To understand a text you need to know why it was written – its purpose.
- Instruction texts tell you how to do something. They should be clear and easy to understand.
- Persuasive texts try to convince you to do something or to think a certain way.
- Information texts give you facts about something. They should be clear and easy to understand.
- Describing texts aim to help you imagine a place, person, thing or something that has happened.

## Check your learning

On the next pages you will find:

- an instruction text
- a persuasive text
- an information text
- a describing text.

Read each text. Then answer the questions about each one.

### An instruction text

#### How to avoid being bitten by red-back spiders

The Australian red-back spider can give a painful and venomous bite. These spiders like to hide under flowerpots and in dark places, like garden sheds. Do these things to keep the spiders away and to avoid being bitten:

- Clean out your garden shed and keep it tidy.
- Spray insecticide (bug spray) in the corners of the shed.
- Throw out garden rubbish like old flowerpots.
- Wear gloves when you are gardening and moving things like cans, rocks and flowerpots.
- Watch where you put your hands.
- Be careful when you put on gumboots – check them for spiders first.

1. Finish this sentence: This text tells you how to ...

---

2. Why would you want to follow these instructions?

---

3. Are the words clear and easy to understand?

---

4. Where do red-back spiders like to hide?

---

**A persuasive text****Holiday Offer!!**

Here is an offer you can't refuse! The CHEAPEST fares you will ever get all the way to beautiful Norway.

Ski down the wonderful slopes! Relax in a sauna afterwards and enjoy the log fires in a luxury hotel.

From as little as \$1,999 per person return.

These sale fares are only available if you pay in full when you book.

**DON'T WAIT!**

5. What is this text about?

---

6. What does this text want you to do?

---

7. What words does it use to try to persuade you?

---

8. What is used to make you take notice of the words?

---

**An information text**

Bus 86 – From Snowdon to the City			
Bus stops	Monday to Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Snowdon Station	6.00 am	6.30 am	8.00 am
Hill Street	6.15 am	6.45 am	8.15 am
Morse Road	6.30 am	7.00 am	8.30 am
City Depot	7.00 am	7.30 am	9.00 am

This information text is part of a bus timetable. It shows the first bus for each day of the week.

9. Where does this bus travel from and to?

---

10. What time does the first bus leave Snowdon Station on Saturdays?

---

11. What is the third stop on the route?

---

12. How long does it take the bus to travel from Morse Road to the City Depot?

---

**A describing text****Deep in the forest**

As we go further into the forest it gets darker. The trees are tall and they cut out most of the sunlight; just here and there a stream of light comes down through the branches. All around us we hear small animals moving in the undergrowth. Birds that we have never seen before fly among the trees calling to their mates. We stop to let a green snake cross the path ahead of us. In places, a lively monkey looks down at us from a tree. In the distance we can hear the waterfall we are trying to find. We feel as if we are the first humans to come to this place.

13. What is the text describing?

---

14. Can you imagine what the place looks like?

---

15. Can you imagine what the place sounds like?

---

16. What animals were there?

---

17. What is the writer trying to find?

---

**Click to complete**

# Answers

## Answers to activities

### Activity 1

Answers will vary depending on the person. Example answers have been provided.

#### Answer to Question 1

The words on the back of the oats package told me how to make porridge.

#### Answer to Question 2

A pamphlet in my letterbox tried to persuade me to join the local gym.

#### Answer to Question 3

The newspaper gave me the date of the upcoming federal election.

#### Answer to Question 4

In the novel I am reading, the main character is travelling through Europe and I could imagine what it felt like.

### Activity 2

#### Answer to Question 1

Answers will vary depending on the person.

#### Answer to Question 2

Instructions for putting together flat-pack furniture or building a LEGO model.

### Activity 3

#### Answer to Question 1

No – you must hand wash only.

#### Answer to Question 2

No – it must be in cold water only.

**Answer to Question 3**

Dry the jumper on the washing line.

**Answer to Question 4**

Cool.

**Activity 4**

Answers will vary depending on the person. Example answers have been provided.

**Answer to Question 1**

It's trying to get me to join the local gym.

**Answer to Question 2**

It says, 'JOIN NOW!', 'FREE MONTH!', 'State-of-the-art equipment', 'Personal trainers onsite'.

**Answer to Question 3**

Yes, lots of them!

**Answer to Question 4**

Yes, when mentioning the FREE things.

**Answer to Question 5**

I could check what other gyms in my area offer. I could look for online reviews. I could ask my friends and family who belong to a gym whether this is a good deal.

**Activity 5**

This text gives you information about the aquarium. It says:

- what the aquarium is called
- where it is located
- the phone number
- the website
- what time it is open
- how much it costs to enter.

## Activity 6

### Answer to Question 1

10 mm.

### Answer to Question 2

40 mm.

### Answer to Question 3

December.

### Answer to Question 4

February.

## Activity 7

### Answer to Question 1

Text B.

### Answer to Question 2

It is trying to persuade me to buy a pie. It uses capital letters, bold and exclamation marks. It uses emotional words such as delicious, great and bargain.

### Answer to Question 3

It describes how to heat up the pie in steps. It contains facts, such as how much the pie costs and what temperature to set the oven. There are no emotional words.

## Activity 8

Answers will vary. Examples have been provided.

### Answer to Question 1

What it is like to visit Brazil.

### Answer to Question 2

Friendly, happy people who like the outdoors, and have active social lives.

### Answer to Question 3

They are similar in that Australians also like the outdoors (the beach and sports) and visiting cafés.

**Answer to Question 4**

I would love the weather in Brazil as it is very warm.

**Answers to check your learning****Answer to Question 1**

Avoid being bitten by red-back spiders.

**Answer to Question 2**

To stay safe and avoid getting bitten.

**Answer to Question 3**

Yes. I understood everything.

**Answer to Question 4**

Under flowerpots and in dark places, like garden sheds.

**Answer to Question 5**

A holiday offer to go skiing in Norway.

**Answer to Question 6**

Buy a return ticket to Norway and pay in full when I book.

**Answer to Question 7**

'Can't refuse', 'CHEAPEST', 'wonderful' and 'luxury'

**Answer to Question 8**

Capital letters and exclamation marks.

**Answer to Question 9**

Snowdon to the City.

**Answer to Question 10**

6.30 am.

**Answer to Question 11**

Morse Road.

**Answer to Question 12**

30 minutes.

**Answer to Question 13**

What it's like to be deep in a forest.

**Answer to Question 14**

Yes, it describes the place very well. I feel like I am there.

**Answer to Question 15**

Yes, lots of animal sounds and leaves rustling. A waterfall in the distance.

**Answer to Question 16**

Monkeys, birds, a snake and small animals.

**Answer to Question 17**

The waterfall.