The Senior English Writing Handbook

5th Edition
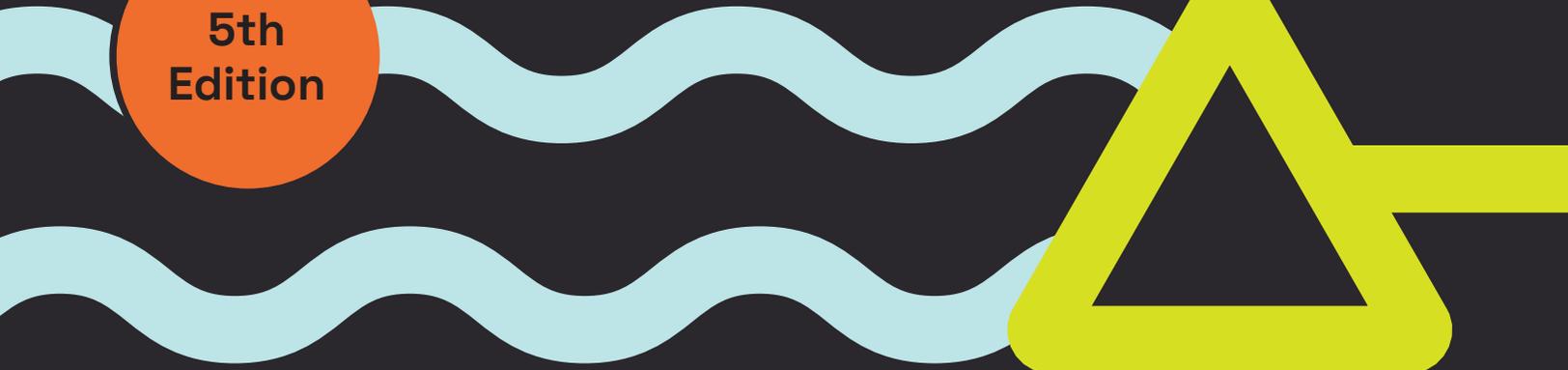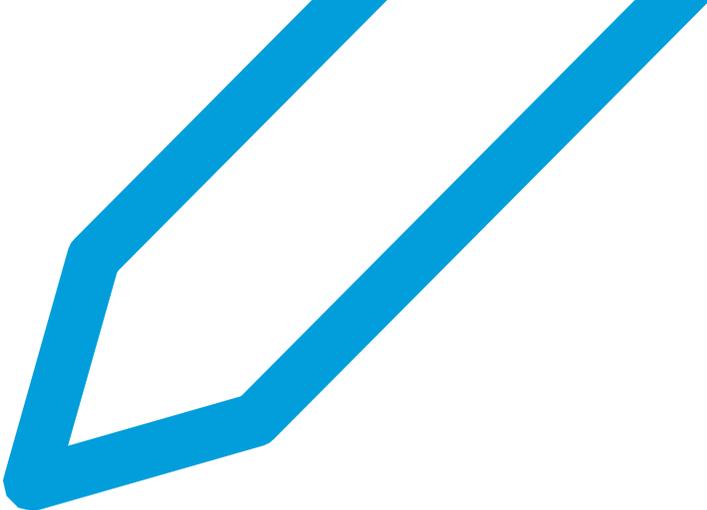
The
Senior
English
Writing
Handbook

A Ticking Mind Publication

**TICKING
MIND**

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Text Response

Writing a great text response is partly about knowing the text –its themes, characters, techniques and symbols. But it's also about responding to an essay topic. It doesn't really matter how much you know about the text you are studying if you can't respond to the essay topic. To create a great text response, you need to think about the best examples and symbols you can use to respond to an essay topic, not all of the examples you can think of. It's all about the essay topic.

This chapter will show you three groups of strategies to help you write great text responses.
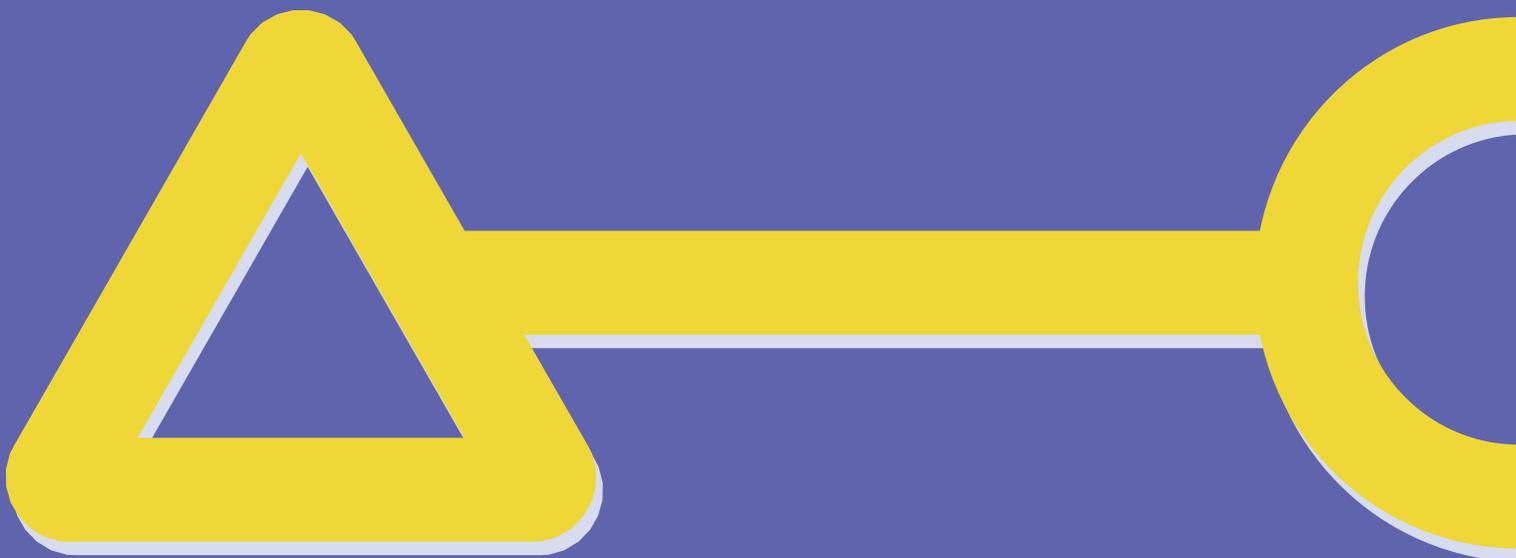
1. Read the text strategically

Before you read or watch a text for the first time, you should look at some essay topics about the text. This will help you to understand the ideas in the text far better.

This section will show you:
- what type of essay topics you can expect
- how to take notes as you read or watch a text for the first time.

2. It's all about the essay topic

Whenever you learn something new about a text, you should consider how it might help you to answer an essay topic.

This section will show you how to:
- identify key words in a topic
- brainstorm examples and topic sentences
- plan body paragraphs.

3. Micro writing practice

The key to improving writing is to do lots of short practice.

This section will demonstrate how to practise writing:
- introductions
- body paragraphs
- conclusions
- for film, novels, non-fiction, graphic novels and plays
- for short stories and poetry.

Read the text strategically

Reading a new text and understanding its themes, ideas, characters and symbols is super hard. So it's important to be strategic with your reading. You will remember key ideas and examples much more clearly if you do some thinking and planning first. This section is full of strategies and tables that will help you to know what to look for when you begin to read (and study) a new text for the English classroom.

Read essay topics first

Before you read or watch a text for the first time, you should look at some essay topics about the text. When you look at essay topics first, you can see the types of ideas you need to think and write about.

There are a few ways you can look at essay questions before you read or watch a text. If the text has been studied in previous years, you can look up past exams and read questions. Your teacher might also give you essay topics.

If you don't have access to essay topics, you can think about the four general categories of essay topics. Let's have a look at them now:

1. How do we think about characters?

If you are studying a novel, film, non-fiction text or play, this is the most common type of essay question you will come across.

Here's an example:

> Dr Ibaraki not only fails others, he also fails himself.

For this type of question, you are being asked to consider whether the text presents a character in positive or negative ways. So, to have some ideas for this type of essay task, think about these questions as you read a text:

- Is a character good or bad?
- What are a character's strengths and weaknesses?
- What motivates a character?
- Does a character change or stay the same?
- Does a character succeed or fail?
- Does a character help or hurt others?
- How do groups behave?

Study alert:

Look up past exams by searching for 'VCE past English exams'

2. What do characters do in response to an event or setting?

This type of question is also common for novels, films, non-fiction texts and plays.It is also a very common question type for short stories. Often, these types of questions require you to think about what the world of the text is like – what is happening in the world of the text and what kinds of behaviours are normal in the world of the text. You should think about how this world affects the decision making of characters.

Here's an example of this type of question:

> *All the Light We Cannot See* shows that war affects different people in different ways.

To have some initial thoughts for this type of essay task, think about these questions as you read a text:

- What is the biggest problem in the text?
- How does a character or group respond to a situation?
- What beliefs or behaviours are valued in the world of the text?
- How does the setting impact on different characters or groups?

3. What is the main message, concern or emotion of a text?

This type of essay task is asking you to think about the main focus of the text. You get these types of questions for all forms of texts, because all texts are about ideas. This is the hardest sort of question to prepare for before you have read the text unless you look at past exam questions or get ideas about the themes from your teacher.

Here are a few examples:

> What do the poems of Kinsella and Papertalk Green teach us?
>
> The importance of kindness and compassion is highlighted in Kennedy's stories.

This can be a tricky type of question to think about when you're reading a text for the first time. Your teacher will give you a lot of help answering these types of questions during a unit. However, here are some questions you can consider as you look at a text for the first time:

- What behaviour is rewarded or punished at the end of the text?
- What feelings or ideas are the characters or the poet mostly concerned by?
- What images, symbols or ideas come up again and again as you read through the text?

Study alert:

Reading the blurb at the back of your print text, or an online description of a text, will give you some of the key theme or idea words you can think about as you read through the text

4. How is a text constructed?

These types of questions are common for all texts. These tasks ask you to think about how an author, director, playwright or poet uses a particular feature, like symbolism or narrative structure, to achieve a certain effect. Here's an example:

How does Wilder create a foreboding atmosphere in *Sunset Boulevard*?

Like the questions about the main idea of a text, they can be tricky to think about on your own. However, here are some questions you can consider as you look at a text for the first time:

- Whose perspective does an author focus upon?
- Is the narrative continuous, fragmented or circular (starts at the end and then goes back to the beginning)?
- Are some scenes in a film light or dark?
- What stage directions does a playwright use?
- What images does a poet use again and again?
- How does an author make an idea important or not important?

Put it into practice

There are two things for you to do now:

1. Before you read or watch the text, look at past essay topics for the text or consider the types of topics you might get if it's new.

2. Choose one of the table formats below to take notes as you read or watch the text.

For a novels, films, plays and non-fiction

Character's name	Problem the character faces	Positive responses to the problem	Negative responses to the problem	Outcome for the character

For a collection of short stories

Name of story	Main problem	Positive reactions to problem	Negative reactions to problem	Positive or negative ending?

For a collection of poetry

Name of poem	Main idea or feeling	Positive images or feelings	Negative images or feelings	Overall, is the poem positive or negative about the main idea?

It's all about the essay topic

To write an effective essay, you need to first clearly understand what a topic is asking you to write about. Often, students know a text well but end up getting an average mark for an essay because they didn't respond to the topic they were given. This section looks at the steps you can practise to avoid this pitfall.

This section is close to the beginning of the chapter because no matter what you learn about a text, you must respond to an essay topic. Whenever you learn something new about a text, you should consider how it might help you to answer an essay topic. Every week throughout your text response unit you should practise unpacking essay topics and connecting what you've learnt about a text to the topic.

The next few pages outline three phases in the planning process.

Over the course of your VCE, you will need to become very efficient at planning so that you can do it in 5–10 minutes for a SAC or the exam.

Study alert:

Practising the steps in this section is a highly effective 5-minute study strategy in the lead up to SACs and the exam

Phase 1:

Brainstorm alternative vocabulary:

→ Identify key terms: brainstorm similar and different terms to expand your vocabulary

→ Identify modifiers: brainstorm alternative modifiers

Phase 2:

Brainstorm examples:

→ Use a checklist to make sure you have a range of different types of examples that show something important about the topic

AND

Write topic sentences:

→ Use the alternative vocabulary from Phase 1 to write topic sentences that have a paragraph focus and respond to the topic

Phase 3:

Plan body paragraphs in detail:

→ Put your topic sentences in order

→ Organise examples under the appropriate topic sentence

Phase 1: Brainstorm vocabulary

Flames *demonstrates* the *importance* of *interconnection* between *people* and *nature.*

demonstrates	interconnection	people	nature
portrays	communities	characters	landscape
represents	ecosystems	protagonists	animal companions
emphasises	relationship	range of people	cycles of life
highlights		perspectives	natural world
creates a picture of	isolated	humans and gods	
	insular	human world	essential nature
	alone		personal nature
			suburban landscape
			environmental destruction

Phase 2: Examples and topic sentences

Examples	• Levi → connects to seal at end "kept afloat" • Karl → "a man couldn't hunt it alone, and neither could a seal" • Thurston = thirsty, isolated • disconnection from suburban world • set in the natural world of Tasmania • detective symbolised by ice • Gibson = desert = isolated • Nicole balances Charlotte • "roars back into the physicality of her body"
Topic Sentences	• Arnott's novel emphasises how essential it is for his characters to have some kind of relationship with the natural world around them. • Each of the protagonists in the text must come to accept and appreciate their own essential nature. • Throughout the novel, there are dreadful consequences for those who fail to value the ecosystems around them and instead choose to live in an isolated and vindictive way.

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3: Plan body paragraphs

BP1: Arnott's novel emphasises how essential it is for his characters to have some kind of relationship with the natural world around them.

- *"A man couldn't hunt it alone, and neither could a seal" (Karl's relationship with the seal).*
- *Charlotte needs the "sky" – not the suburban world of "white-picket fences".*
- *The detective is symbolised by ice, illustrating how she is frozen and separate from the world; her alcoholism shows further withdrawal from the world.*

BP2: Throughout the novel, there are dreadful consequences for those who fail to value the ecosystems around them and instead choose to live in an isolated and vindictive way.

- *Thurston Hough (= thirsty) kills the Esk god and then goes crazy.*
- *Hough creates coffins to isolate and preserve bodies in an unnatural way.*
- *Allen Gibson is named after a desert, which symbolises his isolated nature; his attitude towards the wombats becomes vindictive.*

BP3: Each of the protagonists in the text must come to accept and appreciate their own essential nature.

- *Charlotte "roars back into the physicality of her body".*
- *Nicole comes to understand that she has the power of balancing Charlotte's heat.*
- *Levi connects to the seal and is "kept afloat" by the ocean, literally and metaphorically.*

Phase 1: Identifying key words and modifiers

The most basic strategy to use in unpacking an essay topic is to identify key words.

At the heart of every essay topic is a description of a key idea or element in a text. These are either individual words or phrases and should be the first thing you circle or underline. Responding to the ideas in these words will be at the core of your essay.

Here are three topics about different types of texts. Words about the key idea or element have been circled:

Novel – '*Flames* demonstrates the importance of interconnection between people and nature.' Discuss.

Film – In *Rear Window*, Hitchcock demonstrates that appearances are often misleading.' Discuss.

Poetry – How is grief explored in *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*?

Then, for each of the words or phrases you have circled or underlined, you should begin to brainstorm alternative ways of discussing these ideas. This brainstorming process will help you to understand exactly what the key terms mean and what they imply about the topic. You should think about brainstorming words and phrases that mean similar things (so that you can agree with the topic) and words and phrases that mean different things (so that you can disagree with the topic).

Let's have a look at an example of this brainstorming process for one of the above essay topics:

demonstrates	interconnection	people	nature
portrays	communities	characters	landscape
represents	ecosystems	protagonists	animal companions
emphasises	partnerships	range of people	cycles of life
highlights	. . . .	perspectives	natural world
creates a picture of	isolated	humans and gods	. . . .
	insular	human world	essence of self
	alone		personal character
			. . . .
			industrial landscape
			degraded landscape
			manmade objects
			human greed

Another type of word to look for in an essay topic is a modifier. Modifiers are words or phrases such as 'only', 'all' or 'it is important'. These words and phrases are asking you to consider the extent to which an idea or element is present in a text. Two of the example topics had modifiers in them – these have been underlined:

> Novel – '*Flames* demonstrates the importance of interconnection between people and nature.' Discuss.
>
> Film – In *Sunset Boulevard*, every character is focused upon their own desires.

Picking out the modifiers in a topic is important to understanding the full scope of ideas and examples you need to write about. For example, the modifier 'every' in the *Sunset Boulevard* essay topic above, invites you to discuss whether it is all of the characters or only some who are motivated by self interest.

This is a list of common modifiers that feature in essay topics:

How many	How often	How important
all	always	most
every	often	it is essential
many	usually	it is important
some	sometimes	it is necessary
only	never	more important than
a few		must
nothing		should

Phase 2: Brainstorm examples and write topic sentences

In this phase of the essay planning process, you will need to do two things:

- write topic sentences that focus on the topic itself
- think of the best examples for responding to the topic.

You can do these two steps in any order you prefer. Sometimes you might be able to easily think of the best examples first; at other times, you might have a whole lot of examples you can think of, but writing your topic sentences first may help clarify your thoughts.

A) Brainstorm topic sentences

Rather than immediately thinking about examples after you've unpacked the essay topic, you might find it easier to use the alternative vocabulary from Phase 1 to generate topic sentences. It's essential to put topic sentences into an essay plan because these sentences really help you to focus your analysis around the topic itself.

Many students skip this step and just make a very vague plan like this:

> Body Paragraph 1: characters who like animals
>
> Body Paragraph 2: bad characters who do the wrong thing
>
> Body Paragraph 3: protagonists' super-powers

The reason that the plan above is not very useful is because, although it helps you to sort examples into different groups, it doesn't actually show how the student is analysing the topic. And a great text analysis must always respond to the topic. That's why topic sentences are so important.

Topic sentences are a way of signalling two things:

- what the focus of the paragraph is
- how you are responding to the topic.

By using the alternative vocabulary from Phase 1 when writing a topic sentence, you will clearly link your ideas to the topic. Let's have a look at a few examples of topic sentences that use the vocabulary from the brainstorming table *and* indicate what the focus of the paragraph is. In these examples, the words from the brainstorming table are highlighted in purple and the paragraph focus is underlined:

> 1. *Arnott's novel **emphasises** how **essential** it is for his **characters** to have some kind of **relationship** with the **natural world** around them.*
>
> 2. *Throughout the novel, there are dreadful consequences for those who **fail to value** the **ecosystems** around them and instead choose to live in an **isolated** and vindictive way.*
>
> 3. *Each of the **protagonists** in the text must come to accept and appreciate their own **essential nature**.*

For specific strategies about constructing effective topic sentences, see page 25.

B) Brainstorm examples

During Phase 1, you may naturally begin to think of examples you can use to respond to the topic. A good brainstorming process should be more structured than simply listing the first examples that occur to you. To identify the best examples to respond to an essay topic, you should aim to consider a range of examples from different aspects of the text. An effective habit to develop is to use a checklist to ensure you are considering the full range of possible examples.

Here is an example of a simple checklist you could use:

Novels, films, plays, non-fiction texts and graphic novels	Poetry and short stories
☐ Major characters	☐ Stories or poems most relevant
☐ Minor characters	☐ Setting
☐ Setting	☐ World of the poems
☐ Symbols	☐ Poetic techniques
☐ Techniques	☐ Narrative techniques
☐ Key events	☐ Symbols/imagery
☐ Interactions between characters	☐ Quotes
☐ Quotes	

Phase 3: Plan body paragraphs in detail

The final phase of planning is dedicated to mapping out each paragraph in detail. The aim of this phase is to do most of the analytic thinking you'll need for your essay. This means that when you actually write your essay you will be thinking about the best words and sentences to use, rather than coming up with ideas.

This phase of planning should include:

- looking at the topic sentences you developed in Phase 2 and putting them in the best order
- arranging your examples underneath the appropriate topic sentence and listing them in the best order
- changing or adding any examples you think would be better
- making any brief notes that will guide your analysis.

For example:

> BP1: Arnott's novel emphasises how essential it is for his characters to have some kind of relationship with the natural world around them.
>
> *"A man couldn't hunt it alone, and neither could a seal" (Karl's relationship with the seal).*
>
> *Charlotte needs the "sky" – not the suburban world of "white-picket fences".*
>
> *The detective is symbolised by ice, illustrating how she is frozen and separate from the world; her alcoholism shows further withdrawal from the world.*
>
> BP2: Throughout the novel, there are dreadful consequences for those who fail to value the ecosystems around them and instead choose to live in an isolated and vindictive way.
>
> *Thurston Hough (= thirsty) kills the Esk god and then goes crazy.*
>
> *Hough creates coffins to isolate and preserve bodies in an unnatural way.*
>
> *Allen Gibson is named after a desert, which symbolises his isolated nature; his attitude towards the wombats becomes vindictive.*
>
> BP3: Each of the protagonists in the text must come to accept and appreciate their own essential nature.
>
> *Charlotte "roars back into the physicality of her body".*
>
> *Nicole comes to understand that she has the power of balancing Charlotte's heat.*
>
> *Levi connects to the seal and is "kept afloat" by the ocean, literally and metaphorically.*

Introductions

A good introduction is purposeful – every sentence is designed to respond effectively to a topic. This section of the book will show you how certain words and phrases will indicate that your introduction is on track.

Rather than showing you everything at once, we're going to annotate example introductions in three different ways so that you can see all of the elements that make up a great introduction. These are:

- the different sentence types you will need in an introduction
- how to introduce the text type, author and setting
- words and phrases to discuss the tensions and messages of a text.

Sentence Types

In your introduction, you should have about three sentences.

These sentences should include:

- a direct response to the topic, using alternative vocabulary (such as synonyms) for the key terms
- an understanding of the implications and tensions in the topic
- an explanation of the message of the text.

In *Sunset Boulevard*, every character lies. Discuss.	
Set in the world of Hollywood filmmaking, *Sunset Boulevard* portrays characters who seek shelter within fantasy and fiction because they are unable to distinguish between real life and the movies they write or act in. While Norma Desmond's self-delusion that she is still a great star is the most dramatic example of a character who lies, each of the other characters in the film deludes either themselves or others in order to escape the reality of their lives. In the end, Wilder's film shows the emotional destruction created by a failure to confront the truth.	direct response to topic implications and tension message

Put it into practice

Now it's your turn. Have a go at writing a three-sentence introduction, using the example above as a model. When writing a sentence that directly responds to the topic, use alternative vocabulary (such as synonyms) for the key words.

Text type, author and setting

It's important in your introduction that you show an understanding of how the text has been constructed by someone and how it represents a particular type of world. To do this, an introduction should:

- refer to the text and author (or director, playwright or poet)
- identify the significance of the setting or context of the text
- use a range of analytic verbs to show you are analysing how the text is constructed, not just retelling certain parts of it.

Here are two annotated examples:

In *Sunset Boulevard*, every character lies. Discuss.	
Set in the world of Hollywood filmmaking, *Sunset Boulevard* portrays characters who seek shelter within fantasy and fiction because they are unable to distinguish between real life and the movies they write or act in. While Norma Desmond's self-delusion that she is still a great star is the most dramatic example of a character who lies, each of the other characters in the film delude either themselves or others in order to escape the reality of their lives. In the end, Wilder's film shows the emotional destruction created by a failure to confront the truth.	setting or context phrases
How do Kinsella and Papertalk Green explore the importance of connection to land in *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*?	analytic verbs
Throughout their collection, Kinsella and Papertalk Green's poetic dialogue demonstrates not only a significant personal and cultural connection with Australia's rural landscape but also a profound grief for the degradations wrought upon it. Kinsella's poems explore the landscape through a scientific and academic lens, reflecting on the consequences of ignoring the interconnectedness of landscape and life. In response, Papertalk Green's raw emotions permeate her poetry as she draws parallels between the corruption of her land and her people, peppering her poems with Amangu language that emphasises her connectedness to the ancient landscape.	text type, author (in this case a director and two poets)

Have a go at editing your introduction, making sure you have referred to the text type, author and setting. You should also make sure you have plenty of analytic verbs throughout your introduction.

Use the table below to help you:

Setting	Analytic verbs	Text types
charting* the experiences of…	demonstrates	novel
in a world where…	depicts	chronicle
set against a backdrop of…	examines	
set in a world where…	explores	play
unfolding at a time of…, events in…	portrays	drama
set in the…environment of (put in an adjective here to describe the environment e.g. *Set in the claustrophobic environment of…*)	represents	stories
	reveals	collection
depicting an era of…,	underscores	
the fictional world of…	highlights	poetry
a re-creation of…	critiques	verse
	reflects on	collection
	emphasises	

Alternative sentence alert

*Any of the words ending in '-ing' could end in 's' and be used in a different place in a sentence: charts the experience of…

Tensions and messages

Every essay topic is asking you to discuss an issue, tension or complication within the text. You should also analyse the message the writer has about this issue, tension or complication. Analytic verbs will help you do this, but there are other words and phrases that are just as important:

- complication and tension phrases that explain how there are different sides to an idea within a text
- metalanguage to explain the main features or techniques (such as characters) a writer uses to explore a tension or complication.

Here are two examples:

How does WWI change the lives of Indigenous characters in *Black Diggers*?	
Charting the experiences of **fictional** Indigenous veterans, Wright's play explores the range of ways First Nation's people **struggle** to make sense of their time at war. Many of the **characters** are outraged that the camaraderie and equality they experienced overseas cannot be found in their own communities, while some of them are consumed by grief and sorrow. Through these **fictionalised characters**, Wright emphasises that the experiences of Indigenous troops have **not only** been varied but **also** overlooked.	**Complication and tension phrases** **metalanguage**
How do Kinsella and Papertalk Green explore the importance of connection to land in *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*?	
Throughout their collection, Kinsella and Papertalk Green's **poetic dialogue** demonstrates **not only** a significant personal and cultural connection with Australia's rural landscape **but also a** profound grief for the degradations wrought upon it. Kinsella's poems explore the landscape through a scientific and academic lens, reflecting on the **consequences** of ignoring the interconnectedness of landscape and life. In response, Papertalk Green's use of a raw, emotional **tone** represents **both the** corruption of her land and her people, **as well as** her connectedness to the ancient landscape.	

Now it's your turn to have a go writing an introduction. Use some words from each of the categories below to ensure you are discussing the complication or tension in a text and the writer's message about it:

Complication and tension words	Metalanguage
characters who… seek…because… struggle to/against…because… are/is torn between…	characters protagonist antagonist minor characters
conflict between… consequences of… the importance of… the problems that arise when…	tone
	poetic
not only…but also… both…as well as…	imagery of symbolism of motif
while despite although even though	dialogue dramatic
however, yet, moreover, furthermore,	fictionalised re-creation of re-imagining of

Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs are where the in-depth text analysis really happens. Although many of you will be familiar with a TEEL structure (Topic Sentence, Example, Explanation, Link), there is a lot more going on in a great body paragraph. This section of the book will explain what other elements are in a great body paragraph.

There are three different types of things you need to incorporate in your body paragraph:

- writing about ideas
- writing about evidence
- links between ideas and evidence.

Let's have a look at an annotated body paragraph, so you can see how these phrases work:

Mandel's Station Eleven *reveals the reliance that humans have on each other.* Discuss.	
In the desolate and ravaged landscape of the post-collapse era, Mandel reveals that, above all else, survivors desire community. The ruin of civilisation and the extermination of the majority of the population have made these characters realise how much they require each other in order to survive and flourish. Mandel describes how initially people scattered to avoid the fatal disease and stay safe. However, soon they "clustered close together" in an "archipelago of small towns" because their temporary distance had made them aware of how much they needed others. Not only does Mandel suggest that community is necessary to a more fulfilled life, but she also explicitly states that it is essential to long-term survival as well because it gives her characters a reason to endure. Her post-collapse characters "survived against unspeakable odds… only by holding together", thus demonstrating the importance of reliance on others. This concern is further built upon by Mandel's focus on the Travelling Symphony. For the members of the theatrical group, the only "bearable" elements of the new world are the "friendships" and "camaraderie" they have with each other. Mandel overtly shows this through the slogan that symbolises the group – "survival is insufficient". While all of the members want to survive, it is their community that provides them with a reason to live. Without the people they "long for" such as each other, the members of the Symphony feel they are in "hell" and so have no greater purpose to their lives. Their individual survival is inconsequential compared to the purpose community gives them. This thinking is echoed in the character of James who bursts into tears upon arrival at the Severn City Airport because he "thought [he] was the only one". Finding a thriving community offers him immense relief and joy, because of his need for other people. Through these examples of the necessity of community in a world with a limited number of people, Mandel highlights the dependence her characters all have on other people. Without a community to be part of and live for, the survivors are untethered and so in "hell".	idea phrases (all of these phrases are directly connected to the key words in the topic) phrases that introduce and analyse examples phrases that link examples and ideas

Writing about ideas

Your body paragraphs need to refer to and discuss the ideas in an essay topic. Students often make the mistake of just providing examples in a paragraph, rather than discussing how these examples demonstrate different aspects of an idea. This is why thinking about ideas is so important.

 In your body paragraph, you can discuss ideas through:

- idea phrases to link to key words in an essay topic
- cause, effect and significance words to analyse what ideas do, where they stem from and why they're important
- topic and synthesising sentences that provide a framework and conclusion to the discussion of ideas in a body paragraph.

Idea phrases

Idea phrases are sets of two or more words that refer to the key ideas in an essay topic. For example, the phrase 'natural and unscathed landscape' is an idea phrase that connects to the key word 'land' in the following topic:

> How do Kinsella and Papertalk Green explore the importance of connection to land in *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*?

By using idea phrases to respond to key ideas in a topic, a student can demonstrate a richer and more complex understanding of the ideas a text is expressing. In the annotated example below, the words in blue are all examples of idea phrases that refer to the key words 'importance of connection to land' in the essay topic.

> **How do Kinsella and Papertalk Green explore the importance of connection to land in** *False Claims of Colonial Thieves***?**
>
> From the very beginning of their poetic discourse, Kinsella and Papertalk Green elucidate the profound **cultural degradations and disconnections** that occur when **powerful and self-serving institutions** destroy the natural landscape. Kinsella is particularly concerned with the **rapacious attitudes of mining corporations** who use the land for their own monetary gains, creating **uneven power dynamics** that are driven by wealth. This position is made clear when Kinsella writes in his 'Prologue' that mining companies are filling students "with propaganda". His point is that mining companies are both exploiting the land and then corrupting educational institutions with a certain viewpoint that entirely ignores the importance of a **natural and unscathed landscape.** On the other hand, Papertalk Green's concerns are more visceral and immediate. For her, the changing landscape erases her own cultural history and exports "our precious earth onto foreign shores". **The destruction of the landscape** by mining companies is just another way of destroying the powerful connections that First Nations people had with the land. Her own 'Prologue Response' points out the ways many cannot see "what lies on or within country" and how this "blinds them" to **cultural divisions and inequities.** By beginning the dialogue in this way, Papertalk Green and Kinsella demonstrate just how fundamental it is that we learn new ways of connecting with the landscape and all that it has to offer.

Developing good idea phrases begins when you first unpack the essay topic, identify key words and brainstorm alternative vocabulary (see page 11 for a reminder of what this involves). From there, you can turn any individual words you brainstorm into richer, more complex phrases.

Let's look at an example of this process:

How do Kinsella and Papertalk Green explore the importance of <u>connection</u> to <u>land</u> in *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*?	
1. Brainstorm an alternative vocabulary for key words in an essay topic	**connection:** *disconnection, understanding, memory, respect, spiritual, division* **land:** *landscape, nature, country*
2. Turn individual words into phrases by adding more information with adjectives or extra information words like and, in, of, etc...	**landscape** → *natural and unscathed landscape, destruction of the landscape* **disconnection** → *degradations and disconnection*

Put it into practice

Now it's your turn. Write out single words that respond to the ideas in an essay topic. Then turn these words into idea phrases. The list below provides a starting point to help you with step two – but you should also think of your own words or use a thesaurus for this step to come up with the best words for your idea.

Negative	Positive	Extra information words to extend ideas
destructive	successful	and
violent	effective	of
ignorant	natural	in
blind	unselfish	at
arrogant	selfless	towards
desperate	humane	from
selfish	active	with
naive	insightful	by
cold		
passive		

Cause, effect and significance of ideas

Writing about ideas often involves discussing what causes them, what they lead to and why they're important. Here is the first part of a paragraph on the novel Station Eleven. The annotations show how the sentences discuss the cause, effect and significance of ideas in the essay topic.

Mandel's *Station Eleven* reveals the reliance that humans have on each other. Discuss.	
In the desolate and ravaged landscape of the post-collapse era, Mandel reveals that, above all else, survivors desire community. The ruin of civilisation and the extermination of the majority of the population has led to these characters realising how vital they are to each other in order to survive and flourish. Mandel describes how initially people scattered to avoid the fatal disease and stay safe. However, soon their need for community drives them to cluster "close together" in an "archipelago of small towns". Their temporary distance had made them aware of how much they needed others. Not only does Mandel suggest that community is necessary to a more fulfilled life, she also demonstrates that it is essential to long term survival as well because it gives her characters a reason to endure. Her post-collapse characters "survived against unspeakable odds…only by holding together", thus demonstrating the importance of reliance on others.	cause and effect words significance words idea phrases

Put it into practice

It's time for you to have a go. Using the idea phrases you developed in the previous activity, write some sentences discussing the cause, effect or significance of these ideas. Try using some of the words from the chart below to help you.

Cause	Effect	Significance
arises from	has led to	profound*
stems from	leads to	significant*
results from	has made	crucial*
is based in	results in	important*
is influenced by	shifts	necessary
is a response to	creates	vital
because	causes	essential
since	drives	the importance of
	means	how important it is to
	demonstrates	the necessity of
	highlights	the dire consequences of
	destroys	
	underscores	

Alternative sentence alert

*Any of these words can be changed to end in '-ly' and used like this: *profoundly impacts upon…*

Topic sentences

Topic sentences are idea sentences, but they are always at the start of a body paragraph.

At their heart, topic sentences only require two specific things:

- a link to the topic
- paragraph focus.

These two elements are very important because they signal that you are responding to the essay topic and that you have decided how this paragraph is going to analyse something different from your other paragraphs.

In order to link your topic sentence to the essay topic, you will need to use the idea words and phrases that you have already brainstormed. To create a paragraph focus, you can choose from any of the following options: a specific character (or group of characters)

- the setting of a text
- a sub-idea that relates to the topic
- the symbolism of a text
- a literary technique that you can analyse in detail
- how an idea is represented in a certain part of a text
- how an idea changes in the text.

Importantly, a topic sentence doesn't always need to fit into one sentence – you may need to use two.

Let's look at some examples:

Essay topic: How do Kinsella and Papertalk Green explore the importance of connection to land in *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*?	
From the very beginning of their poetic discourse, Kinsella and Papertalk Green elucidate the profound cultural degradations and disconnections that occur when powerful and self-serving institutions destroy the natural landscape.	link to topic
Essay topic: Mandel's *Station Eleven* reveals the reliance that humans have on each other. Discuss.	paragraph focus
In the desolate and ravaged landscape of the post-collapse era, Mandel reveals that, above all else, survivors desire community. The ruin of civilisation and the extermination of the majority of the population has led to these characters realising how vital they are to each other in order to survive and flourish.	

Put it into practice

Using the ideas you've brainstormed from earlier sections, have a go writing a topic sentence.
Try using some of the words from the list below to help you:

in	reveals*
from the outset	suggests
from the very beginning	elucidates
throughout	illustrates
by the end of the text	emphasises
	demonstrates
while	characterises
despite	underscores
although	
through	
by focusing on	

Alternative sentence alert

*Any of these words can be changed to end in '-ing'

Synthesising sentences

A synthesising sentence (sometimes called a 'link' sentence) is at the end of a body paragraph and ties – or *synthesises* – all of the ideas and examples together. So, a good synthesising sentence has:

- a linking phrase
- an idea phrase that links to the essay topic
- a reference to how the main ideas or examples are connected.

Here are some annotated examples:

By beginning the dialogue in this way, Papertalk Green and Kinsella demonstrate just how fundamental it is that we learn new ways of **connecting with the landscape and** all that it has to offer.	linking phrase idea phrase that links to the essay topic a reference to how the main ideas or examples are connected
Through these examples of the **necessity of community** in a world with a limited number of people, Mandel highlights the **dependence her characters all have on other people. Without** a community to be part of and live for, the survivors are untethered and so in "hell".	

Put it into practice

Write a synthesising sentence that connects the main examples and ideas in your paragraph. Use the words and phrases below to help you.

Opening linking phrase	Analytical verb	Words to connect ideas
By…in this way…	celebrates*	and
Through these examples…	cautions	not only…but also
Ultimately…	highlights	since
By comparing…	demonstrates	because
Despite…, there is evidence…	underscores	by
Thus, [author]…	warns against	with
While…, it is…	illustrates	while
Hence [idea phrase] leads to…	emphasises	despite
		while
		although

Alternative sentence alert

*Any of these words can be changed to end in '-ing

Writing about evidence

To show how much you know about a text, you will need to use evidence. There are many different kinds of evidence and you should aim to incorporate lots of different evidence (i.e. don't just use quotes) in your body paragraphs.

This section of the text will show you how to use:

→ quotes (page 29)

→ characters (page 31)

→ key scenes (page 33)

→ setting (page 35)

→ symbols (page 38)

→ techniques (each different text type has specific techniques you can analyse, and these are shown on page 40)

Inserting and analysing quotes

Quotes are an essential element of any text response.

This section will show you a range of ways to insert and analyse quotes.

Editing quotes

A good quote is short: One to two words in length is ideal, but if you want to use a longer quote, you should ensure it is no longer than seven words. When your quote is short, it means you're highlighting the most important word or idea. If your quote is too long, then you probably haven't picked the most significant part and you'll clog up your paragraph with unnecessary and irrelevant evidence.

Here are two key rules to think about when editing a quote to use in an essay:

Quote just one or two words on their own if they make sense	"~~He also learnt that his heat not only ended life: it could~~ nourish ~~it~~." **Example:** *Karl discovers at the end of* Flames *that heat can "nourish" life, highlighting the importance of emotion and passion to everyday existence.*
Delete pronouns: Removing *I, he, she, it, you, they, us and we* from a quote makes it easy to insert seamlessly into a sentence.	"~~You~~ used to be big" **Example:** *Norma grieves for a time when she "used to be big" and is unable to accept that she no longer has a role in the world of filmmaking.*

Inserting quotes into a sentence

Quotes from a text can be inserted as evidence into a sentence in many ways. Here are examples of five common ways:

→ **After 'is':**

> *Norma's sense of herself is built on the belief she **is "a big star"**, driving her to ignore the reality that people no longer remember or care about her films.*

→ **Before an idea or the name of someone or something:**

> *Jeffries' unwillingness to commit to his **"too perfect" Lisa** emphasises the cynicism of men towards women.*

→ **Directly after 'he', 'she', 'it', 'they' or the name of someone or something:**

> *Although the **Symphony "faces the same problems as every group"**, their musical community offers them a "home" and a rare source of safety in an unhinged world.*

→ **After a reporting verb:**

> *Miranda **declares "I repent nothing"** as she retreats from relationships to throw herself into the solitary projects of her work and art.*

→ **After an action verb:**

> *Charlotte **loathes the "white-picket fences"** of suburbia, fleeing from a world that seeks to restrict and confine her.*

Put it into practice

If you have a list of quotes from your text, the first thing that you should do is make all of these quotes as short as possible (a bonus of this is that they will be easier to memorise). Practise putting quotes into a sentence in a few different ways. This list of words to the right are reporting verbs and will help you with the 'After a reporting verb' method of inserting a quote.

- believes
- thinks
- feels
- says
- understands
- asserts that…
- declares
- describes…as…
- refers to…as

Analysis of quotes

A quote should always be linked to analysis within a sentence or a following sentence. Where you place a quote in a sentence will normally govern where you place the analysis. Here are some examples of where analysis can go in a sentence:

→ **Quote then analysis:**

> *Karl discovers at the end of* Flames *that heat can "nourish" life,* **highlighting the importance of emotion and passion to everyday existence.**
>
> *Jeffries' unwillingness to commit to his "too perfect" Lisa* **emphasises the cynicism of men towards women.**
>
> *Throughout the film, Norma has an unalterable belief that she is still a "big" star and that fans constantly send her fan mail. This delusion* **underscores** *how the world of Hollywood can immerse its inhabitants in fantasy and lies.*

→ **Analysis then quote:**

> **For Papertalk Green, the changing landscape erases her own cultural history and exports** *"our precious earth onto foreign shores".*

→ **Quote embedded in analysis:**

> *For the members of the theatrical group, the only* **"bearable" element** *of the new world is the sense of community they share with each other.*

Put it into practice

Practise writing a few sentences where you insert and analyse quotes in different ways.

The words below will help with sentences where the analysis comes after the quote:

conveys	illustrates
demonstrates	portrays
denotes	reveals
emphasises	represents
exposes	suggests
evokes	underscores
highlights	

Alternative sentence alert

*Any of the words ending in 's' could also end in '-ing' to introduce analysis: i.e. Jeffries has an unwillingness to commit to his "too perfect" Lisa, emphasising the cynicism of men towards women.

Writing about characters

Apart from poetry, all the texts you study will feature characters (or real people) in them. One of the main ways that you will use evidence is analysing what characters do and say and how they're presented. Throughout this chapter, you'll be shown a range of ways you can analyse characters. This section focuses on just two.

Using specific verbs to discuss characters

Throughout your essays, you'll often refer to what characters do or feel. If you use very vague or general verbs when you do this, like went, did, is or was, your sentences can end up summarising (or retelling) the text rather than analysing it:

> *Travis **goes on** the mission to find Baywara because he is upset about the 1919 massacre.*

However, if you use more specific verbs to discuss what a character does or feels, your writing will be more analytic:

> *Having **repressed** his guilt at his involvement in the 1919 massacre for a decade, Travis craves redemption on his mission to find Baywara.*

Another way to effectively discuss what characters do or feel is to use action, feeling or thinking phrases like in this example:

> *As a result of his **unwillingness to** be open with Gutjuk about the 1919 massacre, Travis is ultimately destroyed by Gutjuk's anger and confusion.*

Put it into practice

Have a go at writing some sentences about what characters do, think or feel in a text. Use some of the words in the table below to be specific and analytic.

Verbs to discuss what a character thinks, feels or wants	Verbs to discuss what a character does or responds to		Action, thinking or feeling phrases
believes	accepts	escapes	ability to…
craves for	allows	hides from	inability to…
desires	challenges	ignores	desire for…
discovers	confronts	prevents	unwillingness to…
experiences	conforms to	resists	understanding of…
finds	creates	responds to	ignorance of…
learns	destroys	represses	sense of…
needs	disregards	struggles with	insensibility of…
realises	endures		belief in…
seeks			disregard for…
strives for			
understands			

Comparing and contrasting characters

Most texts you study with characters in them will have a range of major and minor characters. Texts will often emphasise individual aspects of a character by showing the similarities and differences they have with other characters.

Here are some example sentences that demonstrate what it looks like to compare and contrast characters in essay writing:

> *Throughout the text, Arnott **contrasts** the repressed, isolated nature of Levi with Charlotte's inner, burning self and her desire to connect to others.*
>
> ***Unlike** Bertie, whose experiences of the trauma of war render him "expressionless" and unable to enjoy life any longer, Archie is invigorated by his experience of equality in the trenches and agitates for change on his return to Australia.*

Put it into practice

Now it's your turn. Write a few sentences comparing or contrasting characters. Use some of the words in the table below to help you:

Words to use to start a sentence comparing or contrasting characters	Words to use to discuss how a text or writer compares or contrasts characters
Unlike…, In contrast to…, In opposition to…,	contrasts juxtaposes underlines the difference between…and…
Just as…, Similarly to…, Like…,	parallels likens links connects emphasises that connecting…and…is…

Evidence from key scenes

All texts (except poetry) have key scenes, or turning points, in them. These can be really important pieces of evidence because they will often illustrate the conflict in an idea or theme. However, the danger of using key scenes as evidence is that sometimes students will fall into the trap of "retelling", like in the example below.

> *When Norma Desmond arrives at Paramount Studios, lots of people recognise her and they crowd around her, calling out her name, until even the lighting man realises who she is and puts the spotlight onto her and Desmond feels like she is still a star.*

The problem with the writing above is that, although the student realises this is a key scene, there is no analysis of why this key scene is important. Instead of retelling the key scene in such detail, the student could have referred to this scene in a much shorter way.

Here are two methods to refer to key scenes more briefly:

Using extra information words to briefly refer to a scene

This method uses place or time words like 'when' or 'during' at the start of a sentence to introduce an example in ten words or less:

> ***When*** *Desmond is surrounded by adoring people at Paramount studios, the audience can see just how important fame is to her.*

Put it into practice

Using fewer than ten words to refer to a key scene, write some sentences that introduce and then analyse an example. Use some words from this list to help you:

When…,	see
At the point when…,	realise
During…,	the audience see
As…,	her/his…is highlighted
At…,	her/his…is emphasises
	her/his creates…
	her/his leads to…

Using a phrase to refer to a feeling or action

Another way to briefly refer to key moments in a text is to use a phrase that labels a character's actions or feelings:

> **Levi's futile attempts to have a coffin built** for Charlotte so that she will not rise from her death exemplify his wish to control the natural world.
>
> **Juror 10's biased attitudes towards the defendant** are revealed in Act III, when he rants about "those people", demonstrating the difficulty of achieving justice in a world filled with prejudice.

Phases like this can refer to one key moment or a series of moments across a text.

Put it into practice

Write a few different sentences referring to examples of character feelings or attitudes. Use the chart below to help you label and analyse the feelings or actions.

Descriptions	Actions	Feelings and views	Analytic verbs
violent*	attempt to…	desire for…	exemplify
destructive	effort to…	attitude towards…	embody
traumatic	response to…	blindness to…	illustrate
continual	reaction to…	prejudice towards…	underscore
desperate	experience of…	hatred of…	reveal
futile	escape from…	fear of…	highlight
blind	disregard of…	dread of…	create
prejudiced	insistence that…	delight in…	cause
biased	perseverance in…	love of…	result in
deep	struggle to…	belief in…	destroy
profound		commitment to…	manifest
selfish			
naive			
innocent			
instinctive			
misguided			
misplaced			
willful			

Alternative sentence alert

*Any of these words can be changed to end in '-ly' and used like this: *violently rants about…*

Setting

Every text depicts a world or setting. This is most obvious in films, novels, short stories and plays where characters are impacted by the world in which they live. However, poems also depict and describe a world because they show a poet's perception of the world around them. Whatever text you're writing about, it's important that your essays only discuss how the text itself presents the setting. Although you might read or watch supplementary texts such as Youtube documentaries or Wikipedia pages to help you understand the historical context of a text, it is unnecessary to write about this in your text analysis. This is because you should be focusing on the way the world is presented in the text you are analysing.

The most important thing in writing about setting is to analyse the cultural values that are being represented. You need to analyse the message that the text gives about these cultural values, like in these examples:

> *The taxidermist's description of Nigel as a "perfect specimen"* **embodies the racist views of a white, colonial society** *that sees first Australians as primitive and subhuman.*
>
> *Throughout* High Ground, *shots of the burning landscape and blood-red horizons represent* **the destructive violence of white settlement**.

→ Let's have a look at the different ways you can analyse the cultural values of a text.

Character and setting

An important way narrative texts represent the setting is through the experience of characters. The things characters say and do will often reveal important aspects about the cultural and historical values of a society. These can be positive or negative. You can discuss setting by analysing:

1. How characters' actions, words or beliefs represent the values of their setting:

> **Doyle's dismissal of Lisa's "feminine intuition" as a "fairytale"** *underscores the pervasive misogyny of 1950s America.*
>
> **The taxidermist's description of Nigel as a "perfect specimen"** *embodies the racist views of a white, colonial society that sees first Australians as primitive and subhuman.*

2. How the cultural values of a setting impact upon actions and experiences:

> *The pervasive materialism of Hollywood society* **drives Gillis' belief** *in the importance of status symbols and that his car is as valuable as his "legs".*
>
> *The way Travis continually looks at others through the scope of his gun emphasises* **how he is trapped in** *the violent mindset of a white society that fears Indigenous people.*
>
> *Throughout* False Claims of Colonial Thieves, *Papertalk Green depicts how the destructive greed of mining companies ravages the beauty of the natural world and* **destroys the connection** *of her people to the land.*

Now it's your turn. Write a few sentences about how the actions or views of a character or writer represents or is shaped by the values of the world they live. Experiment with using some of the words from this table to help you:

Verbs to write about how a character shows societal values	Adjectives	View and values words	Verbs to write about what social values make characters do
represents	societal	views of…	restricts*
underscores	violent	value society puts on…	traps
illustrates	brutal	attitudes of…	imprisons
demonstrates	oppressive	attitudes towards…	represses
embodies	conservative	approach to…	fuels
evinces	narrow	importance of…	drives
manifests	misogynistic	significance of…	motivates
contrasts to	racist	mindset of…	creates
	materialistic	nature of…	allows
is a representation of	dominant	belief in…	forces
is an illustration of	entrenched	desire for…	destroys
is emblematic of	powerful	priority society gives to…	
is defined by	restrictive	aspiration to	
is based on	destructive	fear of…	
is rooted in	selfish	anxieties of…	
	controlling	misogyny	
	normative	prejudice	
	aspirational	racism	
	underlying		

Alternative sentence alert

*Any of these words can be changed to end in '-ing'

Places, objects and setting

Texts often use physical places – such as buildings or landscapes – or objects within them to represent positive or negative qualities of the setting.

Here are some examples:

> *In* Flames, *the **vast, open spaces of the natural world stand in contrast** to the restriction and confinement offered by the "white picket fences" of the urban environment.*
>
> *Throughout* High Ground, *shots of the **burning landscape and blood-red horizons represent** the destructive violence of white settlement.*

Put it into practice

Now it's your turn. Write a few sentences about how something from the physical setting of a text shows us something about the world of the text. The words in the table below may help you label and describe a part of the physical setting of the text. Use any of the words from the previous table to help you analyse what the physical setting shows about the world of the text.

Adjectives	Place words
natural	community
unnatural	world
harsh	society
vast	landscape
open	wilderness
vivid	nature
grim	environment
confined	
cold	
broken	
isolated	
derelict	
sterile	
dangerous	

Writing about symbols

Let's look at a few examples from 'real life':

> *The colour red symbolises danger, showing us that we must be careful.*
>
> *The use of the word "green" in the product name highlights the environmental credentials of this product.*
>
> *By gesturing rudely with her hand, the driver showed her contempt for other road users.*

In all of these examples, the symbol shows us an important idea or concept.
It's exactly the same in a text response.

> *The derelict mansion that Norma Desmond lives in symbolises how she feels that she has been abandoned and neglected by Hollywood institutions.*
>
> *The endurance of civilisation and art is exemplified by the Travelling Symphony's success in performing Shakespearean plays, works that have been considered relevant to humanity for centuries.*

In order to successfully analyse symbols, you have to identify the symbol and then connect the symbol to an idea or theme using an analytic verb. You'll probably notice that the text response examples are much longer and more descriptive than the 'real life' examples. That's because the writers of these text response examples want to describe how the symbol connects with the idea. Let's look again at the text response examples.

This time, notice the words in red.

> *The **derelict** mansion that Norma Desmond lives in symbolises how she feels that she has been **abandoned and neglected** by Hollywood institutions.*
>
> *The **endurance of** civilisation and of art is exemplified by the Travelling Symphony's success in performing Shakespearean plays, works that have been considered **relevant to humanity for centuries**.*

In both examples, the description of the symbol is connected to the analysis of the idea. When you are writing about symbols, you should brainstorm words and phrases that describe both the symbol and the idea you are analysing. When brainstorming words, you first need to consider the particular aspect of a symbol you want to discuss. For example, the phrase "derelict mansion" focuses on the physical appearance of the symbol.

Use these categories below to help you brainstorm interesting words to describe a symbol:

Size and Longevity	Power and force	Physical appearance
i.e.	i.e.	i.e.
....	. .. .	. . ..
vast	intense	scarred
enduring	extreme	vivid
....	. .. .	. . . .
ephemeral	weak	large
transient	insipid	small

Morality or behaviour	Importance	Connectedness
i.e.	i.e.	i.e.
....	. .. .	. . ..
immoral	significant	isolated
selfish	fundamental	alone
....	. .. .	. . . .
principled	meaningless	communal
loyal	trivial	shared

Analyse one of the symbols in your text by connecting the symbol to a key idea or theme. Use the categories above to help you brainstorm interesting words to describe how a symbol is connected to the idea. Use one of the words in the list opposite to help you analyse what the symbol shows about an idea:

- symbolises
- highlights
- shows
- exemplifies
- embodies
- signifies
- connotes
- is emblematic of
- mirrors
- illustrates
- references
- serves to/as
- operates as
- parallels

Specific textual techniques

So far, what we've explained about the elements of writing about evidence could be applied to analysing any text – whether it's poetry, film, a novel or non-fiction. However, there are also some specific techniques used for different text types.

Over the next few pages, we'll show you some basic ways you can write about the techniques in different text types.

Look through this section to find the text type that you are studying for this unit.

Narrative texts

This section is about written texts that tell a story through lots of author description: novels, non-fiction or short stories. Narrative texts have two specific techniques that you should analyse in your text responses:

→ *narrative arc:* how does the story begin, continue and end?

→ *perspective:* who's telling the story (and do we trust them)?

Narrative arc

Usually, we think of stories as having a beginning, middle and end; but they don't always happen in that order. When you are reading your text, you might find that it has a different structure. Different structures will influence how you interpret the events and characters within the text.

Let's have a look at some of the most common structures you will encounter:

Chronological structure: This is where all of the events are told in the 'right' order. It means that you should analyse how characters change and grow throughout the text and how they learn things from each other. If you are studying a text with this structure, you should use words like those below to analyse how the characters change:

What they learn	How their behaviour changes	How others influence them
come to understand	alter the way they	have been affected by…
realise	have transformed from…to…	have been persuaded that
learns that	change from…to…	are inspired to…
sees that they	adapt to	respond to…

Circular structure: In this sort of structure, the author starts at the end of the narrative – so the reader knows how the story ends – and then circles back to the beginning, so that the reader learns how this final situation came about. With these sorts of structures, you will be analysing what the reader learns, rather than what the characters learn. You can use the words from the left-hand column of the first table to help you to analyse what the reader learns.

Episodic structure: This sort of structure can be confusing at first, because there might be flashbacks or flash forwards and, as a reader, you have to sort out and think about which events came first, second and third. When you are analysing this sort of text type, you should write about the impact of this type of structure. You can use words from the table below to help you with this:

Words to describe the text structure/ episodes in the text	Words to analyse the impact of structure
episodic	creates a parallel between…and…
flashforward	emphasises the connection between…and…
flashback	contrasts…with…
disjointed	likens…to…
vignette	juxtaposes…with…
interwoven	
parallel	
shifting narrative	

Perspective

Stories are told from the perspective of different characters (or from the perspective of the author). When you are analysing the perspective of a text, you will write about the point of view (person) it was written in.

Here are the different points of view a story can be written in:

First Person: This is when one of the characters is writing the narrative ("I did that, I thought that…"). It gives the reader a clear insight into the thoughts of the narrator and the narrator's judgement of other characters.

When you are analysing a text written in first person, it's important to remember that you can't always trust the narrator (do you always tell the truth? Always?) and you can't necessarily trust their opinions about other characters. You should analyse the difference between what the characters do and what they say. You might want to use phrases like:

> *"While [narrator] believes…their actions reveal…"*
>
> *"As [narrator] focuses on/omits/ignores…the reader can see…"*
>
> *"[Narrator's] judgement of [character] is fuelled by their belief that…"*
>
> *"Although the reader is sympathetic of [narrator], it is clear that…"*

Third Person: In this style of narration, the author takes on a godlike perspective and writes about all of the characters ("S/he did this, and then s/he thought…"). Writing in the third person allows the reader to see what all of the characters are doing or thinking and apparently gives a more unbiased perspective. When you're analysing texts written in third person, you need to regularly analyse how the author presents the characters, like this:

> *Arnott presents Levi as a repressed individual but someone who is ultimately able to change and connect.*

Film

There are loads and loads of different film techniques that you could analyse and you might learn lots of technical terms, but a good analysis usually focuses on a few key things.

These are:

→ lighting

→ costume

→ camera work

→ mise en scene.

Lighting

Light and shadows are really important for how we interpret a film scene and the characters in it. Characters who live in the shadows seem shady, whereas characters who are surrounded by light seem charismatic or good.

Let's have a look at an example analysis of this:

> *The darkened and claustrophobic rooms of Norma Desmond's mansion emphasise the sense of her hiding and closing herself off from the larger world.*

The table on the opposite page will help you describe and analyse the impact of different types of lighting:

Type of lighting	Words to describe light	Words to analyse what light represents
dark	hidden repressed cloaking foreboding dim darkened claustrophobic	threat of… danger of… desire to keep hidden… blindness to… corrupt nature of… misanthropic nature of…
light	hallowed angelic spotlighted exposed vulnerable	angelic nature of… the focus upon… exposed position of… virtuous nature of… force of good
contrasting (black and white)	stark split broken sliced divided	the conflicted nature of… the difference between… the divide between… the complex nature of… ambiguity of…
sepia tones	nostalgic old-fashioned tones of yesteryear softens	nostalgic world of… yearning for… desire for… the simplicity of…
bright colours	cheering childlike naive vibrant lively open	the innocence of… the openness of… the connectedness of… humanity of…

Costume

Just as we judge other people on the clothes that they wear, we judge and analyse characters based upon what they wear. When you are analysing costume, you will need to give a brief description of the most important details of the clothes a character wears before analysing how this affects your interpretation of the character, like in the example below:

> *The masculine shirt dresses worn by Stella emphasise her no-nonsense, practical approach to life and the people she meets.*

Put it into practice

You can use the table below to help you with your descriptions

Colours	Overall effect	Feminine/masculine	Class representation
bright	revealing	frilly	expensive
black	plunging	lacy	made-to-measure
soft	short	feminine	designer
white	scanty	prissy	formal
pastel		ladylike	
drab	homemade		cheaper
dark	tattered	masculine	well-worn
gothic	shabby	tailored	ill-fitting
	second-hand	severe	
	worn		
	old-fashioned		
	demure		
	formal		
	modest		

Camera work

Everything you see in a film is through a camera and the camera does a lot of things to emphasise certain things about a scene or a character. Look at the table below to see a list of different camera shots and angles. Keep in mind that the suggested effects in the third column are just suggestions – you should also think of your own interpretations of the film scenes you are analysing.

Camera shot/ angle	What it looks like	What effect it has	Phrases for analysis
Long shot	Shows an entire room or setting. Could also be used to show a group of characters.	Establishes which characters are involved in the scene and how they move or interact with the world and each other. If it is only of the scenery, it illustrates something important about the physical setting.	*In the establishing shot,...* *The panoramic view of the scenery illustrates...* *The long shot of...shows...*
Close up	Shows a character's facial expressions or reactions.	Helps the audience to understand what a character is thinking or feeling.	*Looking at [character] in close up, the audience sees...* *The extreme close up of [character] highlights...*
Panning shot	A slow-moving shot that shows an entire setting (and the people or things in it).	Illustrates something important about the setting.	*The slow panning shot of... reveals...* *In a long panning shot, [director] shows...*
High camera angle	The camera is high up, so it is 'looking down' on a character.	Makes the character look like they have limited power, are shorter or uncertain and childlike.	*As the audience looks down on [character] it is clear that the director is condemning...* *The high camera angle highlights the reduced status of...*
Low camera angle	The camera is low down, so it is 'looking up' at a character.	Makes the character look like they are more powerful, taller or more important.	*By looking up at [character], the audience is impressed by...* *The low camera angle emphasises the power and...of [character] and...*

Mise en scene

This is a French phrase that means everything you can see on the set. Although it sounds sophisticated and complex, it's really just a complicated way of labelling the physical setting and you can use any of the tips from page 35 to help you with this.

Plays

When you analyse a play in English you are actually reading and discussing a written script, not a live performance. Because you're reading the play – as opposed to watching it – you can more clearly understand some things, like how a play is divided into acts, and the stage directions a playwright includes. These elements are important to refer to in an analysis of a play. This section shows you how you can write about them.

Five act structure

Many Shakespearean and Ancient Greek plays follow a clear narrative structure. Shakespearean plays always have five acts. Greek plays have a similar structure, but the five acts are not necessarily labelled. There are two possible endings for these sorts of plays: happy or sad. If it's a happy ending, it's called a comedy; if it's a sad ending and the stage is covered in dead bodies, it's a tragedy.

When you're analysing a play, you'll often be given essay topics that ask you to discuss how a play demonstrates the consequences of certain actions or decisions. When responding to these types of questions, it is important to discuss how the structure of the play illustrates the cause and effect of a character's decisions.

In the table opposite you can see how the structure of a play works and some phrases that might help you analyse it:

	Explanation	Words and phrases to write about structure
Orientation	The scene is set, and a protagonist with strengths and weaknesses is introduced. Other characters who enable or moderate their behaviours are also introduced.	*From the outset of the play, [character] is...* *At the opening of the play, [playwright] depicts [character] as a flawed character who...*
Complication and conflict	In this act, the protagonist responds to a problem in a flawed way. Other, additional problems (often caused by other characters) also further complicate the situation.	*[Character's] blindness to...leads them to...* *[Character's] misguided belief in...spurs them to...*
Rising action	In this part, things begin to spiral out of control. If it's a tragedy, the protagonist makes even worse decisions that will have fatal consequences. If it's a comedy, the protagonist listens to advice and thinks they may need to do things differently.	*[Character's] flawed commitment to... results not only in..., but also...* *Unlike [protagonist] who..., [minor character] believes that...*
Climax and falling action	If it's a tragedy, all of the bad decisions the protagonist has made leads to one momentous point or conflict. If it's a comedy, the protagonist must show that they've learned to change or sacrifice in order to do the right thing.	*At the centre of the drama is the conflict between [protagonist's] attempt to...and...* *When [protagonist] is overcome by..., the action of the play inexorably leads to...* *At the crux of the play, [protagonist] confronts...and realises...* *The action of the play turns when [protagonist] is finally able to overcome [her/his]...and...*
Denouement	In the final part of a tragedy, catastrophe has occurred. The main character is killed, exiled or punished in some other way. In a comedy, the protagonist is rewarded for their change or redemption and they come to understand something important about themselves or the world.	*Ultimately, [playwright] reveals the destructive nature of...through the way [character] is punished...* *By the end of the play, [character]...is completely destroyed by...and...* *By the end of the play, [protagonist] has transformed from...to...* *Ultimately, [protagonist] realises that "..."*

Stage directions

Playwrights convey ideas in their plays not just through the words characters speak but also the stage directions that outline how the play should be presented. Stage directions are any pieces of information the playwright includes that describe:

→ *staging:* how the stage should look

→ *sound and light:* any accompanying sound or light effects

→ *delivery:* how characters look or sound as they deliver their lines.

So, when discussing a play, it's important to analyse not just the things characters say, but the playwright's stage directions. Here are some examples of how to analyse stage directions. In each of the quotes, the words are from the stage directions, not from something a character says.

	Examples	Word lists to help you write about this type of stage direction
Staging	*The play's initial setting – the aftermath of a devastating flood that leaves everything "destroyed" – underscores the wider dispossession that white settlement has inflicted on Indigenous people.*	Writing about setting, page: 35
Sound and light	*In Act IV of The Crucible, the "darkness" that cloaks the stage symbolises the ignorance and fear that has led characters towards their destruction at the end of the play.*	Writing about symbols, page: 38
Delivery	*The traumatic impact of the war on Bertie is emphasised through the ways he walks "stiffly" and is "expressionless" on his return to Australia.*	Writing about character and setting, pages: 31, 35

Writing about the Chorus in Ancient Greek theatre

In ancient Greek theatre, the Chorus was a small group of people who represented the general population. They provide the audience with important background information about the action of the play and offer a commentary on the thoughts and actions of the main characters. The opinion of the Chorus provides the audience with an important insight into whether we should sympathise with a character or if a character's thoughts and actions are wrong.

The Chorus also helps the audience to understand what the views and values of the playwright are.

These are some sentence starters to help you write about the Chorus:

In the Chorus' support of..., [playwright] emphasises...

Through the Chorus' expression of..., [playwright] shows how...

By having the Chorus attack..., [playwright's] critique of...is highlighted.

Through their espousal of..., the Chorus embodies society's support for...The Chorus collectively highlights dominant attitudes of society by expressing...

[Character's] position in society as...is underlined in the Chorus' description of [him/her] as...

The depth of [character's] transgression against society is underscored in the Chorus' description of [his/her] actions as...

The Chorus' horror at...highlights the degree to which [character] has transgressed against...

Poetry

Unlike the analysis of narrative texts, the analysis of poetry requires students to analyse words more closely. Students will also need to identify and discuss particular types of techniques in poetry. This section will help you with the basics of this type of close analysis.

Writing about form and purpose

When analysing poetry, you'll need to discuss the purpose of individual poems or sets of poems. If you're studying older poems, you will find that the form of the poem is linked to its purpose. But most modern poems don't have these sorts of rules, so you can simply analyse the purpose of the poem, like this:

> In 'Culture Bath', Papertalk Green celebrates the rejuvenating nature of a connection to traditional culture.

Use the table below to identify a purpose for a poem or set of poems and verbs and idea phrases you can use to discuss this purpose.

Form	Purpose	Verbs to discuss purpose	Idea phrases
Sonnet 14 lines (8 lines about one idea, 6 about the other)	Compare two ideas to show a whole	*compares, contrasts, links, parallels, likens*	*experiences of...* *nature of...* *essence of...* *meaning of...* *reality of...* *cycle of...* *impact of...* *loss of...* *beauty of...* *wonders of...* *moments of...* *difference between...*
Ode	Praise a person, object or idea	*celebrates, exalts, lauds, pays tribute to*	
Elegy	Express sadness for a tragic event, especially a death	*mourns, grieves for, eulogises*	
Lyric	Explore an idea, emotion or event	*reflects on, explores, meditates on, muses on, considers, imagines*	

Writing about techniques

Writing about poetry will require you to label certain poetic techniques, describe the idea they convey and analyse their impact.

Here's an example:

> In 'Undermining', the *rhyme* of 'hold' and 'old' *invokes a vivid sense* of the powerful bond between the country and uranium, *highlighting* that mining this "poison" from the ground is violating something sacred.

This table will help you to identify and understand the purpose of some basic poetic techniques. It's important to remember that the effects listed here are not the only effects – you should try to think of your own; this table is just a way of getting started with your analysis.

Technique	How it works	What effect might it have?
Repetition	When a word is repeated one or more times throughout a poem.	Emphasises an idea.
Rhyme	Usually, it's the last word in a line that rhymes. Sometimes, there might be an *internal rhyme* where the word in the middle of a line rhymes with a word elsewhere.	Connects words and ideas together.
Rhythm	This is how fast or slow the lines of a poem go. There are many different poetic rhythms, which you can look up online.	Makes a poem go faster or slower and therefore makes it seem more urgent or relaxed.
Alliteration	Words begin with the same letter (e.g. *raging rivers*).	Connects words and their images together.
Assonance	Like a rhyme 'gone wrong' – the words sort of rhyme, but it's not an exact match.	Connects words and their images together.
Onomatopoeia	When the word makes the sound it is describing (like the word 'bang').	The reader can 'hear' what the poet is describing.

Use this table to analyse the impact of poetic techniques:

Words to describe the idea a technique conveys		Words to analyse the impact of a technique
conjures*	a sense of	emphasising**
creates	a feeling of	representing
invokes	an impression of	illuminating
highlights	an atmosphere of	illustrating
underlines	an image of	creating
emphasises	the sound of	expressing
illustrates	an association with	conveying

Alternative sentence alert

(*Any of these words can be changed to end in '-ing'

**Any of these words can be changed to end in 's'

Writing about images

Many poems use interesting words to create a vivid picture of something. These pictures are important to analyse when discussing how the poet conveys an idea.

Here's an example:

Papertalk Green creates a violent image of industrialised mining destroying the land with "deep cuts" and "gaping wounds".

Put it into practice

Use this table to help you label and describe the pictures a poet creates:

Picture verbs	Phrases to label a picture	Words to describe a positive picture	Words to describe a negative picture	Words to describe an attention-grabbing picture
creates	image of…	lush	grim	vivid
draws	picture of…	warm	dark	powerful
casts	vision of…	enticing	bleak	strong
evokes	account of…	soft	cold	startling
generates	description of…	joyful	lonely	striking
	impression of…	peaceful	violent	immense
		magnificent	broken	profound
		natural	hard	deep
		superior	isolated	complex
		picturesque	alienating	intricate
		luminous	unnatural	grave
		incandescent	inferior	dramatic
			damaged	
			stark	

Writing about sounds

In poetry, analysing the sound of words is often just as important as analysing their meaning.

Here's an example:

> *The violence of mining is emphasised through the harsh, metallic sound of 'mechanical', which stands in contrast to the melodic and soft 'dream time animals'.*

Put it into practice

This table has some useful words to describe different sounds in the poems you are analysing:

Hard sounds	Soft sounds	Happy sounds	Sad sounds
percussive	whispering	babbling	wailing
jarring	smooth	burbling	mournful
metallic	sighing	rapid	keening
explosive	melodic	chattering	weeping
clattering	fluid	gleeful	lonely
clapping	flowing	exuberant	tearful
harsh	lilting	warm	melancholic
cold	chiming	chuckling	dirge-like
abrupt	sweet		
vibrating			
shivering			
shuddering			

Graphic novels

Since graphic novels are often fictional narratives with lots of text, many of the strategies you'll use to refer to and analyse quotes and scenes will be the same as for other narrative texts such as novels, films and plays. However, there are some unique ways you'll need to discuss evidence relating to the print visual element of graphic novels. That's what this section is about.

Referring to graphic novel elements

There is a range of elements to the visual layout of a typical graphic novel page. While each of these elements has a technical name, you don't really need to use most of these in good analytic writing.

Here are a few that you will need to write about:

→ *Panels:* These are the pictures or images. Often they're laid out in comic book style boxes or frames, but sometimes they have no borders or they occupy more of the page (maybe even the whole page). In writing about panels in a graphic novel, you can use the terms panels or frames as well as any of the other terms listed in the table below.

→ *Speech bubbles:* This is the text that comes directly from the mouths or minds of characters. In writing about speech bubbles in a graphic novel, you can use any of these terms: dialogue, dialogue bubbles, speech balloons, thought balloons.

→ *Captions:* Captions are the words of a narrator as opposed to the thoughts or dialogue of a character within a panel. Captions usually accompany a panel as a sectioned off box or words. You can refer to captions as: narrative text, narration, accompanying text.

Describing and analysing visuals

Analysing visuals in a graphic novel is similar to writing about symbols. You'll need to use a **phrase** to both label and describe the visual (just as you do with a symbol), before using a **verb** to analyse its impact.

Here's an example:

> The ***dramatic panel of the narrator*** metamorphosing from a boy into a bull fills most of a page and ***evokes*** his sense of being taken over by a "beast".

You'll be able to use the words in the second, third and fourth columns to analyse visuals from any graphic novel. However, the words in the first columns are just suggestions. You'll need to think of your own words to describe the feeling or tone of a visual.

Words to describe a picture	Words to label a picture	Words to describe the size of an image or connection to other images	Words to label the impact of a picture
dramatic	panel of…	fills the entire page	evokes
extreme	series of panels in which…	covers most of the page	symbolises
intense	image of…	is overlayed against a background of…	captures
powerful	set of images in which…	overlaps images of…	dramatises
haunting	portrait of…	centres on…	creates
vivid	close up of…	blends images of…	emphasises
stark	rendering of…	combines images of…	illustrates
simple	representation of…	adds to…	represents
lone	frame in which…	contrasts to…	leads the viewer to…
visceral	scene of…	juxtaposes…	
foreboding	panorama of…		
	vista of…		

Non-fiction texts

There are a few things to consider in doing this:

Discuss the use of background information

In a non-fiction text, a narrator tells the true story of their own life or the life of someone else. To do this, the narrator creatively recounts events to tell a story and present a certain perspective. However, in addition to telling a story, non-fiction texts also often give the reader background information so they better understand the events being described inthe text.

Here's an example analysis of how Trevor Noah does this in *Born A Crime*:

> *By providing historical background about the divisions between the Xhosa and Zulu tribes, Noah helps the reader to see the opening chapter 'Run' within the wider context of interracial violence in South Africa.*

Put it into practice

The words in this table will help you describe and analyse the impact of background information in a text:

Words to describe the use of background information	Words to label the use of background information
provides	factual background
establishes	historical background
summarises	interviews
outlines	real historical documents
interweaves creative recounts of…with…	excerpts of
intersperses stories of…with…	

Words to analyse the purpose of background information
that focuses on…in order to…
highlights…so that…
frames the story within a wider context of…so the reader realises…
orients the reader to…
exposes the reader to…
allows the reader to understand…
underscores for the reader…

Analysing people in the text

Non-fiction is about real people, not fictional characters. This means students are sometimes uncertain about whether they can refer to people in a non-fiction text as 'characters'. The short answer is yes, you can. However, there are other words you can use to **refer to people** in a non-fiction text. This example shows one such way and also demonstrates how to analyse the way a **writer shows** what a person is like in a non-fiction text:

> *Throughout his memoir, Noah's mother is a **central figure** who is a fundamental influence on his life. Noah **portrays** her as a fiercely independent woman who would "never have stood for" taking orders from "some white lady".*

Put it into practice

These words will help you label people in a non-fiction text and analyse the way they are presented by the writer:

Words to refer to people in a text	Words to analyse how a narrator shows what a person is like in a non-fiction text
figure	presents…as…
central figure	characterises as…
central protagonist	depicts…as…
recurring figure	describes…as…
minor figure	portrays…as…
character	draws a portrait of…as…
	creates a picture of…as…

Links between ideas and evidence

A good body paragraph is not a list of sentences, but a series of linked ideas, examples and analysis. Links help to create "flow" between your ideas and examples.

To create a paragraph like this, you need to:

→ link ideas, examples and analysis *between* sentences

→ link ideas, examples and analysis *within* sentences.

The example body paragraph below demonstrates a variety of links being made between and within sentences:

Mandel's *Station Eleven* reveals the reliance that humans have on each other. Discuss.	
In the desolate and ravaged landscape of the post-collapse era, Mandel reveals that, above all else, survivors desire community. The ruin of civilisation and the extermination of the majority of the population have made these characters realise how much they require each other in order to survive and flourish. Mandel describes how initially people scattered to avoid the fatal disease and stay safe. However, soon they "clustered close together" in an "archipelago of small towns" because their temporary distance had made them aware of how much they needed others. Not only does Mandel suggest that community is necessary to a more fulfilled life, but she also explicitly states that it is essential to long-term survival as well because it gives her characters a reason to endure. Her post-collapse characters "survived against unspeakable odds…only by holding together", and as a result demonstrate the importance of reliance on others. This concern is further built upon by Mandel's focus on the Travelling Symphony. For the members of the theatrical group, the only "bearable" elements of the new world are the "friendships" and "camaraderie" they have with each other. Mandel overtly shows this through the slogan that symbolises the group – "survival is insufficient". While all of the members want to survive, it is their community that provides them with a reason to live. Without the people they "long for" such as each other, the members of the Symphony feel they are in "hell" and so have no greater purpose to their lives. Their individual survival is inconsequential compared to the purpose community gives them. This thinking is echoed in the character of James who bursts into tears upon arrival at the Severn City Airport because he "thought [he] was the only one". Finding a thriving community offers him immense relief and joy, because of his need for other people. Through these examples of the necessity of community in a world with a limited number of people, Mandel highlights the dependence her characters all have on other people. Without a community to be part of and live for, the survivors are untethered and so in "hell".	Link between sentences Links within sentences

The example on the opposite page demonstrates the following important things:

- Most sentences should begin with some type of linking word or phrase.
- Within all sentences, use a word or phrase to extend the sentence and an example or idea to further information.
- The most common way of linking things *within* a sentence is to use 'and'.

Put it into practice

Write a body paragraph. Focus on creating links at the start of sentences and within sentences.
Use the words and phrases in the table below to help you:

Links between sentences				Links within a sentence
However,	Through	Ultimately	This	and
Moreover,	Throughout	In the end	These	and so
Yet	By	Consequently	Her	because
Nevertheless	In	As a result	His	but
In contrast	From		Their	by
Similarly	Without		Through this	since
Although	With		Through these	through
While	For		By these	further built upon by
When				to
Since			** See note 2	in order to
Despite				as
				as well
* See note 1				as a result
				that
				such as
				not only...but also...
				*** See note 3

*Note 1: Also, you can use a '-ing' word at the start of a sentence to link to an action in the previous sentence (i.e Having…, Resulting from…, Realising…,)

**Note 2: If you are using any of these words at the beginning of a sentence, you should follow it with an idea word or phrase that links to the previous sentence (i.e. "This concern…", "Her post-collapse survivors…")

***Note 3: Also, you can use '-ing' words to introduce analysis (i.e demonstrating, revealing, illustrating etc…)

Conclusions

At the end of your analytic essay is a conclusion. This shouldn't be a giant paragraph summing up everything you have already said. Instead, a good conclusion should briefly do three things:

→ summarise your analysis of the essay topic

→ emphasise the message the text gives about the essay topic

→ reiterate the most important tension/complication.

Let's have a look at how this is done in an example conclusion:

| Mandel's *Station Eleven* reveals the reliance that humans have on each other. Discuss.	
Ultimately, Mandel demonstrates how the cataclysm of the Georgia Flu forces the survivors to have an appreciation for others, which the people in the old world did not have. While the survivors aim to create a community to survive with and live for, the people of the old world take their society for granted and are self-absorbed and "impersonal", lacking connection with others. However, Mandel reveals that nostalgia and the survivors' inability to accurately remember events cause them to think of the old world as a place of deeper connection than it really was.	summarising link word (see previous section) message of the text analysis and link to essay topic important tension/complication

Put it into practice

In order to link to the essay topic, you will continue to use the words and phrases you brainstormed in your planning process. To write about the message of the text and the tension or complication you explored in your essay, you can use words and phrases from the table below:

Message verb	Tension of complication phrases
warns	against the threat of…
cautions	the dangers of…
exposes	the dire consequences of…
condemns	how society can focus on…
critiques	how society can become…
demonstrates	that…can/can't triumph over…
portrays	how can…succeed against…when…
highlights	a grim vision of…
provides	in order to…must first…
offers	
emphasises	humans' ability to…
	a society in which…
affirms	the capacity to…
celebrates	the beauty of…
endorses	
admires	

Personal
Text Response
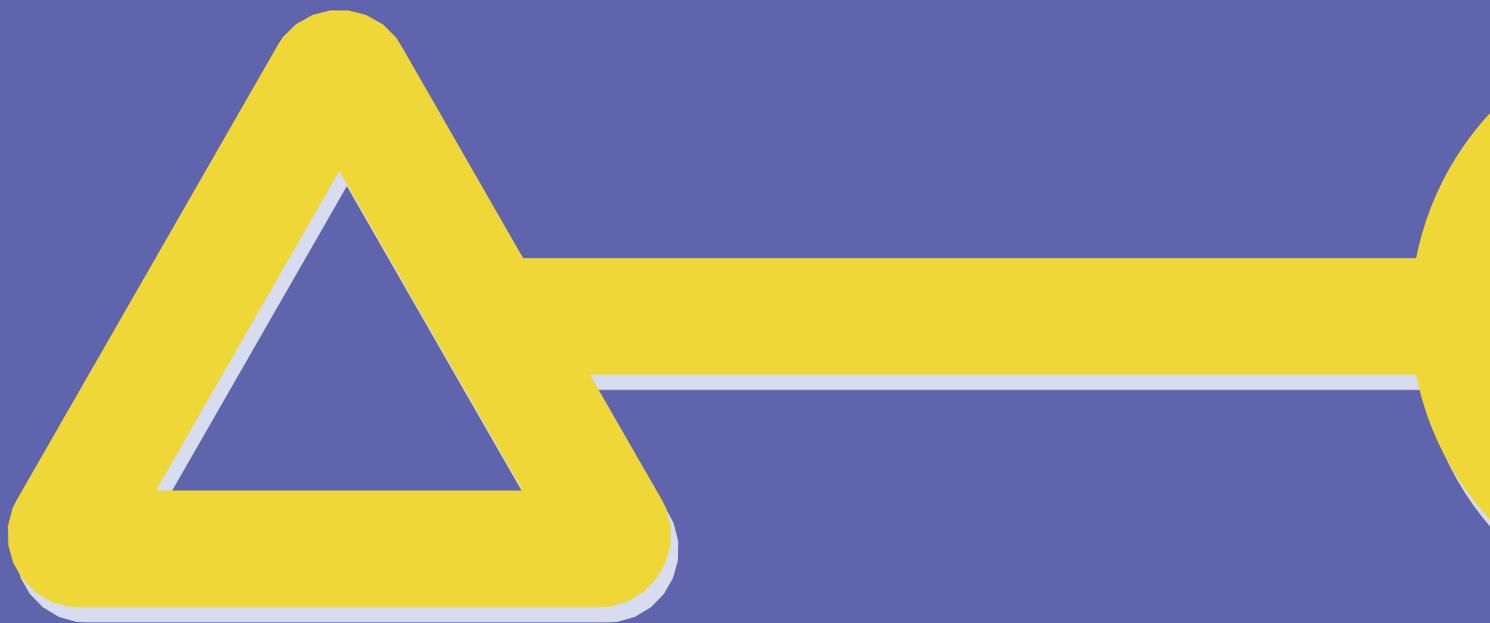
Sometimes you will be asked to write a personal text response essay. This means that you will write about your own thoughts and responses to the text you are studying. You will need to back up your thoughts and opinions with examples from the text itself, to show how well you understood the text. The earlier sections of this chapter will help you to write about the text and use examples well, but this section will show you how to make your personal opinions sound sophisticated and thoughtful.
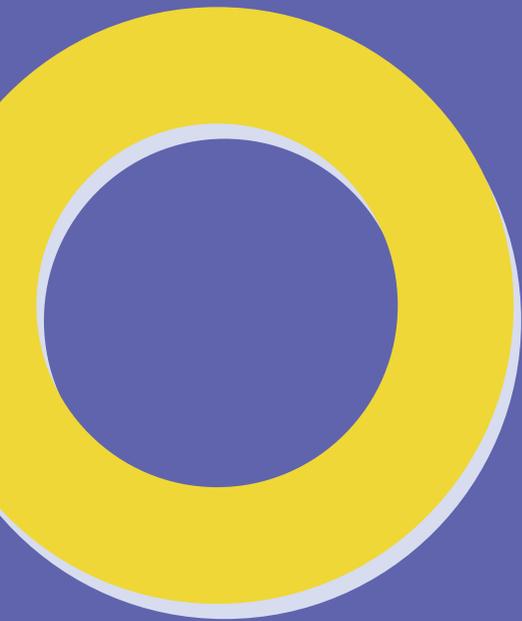
Responding to an essay topic

Before you read or watch a text, you should look at and understand the types of topics you will respond to. There are two ways a personal response topic might appear.

Firstly, you might be given a statement and asked whether or not you agree with it, like in these examples:

> It is Lisa who is the real hero of the film. Do you agree?
>
> *Frankenstein* is still as relevant today as when it was written. Do you agree?

Secondly, you might be asked a direct question about your opinion of a topic, like in these examples:

> Do Kennedy's short stories represent an Australia you know?
>
> Is Macbeth a selfish, evil murderer or a victim of circumstance?

No matter how a topic appears, your first reaction upon reading a topic will be to make a simple choice. It might be a 'yes' or 'no' or it might be a choice outlined in the question – like in the *Macbeth* example. However, responding with a simple choice makes for a fairly boring essay. A better personal response essay is more nuanced and discusses *how much* you think something is true. It is very unusual to completely agree with one thing or another; usually, you will have an answer somewhere along a spectrum or an answer that is 'yes, but…'.

For all of these responses, you need to acknowledge what you think is true about a topic and then discuss the degree to which you think it is true.

For example, when responding to the essay topic:

It is Lisa who is the real hero of the film. Do you agree?

You might respond with

'Yes, she is the hero, but she doesn't really look like a hero and it's not until the end of the film that we understand how heroic she is'.

Or, when responding to the topic:

Do Kennedy's short stories represent an Australia you know?

You might respond with

'Some of the characters and stories are like white people I know, but there are other stories about experiences I don't know anything about'.

In responding to:

Is Macbeth a selfish, evil murderer or a victim of circumstance?

You might think,

'While Macbeth is a totally selfish and evil murderer, he is also a victim of the world he lives in.'

Study alert:

For further strategies for thinking about and planning responses to essay topics, refer to pages 11-15

Read the text strategically

In order to respond to a text personally, you'll need to make notes about the feelings and reactions you have to it. It's important to recognise that your initial feelings about a text might change as you study the text more in class. Or they might stay the same. Either way, when you write your personal response you'll need to refer to your initial thoughts, so it's important to keep a record of your feelings and reactions. This section shows how you can take notes about your feelings and reactions to texts.

Making notes about narrative texts

Narrative texts tell stories with characters. They can be films, plays, novels, short stories or memoirs.

Making notes about characters

Often your main opinion about a narrative text will reflect how you feel about the characters in them. However, your first response can't simply be 'I don't like the main character'. You need to think more specifically about why you like or don't like a character. Here are some more specific reasons you might like or not like a character:

You can like a character because you…		You can dislike a character because you…	
admire respect are entertained by ………………………… …their personality, values or actions	empathise with understand relate to can connect with …………………… …their situation, motivations or interactions with others	are irritated by disagree with are disgusted by are bored by ……………………… …their personality, values or actions	don't understand are confused by don't sympathise with… …………………… …their situation, motivations or interactions with others

The table below will help you make notes about characters as you look at a text for the first time. Here are some more details on how to fill it out:

- **Character actions and personality traits:**
  In these columns, put examples of things a character does and words to describe what they're like. For the main characters in a text, try to write at least 3–4 things in each of these columns. For minor characters, you only need to write 1–2 things.
- **Your initial opinion about the character:**
  Refer to the list of specific reasons why you might like or dislike characters from above to help with the third column.
- **Reasons why you would or wouldn't act the same way as this character:**
  It's really common to compare a character to yourself. Sometimes you like a character because you are like them or wish that you could behave or look like them. You might dislike a character because you would never act as they do or because they represent things that you don't like about yourself.

Study alert:

Download digital copy of the table from: www.tickingmind.com.au/tables

Character name	Character actions	Character personality traits	Your initial opinion about the character	Reasons why you would or wouldn't act the same way as this character

Making notes about techniques

As well as thinking about the characters and what they do, you will have some initial reactions to the way a text is constructed. Below is a chart of different ways you might think about or react to the construction of a text.

Techniques	Things to consider
Narrative voice	• Did you find the text easy to read, or was it written in a complicated style? • Did you like the style of this text? • Were the sentences too long to make sense of? • Did this text have a style that you liked or didn't like? • Did you find the events fast-paced or too slow?
Relevance of topic or ideas	• Do you think the ideas in the text were relevant to today's world? • Did this text contain ideas that were important to you? • Although the ideas in the text might be important to some people, did you think that they weren't important in your life? • Were the ideas in the text really only important to people of a different class, gender or ethnicity?
Characterisation	• Were most of the characters of an ethnicity or gender that you couldn't relate to? • Were the characters presented in a stereotypical way? • Did you like the way the characters looked? • Did you think the text could have been improved if the characters were presented in a different way? • Did the characters represent a society that you know and are familiar with?
Plot structure	• Could you follow the plot easily? • Did you understand what was happening when you were experiencing the text for the first time? • Did the plot jump around in a way that you found confusing? • Do you like having to 'figure out' what is happening? • Was the plot chronological, circular or episodic and what did you like or dislike about this?
Ending	• Did you think the ending was fair? • Did the ending make sense to you? • Were you left with questions at the end of the text? • Would you have preferred a different type of ending?

Put it into practice

Using the questions in the table above as a guide, write a sentence or two about your opinion of each text element.

Making notes about poetry

Reading poetry can be tricky, so your first thoughts about poetry might reflect your confusion.

Sometimes this confusion might mean that your initial thoughts and feelings are "I hate this" or "this is stupid". Although these are valid thoughts, they're not very specific or insightful. The table below has phrases to help you express yourself in a way that is more appropriate for a personal essay.

You can like a poem because it…	You can dislike a poem because it…
makes you think about ideas in a new way	has sentence fragments that at first don't make sense
has interesting words and phrases	has complicated words that you are unfamiliar with
creates pictures in your head about…	is not the kind of text you would normally read
is short	is about feelings or experiences that you don't have
has feelings you can understand or empathise with	

Put it into practice

Make notes about your initial response to each poem in the table below. Use the phrases above to help express your specific thoughts.

Name of poem	What did the poem seem to be about?	Your initial opinion about the poem

Study alert:

Download digital copy of the table from: www.tickingmind.com.au/tables

Introductions

In a personal text response, you are both analysing the text *and* analysing your own response to it. This means that just like any text analysis, the introduction to your personal text response should address the topic itself. However, because this is a *personal* response to the text, you should also include references to your own opinions and explain how or why you think you have these opinions.

To help you address the topic you can use the brainstorming activities and ideas from pages 11-15.

Let's have a look at two examples that do this.

It is Lisa who is the real hero of the film. **Do you agree?**	
Although Hitchcock's 1954 film, *Rear Window*, focuses mostly upon the actions and thoughts of Jeffries, it is easy for the modern and careful viewer to see that it is Lisa who is the real hero of the film. As I get older, I have realised that I should look beyond the spotlight that is given to men's thoughts to what it is that women are doing. In *Rear Window*, Lisa is doing almost everything. Although she doesn't look like how I think a traditional hero should look – with big muscles and a raspy deep voice – she is the only character who thinks critically and acts bravely.	response to topic
***Frankenstein* is still as relevant today as when it was written.** **Do you agree?**	reference to personal understanding of the topic
Reading *Frankenstein* in the 21st Century, when the world is dominated by science and innovation, I found Shelley's novel had important things to say about how we approach our lives in a technological age. On the surface, the most relevant connection between the novel and our times would seem to be its focus on Frankenstein's unethical approach to science and the destruction that can stem from this. However, for me, the most relevant thing the novel has to say about our own modern world is the danger of isolation. Through the tragic demise of both Frankenstein and his creature, Shelley demonstrates that when the individual is isolated from community and friends, they are dehumanised and ultimately destroyed.	

Use page 16 to help you write an introduction that responds to the topic. To help you analyse your own personal response to the text, use the phrases from the table below.

Phrases to introduce your own response	Phrases to contextualise your response
as I have matured	in the 21st Century
I have come to realise	our world is dominated by
my preference for	we are fascinated by
how I think	in this technological age
for me	for the modern viewer
to me	in the urban/rural world, I am familiar with
I found	our own world
I am used to	
I prefer	

Body paragraphs

Body paragraphs of a personal text response need to have topic sentences, analysis of evidence, links and synthesising sentences just like a regular text response.

In addition to these things, they also need to include personal perspectives of the ideas you are discussing.

In the two example body paragraphs below, the personal perspectives have been put in red.

> ### *Frankenstein* is still as relevant today as when it was written. Do you agree?
>
> For me, one of the most powerful ways *Frankenstein* connects to the modern world is through Shelley's depiction of the destructive way Frankenstein isolates himself from other people. From the outset of the novel, Frankenstein is intent on pursuing his scientific dream of unlocking "the secrets of heaven and earth" – not with others, but on his own. As he becomes engrossed with his studies at university, he also becomes "insensible to the charms of nature", breaks off communication with his family and isolates himself in his laboratory. The "dreary" night on which his creature comes "alive" and the season of autumn in which it happens are both symbols of the extent to which his own life is dying while he tries to create new life. When Frankenstein mentally breaks down at the "horror" he has created, I felt this was a symbol of the "horror" any of us might feel in our own century at the realisation that we've shut ourselves off from the real world, connecting to it only through the internet. Through the sickness that Frankenstein subsequently suffers after creating his creature, Shelley demonstrates to me the very real dangers we face today from isolation leading to physical and mental destruction.

> ### It is Lisa who is the real hero of the film. Do you agree?
>
> When I was growing up, my idea of a hero was someone who looked like Christian Bale in *Batman*. A hero was a man with huge muscles, a deep raspy voice and lots of action moves. So a character like Lisa Fremont challenged my picture of what a hero can be. From the first moment we see her – in extreme close-up and framed with a halo of light – Lisa looks like the love interest: a beautiful woman who cares more about clothes and makeup than saving the world. However, as the film evolves, I was forced to confront my own prejudicial stereotypes about beautiful women and what they are capable of. Although Lisa doesn't "wear the same dress twice", she is still able to climb the fire escape in high heels and frilly petticoats and find important evidence to implicate Thorwald. Furthermore, it is her knowledge of clothing and accessories that demonstrates how logically and critically she thinks when she challenges Doyle about "the trunk and the jewellery". Although Lisa doesn't look like the stereotypical champions I tend to think of, throughout the film, her actions and thoughts are those of a hero.

Write a personal text response paragraph. Refer to page 28 to help you insert and analyse evidence as well as page 40 to help you discuss specific types of texts (i.e. films, novels, plays, poetry, etc). The table below includes a range of phrases you can use to discuss your own personal perspective about ideas in your body paragraph.

Ideas you have before you read a text	The way your ideas can be changed as you engage with a text	The things a text can personally show you
before reading/watching the text…	as I listened to the views of others,	the character of…
when I was growing up…	as I became more familiar with the text,	the scene where…
	when I looked beyond…,	the moment when…
my idea of…	while studying this text,	the symbol of…
my sense of…	by shifting my focus from…to…,	[text name]…
my understanding of…	when I discussed the text with others,	[author name]…
my picture of…	looking more closely at the text…,	
the usual way I thought about…	rewatching the scene when…,	underscored to me the…
		represented for me the…
I have usually thought that…		demonstrated to me that…
it's important to me that…	I was confronted by…	reflected my own…
my experience of the world has taught me that…	I could see…	changed the way I…
I have always believed in the importance of…	I realised…	challenged my…
	I felt that…	
	I sympathised with…	now appears to me as…
I have always preferred to read…	I connected to…	cemented my initial feeling that…
my favourite thing to watch has always been…	I understood…	deepened my first reaction…
I have never liked reading…	I was appalled by…	seems to me to be a symbol of…
	I was critical of…	
when I first read/watched the text…		
on the surface, … at first seemed to me to…		
my initial response to…was…		

Conclusions

The conclusion of a personal response to a text should be short and do three things:

- provide a personal response to (or answer) the topic
- summarise the main arguments or complications of the topic
- explain your interpretation of the topic.

Either your response to the topic or your interpretation of the topic should be the first sentence.

Let's have a look at two different examples of conclusions:

|	
It is Lisa who is the real hero of the film. Do you agree?	
I have always thought that a hero is someone who is able to think and act bravely and is the character who drives most of the action in a text. While Hitchcock's leading lady doesn't look much like a hero, it is Lisa who leads the action and is thoughtful, critical and courageous. In comparison, the protagonist of the film, Jeffries, sits around all day judging people and getting others to do the hard work for him. That's why – for me – Lisa is the real hero of *Rear Window*.	direct response to the topic
Frankenstein **is still as relevant today as when it was written. Do you agree?**	summary of main complications of the topic
Although the prose style of Shelley was difficult and old-fashioned for me to read, ultimately I found *Frankenstein* was a story that is as much about our times as Shelley's. Her alarm about science represented our older generation's fears of technology, but I felt that the most important aspect of her novel was Frankenstein's self-destructive arrogance and isolationism. This was almost a parable of the experiences people have today when we rely more on the internet than connecting to actual people around us. In the end, Shelley's novel tells us that we need to consider our responsibilities to others, not just our own selfish desires.	interpretation of the message/ meaning of the topic

→ Once again, in order to link to the essay topic, you will use the words and phrases you brainstormed in your planning process. You can use the table below for other phrases that will help you write your conclusions.

Phrases to summarise the complications	Phrases to introduce your interpretation
the most important aspect	for me
while….it is…	I have always thought
while at first it seems…	I felt
....	I found
in comparison	people have today
represented	around us
not just	we should/need to
is as much about…as	

Listening Task
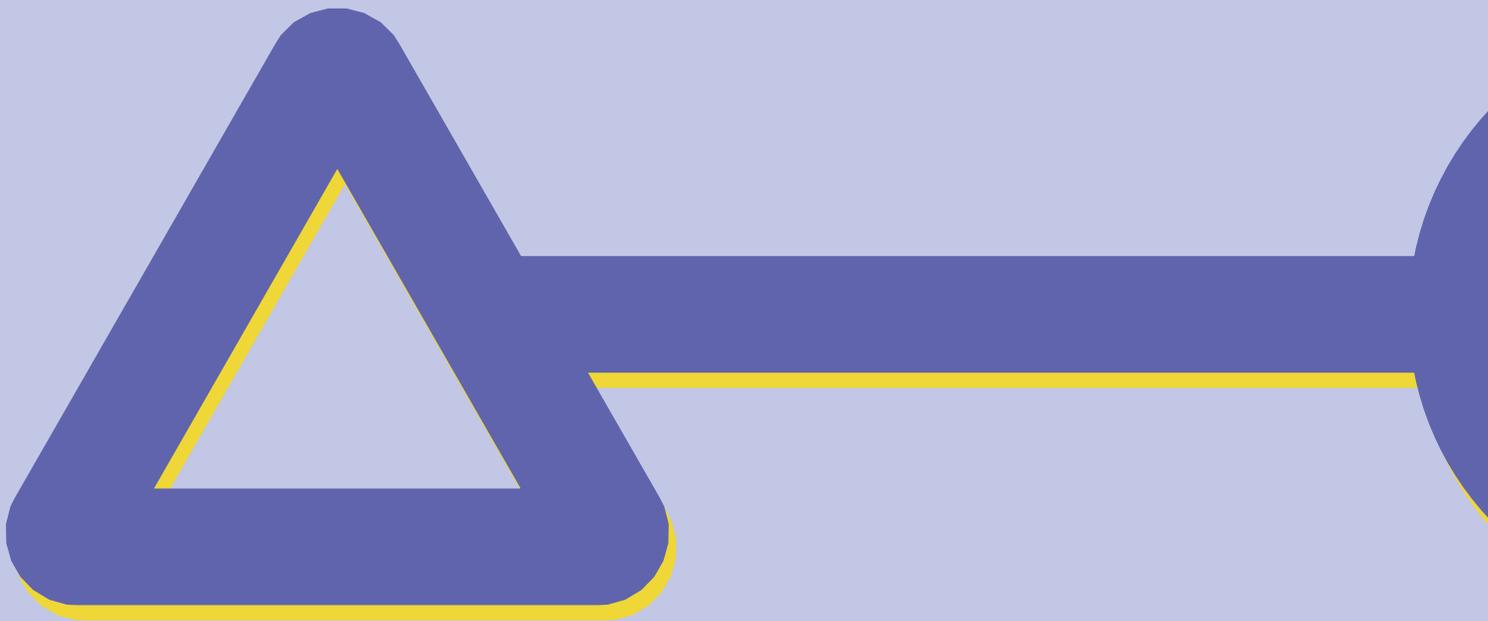
In this section, we'll be referring to two types of texts:

Main text:

This is the novel, film, play, poem, short story or memoir you are studying.

Listening text:

This is the short audio or video text that will provide information about the main text.

**During your text analysis unit, you will be required to complete tasks
in response to a listening text. These tasks will include:**

1. Taking notes about the listening text

2. Answering questions about the listening text

These two tasks are designed to help you understand and analyse the main text of the unit.
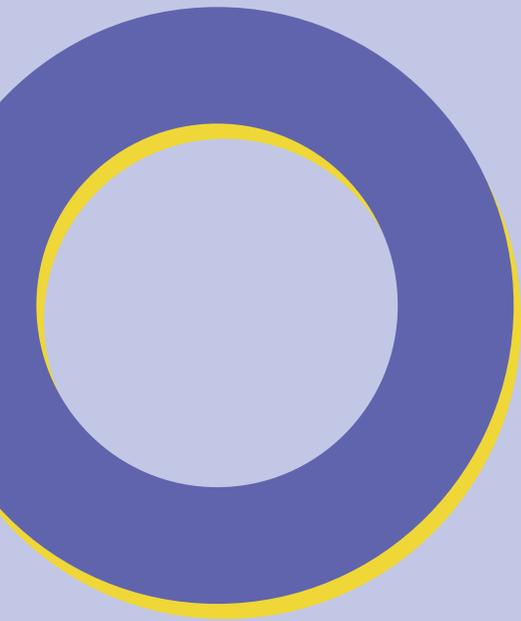
Take notes

In order to take notes efficiently and quickly, you'll need to have some strategies. Since taking good notes is about noticing the most important information that you hear, one effective strategy is to read the questions you have been given first. This will help you understand what you need to listen for.

Another strategy is to use abbreviations as you take notes. By using abbreviations, you'll be able to take notes more efficiently. Here are some common abbreviations you can use:

List of common abbreviations for note-taking	
b/c	because
ea	each
eg	example
ie	that is, that means, in other words
imp	important
sim	similar
w/	with
w/o	without
+	and, also, in addition
↑	increase (two arrows for rapid or great increase)
→	leads to, causes

Organise your note-taking

When you begin to take notes of the listening text, you will notice that it's really hard to keep listening and not get distracted. To remain focused while listening, it's helpful to use a table that makes you write something down a couple of times each minute, like the one below:

Time	What is being said
0.30	
1.00	
1.30	
2.00	
2.30	
3.00	
3.30	
4.00	
4.30	
5.00	
5.30	
6.00	

On the next couple of pages are an example transcript of a listening text and the notes a student took.

This is an extract from a podcast called *Out of the Darkness – a forgotten history of Indigenous Australians.* Students who are studying the film *High Ground* might listen to a text like this.

Roper River Mission – A Dark History of 'Protection'

A mission was a place white settlers set up in the areas they colonised. It involved setting aside some land and forcing Indigenous people to live there. Usually, schools, churches and basic housing was built on a mission.

Early in the 20th Century, five missions were established in the Northern Territory. These missions were designed to 'protect' Indigenous Australians, although there was really no official explanation of what they needed protection from. Unofficially, of course, white community leaders felt that Indigenous Australians needed to be protected from themselves. There was the sense that Indigenous people were uncivilised 'savages' who needed to become a part of the white Australian community.

Missions were often set up and run by church organisations and Roper River Mission was no different. This mission was supposed to bring the teachings of the Christian church to Indigenous people so that they could become 'civilised'. What this actually meant was that young children were taken from their families, given a very basic education and trained to do menial work. Indigenous children were being brought up to be servants for white people. Boys were trained in basic gardening and carpentry and girls were trained to do housework.

These children were removed from their own culture and only taught the basics of a white, European culture. They were not taught to be equals or taught to think for themselves: they were taught that they were inferior and their own culture and people was worthless. They were taught to become reliant upon white Australians.

Of course, many of the missionaries really did think that they were protecting Indigenous people. At the time, it was a common practice for white settlers to murder Indigenous people who lived on land that they wanted for their own purposes. It did not matter if these Indigenous people were men, women or children – no one was spared in these massacres. By providing missions for Indigenous people to live on, missionaries were protecting them from slaughter, but at the cost of their traditional way of living. Indigenous Australians were refugees in their own land.

Time	What is being said
0.30	– Missions = Indigenous ppl forced to live – set up by white ppl
1.00	– 1900s: 5 missions in NT – missions for protection (protection?? why??) – white ppl thought Indig. ppl=savages
1.30	– Roper River Mission (HG mission) – run by church – children > servants
2.00	– white culture taught – Indig. culture bad
2.30	– missionaries protecting Indig. ppl from massacres – white settlers murderers

Take notes for interviews

You might be asked to listen to an interview.

If you are listening to an interview, you could take notes in a format like the one below:

Question		Response
	→ →	
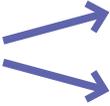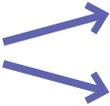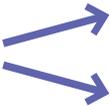
Question		Response
	→ →	
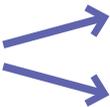
Question		Response
	→ →	

Question		Response
	→ →	

In the listening task, you'll be required to answer a set of questions.

These questions will ask you to:

- identify key information
- show understanding of particular words and phrases
- show understanding of how speakers deliver information
- link information in the listening text to the text you are analysing.

Example listening tasks at the beginning of a unit

Your teacher might do a listening task at the beginning of a unit in order to give you important information about the main text before you study it. The questions below are examples of ones you might do for the listening text *Roper River Mission – A Dark History of 'Protection'.* This text gives information about the historical setting of the film *High Ground.*

Identify questions

'Identify' tasks will ask you to list information, fill in tables, identify facts or respond to the question 'What was…?'.

Here are some examples:

a) According to the listening text, what was the real reason missions were set up in the Northern Territory?

b) Identify one way that missionaries thought their missions could actually protect Indigenous people.

c) In the table below, list one thing missions were *supposed* to teach Indigenous children and one thing they *actually* taught Indigenous children.

What missions were supposed to teach	What missions actually taught

Put it into practice

Use these phrases to help you answer identify questions:

- One example of…
- [Speaker name] says one reason for…is…
- [Speaker name] asserts that…
- [Speaker name] says that…

Questions about meaning

When you're asked to show understanding of words and phrases, you'll be asked to define what a word or phrase means in the context of the listening text.

> What does this listening text mean when it says Indigenous children were given "menial work"?
>
> The listening text says that Indigenous people were "not taught to be equals". Give an example of how they were not taught to be equals.

Put it into practice

Use these phrases to help you answer questions about meaning:

- The phrase…means that…
- When [Speaker name] says…she/he means that…
- An example of what…means is…
- By saying…, [Speaker name] means…

Questions about delivery

Another type of task you'll be required to do is to show your understanding of how someone is speaking to achieve a purpose. Usually, the purpose of the texts you'll be listening to will be to *explain* or *inform*.

Here's a typical task you might be given:

> The text wants its listeners to understand the racist history of missionaries. Explain how it tries to achieve this purpose. Use examples to support your answer.

Put it into practice

Use these phrases to help you answer questions about delivery:

- One way…
- One method…
- A technique the [Speaker name] employs…
- [Speaker name] employs words like "…" in order to…
- The speaker emphasises…
- The speaker engages the listener by…
- The speaker helps the listener to understand the information more easily by…

Example listening tasks during a unit

Instead of doing a listening task at the start of the unit, you might do it during a unit when you've had time to study the main text and already know something about it. Your teacher might do the listening task here so you can use information from a listening text to extend your understanding of the main text.

Identify information and link to main text

For this type of listening task, you'll be asked to identify information from a listening text and link it to what you already know about the main text.

Here are some examples:

> **a)** The listening text indicates that Indigenous people were treated as inferiors at missions. Identify two ways Indigenous people were treated as inferiors.
>
> **b)** Give three examples of the ways Gutjuk is treated like this at the mission in *High Ground*.

> **a)** The listening text says that Indigenous Australians were "refugees" in their own land. What does the listening text mean by this?
>
> **b)** Give one example of how *High Ground* shows that Indigenous Australians are refugees?

Put it into practice

Use these phrases to help you link information to a main text:

- One example of... in [main text name] is when...
- One way the [main text name] demonstrates...is when...
- [Main text name] shows how...when...

Creating Texts

In this area of study, you will study a Framework of Ideas and then present your thoughts about it in different styles of writing. You will need to write two separate pieces, then edit and draft your writing. After producing this work, you will also need to write a commentary reflecting on the writing process.

This chapter will show you strategies you can use to help you create texts.

1. Know how you will be assessed

At the beginning of this unit, you will need to understand what type of tasks you will need to complete.

This section will show you how to:
- understand what type of pieces you need to write
- understand the different conditions you may write under.

2. Develop ideas

At the beginning of the writing process, you will need to consider a big idea and how you might write about it.

This section will show you how to:
- break down a big idea into smaller ideas
- think about purposes you could write for
- understand how to respond to stimuli.

3. Write for purpose

Throughout the unit, you will need to practise writing for different purposes.

This section will show you how to:

Write to persuade or explain
- know the differences and similarities between explain and persuade writing
- openings
- bodies
- closings

Write to express or reflect
- know the differences and similarities between reflect and express writing
- openings
- bodies
- closings
- key vocabulary for express and reflect writing.

4. Edit and refine your work

An important part of the writing process will be drafting and refining your work. This section will give you:
- strategies to give feedback to yourself or your peers.

5. Explain your writing decisions

Finally, you need to reflect on the writing process and explain your authorial decisions. This section will show you how to do this.

Know the assessment for the unit

This Area of Study is about writing creatively. That doesn't mean you have to write a short story (although you could if you really want to), but it does mean you'll need to come up with your own ideas and write about them. For this Area of Study, you will be asked to create three pieces of writing:

- **two** pieces of original writing that show your understanding of a big idea
- **one** piece of writing that reflects and comments on your experience of the writing process.

Most of this chapter will focus on how to write the first two pieces, because that's going to be the hardest part.

By the end of the first few weeks of this unit, you should:

☐ Know what this SAC outcome will look like:

    – Will you be workshopping or drafting your writing in class?

              OR

    – Will you be workshopping or drafting your writing in class?

☐ Know what exam-style stimuli look like

☐ Have 5–6 ideas that you could write about.

Developing ideas

In this Area of Study, you will be investigating one BIG idea. The idea is so big that it will be impossible to write about all of it. What you need to be able to do is break the idea down into smaller, sub-ideas that are easier to write about. When you are coming up with your own ideas for writing, it is important to keep these things in mind:

🫠 Sometimes you will have lots of opinions and ideas.

😖 Sometimes you will have no opinions or ideas.

🤔 Some ideas are easier to write about than others.

🥺 Often, you won't feel passionately about any of the ideas you come up with.

🤷 It's not important to feel passionate about an idea – all you need to do is come up with an idea that you CAN write about.

🤓 It's possible to write really well about something you don't care about at all.

🥵 Coming up with ideas is hard, that's why we've got a lot of questions and tables to help you out.

You might forget some of the ideas that you think of, so it is important to KEEP NOTES about your ideas and thoughts.

Break the big idea into smaller ideas

The big idea you will be looking at will be very big. It's so big that it would be difficult to write about every aspect of it. Instead, you need to think about how you can break this idea into smaller and more manageable ideas like this:

Other words for big idea	What are alternative words you could use to think of this idea?
What examples are there of this idea being…	positive or negative? shared or individual? in the virtual or physical world? physical or emotional? real or imagined?
What is your personal experience?	Have you ever experienced this idea, or can you think of someone who has?
How has it changed?	Throughout history, have people changed the way they think about or experience this idea?
How does it affect people differently?	Are some groups of people likely to experience this idea differently because of who they are or because they belong to a certain cultural or physical group?
What opinions do people have about it?	What different opinions are there about this idea or the people who represent this idea?

Over the next few pages are a series of questions that can help you understand the different ways to think about specific big ideas.

Idea	Other words for big idea	What examples are there of…	What is your personal experience?
Country	atmosphere environment home landscape nation nature place world	…country being… real or imaginary? rural or city? natural or built? beautiful or horrifying? inclusive or alienating? threatening or comforting? strange or familiar? free or controlled?	• Do you have a favourite part of the country? • How do you feel about being in nature? • Has your landscape influenced how you see the wider world?
Protest	advocacy challenge confrontation dissent resistance social justice struggle	…protest being… peaceful or violent? individual or collective? historical or contemporary? online or in-person? successful or failed? to advocate or resist? public or private?	• Have you ever protested about anything? • What makes you angry about the world at the moment? • Who or what do you think it's important to stand up for?
Personal Journeys	change development experience learning growing transition turning point quest	…journeys being… personal or someone else's? celebrated or ignored? physical or emotional? forced or chosen? an escape or an exploration? a turning point or a continuation? successful or unsuccessful?	• What is a significant turning point for you in your life? • Who do you admire for the way they have lived their life? • How would you like your life to change in the future? • What stories have you heard about your own or others' formative experiences?
Play	acting fantasy games make-believe performance sport	…play being… solitary or collaborative? digital or physical? imaginative or boring? inventive or formulaic? rule-based or rule-breaking? competitive or amusing?	• What do you like to do for relaxation and play? • How do your friends or family use their leisure time? • How did you play when you were a kid?

How has it changed?	How does it affect people differently?	What opinions do people have about it?
• How has climate change altered the country? • How do people change the landscape? • Once, there was no 'Australia'; how does our understanding of a nation change?	• Who is in control of the countryside? • Who has lost control? • Do young people have as much say as older people? • Who can afford to own land? • How do people create their own landscape?	• How do people feel about the landscape? • Do people want the landscape to change? • Do people have different ideas about how the land can be managed? • Is there a particular part of the landscape people are concerned about?
What did protest look like for: • suffragettes • the Australian and American civil rights movements • environment • before and after social media?	Who is more likely to: • want to protest • object to protestors • be listened to?	What opinions do people have about: • peaceful vs. violent protest • marching in the street • hunger strikes • wearing certain clothes • writing letters • expressions of anger • cancel culture?
• In the past, did people have the opportunity to develop themselves as much as now? • Do we think differently about personal development now, compared with in the past? • How has the internet shaped the way we develop?	Are some people: • more likely to be able to journey • forced to journey • prevented from journeying or developing?	How do different groups of people: • react to others changing • think about the importance of developing?
• How did people play in the past (also think about whether some groups of disadvantaged people had time to play)? • What kinds of play were more important for your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents…?	• Does everyone have time for play? • Does everyone have the same access to opportunities for play? Do… • women and men • children • different cultural groups …play differently?	Do people think: • play is important • some kinds of play are better than others • some kinds of play are harmful?

Idea	Other words for big idea	What examples are there of…	What is your personal experience?
Influences	inspiration pressure leaders guidance authority ambition role models	…influences being… real or imagined? positive or negative? virtual or known personally? from your past or present life? strong or weak? person or trend, or cultural force?	• Is there someone who is a big influence in your life? • Does a celebrity or online person inspire you? • Is there a trend in society that has shaped you? • Do you know someone who has had a negative influence on your life? • What do you aspire to become?
Other worlds	foreign countries different landscapes fantasy different cultures alien worlds	…other worlds being… exciting or frightening? real or imagined? possible or impossible? exotic or boring? appealing or unappealing?	• Have you ever travelled to somewhere that feels completely unfamiliar to you? • Do you imagine fantasy or alien worlds? • Do you watch or read about other worlds or different cultures? • Do you feel like you belong in the culture you live in? • Do you know people who seem to live in a completely different world to you?
Beauty	attractive good looks handsome loveliness ideal appeal glamour allure	… beauty being … personal or someone else's? celebrated or ignored? physical or personality? inborn or cultivated? real or imagined? achievable or hopeless?	• When have you felt or • experienced beauty? • What helps you be more • beautiful? • Who do you admire for • their beauty? • In the future, what will • beauty look like? • Is beauty experienced differently by different • groups of people?
Power and prejudice	bias bigotry dominance pre-eminence authority control chauvinism discrimination xenophobia privilege	…power and prejudice being… solitary or collaborative? digital or physical? personal or directed against a group? conscious or unconscious? accepted or challenged?	• Have you ever felt discriminated against? • Have you ever discriminated against someone else? • Do you have friends of different genders, abilities or ethnicities? • How do your friends or family members speak about people of different genders, classes, ethnicities or abilities? • How have you seen people exercise power over others?

How has it changed?	How does it affect people differently?	What opinions do people have about it?
• Are we influenced more by famous people than we used to be? • Do people feel more pressure to be 'perfect' than they used to? • Do public institutions have less influence over us than they used to?	• What sorts of people are more likely to influence us – are they more likely to be rich, white, lead a certain lifestyle…? • Are some people more susceptible to being influenced by others?	What opinions do people have about: • celebrity influencers • public institutions (schools, churches, charities, government) • community leaders • sporting leaders • fictional inspiration • 'good' trends or 'bad' trends?
• Have our attitudes to different cultures changed? • Are we more interested in dystopian worlds than we used to be? • Do TV programs and books show us a greater or reduced range of other worlds? • Has the world become less diverse and created fewer truly exotic places?	• How are different genders treated in different worlds? • Are people of different ages treated differently in other places? • Do some people have more opportunities to travel to other worlds? • Are some people forced into new cultures?	What opinions are there about: • people with different ideas • fantasy and role play • different cultures • travel • the difference between the real world and dystopia?
• In the past, did people have a different understanding of what was beautiful? • Do people from different cultures have a different idea of beauty? • Is beauty now more achievable for all? • How is beauty different in the online world?	Are some people: • in a better position to be beautiful • spend more time on beauty • so ugly that they cannot be considered beautiful • kept away from achieving beauty because of their gender, class, ethnicity or abilities?	What opinions do people have about: • their own beauty • the beauty of younger people • the beauty of older people • the money spent on beauty • the value of beauty?
Over the years, how have these people had power, or been discriminated against: • men • women • other genders • people in the LGBTIQ+ community • people of colour • upper classes • lower classes • different cultural groups • people with a disability?	• Does everyone have equal opportunities for jobs and education? • Does everyone have the same access to leisure and play? • Can everyone find a partner or friends equally? • Do we see different people represented online and in the media?	What opinions do people have about: • their own prejudices • whether groups of people 'deserve' to be prejudiced against • the difference between different genders • whether they would be willing to give something up for a person who is discriminated against?

Think about purpose

Now you've done some initial thinking about different aspects of a big idea, you can start to think of how to write about it. This means that you need to write with *purpose* – that is, you need to have a basic plan of what sort of thing you can write. Some of the ideas that you brainstormed will lead to different writing purposes.

There are four main writing purposes that you can achieve:

→ **Explain**: to provide information that highlights important aspects of an idea.

→ **Argue:** to present a point of view about what people should think or do in response to an idea.

→ **Reflect:** to discuss different aspects of an idea through personal experience.

→ **Express:** to show what an idea looks, sounds or feels like.

To help you make your awesome ideas purposeful, you should follow the steps below:

1. Look through the first column of the table below. Did you think of any of these things as you thought about the big idea in class discussions or activities?

2. Look at the second and third columns of the table to consider the next steps.

As you brainstormed ideas, if you thought …	This means you could do some writing that …	To help you with this sort of writing …
I'd like to find out more about this question I know some interesting or important facts to answer this question	provides information that highlights and **explains** important aspects of an idea	To find out more about writing for this purpose, turn to pages 99-114.
I have an opinion about this	**argues** what people should think or do in response to an idea	To find out more about writing for this purpose, turn to pages 99-114.
I have conflicted feelings about this question I have more questions	**reflects** on and discusses different aspects of an idea through personal experience or understanding	To find out more about writing for this purpose, turn to pages 115-132.
I have a story or experience to share about this I can imagine a story or experience about this	**expresses** what an aspect of the idea looks, sounds or feels like	To find out more about writing for this purpose, turn to pages 115-132.

Writing a purpose statement

It is important to realise that to achieve a purpose, you can use either *fictional* forms of writing (such as short stories), or *non-fictional* forms of writing (such as feature articles, blogs, recounts, biographies or persuasive writing pieces). Either way, you will write more clearly if you have a specific purpose.

**A specific purpose doesn't mean something general like this:**

> I'm going to write a short story about play.
>
> I'm going to write a blog about my favourite place in the country.

As well as having a **purpose,** a specific purpose statement should identify **a text form or type**, and a **particular aspect of the idea** you want to write about. Here are some examples:

> I could write a **feature article** about how board games became really popular during lockdown and **explain** the social benefits of this.
>
> I could write a **biography** about my grandmother's migration to Australia from Vietnam and **express** the alienation and homesickness she initially felt.
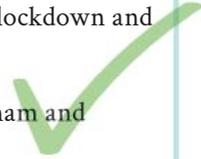
Let's break down exactly what an effective purpose statement looks like:

Text type	I could write a feature article
Purpose (express, explain, argue or reflect)	that expresses and illustrates
Specific aspect of 'performance' idea	how choosing clothes is a performative act that helps you to express your identity.

Here are a couple of things to keep in mind about developing purpose statements:

- Your purpose won't always be clear before you start writing.
- Sometimes you'll need to do some writing, and *then* work out what your specific purpose might be.
- Sometimes your writing will have more than one purpose.

Responding to stimulus

In your exam, you will be required to produce a creative piece of writing in response to a stimulus. During your crafting texts unit, you might also need to respond to a stimulus for a SAC task or to help you develop ideas for a workshopped piece of writing. Below is an example of how stimuli are set out in the exam.

Here are a few things to take note of:

✓ There are always three different types of stimuli to choose from:

  – Stimulus 1: a statement
  – Stimulus 2: an image
  – Stimulus 3: an extended prompt (could be a poem, song or paragraph of text).

✓ You only need to respond to one stimulus, but you _can_ respond to more than one.
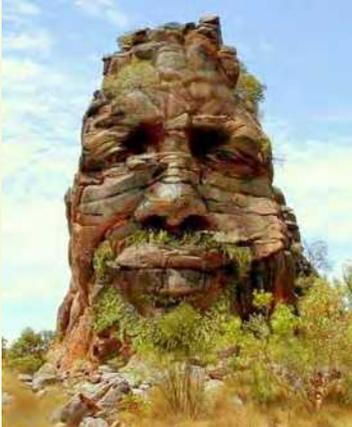
✓ Your piece of writing must use the title provided.

Example set of stimuli on the idea of country:

Title: 'Part of the landscape'

Stimulus 1:

'You are a product of your world.'

Stimulus 2:

Stimulus 3:

Endless the suburbs stretch out from the towns
Upwardly mobile and not looking down
Attitudes born of self-interest
Thinking the rest of the country's a mess
All in its place and nothing untidy
Crockery matching and fresh fish on Friday
Sending the kids to well-privileged schools
Asking for quiet when watching the news
Having two children, a dog and a cat
Dreaming of buying a holiday flat.

✓ In an exam or SAC situation, it can be difficult to come up with new ideas. Think through the ideas you have already developed and consider how you can use one of those ideas to respond to the stimuli.

✓ If you're responding to the written statement (Stimulus 1), brainstorm key words that connect to the topic. Don't just use words from the topic again and again.

✓ If you are interested in writing an explainer, turn Stimulus 1 into a question. For example, Stimulus 1 from the previous page can become 'How are we shaped by the physical world around us?'

✓ If you're interested in writing a persuasive piece, turn Stimulus 1 into a contention with the words *should*, *must* or *need to*. For example, Stimulus 1 from the previous page can become 'Our lifestyle should be a product of the natural world we live in'.

✓ Stimulus 2 can be good for reflective and expressive writing because the image can often help you think of an experience or situation you might want to describe.

✓ Stimulus 3 can be good for reflective writing because it often contains different feelings that you might discuss in a piece.

Refine and develop your ideas

After you've looked at how a mentor text presents an idea, you should then consider your thoughts about what you will write about.

This might involve:

→ refining or changing your purpose

→ thinking about how you might use ideas or techniques from a mentor text

→ thinking about how you might use any other ideas or techniques that have occurred to you.

Writing to persuade or explain

Both explain and persuade writing share the same fundamental purpose: getting an audience to see a topic as important. Where they differ is:

- **persuasive writing** seeks to *convince* an audience to think or act in a specific way
- **explainer writing** wants an audience to *understand* a topic.

This section explores the similarities and differences between these two purposes.

Structural features:

Below is a range of ways you can open, develop and conclude both persuade and explain writing. These strategies will be explained and modelled over the rest of this section.

Openings	
	☐ Provide background or context
	☐ Engage with the audience
	☐ Share an experience
	☐ Create a picture
Bodies	☐ Present facts and then explanations
	☐ Challenge other views
	☐ Create an analogy
Closings	☐ Reemphasise key points
	☐ Leave a lasting image
	☐ Make the problem simple

Language features:

Persuasive and explainer writing share many characteristics. They both aim to:

- show the impact or importance of facts
- describe and create compelling pictures so the audience sees things in a certain way
- sequence information in a logical way.

However, persuasive writing tends to use more positive or negative words, while explainer writing seeks to be more neutral. The tables on the opposite page give examples of this.

Impact words

Persuasive		Explainer
destroys	causes	might
ruins	creates	can
harms	leads to	may
damages	generates	could
improves	results in	should
protects	impacts	possibly will
boosts	stems from	is able to
promotes		
enhances		

Describe words

Persuasive		Explainer
best	significant	interesting
greatest	critical	likely
most	vital	unlikely
long-lasting	key	seems
valuable	fundamental	appears to be
effective	basic	sometimes
toxic	essential	perhaps
catastrophic	integral	often
irreparable	innovative	correct
shocking	important	large
worst		
dangerous		

Sequence words

Persuasive		Explainer
On top of …, there is also …	However,	Let's start by looking at
Not only is …, but it is also …	Moreover,	There is also …
Even more important than …, is …	Furthermore,	Subsequently,
If it wasn't enough that …, there is also …	Consequently,	In addition,
Before anything else …	As a result,	On the other hand,
Let's be clear about a few things to begin with …	In fact,	Another
But it's not just a matter of …, it's also …	While …, there is also …	Another perspective is offered by
	For one thing …	Something else to consider
	Therefore	

Openings

Whether you are planning to persuade or explain, your opening should be engaging for your audience: you want them to read on and understand what you have to say. There are a range of different strategies to achieve this in an opening. In this section of the book, we will show you a number of ways to begin your writing and some of the differences and similarities between these beginnings.

Strategy	Page
☐ Provide background or context	102
☐ Engage with the audience	103
☐ Share an experience	104
☐ Create a picture	105

Look through the different strategies here, but be aware that there could be others you can use – you might read or listen to a mentor text that has a different kind of opening strategy. You can also find more persuasive strategies in the chapter on persuasive writing and presenting. Being a good writer is about being able to adapt the ideas and strategies you see.

Provide background or context

Starting with a key fact or some information about the issue can help the audience understand the importance of what you are trying to explain or argue.

This is an opening to a persuasive piece about the *idea of protest*. The purpose of the piece is to argue that we should support disruptive protests:

The vote for women, marriage equality, strict gun laws and land rights for Indigenous people. What do they all have in common? They are all significant changes brought about by disruptive protests. If it wasn't for campaigners chaining themselves to buildings, stopping traffic and generally getting in the way of daily life, then our daily life today would be a lot less fair and a lot less inclusive. This is why we should all support disruptive protest.	Provides historic background Clearly states contention

This is an opening to an explainer about the *idea of play*. This piece uses a similar sort of research to the example above, but has a different purpose, which is to explain why play is important for all ages:

A recent study by the University of California found that engaging in thirty minutes of cooperative play each day improves cognition, increases happiness and extends life expectancy. Interestingly, the research wasn't about children. It was about people aged over 80. Let's have a look at some of the reasons that play affects physical and mental health.	Presents new information Outlines why this is an important issue to consider

Tips for experimenting with this type of opening:

☐ For suggestions about phrases you can use to provide background information see pages 200 and 107.

☐ If you're writing a persuasive piece, see pages 187-188 for more advice on writing contentions.

☐ If you're writing an explainer, you could use these phrases to introduce the rest of your piece:

- *Over the rest of this piece, we'll look at ...*
- *So let's dive into looking at ...*
- *Let's examine why ...*
- *To understand more about ..., let's ...*
- *To get a handle on why ..., we can break this topic into ...*
- *Let's have a look at ...*
- *We need to understand how ...*

Engage with the audience

Engaging with the audience directly helps them to see why they should care about an issue or idea.

This is the opening to a persuasive piece about the *idea of country*. The purpose of this piece is to argue that young people should get engaged with how a country is run:

We've all been there: some adult is droning on and on about politics and you just … tune out. Because you think it's boring. Because you think it's just old people that care. Because you've got something better to do. But here's the thing – politics is all about deciding what kind of country we want to live in. And we should all feel passionately about that. We should all get more involved in politics so that we can have more of a say in the kind of country we want to live in.	**Connects to the audience's experience** **Clear contention, using the word *should*** **Second person**

This is the opening to an explainer about the *idea of influences*. The purpose of this piece is to explain how online influencers make us more homogenous:

You've all seen them – the people with 'Instaface'. You've probably even tried to make your face more like it, giving yourself enormous eyelashes, or shiny, highlighted cheekbones. Maybe you've even altered your own face online so that it looks more like, well … everyone else's. In a world where one standard of beauty is so pervasive, we all want to achieve it. And when we try to emulate what we see online, we also further normalise this standard of beauty for our friends and family. We all unthinkingly influence each other to conform. But how did we get here?	**Connects to the audience's experience** **Second person**

Tips for experimenting with this type of opening:

☐ Directly engage the audience by using the words you, we or all of us. For example, you could use phrases like:

- *We've all been there: …*
- *You've probably …*
- *Maybe you've …*
- *At least once in you're life, you've probably …*
- *You might even have …*
- *For more phrases you can use, see page 206.*

☐ Ask the audience a question:

- *Have you ever wondered why…?*
- *Have you ever thought…?*
- *Do you…?*
- *Are you…?*
- *Have you ever been in a situation where…?*

Share an experience

Sharing an experience helps the audience to relate to you as a writer and, like creating a picture, helps the audience to directly imagine what it is like to be engaged in the issue.

This is the opening to an explainer about the *idea of difference*. The purpose of this piece is to explain how life is different for people with disabilities:

There **I** was, in downward-facing dog, breathing deeply and concentrating on the idea of inner peace. Beside **me**, someone farted gently and **I** stopped trying to breathe in and instead concentrated on holding my breath. And **I** wondered what the heck **I** was trying to prove. **I** mean, it's **hard enough trying to find your zen when you're blind and in a group class where all around you are the weird sounds of other people's joints cracking and deep breathing,** but stewing in someone else's fart juice as well? It's a lot.	**Establishes what the narrator was doing** **Connects with the idea of difference** **First person**

This is the opening to a persuasive piece about the *idea of turning points*. The purpose of this piece is to persuade people that they should celebrate the turning points in their lives:

When **I** was eight, my dad taught me how to make a fire. **I** remember holding the matches in my hand, terrified that **I'd** set fire to my hair, but so proud that **I** was allowed to do something this dangerous. My younger brother wasn't allowed: Dad said he had to wait until he was eight, too. It was the first time that **I'd** felt really grown up and it made me realise that, big or small, coming-of-age rituals are important for creating life's milestones. **We should all celebrate the turning points in our lives more.**	**Establishes what the narrator was doing** **Clear contention about the idea** **First person**

Tips for experimenting with this type of opening:

☐   Begin by relating an experience. Try using one of these phrases:
- *There I was, …*
- *When I was …*
- *Once, when …*
- *I used to think that …*
- *One of the most … in my life was …*
- *As I was …*
- *Recently*, I …*
- *(*or last week, last year, lately, etc…)*

Create a picture

By starting your writing with a picture, you help your reader to imagine what you are writing about and the sorts of people who are affected by this idea.

This is an opening to a feature article about the *idea of resilience*. The purpose of the piece is to explain how a group of older swimmers demonstrate strength in their daily swim:

The thin, early morning sun barely penetrates the clouds and the air has the crisp chill of autumn. Here, on Altona Beach, the water looks grey and uninviting. Standing with bare feet in the cold shallows is a small group of people. Their skin is goose-pimpled and none of them look like seasoned swimmers, but here, at the edge of the water, they are giggling and shrieking with nervous bravado.	Present tense Gives the specifics of place (Altona Beach) Puts people (the focus of the story) within the setting

This is an opening to a persuasive piece about the *idea of beauty*. The purpose of the piece is to argue that maintaining Western standards of beauty is a waste of time and money:

I want you to imagine the average nail salon in your local shopping centre. Inside it are shiny white benches with women sitting on either side. On one side are underpaid – often immigrant – workers wearing masks to protect their lungs from inhaling the toxic detritus of artificial nails. On the other side are women extending their hands, passively sitting and waiting for their nails to be tidied, trimmed, polished or extended into shapes that are impossible for the human body to produce naturally. Those having the manicures are willing to part with their valuable time (because time is money, after all) and their hard-earned cash, just so the small keratinaceous growths at the end of their fingers look beautiful. It's bizarre, isn't it?	Directly addresses the audience Gives an evocative description of place Labels people and behaviour so that the audience will judge

Tips for experimenting with this type of strategy:

- ☐ Describe a scene in present tense as if it's happening now.

- ☐ Describe a scene by zooming out and zooming in on details. See pages 118 and 131 for more tips on how to use this strategy.

- ☐ Use at least two different sensory descriptions (looks like, sounds like, feels like). See page 125 for more tips on how to use this strategy.

- ☐ Invite the audience to create a picture in their head. Use phrases such as: *Picture this: … Imagine a world where …, I want you to imagine …*

- ☐ Use positive or negative describing words to make something seem good or bad. See pages 203-204 for some suggestions.

Bodies

When you are writing to explain or persuade, your body paragraphs should do the following things:

- present information – this might be statistics, anecdotal evidence or the evidence of experts
- provide explanations and perspectives that show your audience how to think about the information.

There are several strategies you can use to do this. In this section of the book, we will provide models of these strategies, and show you the similarities and differences between explaining and persuasive writing. We will also give you some tips on how to apply them to your own writing.

Strategy	Page
☐ Present facts and then explanations	107
☐ Challenge other views	108
☐ Create an analogy	109

Look through the different strategies here, but as with openings, be aware that there could be others you can use – you might read or listen to a mentor text that has a different kind of body paragraph strategy. Being a good writer is about being able to adapt the ideas and strategies you see.

Present facts and then explanations

At the heart of any persuasive or explainer piece will be facts, information and explanation. Making these facts understandable for the reader is important in an explainer. In a persuasive piece, however, you need to be able to show how shocking or amazing these facts are.

This paragraph is from an explainer about *turning points*. Its purpose is to explain how people struggle to deal with turning points in their lives:

Recent research carried out by *Dealing with Depression* found that nine out of ten Australians do not have the resilience necessary to cope with a negative event in their lives. To put this into a personal context, this translates to almost all of your friends or family being at risk of suffering mental health problems if something goes wrong. And we all know that things go wrong in life. But most of your friends and family won't have the mental strength to cope with these negative turning points. That's why experts have labelled this a 'resilience crisis'.	Cites research Puts evidence into a personal context to explain its meaning Explains technical terms

This paragraph is from a persuasive piece about the *idea of play*. Its purpose is to argue that everyone should spend time in creative pursuits:

There is a huge body of research that provides overwhelming proof that creative play increases our neural plasticity. This means that our thinking is more bendable and adaptable. We can come up with ingenious solutions for problems. When we engage in creative pursuits, we allow our minds to see possibilities, to free ourselves from the rut of everyday thinking. So many scientific breakthroughs rely upon scientists first playing with ideas and imagining the impossible. What this tells us is that we should all engage in creative thinking to avoid getting stuck in our lives. We need to rise above boring, repetitive thoughts and engage in the world of awesome possibilities.	Cites research Descriptive words influence how we consider the research Explains the meaning of research Contention words

Tips for experimenting with this type of body paragraph:

☐ Try using describe and sequence words on pages 100 and 204 to introduce and explain evidence.

☐ Try citing and explaining evidence with the phrases from the table below.

Referring to research	Explaining	Using and defining technical terms
According to research from …	In other words ,…	Experts call this …
Recent research carried out by …	To put this into context …,	The technical term for this is …
A study of … by …	Another way to put this is …	This process is called …, also known as …
Scientists from … have discovered …	What this means …	Or in simpler terms …
Researchers from … have found …	What this tells us …	… what this means is …
There is a body of research that …	In comparison …	
The data about … suggests that …		

Challenge other views

When you rebut opposing arguments or address popular misconceptions in a piece, it shows you understand ideas your audience might already be aware of.

This is a paragraph from an explainer on the *idea of play*. Its purpose is to explain how we are all capable of being creative:

Many people think that you can't teach creativity – that you're either a creative person or you're not. We might read an incredible novel or look at an ingenious design for a product and think: 'I could never come up with something that creative – I'm just not a creative type'. But creativity can be learned. And the key is connecting our emotions to the creative process. Recent research from Chicago University shows that when children were given an opportunity to interact with art materials and encouraged to arrange the materials according to emotional associations, they could then use those materials to create much more imaginative art than children who didn't go through that process.	Misconception Example Rebuttal

This paragraph is from a persuasive piece on the *idea of country*. Its purpose is to argue that we need a new Australian flag:

Critics of creating a new Australian flag argue that it would be a waste of time and money that could be better spent on more practical ways to help everyday Australians. And while it's true that a new flag won't make milk cheaper or solve the rental crisis, it will make a huge impact on our sense of belonging. Around Australia, different groups unite under flags such as the Aboriginal flag, the LGBTIQ+ rainbow and the trade union Southern Cross. These symbols give people strength and improve their connection to a group. They help people understand what the group stands for. We should have an Australian flag that helps us to understand what modern Australia is all about, not a flag that only represents our historical past.	Opposing view Acknowledges point of view and challenges Example

Tip for experimenting with this type of body:

☐ Try responding to an opposing argument or misconception with the phrases from the table below.

Introduce	Respond
Many people argue that …	However,
Most people think that …	While this is true to an extent …
Many people falsely believe that …	But there is no evidence to support this …
There is a popular misconception that …	But what these critics don't say is …
Opponents of … argue that …	There are a few reasons this is wrong …
Critics of … argue that …	This is a myth because …
Those who are against … claim …	But …

Create an analogy

An analogy is a comparison between one thing and another. In an explainer or persuasive piece, analogies.

The following paragraph is from a persuasive piece on the *idea of protest*. Its purpose is to argue that we all should engage in disruptive protests:

Imagine that your parents refuse to buy your favourite breakfast cereal. You can deal with this in one of two ways. In the first way, you just tell your parents that you'd prefer to have a new kind of cereal and hope they buy it for you. The second way is more disruptive: every time your parents buy the wrong cereal, you empty the cereal box into their bed so that they get a crunchy surprise at bedtime. Sure, they'd get angry and probably tell you off, but after a few days of it, they'd give in and buy your cereal. This is how disruption works – you make it so uncomfortable for people to carry on with their normal lives that they'll give in to your demands. Protests need to be disruptive in order to work.	Analogy Links the analogy to the idea Contention

The following paragraph is from an explainer on the *idea of country*. Its purpose is to explain how we can influence others to care for the landscape they live in:

Humans are herd animals. Just like sheep who follow each other or birds who flock together, humans are programmed to sync with the actions of others. So, if we make one small, but public change to the way we interact with the physical world around us – such as having pot plants and planting colourful plants to attract butterflies – we show the people around us how to be interested in their own small patch of country. They will be able to mimic a member of their herd and make their own landscape a more attractive and inviting place. People are hardwired to mimic each other, especially if they like what they see. When people can see how their suburban piece of country can be more beautiful, they are more likely to try to create even more beauty.	Analogy Links the analogy to the idea Impact words

Tips for experimenting with this type of body:

☐ Compare one scenario to another: i.e. *This situation is no different to …; This case is the same as …*

☐ Use similes and metaphors: *… are just like …*

☐ Present a hypothetical situation: *Imagine if …; Imagine a situation where …*

☐ Use persuasive impact words. For suggestions, see pages 100 and 203.

Closings

You need to bring your writing to a clear and emphatic conclusion. The following section will demonstrate a few different strategies you can use to finish your writing. It will provide models of these strategies, and point out similarities and differences between explaining or persuasive writing. It will also give you some tips on how to apply it to your own writing.

Strategy	Page
☐　Reemphasise key points	111
☐　Leave a lasting image	112
☐　Make the problem simple	113

Look through the different strategies here, but as with openings and bodies, be aware that there could be others you can use – you might read or listen to a mentor text that has a different kind of closing strategy. Being a good writer is about being able to adapt the ideas and strategies you see.

Reemphasise key points

This type of closing repeats or summarises key information, which provides the audience with a simple way of remembering your ideas.

This is a closing from an explainer about the *idea of play*. Its purpose is to explain how play is a fundamental part of being human:

All of the above evidence **suggests** that humans have evolved to play. Humans play to build a sense of camaraderie, play to relieve stress and even play to learn. Play is fundamental to being human.	Key idea using **neutral** language. Key points from body paragraphs

This is a closing from a persuasive piece about the *idea of personal journeys*. Its purpose is to argue that the internet manipulates us and that journeys are more free when we do them offline:

What it boils down to is this: online algorithms are not your friend, they're your **enemy**. They will **hunt** you down, **twist** you, **manipulate** you and push you in directions you really don't want to go. If you value your freedom and want to make your life a unique personal journey, you'll do it in real life, not online.	Summary of important information – uses words with a **negative** connotation. Persuasive instruction

Tips for experimenting with this type of closing:

☐   Try using one of the phrases below to summarise key information in your piece:

- *All of the above evidence suggests …*
- *In a nutshell …*
- *What it all boils down to is …*
- *All of this can be summarised …*
- *Ultimately, what's most important to remember …*
- *At the heart of all of this is …*
- *In essence, …*
- *In the final analysis, …*
- *In the end, …*
- *What all of this ultimately means is …*

☐   Try using impact or describe words from pages 100 and 203.

Leave a lasting image

In this type of closing, the writer describes a scene or creates a picture of the future. This provides an image that stays with the reader.

The following closing is from a persuasive piece on the *idea of protest*. Its purpose is to argue that we all should engage in disruptive protests:

In the end, you have to ask yourself: Do you want to live in a world where we all just 'go along' with what's happening because it's easy and convenient? A world where everyone minds their own business and ignores the problems around them? A world where the rich and powerful can do whatever they want because it would be rude to disrupt them? Of course not! So, get out there and disrupt things! Get out there and protest!	Rhetorical questions that describe a hypothetical world Persuasive instruction

This closing is from an explainer about the *idea of play*. Its purpose is to explain how play is important for mental health:

When you're suffering from depression, life can often seem grey, flat and uninteresting. It's also much easier to focus on the difficult and challenging parts of your life that seem insurmountable. That's where play can help, by shifting your focus from your troubles and flooding your brain with feel-good hormones.	Description of the issue Key idea with **neutral word**

Tips for experimenting with this type of closing:

☐ Use these phrases to help you create a picture for the audience:

- *When you're …, … can seem …*
- *At the moment things are …*
- *While … can be best described as …*

☐ See pages 118, 125 and 131 for some more tips on creating a picture.

Make the problem simple

Many persuasive pieces and explainers outline problems. An effective way to finish these types of pieces is to provide an outline of a solution that seems straightforward and achievable to the audience.

This closing is from a persuasive piece on the *idea of country*. Its purpose is to argue that we need a new Australian flag:

It's clear that we need a new flag to unite the country. **All we need to do is** invite the public to submit potential designs. When the ideas come flooding in, we can then vote for the design we feel best reflects who we are as a nation. **We need a new flag to connect us as Australians.** This is a powerful opportunity to do it.	**Phrase that indicates the solution is simple** **Restates the contention (with *need, must, should* or *ought*)**

This is a closing for an explainer about the *idea of influences*. The purpose of this piece is to explain how online influencers make us more homogenous:

If any of this information makes you feel like you're being overly influenced by beauty trends on Instagram or TikTok, there are a **few easy steps** you might consider taking. You **can** change the algorithms that suggest what you watch by searching for influencers of different ages, abilities and interests. You **could even suggest** new and weird people for your friends to follow. Finally, **you could** start looking at the people around you and all of the weird and wonderful ways they are beautiful.	**Phrase that indicates the solution is simple** **Solutions are suggested in neutral language**

Tips for experimenting with this type of closing:

☐ If you're writing a persuasive piece, use more forceful phrases to introduce the next step:
- *It's clear that …*
- *Everything points to …*
- *All the evidence unequivocally shows that …*
- *All we need to do is …*
- *What we now need to do is …*
- *It's obvious that we must …*
- *It's a no-brainer that we should immediately …*

☐ If you're writing an explainer, you want to provide possible next steps in neutral language:
- *An easy step …*
- *A straightforward solution …*
- *You can think about …*
- *You could …*
- *One possibility you might consider …*
- *Here are a few suggestions to try: …*

Writing to express or reflect

There are a lot of similarities between writing to express and reflect. Both purposes require a description that shows your audience how to understand different perspectives and life views. However, there are a few subtle differences:

→ reflective writing is more *personal* and usually involves the writer exploring their changing understanding of something

→ reflective writing is usually based on true events, although they might be made more dramatic in order to entertain the audience

→ expressive writing can be from different perspectives, including the writer taking on a different *persona*, or imagining the world from an alternative angle

→ expressive writing is usually the kind of writing that people would call 'creative writing'.

Structural features

Below are a range of ways you can open, develop and conclude both expressive and reflective writing. Because description is at the heart of these two types of writing, one of the key strategies is to *describe*.

Openings	☐ Describe the setting
	☐ Introduce a person or a character
	☐ Action sequence
	☐ Statement of belief*
Bodies	☐ Describe action
	☐ Describe people
	☐ Describe places or things
	☐ Describe an idea
Closings	☐ Looking back
	☐ Looking forward
	☐ Final action**

*For reflective
**For expressive

Language features

Expressive and reflective writing share many descriptive characteristics. Where they differ is that expressive writing tends to describe how people, actions, places or things *show* something. On the other hand, reflective writing often directly *tells* how something feels.

Let's look at two examples, both writing about the idea of country:

> **Expressive**
>
> *The old tree grew like an upstretched hand towards the sky and from his platform in the old tree, Luca surveyed the overgrown, abandoned block over the fence. From his vantage point, he could see the slab of concrete that was perfect for practising skateboarding, flowering weeds blooming at its edge. In the distance, he could hear the hum of traffic, moving past and hurrying somewhere else. Past him.*
>
> **Reflective**
>
> *My old treehouse was cradled in the palm of the biggest tree in our backyard, high above the abandoned block next door. When I was here, I felt both alone and the king of my own domain. Looking across the block, I could see the cans left by teenage drinkers lying alongside the flowering weeds that ran rampantly, gloriously in defiance of the neat suburban gardens around. A real wilderness. It seemed like this abandoned country was mine.*

Expressive and reflective writing share these features:

Short and long sentences	Some sentences are 20 words or longer and some sentences are 5 words or fewer.
Sentences begin in a range of ways	Each sentence begins with a different word.
Active and specific verbs and adverbs	• Strong verbs describe what things do: "Luca *surveyed* …" • Adverbs describe how something is done: "*rampantly*, *gloriously*"

The two pieces of writing have these differences:

- **Expressive writing 'shows':** Expressive writing seeks to show feelings. To do this, the expressive piece suggests how Luca is left alone, rather than stating he was alone: *"In the distance, he could hear the hum of traffic, moving past and hurrying somewhere else. Past him."*
- **Reflective writing 'tells':** Reflective writing relates to the writer's feelings. This means the writer explicitly tells their feelings in a number of places: *"It seemed like", "I could see".*

Openings

Whether you are writing to express or reflect, your opening should somehow be engaging. In this section of the book, we will show you a number of different ways to begin your writing and some of the differences and similarities between these openings.

Strategy	Page
☐ Describe the setting	118
☐ Introduce a person or a character	119
☐ Action sequence	120
☐ Statement of belief*	121

*For reflective

Look through the different strategies here, but be aware that there could be others you can use – you might read or listen to a mentor text that has a different kind of opening strategy. Being a good writer is about being able to adapt the ideas and strategies you are aware of.

Describe the setting

By beginning your writing with a description of the setting, you help your reader to imagine the particular environment you are writing about and the sorts of values or beliefs of the people who are in it.

This is an example of an opening to a short story about the *idea of other worlds*. The purpose of the short story is to express the struggle to survive in a dystopian environment:

In front of me, the arena was bare and lifeless. Heat rose from the gravel in stifling waves that distorted the air and made it difficult to see the opposite side. **The glare made me squint,** but when **I focused, I could see the dark splotches on the gravel around me.** I preferred not to think about those and instead concentrated on the hushed quiet of the crowd all around me. **Into this silence, the grinding sound of the gate** on the far side drew everyone's attention.	**Big picture 'zoom out' description** **Multi-sensory (looks like, sounds like, feels like)** **'Zoom in' description**

This is an opening to a reflection about the *idea of country*. Its purpose is to reflect on how country means different things to different people:

As they walked into the suburban supermarket, they knew they'd made a terrible mistake. The **fluorescent lights** highlighted the small **selection of carrots, potatoes and turnips in the vegetable section. Where was the nog gai (coriander)? The hung que (Thai basil)? The bac ha (mint)? Didn't Australians eat herbs at all?** The meat was wrapped in plastic and it was impossible to see how fresh it was. There were so many cans! **It's almost impossible for me to really imagine how hard it was for my grandparents when they first arrived in Melbourne.** For them, Vietnam was their home and everything here was foreign. For me, Australia is home and supermarkets are normal. That's because this country means so many different things to the different people who live here.	**Big picture 'zoom out' description** **'Zoom in' to details** **Something that is missing** **Link to personal reflection**

Tips for writing this type of opening:

☐ To describe a setting, first, zoom out and write a 'big picture' description of the place. Then, zoom in on 2–3 specific details.

☐ For more tips about the multi-sensory things you can describe, see page 131.

☐ Begin your sentences with extra information words like *in*, *as* or *for* to give more description about where or how things are happening. See page 131 for more information.

Introduce a person or character

Starting with a short description of a character or group of people works well for pieces that focus on the actions of a person or group, such as a personal reflection, biography or short story.

This is an opening to a short story about the *idea of protest*. The purpose of the story is to express how people can be moved to feel outrage and then protest:

If you could divide the world into two categories – complainers and non-complainers – then Esme was a non-complainer. She put up with everything. When her older brothers hogged all the chocolate for dessert, she said nothing. If someone rudely shoved past her in a crowd, she shrugged her shoulders. If the teachers at school forgot her name from time to time, she simply accepted it as her fate. On the outside, nothing seemed to ruffle her. But on the inside, something was seething.	Key characteristic Example of key characteristic Connects characteristic to the story

This opening is from a reflective piece on the *idea of personal journeys*. The purpose of this piece is to reflect on an experience of journeying beyond your comfort zone.

I've never really considered myself a risk-taking person. I hate doing anything spontaneous, I dreaded the high ropes course at Year 8 camp, and any type of performance is a definite no-no. I'm more of a 'follow the rules and plan everything six months ahead' type of person. That's why the time my friend Arjun texted out of the blue and invited me to go camping that very same afternoon really sticks in my head as a major personal journey.	Key characteristic Example of key characteristic Connects characteristic to the story

Tips for writing this type of opening:

☐ For a reflective piece, use phrases like these to introduce a key characteristic about yourself:
- *I've never really thought of myself as …*
- *The thing about me is that …*
- *Those who know me understand that …*
- *Before I get into …, I should explain to you a few things about myself first:*
- *I'd say the words that best describe me are …*
- *Ask anyone about me, and they'll tell you …*

☐ Use words and phrases like the ones below to describe things that you personally or a character you're writing about always do or never do. For example, *I never break the rules.*

never	*always*
hardly ever	*only ever*
am unable to	*all the time*
cannot	*completely*

☐ Over 2–3 sentences, provide a range of examples that demonstrate a key characteristic.

Action sequence

Action sequences are an engaging way of getting your reader involved from the very beginning of your writing. An action sequence should demonstrate a typical quality about a person or group.

This is the opening to a short story about the *idea of play*. The purpose of the story is to express how the protagonist's imaginative experience of the world allows her to cope with reality:

Peering cautiously around the bush she is hiding behind, she sees no robbers. Good. The coast is clear. She drags her (motor)bike out from behind the bush, checking to see that the piece of cardboard is still firmly pegged to the prongs of her wheel. She jumps onto the seat of her (motor) bike and pedals furiously away, the cardboard making a satisfying roaring sound as it whips against the spokes of her (motor)bike, making it sound like the real thing.	Opening sentence describes a person and provides a glimpse of action Following sentences provide more details about the person, action and place

This opening is from a reflective piece about the *idea of beauty*. The purpose of the piece is to reflect on how hard it is to meet expectations about beauty in the teenage years:

First, it was being hit by puberty and a growth spurt that turned my limbs into tent poles with weird knobs and gave my underarms and legs wolverine-like hair. Then, it was a rash of acne that spread over me like scabby tomato sauce that would never wash off. And finally, it was the all-important school formal, where I knew that I would look like a diseased scarecrow in a tuxedo. People tell me that being handsome is not the most important thing in the world, but that's just the kind of thing adults tell ugly kids. Because being attractive IS important – and being unattractive is just, well, it's hard.	Opening sentences describe a series of events and their personal consequences Concluding sentence introduces the topic for reflection

Tips for writing this type of opening:

☐ Start with an *-ing* word to describe exactly what a person is doing.

☐ Use short sentences to make the action seem faster.

☐ List things that happened, using sentence starters such as:
- *First … Then …*
- *It began with … Then it was …*
- *At first … Later …**

☐ You could also begin a reflective piece by relating an experience. Look at the examples on page 104 (share an experience explain/persuade) to help you with this

You can find more markers of time and sequence on page 132 to help you.

Statement of belief

Starting with a statement of belief works well in reflective writing where a person is explaining something they have learnt.

This is an example of a recount of the *idea of journeys*. The purpose of the recount is to reflect on the writer's realisation that it's important to arrive somewhere on a journey:

You know the saying 'it doesn't matter about the destination, it's the journey that's important'? People say it all the time, usually when you've got lost as hell and you want to make everyone feel okay – like it really was fun to spend all that time in the car and go to a crappy takeaway store for a greasy, cold lunch. So, this story is all about how I learnt that the destination is the most important part of the journey. The destination is a better you. And that's pretty important.	Summary of a belief Indication of how or why it's important Signposting of how the belief will be important to the rest of the text

Tips for writing this type of opening:

☐ Start with a sentence starter like this:

- *People say …*
- *I've always thought …*
- *You know the saying that …*
- *I grew up thinking that …*
- *Have you ever heard …*
- *I used to think that …*
- *For the longest time, I believed that …*
- *Where I grew up, people often said …*

☐ Introduce the reflective idea with phrases such as:

- *So I've learned that …*
- *This made me realise …*
- *That's what helped me to understand …*
- *That's when I realised …*
- *Gradually, it dawned on me …*
- *Now I know better …*
- *But that was years ago, now …*
- *I no longer think that …*
- *And it's true …*

Bodies

In the body paragraphs of your expressive and reflective writing, you'll mainly be concerned with describing things. In reflecting writing, this will often involve relating an action or idea and then describing your feelings about it. In expressive writing, you'll build pictures of events, people and places. Over the next few pages, you'll find models of what this can look like in both express and reflect pieces.

Strategy	Page
☐ Describe the action	123
☐ Describe people	124
☐ Describe places or things	125
☐ Describe an idea	126

Look through the different strategies here, but be aware that there could be others you can use – you might read or listen to a mentor text that has a different kind of strategy. Being a good writer is about being able to adapt ideas and strategies.

Describe action

People's actions represent their values and beliefs. So describing actions can be a powerful way of representing ideas in your writing.

This is a body paragraph from a reflective piece on the *idea of influences*. **The purpose of this piece is to reflect on how being an influencer can shape all the decisions you make in your life:**

Every single day I post about my daily life: what I'm wearing, eating, doing or where I'm going. I never miss a post. Rain. Hail. Shine. It's important to me that you wear your heart on your sleeve. And Insta. But recently I've started questioning how much my daily posting impacts on my everyday decisions. And am I wearing this shirt because I want to or because I think my followers will like it? Am I actually enjoying taking this selfie or does it mean that I'm not living in the moment? I'm realistic enough to see that Insta is directing my life choices, not me. It kinda sucks.	Describes action Links to key idea and purpose in piece Word choice connects to main idea

This is from an expressive recount of the *idea of play*. **The purpose of this piece is to express how play helps us to escape from reality:**

Eyes focused on the screen in front of him, Ayden successfully manoeuvres through the virtual rubble in front of him, so absorbed in the cyber world that he is unaware of all reality. I watch him enviously, knowing that while he plays he gets to escape from the reality of our lives, from the knowledge that our mother is slowly slipping away in the room right next door. I hear the faint cry from her room. He doesn't. Of course he doesn't. I sigh loudly and, as I stand up, I deliberately obstruct his view. If I don't get to play, no one else does either.	Describes action Links to key idea and purpose in piece Word choice connects to main idea

Tips for writing this type of body paragraph:

☐ Try describing two or more actions in a single sentence (i.e. *I **watch** him enviously, **knowing** that while he **plays** he **gets to escape** from the reality of our lives*).

☐ Try listing actions in a sentence (i.e. *what I'm wearing*, *eating*, *doing* or *where I'm going*).

☐ Try introducing an action with one of these markers of time:

- *everyday*   *often*
- *routinely*   *sometimes*
- *all the time*   *once*
- *without fail*   *never*
- *recently*   *when I was*

For more examples of markers of time and sequence, see page 132.

Describe people

An audience will want to understand the people you are writing about. So describing people should be about more than just their appearance – it should help your audience understand how your person or character behaves, moves and thinks.

This is from a story about the *idea of country*. Its purpose is to express how people are shaped by the country they live in:

Her blue eyes are a faded reflection of the sky and the lines at their corners are reminders that she has spent a lifetime squinting into the distance. Her hands are brown, tanned and spotted by the sun, but surprisingly soft from the lanolin in her sheep's fleece. She looks at me now, tired amusement on her face, and gestures with those soft hands, "Of course, you need to leave, you need to find something that suits you more. The country is perfect for me, but you need something else. Something that you won't find here."	Describes action Links to key idea and purpose in piece Word choice connects to main idea

This is from a reflective piece about the *idea of protest*. Its purpose is to reflect on how protest is a fundamental human duty:

When I think about the ideal protester, I think of my uncle, a man of firm and unshakeable convictions. He thought that we should all be trying to make life better and that people who didn't protest were people who were okay with injustices. Although forced to spend his life in a wheelchair, my uncle never took anything sitting down. He always moved his arms vigorously, in defiance of the legs that he described as "purely for decorative purposes". He loved a pun, and whenever he got angry about some kind of social injustice he would talk about "ramping up" his actions. That's wheelchair humour for you. He regularly wrote letters to local politicians and sat beside tram stops, holding up the whole tram until someone came to help him. He inspired me to realise that you can and should bring protest into your everyday life. Because making life fairer is something that concerns us all, isn't it?	Describes action Links to key idea and purpose in piece Word choice connects to main idea

Tips for writing body paragraphs like:

☐ Describe someone in at least two different ways. See page 131 for suggestions about different things you can describe.

☐ Describe what a person does or likes, not just what they look like.

☐ Use extra information words at the beginning of a sentence to add more description about a person. See page 131 for a list of extra information words.

☐ Have a series of descriptions in the one sentence (i.e. *She was …, … and …*).

☐ Use *-ly* adverbs (i.e. *vigorously*, *defiantly*, *bitterly*) to add extra descriptive detail about how people act.

Describe places or things

Describing objects and settings will help your reader to create a vivid mental image. You should aim to describe different and unexpected things to keep your reader engaged.

This is from a recount about recovering from a flood, as a response to the *idea of personal journeys*. Its aim is to express how personal journeys can be difficult and lonely:

This morning I woke up and thought about burning the place down. I knew it would be a long journey to recovery and I thought that I wouldn't make it. You wouldn't believe the stink of rotting carpet. It's like a sheep has wandered into our lounge room and died there. We spent yesterday pulling up the carpet and each time we lifted a segment, a new waft of rancid death fumes reached our noses. It's seeping into my skin and even after I've showered, I can still smell mouldering wool. Each day I am confronted by a new problem to solve and a new heartbreak.	Describes a place Links to key idea and purpose in piece Word choice suggests and shows main idea

This is part of a reflective essay on the *idea of beauty*. It aims to reflect on the idea that the pursuit of beauty has an ugly side:

Recently, Mum has told me that I need to be responsible for cleaning my own clothes – including my sneakers. So I spent last weekend with the sneaker whitener, trying to restore my sneakers to their whitest and brightest. And boy, did those babies gleam. I definitely did a better job than Mum, but I went through a whole container of whitener and when I took the empty container to the bin, I made the mistake of looking into it. Inside were empty Lynx canisters, used tubes of toothpaste, bottles of pimple cream and face cleanser, all clanking over each other and oozing their disused contents into a foul swamp at the bottom of the bin. Disgusted, I chucked the sneaker whitener on top. But as I walked back to my room to spray myself with 'Africa' and get rid of the bin-smell in my nostrils, I realised the ugly side of my efforts to look good. I was looking good, but the planet? Not so much.	Describes action Links to key idea and purpose in piece Word choice connects to main idea

Tips for writing body paragraphs like:

- ☐ Try describing a place or thing by first zooming out and writing a 'big picture' description of it, then, zooming in on 2–3 specific details. See page 118 for some more examples of the zoom out and zoom in strategy.

- ☐ Use a short sentence to zoom in on a particularly vivid detail of a place or thing.

- ☐ Try using at least two extra information words in a sentence to describe different details. See page 131 for a list of extra information words.

- ☐ Write at least two different sensory descriptions of a place or thing (i.e. looks like, sounds like, feels like, tastes like).

- ☐ Use personifying words to describe a place or thing as somehow like a human (i.e. *Mournfully, the tree stared down at me*).

Describe an idea

At the heart of this area of study is a focus on ideas. Therefore, a good writer will help their audience to understand the key idea in a variety of ways.

This is part of a reflective piece on the *idea of journeys*. Its purpose is to reflect on the idea that life is a journey:

Xavier Rudd once wrote, "breathe, breathe in the air; cherish this moment; cherish this breath". And for the longest time I really just thought it was a song for people who did yoga. But recently I listened to the whole song. Really listened to it. Maybe I was just burned out from the latest round of assessment tasks, but I realised something. I've been treating Year 12 like it's a race to the finish line, like the destination matters more than the actual journey. But at the end of this year, I'm not going to be seeing my friends every day; I'm not going to have this experience ever again. So, it made me realise that we need to take the time out of our crazy, ambitious life plans and journeys and just … stop. Stop trying to go anywhere. Stop aiming for something new. Something better. We need to just cherish each moment.	Describes an idea or feeling Links to overall purpose and idea of piece Word choice connects to the main idea

This is part of an expressive piece on *play*. Its purpose is to express the idea that play is a way of experiencing risk:

For Liz, Bremlea Beach meant adventure. It was a place where you could find hidden caves and play epic games of hide and seek in the sand hills. Importantly, it was somewhere where you could also come to a sticky end. From time to time there were shark sightings. One time, a man drowned – pulled out to sea by the hungry rip. It wasn't always safe: danger added a frisson of fear and excitement to her play.	Describes action Links to key idea and purpose in piece Word choice connects to main idea

Tips for writing body paragraphs like:

☐ To insert a quote in a reflective piece, try using one of these phrases:

- *… once said …*
- *… once wrote …*
- *In the words of …*
- *My favourite song lyric is …*
- *It is often said that …*
- *Many people believe …*
- *Conventional wisdom has it that …*

☐ Use a statement of belief to write about an idea in a reflective piece. See page 121 for some suggestions.

☐ To describe an idea, feeling or memory that you or a character in a story connects with something, try using one of these phrases on pages 128 and 132.

Closings

It's often difficult to know how to end your writing so that it feels 'finished'. Looking at your mentor texts again and thinking about the ways they close will be a very important strategy, but this section will also show you a range of ways you can finish your piece.

Strategy	Page
☐ Looking back	128
☐ Looking forward	129
☐ Final action	130

*For expressive pieces

Looking back

This type of ending is about thinking back over events and trying to make sense of them. It can be an effective way for you to articulate what you have learned from an experience or person. Here are the important things a 'looking back' closing should have:

- an indication of something you've learned
- statements that connect to the key idea.

This is from a reflective piece about the *idea of influences*. Its purpose is to reflect on the idea that we all influence each other:

I guess I've always thought about the ways I feel influenced by the people around me, and how other people made me feel better or worse when I was with them. Before this happened, I'd never imagined that I could be the influencer and that the impact I'd have on another human could be so negative.	Statements that connect to the key idea of influences Key learning

This is from an expressive piece about the *idea of beauty*. Its purpose is to express how beauty is in the eye of the beholder:

Almira was a passionate lover of beauty who felt that every day was an opportunity to wear beautiful, outlandish things. So she festooned herself in loud costume jewellery and sequins. She wanted to be covered with beautiful things. We thought she was a local character, a bit of a joke. But she was out there every day, living her values. She wanted to bring more beauty to the world and, in her own inimitable way, she did.	Key learning Statements that connect to the key idea of beauty

Tips for writing closings like this:

☐ Try using one of these phrases to summarise something important you've learned:
- *I guess I've always thought …*
- *Before …, I'd never imagined that …*
- *Looking back, I now realise …*
- *What I've learned from all this is …*
- *The most important thing I've come to understand from … is …*
- *Now, when I look back at … I see that …*
- *Ultimately, I think that …*
- *I still haven't quite made up my mind about …*
- *There are many lessons I've taken away from …, but the most important is that …*

☐ Try using one of these phrases to summarise something about the life of another person:
- *[Name]'s … greatest achievement was …*
- *The most remarkable thing about [name]'s life was …*
- *Of all the incredible ways [name] contributed to …, perhaps [her/his/their] greatest contribution was …*
- *There are many lessons I've taken away from [name]'s life …, but the most important is that …*

☐ Try creating a list in one sentence of the key character attributes and beliefs of a person (i.e. *Almira was a passionate lover of beauty who felt that every day was an opportunity to wear beautiful, outlandish things*).

Looking forward

This kind of closing helps your reader to imagine what's going to happen next and makes them imagine a future world that you have hinted at. It can include:

- a statement about what is going to happen in the future (or what to look forward to)
- phrases that connect to the key idea.

This is from a feature article about the *idea of country*. Its purpose is to express hope about how we can care for the country:

After we had grieved for the landscape that we once had, it was time to rebuild and replant. The fires had destroyed the native forest that I grew up with, but I was determined to help bring them back. One small sapling at a time.	**Statement about the future** **Phrases that connect to the key *idea of country***

This is from a reflective autobiography about the *idea of journeys*. Its purpose is to reflect on how we have to have optimism to face the future:

Everyone keeps asking me how I'm so brave about the past, but I'm not. I couldn't care less about the past, unless it's got a funny story I can tell at the dinner table. I want to know whether the last book in the *Nevermoor* series is ever going to be published.	**Phrases that connect to the key idea of *resilience*** **Statement about the future**

Tips for writing closings like this:

☐ Trying using one of these phrases to write a statement about the future:

- *After we had …, it was time to …*
- *After they had …, it was time to …*
- *When … had finally come to an end, I could begin to …*
- *When … had finally come to an end, they could begin to …*
- *I want to know …*
- *Looking ahead, I want to …*
- *Over the next stage of my …, I want …*
- *As I consider the future, I think …*
- *While I'm content at the moment to just …, I think that in the future …*

Person has a final action

In these sorts of endings, the person or character you are writing about goes back to their lives as your writing finishes. In this sort of ending, you should include:

- an action
- a reference to the key idea

This is from an expressive piece about the *idea of protest*. Its purpose is to express that protest requires breaking the rules:

He grins cheekily at me and reaches for the can of spray paint. "Unless you want to be part of a criminal protest, you'd better leave now", he says, as he starts to shake the can.	Phrases that connect to the key idea of country Actions

Tips for writing closings like this:

- ☐ In a single sentence, describe two actions that are representative of a character (i.e. *He grins cheekily at me and reaches for the can of spray paint*).
- ☐ Use dialogue to represent a character's belief.

Strategies and vocabulary for reflective and expressive writing

Things you can describe

Big things you can describe	Details within the larger thing
The setting	sounds smells light weather the size of the space temperature buildings
Objects	things a character interacts with decorations or interesting features food furniture
How a character …	speaks gestures moves holds their body has different expressions feels or thinks looks (body, hair, clothing, face)
Feelings and ideas	how big or deep a feeling is what an idea or feeling does to you (i.e. *Anger seeped through me.*) the familiarity of an idea (is it new or old?) how widespread a feeling or idea is how people react to it

Extra information words

above	below	from	under
across	beneath	in	underneath
against	beside	into	until
along	between	inside	throughout
although	before	from	to
around	beyond	near	while
among	by	off	when
at	despite	on	with
as	during	over	within
behind	for	past	without

Markers of time and sequence

Markers of...			
Time	to begin with from the very beginning at the outset for decades for years initially	as time went by after a while fast forward [a year, a decade, etc] and … in time then later in the meantime	in the end ultimately after all of this finally
Sequence	first before anything else let's start by looking at early	while this was happening at this point during this never ever	consequently therefore as a result of this inevitably

Phrases to introduce a personal reflection

Writing personally	Writing about someone else
Last [week, year, etc] … Recently, … When I was … Once when I … Whenever I see …, I always think of … … always reminds me of … I can never … without thinking of … I can't help but associate … with … In my mind, I always connect … with … To me, … means …	When [name] was … Once when [name] … For [name], … was a place of … Whenever [name] saw, [she/he/they] always thought of … … always reminded [name] of … … in [name]'s mind … always meant …

Phrases to personally respond to something

Ask questions	Ponder answers
I've started asking myself … I wonder why … I can't help but wonder … More and more, I've come to wonder … All I can think of is why … I can't help thinking about … … has made me wonder whether … Why is it that…? The first thing that springs to my mind about …, is the question …?	The thing is … I can't work out whether that answer is … or … The answer that keeps coming to me is … What I'm coming to realise is … It's becoming obvious to me that … Events have made me realise that … I like … but … Turning this over in my head, I feel that …

Edit and refine

No matter what form or purpose you have chosen, you will need to practise, draft and revise your writing. Don't just wait until your teacher gives you feedback – think about advice that you can get from your peers or other people who might read your work. When you are revising writing, there are some basic strategies you can apply to make sure you are being as critical as possible about what has been written:

Strategy	How it works
BAR – Bigger, Add, Remove	**A basic way of assessing anything you've written is to ask yourself these three questions:** • **What can be bigger? What's interesting that I could make more important or emphasise more?** • **What can I add? What is something that is missing?** • **What can I remove? Is there any boring or irrelevant information I can cut out?** **Every time you use this technique, try to answer two of the questions to change and revise your writing. Be ruthless about cutting boring or irrelevant words out so that you can put more of the good stuff in.**
Read aloud	Good creative writing should have a rhythm and a 'flow'. The length, pace and mood of sentences should help a piece achieve its purpose. When you silently read a piece, you can't always 'hear' what it sounds like. Try reading your writing out loud to a peer or getting a peer to read your work out loud back to you. You can even record yourself reading your own writing and then listen back to it. Think about whether any sentences would sound better if they: • *Were longer or shorter:* Writing can be more interesting when it has a range of different sentence lengths. A long sentence followed by a very short sentence (or vice versa) can add interest. • *Had different punctuation:* When you are reading your piece aloud, you might notice that you naturally break the sentences up differently. Listen to a recording of your piece and try to annotate your writing with the pauses you can hear. • *Used other words:* Think about whether the words you are using are appropriate for the 'vibe' you want your piece to have. For example, are you using very complex words when you are trying to sound casual?
Sentence re-write	Often, people get into the habit of starting sentences in a similar way. Highlight all of the beginnings of your sentences. Identify any sentences you've written that start in the same way and re-write some of them so they start in a completely different and more interesting way.

Explain your writing decisions

This task requires you to produce a commentary that explains the decisions you made in creating one of your written pieces. In particular, your commentary should have:

An introduction:

The introduction of your piece should discuss the ideas in your writing:

- How did you engage overall with the big idea of the unit?
- If you are responding to a prompt, in what way is your piece doing this?
- How did you develop a specific purpose for your piece?

Paragraphs:

Each of your paragraphs should focus on a different section of your writing:

- What different openings, bodies and closings did you experiment with?
- What specific language and technique choices did you make?
- How did other texts or learning about the writing process influence your piece?
- What was the impact of your writing choices on the purpose of your piece?

This commentary needs to be a substantial piece of writing because it should reflect the learning you have done in this unit and how you understand the writing choices that you have made. To ensure your commentary is detailed and reflects the writing process, refer back to the notes and plans you made for your piece.

Introduction

The introduction to your commentary should explain how your piece is relevant to the big idea of your unit. Here are some questions your introduction should address::

→ How did you engage overall with the big idea of the unit?

→ If you are responding to a prompt, in what way is your piece doing this?

→ How did you develop a specific purpose for your piece?

Here's an example:

One of the things that interested me most about the idea of play was creative play because I have a long-standing interest in fantasy role-playing. I had thought I could write persuasively about how we should all engage in fantasy play to make us more original thinkers. However, I found it very difficult to respond like this to the prompt 'Play makes anything possible' and I had to come up with a new contention about how we should all engage in fantasy play to help us understand how creative play makes anything possible. When I did some research to support my arguments and started using some of these facts in my writing, I noticed that I was explaining things more than I was arguing about them. Not only that, but most of my best research was not about fantasy worlds. I was using research and studies about creativity. So, I changed my purpose to writing an explainer, which reflected the writing I was actually producing.	**Engagement with the big idea** **Response to the prompt** **Development of purpose**

Tips for explaining your idea:

☐ Try using some of the phrases below to explain your decisions:

Engagement with the big idea:

• *As a …, I have personal experience with the idea of … and how it …*

• *The idea of … means … to me.*

• *When I think about the idea of … I think of …*

• *One of the things that interested me about … was … because …*

• *For me, at the very heart of … is …*

• *To me, the idea of … means more than just …, it is also …*

• *One of the important issues at the heart of the idea of … is …*

Your experience of responding to a prompt:

• *Having a prompt made …*

• *It was challenging to respond to this prompt because …*

• *I found it … to respond to this prompt because …*

• *The prompt helped me to …*

• *Responding to the prompt meant that …*

Developing purpose:

• *From the outset, I had decided to … since …*

• *My initial plan was … because …*

• *I developed a … piece, which suited me because …*

• *My purpose was to … and …*

• *I wanted to create a … because …*

• *While I originally thought I would …, I found … So, …*

• *I had thought … However, …*

• *When I first …, I realised that … As a result …*

Paragraphs

Most of your commentary should be dedicated to explaining the writing decisions you made in the opening, body and closing of your piece. In this part of the commentary, you should explain:

- What different openings, bodies and closings did you experiment with?
- What specific language and technique choices did you make?
- How did other texts or learning about the writing process influence your piece?
- What was the impact of your writing choices on the purpose of your piece?

An effective way to structure this part of your commentary is to write a paragraph about each section of your piece. Here's an example:

One of the things I struggled most with when writing my explainer was how to present information in an interesting way. From looking at other explainers, I knew that for my piece to be effective, it would need to make the facts and evidence both understandable and enjoyable to read. So, I tried a few different ways of opening my piece to achieve this. The first way was just by outlining some important research from a university about using creative play to as a way of seeing possible new solutions to problems. But after reading through it a few times and getting some feedback, I dismissed it as an uninteresting beginning. In class, we had learnt about challenging an attitude or belief people generally have. I realised it was much more interesting to start by saying, "Many people think that creative play is a waste of time". After making this statement, I then moved on in my opening to cite the research from Chicago University. Putting this information later in the opening meant that the audience was no longer bombarded with facts, but instead got a reason for why they should keep reading.	**Paragraph focuses on the opening** Influence of other texts Different types of openings that were attempted Language choice Analysis of impact of writing choices
An important way I responded to the prompt throughout my body paragraphs was by using a vocabulary list. I used words like "innovative" and "imaginative approaches to leisure" to make sure I was linking the idea of creativity to play, as well as using words like "capability" and "opportunities" to link to the idea of "possibility". My first draft had too much information, making it too dense and boring. I also tended to just summarise the information, rather than giving the reader a reason to think about it. One of the things we learnt about in class was that explainer writing is trying to show your reader why it's important to think about the information. So, on my second draft, I removed about half the examples and spent more time explaining the significance of the examples I'd left in. I used phrases like "think about it like this" and "another way to put this is …" To add humour, I also inserted an analogy comparing neural plasticity to a bag of two-minute noodles – because they can both do anything! This meant that the body of my piece became less information-heavy and more entertaining.	**Paragraph focuses on the body** Language choice Analysis of impact of writing choices Influence of learning about writing Technique choice
The closing was perhaps the easiest part of my piece to write because it was only two sentences long. I wanted to use the phrase "in conclusion", but my teacher pointed out that this was fairly unimaginative. Instead, I went for "in a nutshell", to introduce a neat recap of the main points for my reader. One of the things that helped me most with the closing was to think about what I found most interesting about what I'd been explaining and to put this into one easy-to-digest sentence.	**Paragraph focuses on the closing** Language choice Technique choice

Tips for explaining your choices in the opening, body and closing of your piece:

☐ Write one paragraph about each section of your piece.

☐ Look back at your drafts and notes to remind yourself of the ways you changed your piece.

☐ Try using some of the phrases below to explain your decisions:

Writing about each section of your piece:
* In my [opening/body/closing], I sought to …
* The overall structure of my piece is designed to …
* I have structured my piece in order to first … then … and ultimately …
* I began my piece with a … to …
* At the start of my piece, I used a … to …
* Throughout the body of my …. piece, I …
* In the body paragraphs of my … piece, I …
* At the end of my piece, I …
* Although during the body I had …, in my conclusion I wanted to …
* For the closing, I …

Provide examples of language and technique choice:
* I used phrases like …
* I used words like …
* By describing … as …
* By referring to … as …
* Through the technique …
* To create a sense of …,
* To evoke a feeling of …, I …
* One technique I used to … was …

Discuss impact of language and technique choice:
* This meant that …
* It was important in the piece that … so I …
* To create …
* In order to …
* … to link to the idea of …
* … to achieve my purpose of …
* … to make it less … and more …
* Rather than …, I … in order to …

Explain the impact of other texts or learning activities:
* In class we learnt about …, so I…
* One of the mentor texts we looked at …, so I …
* In one of the mentor texts, we looked at …, and I used this strategy to…
* During the unit, I read a text that …, which gave me an idea for …
* One of the mentor texts I found most useful was … because …
* My first draft was too … so …

Annotating writing for EAL

If you are an EAL student, you will need to comment on the writing decisions in one of your pieces through annotations. Following is an example of an annotated piece.

The piece is on the idea of *personal journeys* and responds to the prompt 'Journey through adversity'. Its purpose is to persuade an audience that being uncomfortable is important to personally grow:

We are all obsessed with being comfortable. We complain about school uniform being "uncomfortable". We complain if our classrooms are too hot, or too cold. I even complain if my class is "too far away" and I have to walk. But recently, I've started to wonder if our obsession with being comfortable is holding us back. And after a quick search on Google, I've realised that comfort stops us from personal growth. We need to embrace the idea of feeling a bit uncomfortable, because these are the moments that help us grow and develop as humans.	Engages audience with a short, sharp statement about a common attitude we have
	Words link to adversity
	Challenges the common attitude
	Intention, using instruction word *need*
	Words link to the idea of journey
We can probably all remember COVID lockdowns where we all hid in our houses, wearing only tracksuits and living on comfort food. When life got scary, we looked for things that were convenient and easy. Because it made us feel safe. We didn't want to be challenged, because the world was already scary enough. However, in those early weeks, when the whole world changed, we learned a lot about ourselves and our families. I'm not saying I want to ever go back to lockdown again, but looking back at it, I can see that we did most of our learning – like how to log on to a virtual classroom – in the early and uncomfortable days of COVID-19. It's when things get uncomfortable that we learn the most, so we should all do more to get out of our comfort zones.	Uses a shared experience with audience to create connection
	Words link to adversity
	Asks the audience to think differently about the shared experience
	Personal statement makes writer more relatable
	Short summary of main paragraph point, and restatement of intention, using *should*
Now we're all back at school again, we can complain *in person* about the things that make us feel bad about ourselves – like Year 12. You can see it around you everywhere: whenever a SAC looms, people start complaining. Like, it's the worst thing ever to feel anxious about a SAC. Seriously? Our biggest issue is that we might have to do a bit more study to get the mark we want? But we're supposed to feel a bit stressed so that we feel motivated to learn and do better. Learning is hard and stressful, and we need to embrace the struggle to learn and grow – and that makes us better people.	Continues to show understanding, awareness and connection with audience's experience
	Relatable example that will resonate with audience
	Humorously mocks own and audience's experiences, to show how ridiculous these attitudes are
	Intention, using instruction word *need*

When I came to Australia, I felt pretty uncomfortable. I didn't really speak the language and I didn't know how to get around the city. Going to a new school made me feel really worried and nervous and I thought I would never make any friends. Now though, I'm glad my parents made me come to Australia and I feel that it was a really good decision, even though it was so hard at the time. I've learned a lot and have become a much stronger and more independent person than I ever was before we moved. I'm not saying we all have to move countries to become a better person and I'm not talking about making you all suffer. I think everyone has the opportunity to do things that are a bit hard, like getting yourself to school, rather than having your parents drive you. Walking to school, riding a bike – that's not torture. Yes, it's harder than being driven, but it will help you learn to be more independent, and it will help you grow as a person.

So, while I still don't love being uncomfortable, because it feels weird and hard, I'm really trying to love the idea of being uncomfortable. Because I want to learn new things, which is hard. I want to go to new places and have new experiences, which I feel nervous about. Mostly, I don't want to only do things that make me comfortable, because that would mean I'm stuck. Learning and growing is hard. Year 12 is hard. But I don't want to be back in my cosy, hibernating world of being at home. I want to get out in the world and have new, exciting experiences. I want to grow as a human. And that means I have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. And you should too.

Relating this personal experience builds trust in the reader that the writer knows what they're talking about

Words link to idea of adversity

After talking about own experience, reconnects with the audience whose experience might be different

Words link to the idea of journey

Provides easy solutions that seem achievable for the audience

Linking phrase that indicates the writer is about to summarise the main point

Phrase that links to the prompt

Words link to idea of adversity

Uses word that means the opposite of journey, to show how important journey is

Repetition of the idea of journey emphasises the importance of growing as a human

Closing looks forward to the future: creates a positive argument about how things will be better and gives audience an instruction with *should*

Tips for annotating your writing:

☐ For each paragraph, do 3–4 annotations. This could include:
  - *how a technique or word choice you used helps achieve the purpose of a piece*
  - *how word choice links to a big idea or prompt*
  - *how you used words to link and sequence ideas*
  - *strategies you have used.*

☐ Try to make some of your annotations more detailed – use sentences of more than 10 words.

☐ Try using phrases on page 138 to explain the impact of your choices.

Analysing Argument

In this area of study, you will be required to analyse written, spoken or audiovisual persuasive texts. To analyse these persuasive texts, you'll need to be able to identify and discuss how a text uses three key elements:

- particular arguments to persuade its audience
- a structure to develop those arguments and persuade an audience
- specific techniques and language to emphasise its arguments and persuade an audience.

The rest of this chapter is divided into three sections that will show you how to identify, think and write about each of these elements.
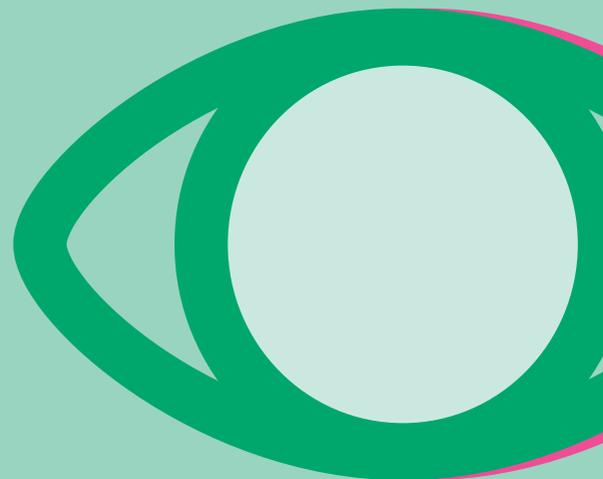
1. Think about audience and author

You will be able to identify and think about arguments and techniques in a persuasive piece more effectively if you first think about the values and interests of different audiences.

This section will help you identify audiences who:
- agree with the values of a publication
- have a specific interest or connection to a text
- value a particular author or presenter.

2. Annotate and take notes

Effective annotation and note-taking will help you focus your analysis and structure your writing better.

This section will show you how to annotate or take notes on:
- written and audio texts
- the author or presenter
- the intention
- the sections and arguments

3. Engage in micro-writing practice

You'll improve your writing more by practising specific elements of an analysis, rather than just writing whole pieces.

This section will show you how to:
- write introductions
- write body paragraphs
    - write topic sentences
    - analyse evidence
        * quotes
        * common techniques
        * visuals
        * speech
    - link analysis and sentences
        * write synthesising sentences
- write conclusions

Audience and author

The authors or producers of persuasive pieces have chosen arguments that they believe will persuade their audience. So, to analyse how a text has been constructed, you must think about who this audience is, what they value or are interested in and how a persuasive text is attempting to engage these values or interests. These three steps will help you think strategically about the audience before you read or watch a persuasive text:

1. Identify the publication, media outlet or author/presenter who has produced the text.

2. Consider why the audience has decided to engage with this text.

3. Think about what arguments or values might persuade this audience.

This section will explain the types of publications you will come across. But first, let's think about the three reasons audiences have for engaging with texts:

- They agree with the values of the publication.
- They are interested in or value the opinion of the author of the text.
- They have a specific interest or connection to the topic.

Audiences who agree with the values of a publication

Every person has values or beliefs, such as *we should look after the environment* or *we should be free to say whatever we want*. Every person also has a sense of their own identity – such as *I'm just an ordinary Australian* or *I'm someone who cares deeply about the environment*. These types of values or identity statements can be labelled as progressive, moderate or conservative. Mostly, people will read or watch material produced by media that has the same values or affirms their sense of identity.

Let's look more closely at what progressive or conservative values are.

The table below provides basic examples of progressive or conservative values and sense of identity. People with moderate values have beliefs and identities that are somewhere in between these two sides.

	Progressive	Conservative
Identity	view themselves as modern and willing to try new things or adopt new ways of thinking view themselves as caring for others and responsible for the welfare of wider society	view themselves as ordinary, everyday people with common-sense, practical approaches view themselves as individuals who are protecting their families and close communities
Education and health	in favour of publicly funded schools and hospitals	in favour of individual choice, private schools and private hospitals
Tax and the economy	believe 'big business' should be taxed at a higher rate	in favour of business and tax breaks for business people
Environment	protective of the environment	sceptical of climate change / believe that climate change is not as important as business
Law and order	believe in being compassionate to victims and perpetrators more likely to be interested in drug reforms	believe in a 'tough' approach to law enforcement, including strong punishments
Tradition	sceptical of traditions	believe traditions are important
Diversity	protect and celebrate minority groups	believe minority groups should 'fit in'
Free speech	likely to be in favour of limiting 'hate speech' or misinformation, (possibly in favour of 'cancelling' other conservative or bigoted voices)	likely to be in favour of 'free speech' (although more concerned with protecting the free speech of religious and patriotic groups)

Progressive, moderate and conservative Australian media

Although news is supposed to be impartial, most publications or media outlets present issues in a way that they think will appeal to their audiences. Therefore, different media publications and outlets have progressive, moderate or conservative values.

The chart below includes many of the newspapers and media outlets that produce or publish the persuasive material you'll study. It will help you identify whether it is progressive, moderate or conservative and then you'll be able to figure out the values of its audience:

	Progressive	Moderate	Conservative
Newspapers	The Guardian greenleft	THE AGE The Sydney Morning Herald	THE AUSTRALIAN Courier Mail Daily Telegraph
Websites and blogs	JUNKEE. Crikey THE CONVERSATION	MamaMia	Institute of Public Affairs
TV shows, digital or audio platforms	TEDx THE PROJECT	60 minutes 7/30	sky news 3AW 693 A CURRENT AFFAIR

Media outlets sometimes publish alternative views

WARNING

Even though a newspaper or media outlet might have a mainly conservative or progressive audience, this does not mean it will always publish persuasive pieces that align with their views. Many media outlets believe in trying to present a balance of viewpoints about an issue. This means that a conservative newspaper like *The Australian* or T*he Courier Mail* might publish a very progressive viewpoint about an issue or a progressive newspaper like *The Guardian* might print a conservative argumentative piece.

If you are analysing a persuasive piece that has a viewpoint that goes against the usual values of the outlet, you need to think about the following question:

How is this piece designed to challenge or change the view of readers?

Audiences who have a specific interest or connection to a text

While newspapers or TV shows have audiences with a particular set of values, they are read or watched by people all around the country of different ages, genders and interests. This is true of newspapers like *The Age* and *The Herald Sun* or TV shows like *A Current Affair* or *60 Minutes*. These sorts of texts are called 'general circulation texts'. The opposite of this type of general circulation text is a 'specific interest text'. This type of text engages an audience who is interested in the specific thing a text is about.

Here are the main categories of specific interest texts you'll come across:

Text types	Things of interest or value to this audience	Examples
Texts for people who live in an area or belong to a particular group*: • Local newspapers • Community newsletters, blogs or social media pages	• The health and wellbeing of their local community or group • The future of their local community or group • Their sense of identity as belonging to a local community or group	• *The Brunswick Voice* (website for people who live in Brunswick) • *The Cobram Courier* (local newspaper for people who live in Cobram)
Texts for people who support particular political parties: • A political party's blog, website or social media • A political party's advertising material (pamphlets, whole page ads, extended video ads)	• The progressive or conservative values of the party • A belief that other political parties or values are wrong	• Labor Party letterbox pamphlets • Interview with a Liberal politician • The Reason Party website
Texts such as magazines, blogs and websites for people who are interested in a specific topic, issue or hobby	• This interest, hobby or topic is important and worthwhile • A sense of themselves as knowledgeable about this particular topic or subject	• An animal rights website • A website that reviews new computers • A fashion magazine • A podcast about a particular topic such as mental wellbeing

Study alert:

*The exam often has these types of pieces. Complete past exams to get plenty of practice writing about this type of audience.

Audiences who value a particular author or presenter

Sometimes readers or viewers decide to read or watch a text because they are interested in or value the opinion of the person who has produced it.

	Examples	Reasons an audience might value this author or presenter
Well-known journalists	• Andrew Bolt – *Herald Sun / Bolt Report* • Rita Panahi – *Herald Sun* • Waleed Aly – *The Age* • Peta Credlin – *Sky News* • Stan Grant – A*BC* • David Koch – *Sunrise* • Allison Langdon – *Today* • Neil Mitchell – *3AW*	• They share the values of this person • They are used to listening to or reading the opinions of this person • They believe this person has expertise or experience that should be listened to • They believe this person offers an opinion that can effectively rebut an opposing view • The video or post has been recommended to them • They believe this person is worth listening to because of the number of followers the person has
Political leaders	• Leaders such as the prime minister, premiers, party leaders • Controversial politicians • Leaders of political movements or groups	
Experts	• People in charge of organisations or companies • Scientists • Professors or academics from universities • People who are leaders in particular fields (i.e. successful writers, athletes, artists)	
Social media influencers	• Popular YouTubers, Instagrammers, TikTokers, etc • Celebrities	

Before you read or watch a text, look at who has written or produced it and think about these questions:

Does the person have an identity or role that could be a major factor in the audience reading or watching this piece?

What might the audience think or feel about the identity or role of this person?

Print persuasive pieces will often include information about the author.

Put it into practice

It's time to look at a persuasive piece and think about its audience. Use the checklist below to practise identifying the audience of a persuasive piece and the things that might interest or engage this audience.

Is this a text designed for a specific or general audience?	☐ Specific interest text
	☐ General circulation text
Why has the audience engaged with this text?	☐ They share the values of the text
	☐ They have a specific interest in or connection to the topic of the text
	☐ They are interested in the author or presenter
Does the text offer an opinion that the audience is likely to agree with or disagree with?	☐ Agree with
	☐ Disagree with
What values or interests of the audience might the text attempt to engage?	☐ Progressive values such as…
	☐ Conservative values such as…
	☐ Moderate values such as…
	☐ Local concerns such as…
	☐ Interests or values about the specific topic such as…
	☐ A sense of their own identity as…

Annotate and take notes

To analyse a persuasive piece successfully, you will need to read or listen to it a number of times. Each time you read or listen to the text, you should pay attention to different things so you can analyse it more deeply. This section will explain and demonstrate what to look for and how to annotate a written text or take notes on an audiovisual text:

First read or listen	• Identify author or presenter
	• Identify intention
	• Identify and annotate sections
Second read or listen	• Identify and annotate persuasive techniques and language

First read or listen

On the first reading or listening of a text, you should identify its intention and structural features.

Let's look at these things in more detail.

1. Identify author or presenter

When you read or listen to a text the first time, you should pay attention to any information you can find about the author or the presenter. In a written text, information about the author will often be under their name and tell you if they are an expert in the field or have an important role. If you are listening to a text, the presenters will provide information about themselves and the people they speak to.

Turn to page 143 for more advice about how to analyse this information.

2. Identify intention

The intention of a piece is the way the author or presenter wants its audience to think, feel or act about the issue. Identifying the intention of a piece is particularly important because you will need to analyse how people use arguments and strategies to achieve their intention.

On page 155, there is a table that will help you identify the intention of a piece.

3. Identify sections or arguments

After you first read or listen to a persuasive piece, you should divide it into sections. Every persuasive piece has some type of opening, body and closing. By identifying these sections, you can begin to think about how a piece is structured to persuade an audience.

On pages 155-56, there are two tables that will help you identify the sections or arguments of a piece.

Second read or listen

The second time you read or listen to a text, you should pay attention to the words and techniques that make arguments stronger. If you are reading a text, you should underline or circle words that *contribute to the strategy of a section*. By paying particular attention to the words and techniques that contribute to the strategy, you will link pieces of information and make your analysis more cohesive.

If you are listening to a text, the second time you hear it, you should note down the words and techniques that enhance the argument or strategy of the section you are analysing.

Over the next few pages are examples of annotations and note-taking.

Example annotated sections in written text

The following opinion piece is on the issue of banning the sale of petrol cars and boosting the take-up of electric cars. It's from *The Melbourne Mail*, a moderate daily newspaper.

This piece has been divided into four sections:

→ the opening,

→ two parts of the body, and

→ the closing.

The strategies and arguments are annotated in **green**, the techniques and language are in **blue** and the intention and author are annotated in **red**.

The Era of the Combustion Engine is Dead

By Selima Demir

Traditional, petrol-driven cars were invented way back in 1886. Back then, men wore top hats and women wore long skirts with lots of petticoats. Television wasn't invented. The internet wasn't invented. No one had a smartphone.

The world has changed since then. A lot. But for some reason, car manufacturers just haven't quite caught up. They've made cars faster, more comfortable and put in far more cup holders, but the basic machinery hasn't really changed. Except that there has been a huge change: electric engines.

By now, we all know that petrol cars are a disaster for the environment – they cause significant air pollution that contributes to greenhouse gases and global warming. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in America, a typical car emits 4.6 tons of carbon dioxide every year. And many households have more than one car. Each year, road traffic contributes a staggering 20% of all carbon dioxide emissions. All due to us using technology from the 19th century.

But we live in the 21st century. An era when we should know better. An era when many of us are suffering from climate grief and watching with horror as polar ice caps melt and extreme weather events are becoming more common. An era when we should be using newer, cleaner technology. It's time to ban petrol-driven cars.

While some people may be horrified at the thought of abandoning their petrol car and asking themselves things like: "But how will I get the kids to school?" or "I need my car to get to work", it's important to remember that we are asking people to switch to an electric car next time they buy a car, rather than get rid of a car altogether. It is by making small changes – such as swapping the type of car you use – that we will be able to halt climate change together. We don't need to renounce our current lifestyles, we just need to commit to small but vital changes together.

Many countries, including the UK, plan to ban the selling of petrol vehicles by 2035. Some countries have decided to do this even earlier. But not Australia. At the moment, only about 0.8% of cars sold in Australia are electric. And we have fewer public charging stations per person than many other countries. At the moment, our government has no plans to improve this sorry state.

It's up to us to ask our government to make changes. The government is elected by us, to do the work that we ask of them. We must compel them to make improvements. The government must commit to creating more public charging stations for electric vehicles. The government must introduce a plan to phase out archaic, petrol-driven cars. The government must wake up and realise that we are living in the 21st century. The era of the combustion engine is dead. We're living in a whole new world and we must have vehicles that represent this.

Selima Demir is The Melbourne Mail's motoring reporter.

Opening

Strategy = provide background to the issue and connect to the audience as progressive and modern

emphasises how old petrol engine technology is

highlights how much things have changed in the present

Body

Strategy = present facts

Argument = environmental damage of petrol cars

facts appeal to audience's desire for evidence and their environmental values

targets audience's sense of themselves as modern

Body

Strategy = acknowledge concerns and present solution

reassures the audience

diminishes the size of effort required

Argument = for the feasibility of changing to electric cars

taps into audience's desire to be modern and like other countries

Closing

Strategy = call to action

Intention = audience to advocate for change in government policy about electric cars

re-emphasises how out of date petrol car technology is

Example notes on an audiovisual text

If you're analysing an audiovisual text, you often won't have access to a transcript of it. Instead, you will need to use a table to take notes about it as you listen to or view it. Below is a transcript from a persuasive TV show and on the following page is an example of a table that has been used to take notes about it.

The following is a transcript of a television presentation from the popular program *The Real Truth*, a show that presents a conservative viewpoint of current issues. In this show, it is presenting a perspective on the affordability of electric cars.

ELECTRIC CARS

[A television news studio with a well-groomed white female presenter sitting at a desk. Behind her, is a blue screen with the logo of *The Real Truth*.]

PRESENTER (TRACY): And now to an issue that concerns all Australians, particularly those struggling with the current cost of living: electric cars. We all know that electric cars are supposed to help us save the environment, but they are an expensive, luxury item that many Aussies can't afford. Instead, they are a symbol that inner-city hipsters like to buy to show off their environmental credentials. Let's look at this report by Graham White for more information.

[Camera pans across an inner-city cafe strip then focuses upon a series of shiny, new black cars. Camera then focuses upon a white man in his thirties with a microphone.]

GRAHAM: Look at any shopping strip in the inner city and you're likely to see them, parked out the front of expensive boutiques and cafes spruiking single-origin coffee. Electric cars. Here, in suburbs that most of us can't afford to live in, people are buying electric cars to make a statement. A statement about how environmentally friendly and "woke" [presenter makes inverted commas with his hands] they are.

[Camera focuses upon a young woman with short hair and large earrings walking towards a car. The presenter, Graham, walks towards her.]

GRAHAM: Excuse me, madam, can I ask you a few questions about your car?

WOMAN: Sure.

GRAHAM: Is this an electric car?

WOMAN: Yes, it is. I thought that if I was going to buy a car, it should really be environmentally friendly. That way I wouldn't feel bad about using it.

GRAHAM: Do you mind if I ask how much this car cost?

WOMAN: [Close up of woman looking uncomfortable] Well…it wasn't cheap.

GRAHAM: Do you think that the average Aussie could afford a car like this?

WOMAN: Ahhh…

[Camera shows Graham walking up to another man. This time it's a man in a suit approaching his car.]

GRAHAM: Excuse me, sir, do you mind if I asked how much your car cost?

MAN: I think you probably already know the answer to that question.

GRAHAM: It's not cheap, is it?

MAN: I don't think you're really asking a question, are you?

[Cut to a new scene. This time, Graham is standing outside a suburban shopping centre. A white woman is holding a full shopping trolley with a toddler in the baby seat. Beside her stands a pre-school-aged child.]

GRAHAM:	Excuse me, madam, can I ask about your car?
WOMAN:	Go for it.
GRAHAM:	Is it electric?
WOMAN:	[Laughs] No! They cost a ton. I'm just trying to keep a roof over my head and buy groceries **[Close up of baby in shopping trolley].** There's no way I can afford an electric car.
GRAHAM:	But wouldn't you save on petrol?
WOMAN:	Yeah, but I'd still have to buy a brand new car. I just can't do that at the moment… not with all the bills I've got.

Media outlet and audience: The conservative TV show *The Real Truth*. The audience would be interested in seeing their conservative values represented, such as their right to drive whatever car they want.

Intention: To show electric cars as a luxury that only rich, out-of-touch people can afford

First viewing	Second viewing		
Strategy/Argument	Persuasive words	Persuasive manner of speaking	Persuasive images and sounds
Opening: *Connects with the audience as ordinary Australians* *Poses a problem of electric cars being too expensive*	*"all Australians"* *"struggling"* *"luxury item"*	*Presenter speaks in a concerned, serious way at start*	*Logo 'Real Truth'*
Body: *Builds a picture of electric car owners as rich and out of touch* *Interviews ordinary car owners and shares their stories*	*"most of us can't afford" (judgemental)* *"average Aussie"* *"not cheap"*	*Cuts off woman's answer to question about affordability of electric cars* *Questions in an interrogating way*	
Closing: *Leaves a lasting image of the problem of electric cars being too expensive*	*"not with all the bills I've got"*	*Asks questions in a more sympathetic way*	*Close-up of baby in trolley* *Reporter nods in response to woman, face shows sympathy*

Put it into practice

Annotate intentions:

Read or listen to a persuasive piece once. Use this list of common intentions to help you identify how an audience is meant to think, feel or act by the end.

Feel
☐   be energised, excited, hopeful, inspired
☐   be outraged, horrified, concerned
☐   feel reassured, affirmed, listened to
☐   feel responsible for
☐   feel disdainful, judgemental of

Think
☐   view people with a different opinion in a certain way
☐   realise that there is a strong case for something
☐   change their minds about something
☐   realise that action is urgent
☐   accept that there is only one way ahead

Act
☐   take a particular action
☐   change the way they do something
☐   join a movement, become part of something
☐   put pressure on a powerful group

Arguments

Combine a word from the first column with something from either the second or third column to label an argument. For example, *environmental benefits.*

Description	Plus	Minus
environmental	benefits	drawbacks
economic	progress	threats
financial	advantages	difficulties
social	solutions	harms
local	opportunities	consequences
community	importance	disadvantages
cultural	significance	concerns
health	possibility*	damage
practical	feasibility*	dangers
long-term		impossibility*
immediate		
practical	*These words don't need a description from the first column.	

Put a rectangle around the opening, body and closing of the persuasive text.

Bodies are normally the longest part of a text and may be broken in two (like in the example annotated text). Use both the tables below to help you annotate each section with the strategy or argument being used.

Strategies

While these strategies have been grouped into 'openings,' 'bodies' and 'closings', keep in mind that these strategies could be used in any place in a persuasive piece.

Openings

• establish seriousness of issue	• outline facts
• pose a problem	• shock the audience
• connect with the audience's sense of identity as…	• re-frame the issue as…
• establish the author's identity as…	• provide background to the issue

Bodies

• present facts	• acknowledge concerns
• present examples	• pose problems
• interview experts	• present solutions
• interview ordinary people who…	• provide personal stories
• rebut opposing views	• Wcreate a word picture of…
	• present an analogy

Closings

• provide a clear instruction	• suggest a common-sense solution
• condemn actions that…	• re-emphasise a problem
• condemn people who…	• leave a lasting image of a problem
• present a next step	• suggest a moral responsibility
• call for governments to…	• emphasise the urgent nature of…
• place responsibility on…	

Introductions

The first thing you should do in your analysis of argument is to write an introduction. Your introduction won't actually contain much analysis of argument, so you want to keep it fairly short so you can get down to some really detailed and insightful analysis in your body paragraphs. This section will show you how you can write a brief, snappy introduction in a short space of time.

The introduction of your analysis of argument should do these four things:

- outline the two sides of the issue that you are studying
- provide text and author information
- describe the contention or intention of the text
- describe the audience of the text.

Let's look at an example introduction.

→ The first row shows an introduction for just one piece.

→ The second row demonstrates how you would introduce a second piece:

While cars are viewed as an essential form of transport for many people in Australia, the increasing effects of climate change have prompted some people to advocate for electric cars, which are more environmentally friendly. In an article published for the moderate newspaper, *The Melbourne Mail*, motoring journalist Selima Demir argues that traditional, petrol-driven cars are outdated and consumers must advocate for the government to ban them from purchase in Australia. Demir targets the more progressive, forward-thinking values of her readership, asking them to turn their backs on old-fashioned technology.	Issue Text and author info Contention/ Intention Audience Linking phrase for second piece
In contrast, the television program *The Real Truth* presents electric vehicles as expensive and out of reach for the average Australian consumer, appealing to its viewers' conservative identification as people who look for common-sense approaches to purchasing.	

Write a short introduction to the persuasive piece/s you are analysing. Use the sentence starters below to help you write sentences that include each of the four necessary pieces of information.

Information	Sentence starts	
Issue	Recently, A perennial concern of… The debate about… A recent	While… Following the… The issue of… Many people are concerned with…
Author and text type	In her…entitled…, [name]* In a…published by…, [name] Writing a…called…,[name] Speaking at…[name]	Speaking on behalf of…[name] In contrast, [name]** Refuting this… Arguing against this in…[name]
Contention/Intention	…asserts …argues …praises …advocates for	…debunks …repudiates …criticises …presents
Audience	appeals to^ targets addresses	affirms^ plays on petitions
Linking phrases (if analysing two pieces)	Unlike… In contrast to… While…	Also concerned with… Another…

Alternative sentence alert

Any of the words in this category can be used as an '-ing' word

*Note: the [name] should be filled by the speaker's or author's name

**This can either be the speaker's, the author's or the program's name

Body paragraphs

Each of your body paragraphs should analyse a different section or argument of a persuasive piece. You will need to analyse how the language and techniques within a particular section work to persuade the audience.

In this section, we'll show you how to use:

- effective examples
- body paragraph structure
- topic sentences
- evidence
- linking sentences.

Select effective examples

You *should not* identify and annotate every example of persuasive language or techniques you notice in a persuasive piece. You should pick a few examples that best demonstrate the argument or strategy being used within each section. Look back at the example annotated persuasive piece on pages 152 and 154 to see how *just a few* examples have been selected in each section.

Body paragraph structure

In an effective analysis of argument, a body paragraph should contain the following elements:

Element	Explanation	Find more information on…
Topic sentence	This sentence focuses your body paragraph, identifying which section and argument you will be writing about, as well as the impact it has on the audience.	Page 161
Evidence and analysis	These sentences focus on analysing the evidence that best demonstrates the strategy or argument of a section.	Pages 163-176
Links	The words that connect examples and analysis within and between your sentences to create a cohesive paragraph	Page 177
Further evidence and analysis	In the second half of a body paragraph, you should have sentences that analyse additional evidence that demonstrate a section's argument or strategy.	Pages 163-176
Synthesising sentence	The synthesising sentence links all of the evidence and analysis of this body paragraph.	Page 179

Let's start by looking at an annotated example of a good paragraph:

Throughout the body of her opinion piece, Demir refers to the environmental destruction wrought by petrol-driven cars, in order to activate her audience's concern for the environment.

She begins by labelling traditional cars as a "disaster", evoking the sense that they wreak havoc on the environment, destroying everything in their path. She underscores this point by referencing the figures provided by the Environmental Protection Agency, which reassures her readers that she is not being alarmist, but has well-researched facts and evidence to support her argument that petrol-driven cars are detrimental.

Rather than continuing to focus on the negative, Demir labels electric cars as "newer, cleaner" energy, highlighting how advanced they are and appealing to the audience's sense of themselves as modern members of the 21st century. Describing these cars as both newer and cleaner, she further appeals to her audience's collective desire to create an immaculate and untainted environment to live in. She also emphasises that "it's time" we ban electric cars to heighten the audience's sense that petrol cars are out of date. By structuring the body of her writing with both problems and solutions, Demir is able to create the sense that she has considered the dilemma of cars and climate from all angles and is providing her climate-conscious audience with solutions that are researched and thoughtful.

Topic sentence

Evidence and analysis

Links

Further evidence and analysis

Synthesising sentence

Topic sentences

Writing clear and focused topic sentences will really improve the quality of your analysis of argument. This is because topic sentences signal what your paragraph is about and link your body paragraphs into a cohesive whole analysis. The beginning of each paragraph should start with a couple of topic sentences that indicate these things:

<div align="center">the section + the specific argument or strategy + the effect on the audience</div>

Often, you'll be able to put all of this into one sentence, but sometimes you'll need two. Let's have a look at a few different examples of this:

During the main part of *The Real Truth's* story, Graham White interviews several electric car owners about how expensive their cars are, creating the sense that these cars are out of reach for the average, financially conservative viewer.	section
Throughout the body of her opinion piece, Demir refers to the environmental destruction wrought by petrol-driven cars, in order to activate her audience's concern for the environment.	specific argument or strategy
At the very beginning of *The Real Truth's* segment on electric cars, presenter Tracy highlights the costs of electric cars for viewers who consider themselves 'ordinary Australians'.	effect on the audience

Put it into practice

Use the phrases in this table to refer to the section, argument and strategy in your topic sentences:

Indicate the section	Refer to the argument or strategy
In the beginning	establishes
Early on in this…	offers
At the very beginning	evokes
From the outset	refers to
In the opening	interviews
At first	highlights
To begin with	considers
During	appeals to
In the middle of	prioritises
Throughout the body of	discredits
Midway through	disputes
Towards the end	contests
At the closing of	rebuts
The final section of	substantiates
The culmination of	underscores
	supports
	validates
	corroborates
	reassures

Use the examples and word lists below to help you refer to the audience in your topic sentence or any other part of your analysis:

1. Use adjectives to describe the audience like this:

*Graham White interviews several electric car owners about how expensive their cars are, creating the sense that these cars are out of reach for the average, **financially conservative viewer.***

Here are some words you can use:

environmentally minded	moderate
community-oriented	....viewer
forward-thinking	....reader
conservative	...listener
progressive	

2. Refer to the audience's interests or values in one of these ways:

a) *Tracy highlights the costs of electric cars for viewers who consider themselves 'ordinary Australians'.*

Here are some words you can use:

for viewers	think of themselves…
for listeners	identify as…
for readers	are concerned about…
…who…	are interested in…
consider themselves…	

b) *Demir refers to the environmental destruction wrought by petrol-driven cars to activate her audience's concern for the environment.*

Here are some words you can use:

the audience's sense of…

the audience's identity as…

the audience's value of…

the audience's belief in…

the audience's concern for…

Analysing evidence

At the heart of each of your body paragraphs will be the analysis of evidence. To analyse evidence, you'll need to use analytic verbs, think analytically and use a range of evidence. This section will show you how to do these things.

Use analytic verbs

These verbs are called 'analytic' because they *analyse*, rather than just describe. By using them effectively, you can better analyse:

- the action of an author or presenter
- the impact of these words on the audience

Analytic verbs are words like *labels, describes, targets* and *creates*.

Let's look at an example:

Author or presenter action	Impact on the audience
*The presenter **attacks** electric cars as "luxury" items,*	***priming** the audience **to view** the cars as something only for rich people and not an item necessary for everyday life.*

The more specific you are in your word choice, the better your analysis will be.

Study alert:

Use the list of verbs on the opposite page to help you annotate or take notes about persuasive words in a text. By noting down analytic verbs at the annotation or note-taking stage, you'll create a plan for how you'll analyse persuasive language later in your writing.

The table below lists a range of specific verbs and phrases you can use to analyse the action of an author or presenter and the impact it has upon the audience. Use the list to write a series of sentences analysing the evidence you have selected.

Author action		Audience impact	
connects to the audience	emphasises shared experience of…	reassures	the audience to believe…
	highlights the universality of…	builds trust	the audience to think…
	speaks to the audience as a group who…	creates belief	the audience to recognise…
	reaches out to the audience as…	causes	the audience to view…
	links themselves with the audience by…	fosters	the audience to associate…
connects to the audience's identity or values	appeals to	develops	the audience to acknowledge that…
	invokes	primes	the audience to see…
	affirms	prompts	the audience's sense of…
	validates	heightens	the audience's value in…
	recognises	increases	the audience's interest in…
	acknowledges	strengthens	the audience's desire for…
	places to the fore	generates	the audience's concerns about…
says something negative	criticises	activates	the audience's fear of…
	attacks	triggers	
	lambasts	engenders	*you can replace 'audience' with *readers, listeners, viewers the readership of…, community members* or *other more specific words you discuss in class*.
	demeans	galvanises	
	denigrates	inspires	
	derides	confronts	
	ridicules	forces	
says something positive	praises	establishes	
	lauds	highlights	
	celebrates	emphasises	
	champions		
uses evidence	cites		
	refers to		
	supports their case with		
	points to		
makes something seem important	emphasises		
	highlights		
	reinforces		
	reiterates		
	exaggerates		
	generalises		
puts a name or picture to a thing	describes		**Alternative sentence alert**
	characterises		Any of the verbs in the middle columns can be used as '-ing' verbs (i.e.…*emphasising how, ridiculing the…*)
	portrays		
	labels		
	equates…with…		

Use a variety of sentence structures

Good analysis of argument will use a variety of sentence forms. If your sentences always start and end the same way, you will tend to say the same types of things in all of your sentences and your writing will become formulaic. You definitely want to avoid writing like this:

> *Demir describes petrol cars as being a "disaster", positioning her audience to see them in a bad light. She then says that petrol cars contribute a "staggering" amount of pollution, making the audience think they are really bad for the environment. Demir says after this that electric cars are "newer, cleaner" technology, making the audience think that they are better.*

By structuring your sentences in a variety of ways, you will show that you have greater control over your writing and you will keep your reader more engaged. You are also likely to say more insightful and interesting things.

A good analytic sentence can contain up to four things:

- an introduction of evidence (i.e. an analytic verb such as *describes, attacks*)
- evidence
- analysis
- linking word (i.e. *and, because*).

The example sentences below show how these elements can be used in different orders.

Sentence Structure	Sentence start	Sentence end
1. **Introduce evidence** 2. **Evidence** 3. **Analysis beginning with '-ing' verb** 4. **Link**	*Demir labels electric cars as "newer, cleaner" technology*	*, highlighting how advanced they are and appealing to the audience's sense of themselves as modern members of the 21st century.*
1. **Evidence** 2. **Analysis**	*The words "newer, cleaner"*	*appeal to the readers' sense of themselves as both modern and environmentally conscious.*
1. **'-ing' verb to introduce evidence** 2. **Evidence** 3. **Analysis** 4. **Link**	*Labelling electric cars as "newer, cleaner" technology*	*, Demir appeals to her audience's sense of themselves as modern members of the 21st century and so positions them to view the ban of petrol cars as a necessity.*
1. **Analysis** 2. **Introduce evidence** 3. **Evidence**	*In order to appeal to her audience's sense of themselves as modern consumers, Demir presents these types of cars as advanced and modern*	*through her description of electric cars as "newer, cleaner" technology*

Write sentences analysing three different quotes. Practise structuring each sentence in a different way. Use the words and phrases in the table below to help you construct your sentences in a variety of ways:

| Sentence starts	Sentence ends
By…	and
Through…	and so
In order to…	and consequently
In an attempt to…	in order to
	since
The description of…as "…"	so that
The characterisation of…as "…"	by
The reference to…as "…"	through
The word "…"	with
The words "…"	to
The phrase "…"	for
'-ing' words, i.e.	'-ing' words, i.e.
Attacking…as "…"	highlighting
Describing…as "…"	emphasising
Labelling…as "…"	underscoring
	appealing
	targeting
	activating

Think twice

When you are writing your analysis, you might be tempted to use as many different examples as possible. This means you might just write the first thing that pops into your head about each example and then move on to analysing another example, like this:

> *Demir labels electric cars as* ***"newer, cleaner"*** *energy, highlighting how advanced they are and appealing to the audience's sense of themselves as modern members of the 21st century. She also emphasises that* ***"it's time"*** *we ban electric cars, which heightens the audience's sense that petrol cars are out of date.*

Both of these sentences contain good analysis, but the student hasn't really given an in-depth analysis of either of the quotes they have chosen. Instead, it would have been better if the student had thought twice about each of the examples they had used and done something more like this:

> *Demir labels electric cars as* ***"newer, cleaner"*** *energy, highlighting how advanced they are and appealing to the audience's sense of themselves as modern members of the 21st century. By describing these cars as both newer and cleaner, she further appeals to her audience's collective desire to create an immaculate and untainted environment to live in. She also emphasises that* ***"it's time"*** *we ban electric cars, which heightens the audience's sense that petrol cars are out of date.*
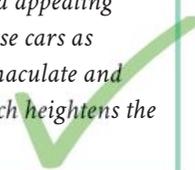
To make this a truly outstanding analysis, the student could go on to add more analysis of the second quote.

Put it into practice

Practise writing two sentences that analyse the impact of one example.

Analysing quotes

Whether you are analysing a written or an audio text, one of the important pieces of evidence you'll analyse is quotes. When you're using a quote in your analysis, you should be analysing how a specific word or phrase creates a particular impact on the audience. This means you should ideally keep your quotes to 1–2 words in length.

Here's an example:

> *Demir labels electric cars as "**newer, cleaner**" energy, highlighting how advanced they are and appealing to the audience's sense of themselves as modern members of the 21st century.*

You should never quote an entire sentence: students who do this are *summarising* what a text does, not analysing it. You want your analytical essay to be full of *analysis*, not just retelling the main points of the persuasive text.

The impact of specific words

When you keep your quotes short, you can focus on how specific words or phrases are persuasive. Authors and presenters choose specific words or phrases to create a picture, feeling or association in the minds of their readers and viewers. A good analysis will unpack how this works. Here's an example of the thinking process to analyse the persuasive impact of specific words and phrases:

Specific word or phrase	Picture, feeling or association it creates
luxury item	something unnecessary, wasteful
vital	something required, urgent

Here are some examples of what analysis of specific words can look like once you've brainstormed the picture, feeling or association it creates*:

Specific word or phrase	Specific impact
By labelling electric cars as a "**luxury item**",	**the presenter characterises them to the audience** as an unnecessary and wasteful thing that only rich people can access.
Demir emphasises that changes to our lifestyle are "**vital**"	**creating a sense for the audience that** such changes are not only required but urgent.

Alternative sentence alert

Of course, you can always reverse the order of these sentences and put the analysis of impact before introducing the specific word or phrase.

Analysing common techniques

There are some techniques that are particularly common in persuasive texts. Because these techniques are so common, students often write about them in a very general way and end up saying nothing specific about the text being analysed. In fact, rather than analysing these techniques, students often make the mistake of simply *identifying* the techniques and labelling them. But identifying and labelling is *not* analysis.

Here's a list of common persuasive techniques and examples of poor analysis:

Techniques	General and poor analysis
Inclusive language	Makes the audience feel included
Statistics	Makes the audience believe in the facts
Statistics about money	Appeals to the 'hip pocket nerve' of the audience
Rhetorical questions	Makes the audience think
Emotive language	Makes the audience feel

It's important to realise that you shouldn't just use the names or labels of techniques. Instead, you should be describing the technique and analysing how it will affect the audience.

Let's have a look at a high-level analysis. Although the student is analysing the effect of inclusive language, the student doesn't just *label* the technique, but analyses how the technique works:

> *Throughout the second half of the body of her piece, Demir repeatedly uses language* **that creates a bond with her audience.** *She says "we live", "we should" and "many of us",* **to establish that she shares environmental values with her readers.** *By establishing this connection, Demir* **presents herself to her readers as a representative** *of their views.*

Practise writing about a common technique in a persuasive piece. Try to describe the technique by using words or phrases other than the name from the left-hand column. Use or adapt any of the phrases in the right-hand column to help you write about how this strategy impacts on a particular audience.

Techniques	Phrases to introduce specific analysis
Inclusive language *establishes a bond with…* *creates a connection with…* *emphasises shared values of…* *repeats shared pronouns…* *employs second-person pronouns…*	*presents (writer or speaker) as a representative of….* *demonstrates (writer or speaker's) understanding of…* *cultivating a sense of…*
Statistics *numbers that show…* *figures representative of…* *data about…* *figures revealing…* *graphs of…* *percentages of…*	**Statistics that show something is big***:* *emphasises the size of…* *confronts the audience with the magnitude of…* **Statistics that show something is small:** *illustrates the minor nature of…* *reduces the size of…* *presents…as only a…*
Statistics about money **use any of the phrases from the cell above to describe statistics about money in different ways	*targets a fear that money has been…* *targets the reader's concern that their own money could be…* *appeals to the…value that money should be…* *taps into the fiscal concerns of…*
Questions *poses…* *lists a series of…* *asks the reader…* *challenges the…*	**Questions with obvious answers:** *anticipates the audience's own question about…* *puts to the fore the primary concern about…* *emphasises that the (writer or presenter) is logically unpacking the issue and…* **Questions without obvious answers:** *shifts the audience from focusing on…to…* *prompts the audience to consider for the first time…* *presents (writer or speaker) as someone who has considered…*
Emotive language ***neutral*** *uses a description of…* *evoking…* **negative** *incendiary* *inflammatory* *inciting* *provocative* *warns* **positive** *idealises* *reassures*	**Negative responses:** *plays upon the sympathy of the audience towards…* *makes the audience feel ashamed of…* *creates a sense of fear about…* *elicits a sense of disgust in…* *cues the audience to feel outraged about…* **Positive responses:** *spurs the audience to a sense of excitement about the idea of…* *rouses the audience to…* *stimulates a sense of anticipation in…* *energises the audience to feel…*

Analysing visuals

Often, a persuasive piece might use a visual to support its arguments. These visuals can come in two forms.

1. **Clearly persuasive images:** These are any types of visual that are obviously intended to have some kind of persuasive impact. They could include:
   - icons, logos
   - cartoons, persuasive graphics or art
   - graphs, charts and tables
   - dramatic photos or footage.

2. **Ordinary images:** These are usually photos of people, places or things that – at first glance – don't initially seem particularly persuasive.

   No matter what form the visual is in, your task is to analyse how it is being used to support the arguments and overall intention of a persuasive piece. To do this, you need to do three things:
   - Link the visual to arguments in the text.
   - Identify key persuasive features of the visual.
   - Analyse the impact of persuasive features on the audience.

No matter what type of image you are presented with, you shouldn't spend too long analysing them: 2-3 sentences of analysis is a good length. Let's look more closely at how to do these things for the two types of visuals you will come across.

Clearly persuasive images

As an example, let's say that the persuasive piece on banning petrol cars from page 148 included the visual below. This is what a good analysis of the visual should look like:

Demir reinforces her argument about the significant environmental damage of petrol cars through the inclusion of a visual that depicts various vehicles producing a huge cloud of pollution. By showing a small car, alongside a bigger car and a truck, the picture vividly emphasises Demir's argument that all petrol cars are toxic to the environment.	links visual to arguments identifies key features in visual analyses impact of visual

Try analysing a clearly persuasive image. Use some of the phrases in the table below to help you.

Words to link visual to argument:	Words to identify key features:	Words to analyse impact
reinforces strengthens underscores adds to highlights accompanying visual inclusion of a visual	portrays depicts represents includes features revolves around by showing through depicting by illustrating through characterising as	vivid, graphic, clear, powerful, dramatic, stark, comic, laughable, startling* a...sense that... a...picture of... an...image of... ...representation of... ...reminder of...

Alternative sentence alert

Instead of using these words as adjectives, turn them into adverbs by adding an '-ly' to the end (i.e. *vividly, graphically*). You can then use them with verbs such as 'emphasises', 'illustrates' and 'represents' to analyse the impact of a visual (i.e. *vividly emphasises...*)

Ordinary images

Ordinary images are typically photos of people, places or things. When you first see these types of images, they won't strike you as persuasive. However, the key to analysing them is to point out that someone or something is being presented in an ordinary or relatable light. For instance, the image below could have been included as an accompanying visual to the persuasive written piece on banning petrol cars from page 152.

This is what a good analysis of the visual should look like:

In order to make Demir's arguments more relatable to those of her readers who drive cars, the article is accompanied by a typical scene of petrol-driven vehicles on a busy highway. This highlights the ubiquitous nature of petrol-driven cars in society.

links visual to arguments

briefly describes key features in visual

analyses impact of visual on audience

Put it into practice

Try analysing an ordinary image. Use some of the phrases in the table below to help you.

Words to identify key features	Words to analyse impact
presents	puts a face to
depicts	shows the audience the reality of
shows	suggests to the audience that
	allows the audience to see the writer as
as a…	strengthens the audience's sense of the writer as
relatable	the ubiquitous nature of
ordinary	the everyday occurrence of
typical	the ordinary nature of
everyday	

Analysing speech

When you are writing about an audio text, you will have to analyse word choice and techniques, but you will also have to consider the way speakers use their voices to persuade.

These are some of the things that change the way you think about an audio text:

- tone (excited, happy, angry…)
- pace (the speed of speaking)
- volume
- pauses
- interruptions or people speaking over each other
- sighing
- emphasis on particular words
- hesitation before responding.

When you are listening to an audio text for the second time, you should use the right-hand columns of the table on page 154 to ensure you are taking notes about the way an audio text is delivered.

When you begin to analyse the examples you have noted, it is helpful if you have some kind of understanding of the ways that voices are conventionally used to persuade people. On the page opposite is a table that shows you some of the ways that voices are often used to persuade. *However*, it is important to remember that the interpretations in the right-hand column are only some of the 'possible intentions' a speaker may have – as you practise listening to and analysing audio texts, you should make sure that you are thinking of your own analyses.

Here are some example analyses of how the delivery of speech influences an audience:

> ***When Graham interrupts*** *the electric car owner, cutting her off by saying, "Thanks for your time", he dismisses any points that she may have made, diminishing the value of any opinions or insights she may have offered.*
>
> *To highlight how ridiculous Graham's question is,* ***the woman with the shopping trolley laughs****, strengthening the audience's concerns that electric cars are simply unaffordable for the average Australian.*

Over the next two pages is a table that will help you identify and analyse ways of speaking.

This table provides both a checklist of methods of speech to listen for in an audio text as well as some ideas about how these different elements might be persuasive. When analysing the impact of a method of speaking, use the verb table on page 164 as well as the suggestions in the right-hand column of the table to help write your sentences.

Ways of speaking	How it is used	
Volume of voice	Louder	
	Softer	
Speed of voice	Faster	
	Slower	
Silence	Length of pause	
	Hesitation or pause before answering a question	
Conventional phrases	• Thanks • Thank you	• It's a privilege to be here • It's exciting to be here
	• That's a good question • Thanks for asking that question • That's a good point	
	• You might be thinking • You might be asking yourself • You might want to know	
Emphasis on particular words	Some words are said more loudly or more slowly	
Interruptions when another person is speaking	Someone speaks over the top of another person or doesn't allow them to finish their point	
Sighs	A loud exhale of air	
Tone	Serious/angry	
	Positive/enthusiastic	

Possible intention
Indicates passion (either anger or excitement)
Suggests that an idea is a secret or secretive (or perhaps a little bit forbidden)
Suggests excitement or enthusiasm for an idea and that there is so much information to learn
Indicates that this is an important point that must be listened to extremely carefully
Gives audience time to think about or consider what is being said
Can be used to indicate that the speaker is thinking carefully about the answer to the question Could also mean that the speaker is unsure about how to answer the question
By being polite or enthusiastic, a speaker comes across as someone reasonable and respectful of others
By being positive about questions or points others make, a speaker appears more agreeable and less argumentative
The speaker understands what people are thinking about this issue, but wants to gently point out their mistakes
To indicate that a word and the ideas the word contains are particularly important
• Shows contempt for another person's point of view • Suggests that the person who is interrupting thinks they have a better or more important point of view
Indicates frustration or impatience with an idea Could also indicate satisfaction at a point well made
These sorts of tones indicate that the speaker thinks the issue shouldn't be dismissed and underlines that it is grave, important, significant or critical
A more positive tone indicates a speaker's excitement or enthusiasm for a new idea and invites listeners to feel energised, inspired or galvanised

Links

Throughout the paragraphs of your essay, you'll need to link your sentences and ideas together into a cohesive whole. When you are writing, you will need to create:

- links within sentences
- links between sentences
- synthesising sentences that link to the intention.

Links within sentences

Using linking or extra information words within a sentence will help you write with more detail. Typically, you should try to use at least one extra information word in each sentence. Very detailed sentences will have 3–4 extra information words like this:

> *She underscores this point by referencing the figures provided by the Environmental Protection Agency,* **which** *reassures her readers that she is not being alarmist,* **but** *has well-researched facts* **and** *evidence to support her argument that petrol-driven cars are detrimental.*

Put it into practice

Write a sentence that analyses a piece of evidence. Use the table below to practise using at least two extra information words in your sentence.

Give more information	Explain why something is done	Explain how something is done
and	because	by
and also	since	through
but	in order to	with
not only…but also	'-ing' words (i.e. highlighting, creating, causing)	
that		
which		

Links between sentences

Throughout an effective body paragraph, each sentence will build upon the analysis in previous sentences. To do this, you need to use linking words. In these body paragraph sentences, the linking words have been put in bold:

> *She begins by labelling traditional cars as a "disaster", evoking the sense that they wreak havoc on the environment, destroying everything in their path.* ***She underscores this point by*** *referencing the figures provided by the Environmental Protection Agency, which reassures her readers that she is not being alarmist, but has well-researched facts and evidence to support her argument that petrol-driven cars are detrimental.* ***Rather than continuing*** *to focus on the negative, Demir labels electric cars as "newer, cleaner" energy, highlighting how advanced they are and appealing to the audience's sense of themselves as modern members of the 21st century.* ***Describing these*** *cars as both newer and cleaner, she* ***further appeals*** *to her audience's collective desire to create an immaculate and untainted environment to live in.* ***She also emphasises*** *that "it's time" we ban electric cars to heighten the audience's sense that petrol cars are out of date.*

Put it into practice

Write 3–4 sentences analysing a section of a persuasive piece.

Use words from the table to practise linking these sentences.

Sentence starts	Verbs
Here	again uses
Rather than	repeats
Instead of	furthers
Moreover,	emphasises
Furthermore,	underscores
By	strengthens
Through	intensifies
In order to	
'-ing' this…as… (i.e. *Describing this idea as…*)	

Synthesising sentences

A synthesising sentence is the final sentence of your body paragraph. It performs a critical function by doing three things:

→ linking all of the individual examples within the body paragraph

→ linking the strategy or argument to the persuasive piece's overall intention or structure

→ analysing how this strategy works for this particular audience.

To do this, synthesising sentences should label the section and strategy being analysed, before introducing an analysis of the section and its link to the overall intention or structure of a piece.

Here are some examples:

By structuring the body of her writing with both problems and solutions, Demir is able to create the sense that she has considered the dilemma of cars and climate from all angles and is providing thoughtful solutions for her climate-conscious audience.	section and strategy
Ultimately, by ending the segment with a portrait of a struggling suburban mother they can identify with, *The Real Truth* is appealing to an audience who view themselves as ordinary Australians.	link to overall intention or structure
To trigger her audience's sense of themselves as modern and thoughtful, Demir's opening description of outdated technology primes readers to see cars as a relic of the past that must be replaced.	impact on audience

Put it into practice

Write a synthesising sentence for a body paragraph. Use any of the words and phrases in the table below to help write your sentences. In addition, you can use any of the verbs on page 160 to analyse the impact of a section within the whole persuasive piece.

Section and strategy	Analysis of impact of section and link to overall intention or structure		
By structuring the…with…	and so	paves the way for	triggers
By utilising…throughout the…	consequently	leads into	stokes
....	and as a result	lays the foundation for	activates
Through opening with…	which in turn	....	primes
Through focusing on…in…		builds on	frames
Through this strategy of…		capitalises on	....
By ending the piece with…		....	galvanises
....		creates	marshalls
Ultimately, this…		provides	impels
The overall impact of…in…is to…		strengthens	returns to
The net effect of…in…is…		underscores	impresses upon
The combined result of..is…			leaves the audience with
....			
Cumulatively, these techniques combine to…			

No matter whether you are analysing one piece or two, your analysis does not require a separate paragraph for a conclusion. Instead, your final body paragraph, where you analyse the closing of a piece, will serve as the end of your analysis. In this final paragraph, it's particularly important to analyse how the closing of a piece brings its arguments to a culmination and finally results in the audience thinking, feeling or wanting to do something.

Look at the example below.

Note how the topic sentence and the synthesising sentence work together to emphasise how the closing achieves a purpose:

*In the final section of his report on electric cars, Graham interviews a woman at a suburban shopping centre **to underscore how much** electric cars are beyond the means of ordinary people. The shot of the woman next to a shopping trolley laden with groceries and accompanied by two children emphasises that this person represents the everyday, real experience of trying to look after a family. The sympathetic tone in which Graham asks "is it electric" primes the audience to approve of her response. The impossibility of being able to buy an electric car is further emphasised through the way the woman laughs at the idea of buying one and labels them as costing a "ton". Ultimately, this final portrait of an ordinary person who scoffs at the idea of being able to afford an electric car **leaves the audience with the lasting impression** of such cars being only a "luxury" item for the elite.*

Put it into practice

To find some good words to analyse how the closing of a piece brings arguments to a culmination, look at the tables for topic sentences on pages 161-162 and synthesising sentences on page 179.

Persuasive Writing and Presenting

As part of your English studies, you will be required to complete a persuasive presentation – either in person or via a screencast.

You might also choose to write a persuasive piece for the Creating Texts area of study. Regardless of why you are drafting a persuasive piece, there are a number of steps that will help you with the process.

That's what this chapter is all about.
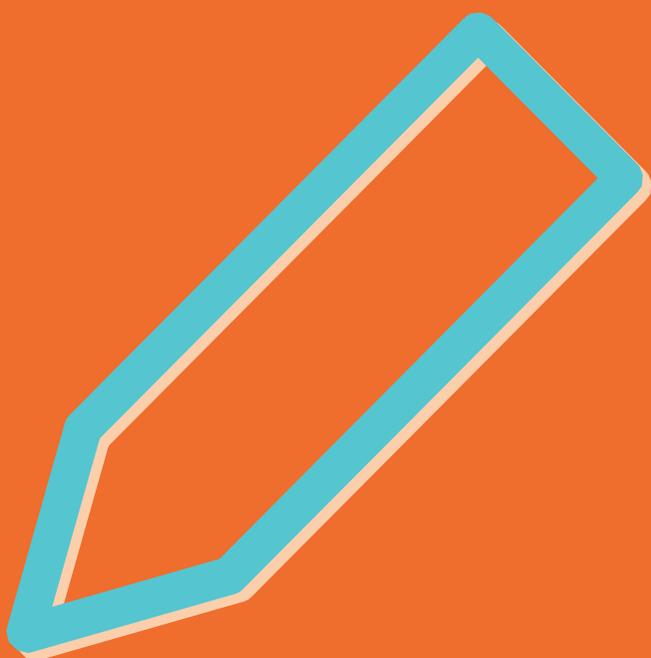
1. Choose an issue

To develop an interesting persuasive piece, you need to choose an issue you care about.

This section will show you how to:

- choose an issue:
    - for exploring and analysing argument
    - for crafting and creating texts
- develop a contention.

2. Brainstorm and plan

Your persuasive piece needs to be built on a detailed and purposeful plan.

This section will show you how to:

- plan in detail
- brainstorm arguments
- identify specific purposes
- choose strategies.

3. Micro writing practice

There are many different ways to write each part of your persuasive piece.

This section will show you examples of persuasive writing and different strategies you can use in your:

- openings
- bodies
- closings.

4. Presentation strategies

If you're delivering your persuasive piece as an oral presentation, you'll need to practise your presentation.

This section will provide you with:

- tips for all presentations
- tips for live presentations
- tips for recording screencasts.

Choose an issue

Coming up with an issue to write about can be tricky. To help you choose an issue, here are two tables that contain a whole range of common issues to think about. Use these tables as a starting point for selecting an issue. Your teacher will provide you with other suggestions and you can also come up with your own ideas.

Study alert:

The website www.procon.org lists many recent issues and pro and con arguments about them

Issues for exploring and analysing argument

Big issue	Common specific issues
Environment	climate change (bushfires, floods, unpredictable weather) green technologies (i.e. electric cars, renewable energies) animal extinction animal rights public transport farming practices (pesticides, fertilisers, land clearing) vegetarianism and veganism
Inclusivity and social justice	quotas pay gap between men and women violence towards minorities inclusivity in fashion diversity of representation on TV, in literature, in government accessibility of facilities to all people discriminatory employment freedom of religion hate speech
Public health	unhealthy behaviours: vaping, gambling, poor diet ads for unhealthy behaviours/foods drug reform effective training of health professionals cost of healthy food ease of access to health services (mental health, abortion) suicide prevention promoting exercise
Leadership	political leaders/parties not representative of wider society sporting leaders being flawed lack of voice for young people
Technology	impact of social media trolling mobile phone addiction power of tech giants robots replacing humans
Local issues	lack of access to opportunities lack of facilities controversial development names of public parks, streets, buildings

Issues for crafting and creating texts

Framework for ideas	More specific ideas
Play	some types of play are better than others
	play is essential to learning
	technology is destroying imaginative play
	schools destroy our ability to play
	being 'busy' interferes with leisure
	people who don't play are boring
	breaking the rules is important to play
Journeys	risk-taking is essential in life
	everyone should travel
	we should celebrate our failures
	the most important journeys are the ones we take inside our own heads
	companionship is important in travel
Country	humans always exploit the country they live in
	country is more important to some people than others
	community is more important than country
	when we control the country, we control others
	urban life offers richer cultural choices than country life
Protest	protest is the only way we can control our lives
	violence has no place in protest
	protest builds communities
	defiance is important in democracies
	everyday defiance is important
	getting along with others is more important than anything else
Influences	social media has too much power over our lives
	the most important people in our lives are our parents
	friends influence people more than leaders
	TV changes how we see each other
	we need to restrict the influence of advertising

Framework for ideas	More specific ideas
Other worlds	we must go to Mars
	other cultures can teach us important things
	we need to preserve indigenous cultures everywhere
	the world is becoming more homogenous
	preserving diversity is vital
	fantasy is the most important genre
Power and prejudice	white men control too much of the world
	no one has the right to say hateful things about others
	indirect racism is more harmful than blatant racism
	able-bodied people don't understand how difficult it is to live with a disability
	institutions must be more representative to make them fairer
Resilience	anxiety is the biggest problem facing young people today
	young people are snowflakes who need to harden up
	failure teaches resilience
	helicopter parents are raising kids who can't cope with the real world
	compassion is more important than 'getting over' something

Develop a contention

A really good persuasive piece will have a clear contention that is an integral part of every section of the piece. You want to leave your audience with no doubt about your opinion of the issue.

Often, when students think about an issue, they think about it in very general terms, like this:

> *We should do more to prevent climate change.*
>
> *We need to pass laws so certain groups are treated more fairly.*
>
> *We need to ban unhealthy things.*

The problem with all of these statements is that they're quite vague. They don't nominate a specific action or a specific group of people who are responsible for the action. The reader is left with the questions – Do more what? What sort of laws? Ban what?

When you are arguing about an issue, you will do a much better job persuading your audience if you are specific about who or what is involved, like this:

> ***All households*** *should install* ***solar panels****, in order to prevent climate change.*
>
> ***Hate speech*** *must be banned so* ***minority groups*** *aren't attacked.*
>
> ***Governments*** *need to introduce a* ***sugar tax*** *to combat the obesity epidemic.*

Study alert:

When you choose an issue, a contention might occur to you straight away, but for some students, you might need to think about some arguments to do with your issue before you're ready to state your contention **(the 'Brainstorm arguments' section on pages 192-194 will help you with this).**

Put it into practice

To develop a specific contention, you should think about who is involved and what actions they should take. The table below will help you to do this.

should	stop/start	stakeholders
must	do more	women
need to	adopt	men
ought to	promote	members of the LGBTIQ+ community
it's essential to	pass laws	Indigenous people
a matter of urgency	develop	immigrants
now is the time to	fix	refugees
it's vital	improve	differently-abled people
it's important	stop	children
	prevent	teenagers
	protect	young adults
	ban	families
	regulate	parents
	help	students
		government
		political leaders
		schools
		people starting a career
		the elderly
		retirees
		homeless
		unemployed
		business owners
		people who live in the city
		people who live in the country

Brainstorm and plan

Ultimately, in any persuasive piece, you are aiming to manipulate your audience into thinking and feeling a particular way about an issue. A good plan will help you do this better. This section will guide you through these four steps to produce a detailed persuasive plan:

Phase 1

Phase 1: Brainstorm arguments

Here's an example:

Contention: *Elite sports people should behave as role models.*

- If people continue to handle this issue in the same way, they will only get the same results: the front pages of newspapers will continue to have stories of sports people behaving badly.
- We need sports stars to be leaders.
- What's happening now is hypocritical and unfair. We need to have one rule for everyone: sports stars are getting away with the type of bad behaviour that ordinary people don't.
- This will create a fairer society: everyone will be expected to conform to the same rules.
- We admire sports people for their discipline.

Phase 2

Phase 2: Identify specific purposes

Here's an example:

For the audience…

- *to feel judgemental about the poor behaviour of elite sports stars*
- *to realise there is a strong case for elite sports stars changing their behaviour*
- *to understand and connect with my opinion that it is hypocritical for sports stars to behave like this.*

Phase 3: Select strategies

Here's an example:

> **Opening**
>
> Pose problem that makes audience judgemental of sports star's behaviour.
>
> State solution that creates hope.
>
> **Body Part 1**
>
> Create a picture of why we admire sports stars.
>
> **Body Part 2**
>
> Rebut common arguments that sports people give to justify their behaviour.
>
> **Closing**
>
> What's happening now is hypocritical – we need a fair society where everyone is treated equally.

Phase 3

Phase 4: Plan in detail

At the end of the process of brainstorming ideas, you will need to outline a detailed plan for your persuasive piece. This plan should include notes about your contention, your purposes and what strategy, arguments and language you will use in each section of the piece to achieve your purposes or intention.

Phase 4

Example plan

Although creating a detailed plan is the final step, it will be easier for you to complete the other steps of the planning process if you first know what you are working towards.

Below is an example plan on the issue of: *elite sports people should behave as role models.*

This plan is structured almost in the same way as you would take notes to analyse an argument. This is because you are using the same elements you identify in an analysis of argument to construct your own persuasive piece.

Contention: *Elite sports people should behave as role models.*

Purposes: For the audience…

1. *to feel judgemental about the poor behaviour of elite sports stars*
2. *to realise there is a strong case for elite sports stars changing their behaviour*
3. *to connect with my opinion that it is hypocritical for sports stars to behave like this.*

Strategy/Argument	Notes	Vocabulary
Opening *Pose problem that makes audience judgemental of sports star's behaviour* *State solution that creates hope*	• *recent examples of bad behaviour: drugs, swearing, sexual assault* • *sports stars need to behave in thoughtful ways*	*self-deluded* *nonsense* *discipline and control*
Body Part 1 *Create a picture of why we admire sports stars*	• *training regimes* • *doing things we can't or won't*	*hypocritical* *impressive* *mental discipline*
Body Part 2 *Rebut common arguments that sports people give to justify their behaviour*	• *blame the media (even though they put up their own social media)* • *examples: quotes from social media*	*claims* *persecuted* *individual responsibility* *whining*
Closing *What's happening now is hypocritical – we need a fair society where everyone is treated equally*	• *Compare entitled athletes to real people*	*humility* *deserve* *lucky* *recognise* *privilege*

Study alert:

Download a blank copy of this planning template from: www.tickingmind.com.au/tables

Phase 1: Brainstorm arguments

After you've developed a contention, you'll need to brainstorm arguments to support this contention. Over the next few pages are some checklists that will help you think about arguments more strategically.

Common arguments

Many effective persuasive pieces don't rely on new or innovative arguments but in fact use tried and tested arguments that have been used many times before. The common arguments listed below work particularly well if you are arguing for or against implementing a new law, technology or process.

Put it into practice

Look through these arguments to identify any that might help you make your case. It's worthwhile reading through the arguments on both sides because you might find an argument on the 'opposite' side that will support your case.

Common arguments for trying something new	Common arguments against trying something new
• If people continue to handle this issue in the same way, they will only get the same results. • Progress is good. We need to live in the 21st century, not the past. • We all need to be responsible for change. We can't leave it to someone else. • What's happening now is hypocritical and unfair. We need to have one rule for everyone. • Even though change might be expensive or difficult, there are important long-term benefits. • If people don't change now there will be huge costs in the long term. • Other people, places or countries are doing this. We need to stay relevant and keep up with what is modern and best practice. • The evidence is clear. Experts agree. • We need to act in the best interests of the majority. • I've always found this attitude confusing because…	• A change like this is the first step to bigger and more destructive changes. If we let this happen…what worse change will happen next? • It's impractical. It's already been tried and hasn't worked. • It's too expensive. The money and time can be better used elsewhere. • The cost to people's personal freedoms and rights is too high. • This is simply change for change's sake. We need to keep some things the same. • People aren't ready for this type of change. • Jobs will be lost. • The evidence is unclear. We need to wait until experts agree. • It is inconvenient to make this change. • Undoubtedly, mistakes have been made, but this doesn't mean we need to change the whole system. • Let's not forget that history shows us…

Consider all factors

Looking at common arguments might help you to articulate some ideas you already have about your issue, but in order to have a really good persuasive piece, you need to have a range of different arguments and thoughts. On the opposite page is a Consider All Factors chart. Look through it to help you develop a range of arguments.

For example, if you were writing a persuasive piece about how all schools should create a four-day week, you might immediately go to the Education section on the CAF chart.

However, as you look through the chart, you could also consider these factors:

1. Economy and productivity: this might impact on teachers' jobs and how much they get paid.

2. Social welfare: a four-day week would create a more liveable society where students have a better school/life balance.

3. Justice, fairness and equality: Working parents need somewhere to send their children when they're at work.

4. Public health and safety: School-aged children need to be looked after by qualified staff.

Put it into practice

Look through the list and identify the one or two factors that you believe support one, central contention. Use the questions to help you develop arguments that will support your case.

Economy & Productivity	Public Health & Safety	Environment & Animal Rights
• Will this impact on people's jobs? • How much will this cost? • Long-term and short-term costs? • Who is paying? • What are the financial benefits? • Will this be an efficient use of resources? • Does this have practical benefits?	• Will this protect people from risks? • Will this impact upon people's health? • Is this overprotective? • Is this measure proportional to the risk or danger?	• Will this protect the environment? • Is this in response to scientific evidence? • Does this provide long-term solutions? • Will this have unforeseen consequences for the environment? • Should we give animals similar rights to humans?
Education	**Social Welfare, Culture and Tradition**	**Justice, Fairness & Equity**
• Is this about equal access to quality education? • Does this improve the educational opportunities for everyone? • Does this prioritise some types of education over others? • Do people need further education about this issue? • Should there be a public campaign about this?	• Will this help us look after each other better? • Will this create a more vibrant or diverse community? • Will this create a more liveable society? • Will this create a more inclusive or respectful society? • Does this preserve important traditions?	• Does this give some people more power than others? • Are some groups impacted by this more than others? • Is this likely to create a fairer society? • Have different voices and perspectives been listened to? • Is this best for a majority of people?
Public Popularity and Opinion	**Leadership**	**Individual vs. Group**
• Is this issue actually important to most people? • Do we know what people really think about this issue? • Is this important, even if it's unpopular? • Will this create protest, opposition or division in society? • Does this send a signal to people?	• Is this organisation/institution being run well? • Do leaders represent the views of the people? • Will this create better leaders? • Do we need leadership on this issue? • Who needs to be a leader about this issue?	• Is this more important for the individual or for wider society? • Does this allow people to preserve their own privacy? • Will people be able to choose what's best for themselves? • Should everyone be forced to change because of the actions of a few people?

Phase 2: Identify specific purposes

As you choose arguments to support your contention, you'll begin to develop a sense of how you want your audience to react to your arguments. For example, if you have chosen arguments that emphasise the importance of change to improve public health, you probably want your audience to think *that the need for action is urgent*. Often your piece won't have just one purpose, but multiple purposes. This is because you want your audience to feel and think different things as they experience your argument.

Let's look at an example of this:

Contention: *Elite sports people should behave as role models.*	
Arguments	**Purposes**
• We need sports stars to be leaders. • What's happening now is hypocritical and unfair. We need to have one rule for everyone: sports stars are getting away with the type of bad behaviour that ordinary people don't. • We admire sports people for their discipline.	1. *For the audience to feel judgemental about the poor behaviour of elite sports stars.* 2. *To realise there is a strong case for elite sports stars changing their behaviour.* 3. *To connect with my opinion that it is hypocritical for sports stars to behave like this.*

Put it into practice

This table lists possible ways you might want your audience to feel, think or act in response to your persuasive piece. Choose, combine or adapt one or more of these statements to develop a set of specific purposes for your persuasive piece.

Connect	Feel	Think	Act
☐ empathise with the presenter ☐ identify with what the presenter does or says ☐ trust the presenter's integrity ☐ understand where the presenter is coming from ☐ feel affirmed, listened to, represented	☐ be energised, excited, hopeful, inspired ☐ be outraged, horrified, concerned ☐ feel reassured ☐ feel responsible for ☐ feel disdainful, judgemental of	☐ view people with a different opinion in a certain way ☐ realise that there is a strong case for something ☐ change their minds about something ☐ realise that action is urgent ☐ accept that there is only one way ahead ☐ think that this case has been well-researched	☐ take a particular action ☐ change the way they do something ☐ join a movement, become part of something ☐ put pressure on a powerful group

Phase 3: Select strategies

To achieve your specific purposes, you will want to use a range of strategies. Let's look at how you might match purpose and strategy:

Purpose	Strategy
To feel judgemental about the poor behaviour of elite sports stars	*outline facts*
To realise there is a strong case for changing their behaviour	*create a word picture of how dedicated sports stars are* *rebut arguments that they are treated unfairly*
To connect with my opinion that it is hypocritical for sports stars to behave like this	*suggest a common-sense solution*

Put it into practice

The table below includes a list of common strategies that can be used at different points in a persuasive piece. Use this list to select a strategy for each section of your persuasive piece.

Openings	Bodies	Closings
• establish seriousness of issue	• present facts	• provide a clear instruction
• pose a problem	• present examples	• condemn actions
• connect with the audience's sense of identity as…	• interview experts	• condemn people
• establish the author's identity as…	• share stories of ordinary people	• present a next step
• outline facts	• rebut opposing views	• call for governments to take action
• shock the audience / challenge assumptions	• acknowledge concerns	• place responsibility on someone
• re-frame the issue	• pose problems	• suggest a common-sense solution
• provide background to the issue	• present solutions	• re-emphasise a problem
	• provide personal stories	• leave a lasting image of a problem
	• create a word picture	• suggest a moral responsibility
	• present an analogy	• emphasise the urgent need for action

Phase 4: Plan in detail

To create a detailed plan like the one on page 191, download a planning template from www.tickingmind.com.au/tables

Openings

There are some common strategies that work particularly well in openings. These are:

→ provide background to establish the seriousness of the issue

→ connect with the audience

→ establish the author or presenter's identity

→ re-frame the issue or challenge audience assumptions.

These strategies can be carried out by using a range of persuasive techniques such as:

- telling an anecdote
- emphasising the most important information
- labelling or describing the issue
- creating a picture of what an experience, situation or problem is like
- directly addressing or involving the audience
- clearly stating a contention.

Let's look in more detail at some openings, so you can see how different strategies are achieved through a range of persuasive techniques.

Provide background to establish the seriousness of the issue

The aim of this type of opening is for the audience to understand how bad a situation is so they can see that it needs to be fixed. Often, this type of opening involves creating a picture of the situation, labelling the issue or emphasising the most important information the audience needs to focus upon. The two examples below show you this. However, it is also possible to use an anecdote to show the seriousness of the issue.

Elite athletes have been in the news this week for these sorts of behaviours: spitting, swearing at umpires, sexually assaulting people and drug taking. It's ironic because, in order to be an elite athlete, you need to have discipline and control – but for some reason, these people think that they only need to apply discipline to their sport, not to their lives. But this self-deluded nonsense has to stop. Now.	Create a picture of what the situation is like Clear statement of contention
There's a crisis of depression, anxiety and violence that is crippling the world. More people are unhappy than ever before. Our society is plagued by anti-social and aggressive behaviour. But there's an answer: we need to play more.	Labelling the issue Emphasising the most important information Clear statement of contention

Establish author's identity

The aim of this type of opening is to establish how the author or presenter is knowledgeable about this field. Often, this is achieved through an anecdote about the author's experience or by providing a picture of what sort of person they are.

Yesterday I was a tiger. Well, it was only when I was babysitting my three-year-old cousin that I was a tiger, but still – it happened. In that moment, stalking through the jungle of my auntie's living room, I was a tiger. And it was kinda fun. Embarrassing, but definitely fun. That's because playing is fun.	Tells an anecdote about a recent fun instance of playing Creates a picture of what playing is like Clear statement of contention
We should all be treated equally, right? I feel lucky that, unlike the stereotypical image of boys, I don't have to be interested in sport. I don't even know the rules of most games. So I've never paid much attention to the latest scandal involving a 'sports star'. Until this weekend, when one of my uncles was talking about the latest scandal with my mother and he shrugged and said, "Boys will be boys, right?" And she agreed. Right in front of me. And it made me wonder: as a boy, am I allowed to do things my sisters aren't?	Clear statement of contention Provides a picture of the sort of person they are Tells an anecdote

Connect with your audience

Persuasive pieces are much more effective if they connect with their audience. Some writers or presenters do this in the opening of their piece. They achieve this sort of connection by:

- showing how an issue affects the audience
- putting them in someone else's position so they feel empathetic
- establishing shared values or experiences.

Let's do a short quiz. Which of these do you think is acceptable? Urinating through the window of a nightclub. Making a TikTok video rating the attractiveness of women. Sharing nude pics of someone with your friends. If your answer is 'none,' then you'd have trouble being a sports star at the moment, because the current epidemic of athletes behaving badly shows they're all common practice.	Directly addresses and involves the audience Label the issue
Picture this: over the weekend, you head out to do some shopping with your friends. You're hoping to try on a few new styles, get a couple of new t-shirts and maybe even something you haven't planned for. But instead, what happens is that you get to the shops and go into store after store without being able to find your size. What's worse is that the only shop that seems to have your size stocks clothes that look like something your grandma would wear. Pretty demoralising, right? But that's the kind of shopping experience larger teenagers have been experiencing for years.	Puts the audience in a position to empathise with this experience Directly addresses audience

Challenge audience assumptions or reframe the issue

The aim of this type of opening is to tackle common misconceptions an audience might have about an issue or to introduce a new way of thinking about it. Typically, this is achieved by addressing the audience or presenting important information that many people wouldn't know.

A recent study by the University of California found that engaging in thirty minutes of cooperative play each day improves cognition, increases happiness and extends life expectancy. Interestingly, the research wasn't about children. It was about people aged over 80 and showed that play is just as important for adults as it is for children.	Presenting new information Clearly stating contention
A recent study by the University of California found that engaging in thirty minutes of cooperative play each day improves cognition, increases happiness and extends life expectancy. Interestingly, the research wasn't about children. It was about people aged over 80 and showed that play is just as important for adults as it is for children.	Presenting new information Clearly stating contention

Put it into practice

Experiment with writing openings for your persuasive piece. Try two different opening strategies and compare which works best. The table below provides some suggestions about particular phrases you can use to write with some of the specific persuasive techniques modelled in the examples.

Create a picture	Label or describe the problem	Directly address or involve the audience
Picture this:… Every day in the news there is another story of… All around us… We live in a society where… Unlike many people, I… You might not know this about me, but…	crisis in… epidemic of… catastrophe critical failure disaster plaguing crippling	Who hasn't thought…? We all know that… Everyone has had some experience of… You can't deny that… Like me, you probably… Put yourself in… You might not have thought about it much, but… If you could, would you…
Tell an anecdote	**Emphasise the most important information**	**Clearly state a contention**
Only the other day, Last week, I heard someone When I was At the…I overheard… My parents are always telling me… Over the weekend, My view about…changed when	more people than ever before our society is every day, we're faced with recent research has shown experts all agree a poll of	solution turning point the way forward is opportunity chance just as important as now is the time should there's an answer

Body Paragraphs

This section will give you help with two aspects of a persuasive body paragraph:

- **body paragraph structures**

- **techniques to provide persuasive details and a description within a paragraph.**

Structures

There are different ways to structure a body paragraph, but every structure has the same two basic elements:

- an opening sentence
- persuasive details and a description that follows on from the opening.

The persuasive details and description will make up most of the paragraph and will include a key argument and strategy. This will be explained in more detail pages 203-209.

Opening sentences

The opening sentence of your persuasive paragraph sets up the argument and strategy that you will be using throughout your body paragraph. There are a few different ways you can structure the first sentence of a persuasive piece:

- assertion
- problem
- question
- information
- opposing claim.

Each of these opening sentences indicates the sort of information and detail that the rest of your body paragraph will have, like this:

- assertion → justification
- problem → solution
- question → answer
- information → explanation of its significance
- opposing claim → rebuttal.

Let's have a look at a paragraph that starts with an *assertion* and then goes on to include *justification* for that assertion:

One of the reasons that we admire athletes so much is that they can do things we cannot. They get up to train for hours every day. They eat well to improve their performance. They have the mental discipline to get up and exercise even when it's cold and rainy. While the rest of us are hitting the snooze button on our alarms and skipping gym sessions, these athletes are up and about, improving their fitness and abilities. It's impressive and we're right to be impressed. We know these athletes can control themselves when we can't. But for some reason, these individuals think that self-control only applies to their sporting performance. It's hypocritical and pathetic.	**Assertion** Justification

There are many other ways of structuring a persuasive paragraph. These are listed in the table below with examples. You should try to use a few different structures throughout your piece.

Paragraph starter	Next part
Problem	**Solution**
People who live in the country are disadvantaged in all sorts of ways – they have less access to cultural events, they don't have reliable access to public transport, but worst of all, they don't have easy access to health professionals.	*Fortunately, social media and tele-health are easy ways of overcoming this health problem...*
Question	**Answer**
But who really has the time to play?	*This is exactly the sort of attitude that suggests play is frivolous and 'extra' in our lives, rather than a vital part of maintaining imagination and curiosity. Psychologists and mental health experts suggest...*
Information	**Explanation**
Emerging evidence suggests that the amount of time that children spend on outside imaginative play has decreased by over 70% in one generation.	*What this means is that children are far less likely to be able to regulate their emotions and are more likely to develop depression than their parents...*
Opposing claim	**Rebuttal**
Some fashion labels claim that it's too expensive to produce a size-inclusive range.	*But this is ridiculous because by increasing the size options, fashion labels are accessing a whole new customer base...*

Put it into practice

Plan three or four body paragraphs for your persuasive piece. Choose a range of structures for these body paragraphs. Practise writing the first sentence of each paragraph.

Techniques to provide persuasive details and description

Throughout your body paragraphs, it's important you use a variety of strategies that support your opening sentence and provide persuasive details and a description. This section will help you understand and practise how to use a range of common strategies that provide details and descriptions.

Strong verbs

Verbs are the action words in our sentences. In persuasive writing, your sentences will be much more persuasive if you use verbs that have strong and dramatic positive or negative connotations.

In the example below, the two verbs in bold convey strong positive connotations about the benefits of play:

> *Engaging in just ten minutes of play each day significantly **enhances** brain function and **boosts** a child's ability to learn new things at school.*

In this next sentence, the two verbs in bold have strong negative connotations about the harm of joyless education:

> *Institutional, structured education **kills** play and **destroys** the capacity of our young people to learn how to have fun and use games as a way to learn and live.*

Put it into practice

Practise writing some persuasive sentences and focus on using strong verbs. Choose some verbs from this list to help you.

Verbs with positive connotations		Verbs with negative connotations	
augments	encourages	bars	kills
assists	enhances	chokes	narrows
builds	generates	damages	quashes
bolsters	launches	destroys	removes
boosts	promotes	eliminates	ruins
creates	stimulates	erases	stalls
elevates	strengthens	extinguishes	vaporizes

Persuasive Adjectives

Throughout your body paragraphs, you will need to describe the issue to your audience. It's important to remember that you are trying to manipulate your audience into *feeling* something about the issue. Strong feelings are very persuasive. So you will want to use describing words, or adjectives, that make your audience feel positively about what you're arguing for or negatively about what you're arguing against.

In this example, the adjectives in bold encourage the audience to feel negatively about the behaviour of athletes:

> *But for some reason, these individuals think that self-control only applies to their sporting performance. It's **hypocritical** and **pathetic**.*

In this example, the last adjective in bold encourages the audience to feel that play is necessary and not something that is silly:

> *This is exactly the sort of attitude that suggests play is **frivolous** and '**extra**' in our lives, rather than a **vital** part of maintaining imagination and curiosity.*

Put it into practice

Practise writing sentences that make your audience feel a certain way about the issue. Try using some words from this table.

Instead of *bad…*	Instead of *good…*	Instead of *silly…*	Instead of *important…*
dire	exceptional	hypocritical	vital
disastrous	fabulous	frivolous	significant
catastrophic	first-class	ridiculous	crucial
drastic	superior	poorly planned	serious
severe	on-the-ball	unintelligible	fundamental
problematic		vague	historic
painful		pathetic	remarkable
			necessary
Instead of *difficult…*	**Instead of *simple…***	**Instead of *certain…***	**Instead of *common-sense…***
arduous	straightforward	sure-fire	practical
complicated	easy	beyond a doubt	reasonable
convoluted	basic	naturally	sound
over-involved	plain	surely	sensible
	simplistic	unquestionably	
		exactly	

The Rule of Three

By now, you've probably realised that effective persuasive writing isn't just about having sensible reasons and good evidence. You need to create a piece that makes people feel, that makes people think and that makes your writing memorable. In order to make your writing memorable, you often need to say something more than once. This is where the rule of three comes in: it's a really old writing technique and it works well because it creates a sense of 'flow' in your writing.

Let's have a look at a couple of examples:

> *We're living through an epidemic of **anxiety**, **depression** and **mental health** issues.*
>
> ***They** get up to train for hours every day. **They** eat well to improve their performance. **They** have the mental discipline to get up and exercise even when it's cold and rainy.*

Put it into practice

Here are a number of tips for using the rule of three:

Rule of three strategy	Example or phrases
Instead of just using one adjective to describe something, use three. Use the table of adjectives on page 204 to help you.	~~*This is a terrible idea.*~~ *This is a **ridiculous**, **poorly planned** and **stupid idea**.*
If you use a phrase such as 'we must' or 'we should', try describing three things that 'we must' do, instead of just one.	*We must make more room for **play**; we must make more time for **games** and we must fill our lives with more **joy**.*
Think of three groups of people who might be affected by an issue and list them in a sentence.	*This is bad for f**amilies**. This is bad for **children** and it's bad for **society**.*
Use some of the phrases in the next column to help you write a sentence with a rule of three or three linking sentences.	• *It's not only…it's also…and…* • *The reasons for this are threefold: it's…it's…and it's…* • *We must…, …and…* • *They should…, …and…* • *It's…It's…It's…* • *You should…You should…You should* • *We must…We must…We must…* • *They…They…They…*

Inclusive language

Everyone likes to feel included. When you write a persuasive piece, you should use language that makes your audience feel that your argument concerns and affects them. It should also make them feel connected to you as a writer.

Here are some examples of sentences that use inclusive language:

> *__Just like you__, I want to make life a little bit easier for myself and a little bit more convenient.*
>
> *__We all__ know that life is harder for people who are living with a disability and that's why __we all__ must do something to make their lives easier, like advocating for more publicly accessible toilets, more ramps to public buildings and more updating of historic buildings.*
>
> *It's important to understand that it is __our__ future at stake. If __we__ don't do something to prevent climate change __we're__ all going to be facing an uncertain future.*

Put it into practice

Use the phrases in the table below to help make your audience feel more included and involved in your argument.

We phrases	*You* phrases
we must	you all know
we all	you can't deny
we all believe	you have to ask yourself
we all feel	just like you
at some point, we've all had the experience of…	when you…
who of us hasn't…?	

Links

Just like for any good paragraph, the sentences in a persuasive body paragraph should link and flow into each other. These are three linking strategies that work particularly well in persuasive writing:

- 'Signpost phrases' at the beginning of a paragraph
- Linking words at the start of sentences
- Repetition of related words and ideas

The paragraph demonstrates some examples of these linking strategies:

Even more important than the way social media facilitates the **sharing** of information or **connects** individuals, is the way it builds **communities**. People can truly find their tribe online. **And not just** one tribe, but many. You name your interest – cloud watching, cosplay, handball, cooking things with artichokes – and there will be a social media **community** that **shares** this interest. Reaching out and finding that there is not just one person but **many** who **share** your interest and passion for a topic is a life-affirming experience. **These** meaningful **connections** make the world a better place – because the more **communal** we are, the kinder we are as well.	**Signpost phrase** **Repetition of related words or ideas** **Linking words at the start of sentence**

Put it into practice

Write a persuasive paragraph. This table will give you some concrete tips on how to use linking strategies:

Strategy	Tips or phrases
Signpost phrases	The first thing to know about this issue is… At the heart of this issue is… The most basic reason for…is… To understand why…you first need to understand that… Apart from…, there is also… On top of…, there is also… But this is not just about…, it's also about… Another key reason for… But of most importance… But even more important than… The final and most important reason for… But perhaps the most compelling reason for…is…
Repetition of related words	• To emphasise an important idea or feeling, use a key word in a variety of forms throughout a paragraph (i.e. *connects, connection, connected / community, communal*) • Use the rule of three to repeat related ideas – see page 205.
Linking words at the start of a sentence	This… These… However,… Moreover,… Furthermore,… As if this isn't proof enough, there is also… What's more… On top of this… And… And not just…

Closings

A strong closing to a persuasive piece should be reasonably short (1–2 sentences is a good length) and leave the audience with a clear feeling or motivation for action. Here are five examples of simple ways to close a persuasive piece.

Takeaway message

This technique aims to summarise the core of your argument into a memorable, slogan-like final one or two sentences.

> *It's clear that bodies have changed over the years, all I'm asking is that fashion reflects these changes. It's as simple as that.*

Rule of three/list

The rule of three is a highly effective closing strategy: it summarises an argument in a memorable way and makes your case appear elegant and polished.

> *We should all take the time to reflect on the hard work that has gone into our food. We should all consider how long it takes for the vegetables on our plate to become nutritious and delicious food. And we should all think about the hard work farmers have done to provide us with food.*

Future prediction

This closing strategy seeks to motivate the audience to take action or change their attitude now by showing what things might look like in the future.

> *In years to come, we're going to look back on this epidemic of 'busyness' with bemusement and wonder why we didn't take more time to have fun while we could. Because, hopefully, in the future, we'll clearly understand just how important play is.*

Call to arms

With this type of conclusion, you challenge your audience to take immediate action.

> *Next time you go to a cafe and ask for a takeaway coffee, remember that the planet is not as disposable as a cup. So use a keep cup, because you're on this planet for keeps.*

Personal pledge

In this type of closing, you commit to taking action yourself in order to motivate your audience to also take action.

> *So from now on, I'm going to think carefully before I give a one-star review, because if I'm rich enough and lazy enough to pay someone to bring me cold takeaway I shouldn't make an overworked and underpaid delivery person feel worse about themselves.*

Practise writing your closing in a few different ways. Use the table below to help write with different closing strategies.

Takeaway message

It's clear that…

The way forward is simple:

Really, it's as easy as…

In the end, the choice is straightforward:

It's impossible to argue with…

Rule of three

We must do this for…, for…and for…

We must commit to…, …and…

See more tips about this strategy on page 205.

Future prediction

In years to come…,

Within the next few years…,

Soon…,

There is a window now to act. If we don't…

If we don't take the opportunity to…now, the future will be…

Call to arms

Next time you…

Whenever you're next…

We can all choose to make a difference tomorrow by…

Change is possible if we all…

If we're to change things, each of us needs to…

Personal pledge

Next time I…, I will…

So from now on…

I'm going to start…

Fixing…requires each of us to…So I'll be…

Presentation strategies

When you deliver your persuasive speech, you need to consider your audience. You want to make your speech as interesting and engaging for them as possible. This is true whether you are presenting your speech in person or you are creating a screencast of yourself. Try to give the sort of presentation that you wouldn't mind watching yourself.

All presentations

Whether or not you are giving your presentation live or creating a screencast, here is a checklist for making your delivery as persuasive as possible:

☐ **Practise:** Just like you have to practise your writing skills, it's important to practise your presentation so that you do a good job. Don't just write your persuasive piece and then record it, actually practise speaking it several times over a few days. A valuable way of giving yourself feedback about your presentation when practising it is to record yourself. This way, you can see what other people see and you can practise the parts of your speech that need the most work. Also, the more you practise, the less you will need to use notes and your speech will start to sound more natural.

☐ **Find a natural and steady pose:** If you're standing up in front of your audience, try to stand in the one spot, because pacing up and down can make you look a bit unhinged. If you're creating a screencast of yourself, sit comfortably with both feet firmly on the ground (or one foot, if you prefer to cross your legs) so that you don't swivel in your chair or fidget too much. Lots of movement can be distracting for your audience.

☐ **Use hand gestures:** Some people naturally use a lot of hand gestures when they speak. Other people are more still. You should do whatever feels most comfortable and normal for you. The more you practise, the more your gesturing will become natural. However, make sure you gesture with one or both of your hands to emphasise important points.

☐ **Pace yourself.** When you are nervous, it's normal to want to speak more quickly so you can get your speech over and done with. However, it's difficult for your audience to understand how important your arguments are if you're always rushing. Pause between sentences and between arguments so that your audience has time to let your information sink in.

☐ **Vary your tone.** If you've ever had the experience of being told off, you already know that being shouted at for a long time is very tiring. But also, being spoken to calmly and quietly can become quite boring. Try to vary your tone so that you are sometimes speaking passionately and sometimes speaking calmly. This will help your audience to maintain focus throughout your presentation.

Study alert:

Record yourself practising your presentation. Watch the recording and think particularly about whether the speed of your presentation is right and your tone is natural and interesting.

Live presentations

If you are giving your presentation live, there are two things to take particular care with:

☐ **Eye contact** is perhaps the most important and difficult element to get right. Because you will probably feel nervous and a bit embarrassed or weird, it's tempting to try to avoid looking at anyone in the room. However, this will have the effect of making everyone feel ignored and like your speech is entirely irrelevant to them, which isn't persuasive. People can read faster than they can speak, so scan through each sentence and as you finish reading the last part of each sentence, look up at your audience. Make sure you sometimes look to your left, to the centre and to the right of the room. Looking at three parts of the room can work really well if you're using a rule of three.

☐ **Use cue cards.** It's hard to read a speech fluently from a whole page print out so you won't be able to make eye contact as effectively if you do this. Also, if you're nervous, the page can shake in a distracting way. Instead, use cue cards.

Cue cards should:

– be small enough to hold in one hand so you can gesture naturally
– have only 3–4 sentences on each of them
– be numbered.

Screencast

If you're recording your presentation as a screencast, here is a checklist of things to organise and consider:

☐ **Work out how to use the screencast software on your computer:** Using a computer rather than a phone to record your screencast has several benefits:

1. You can use teleprompter apps to read your notes.

2. It's easier to save and share your presentation.

3. A phone can move around too much and create a very amateurish recording.

☐ **Choose a quiet space to record:** Make sure you're in a room where you can close the door and you won't accidentally record the conversations of other people in your house, pet sounds or the sound of passing traffic.

☐ **Choose which type of screencast shot to use:**

- **Shot of just your face:** In this type of shot, you need to put your computer on a box or pile of books so it is at face height and you film yourself looking directly at the screen, not down at it. The advantage of this screencast shot is that it will give a clear view of the expressions on your face and allow you to scroll through the script of your presentation on your computer. The downside of this type of screenshot is that you can't record hand gestures and the presentation could be a bit boring.

- **Mid-length shot:** This is a shot of you from the waist up. For this type of shot, you would normally sit on a chair about a metre away from your computer. You need to put your computer on a box or pile of books so it is at face height. The advantage of this type of shot is that it allows you to film hand gestures and body language that create a more interesting presentation. While you can read from cue cards to record this type of presentation, it will look better if you use a teleprompter app to read your presentation from the screen of your computer. Teleprompter apps will automatically scroll through your script as you speak.

> **Study alert:**
> This is an excellent free teleprompter app that you can use on your computer:
> *https://telepromptermirror.com/telepromptersoftware.htm*

☐ **Make sure the lighting is right:** Make sure the light is shining on your face, not from behind. Light that comes from behind you puts your face in a shadow and makes it difficult for your audience to see you. This means that you either need to be facing any windows in your room or draw the curtains.

☐ **Listen back:** You should definitely practise your presentation a number of times and you'll probably need to record it a few times before you get it right. Remember: the advantage of doing a screencast is that you can record and re-record it again and again until you get it right.

Before you save and submit a screencast of your recording, make sure:
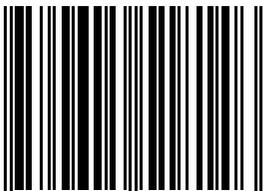
- the audio is clear the whole way through
- you're happy with your pace throughout – you don't go too fast
- you're happy with your expression, and you vary your tone and emphasise points.

About The Senior English Writing Handbook

This is not just another textbook filled with endless descriptions and information about the English and EAL study design. Instead, The Senior English Writing Handbook shows students how to write successfully for each area in the new English and EAL study design. Each chapter focuses on a different area of study, guiding students through its aim and purpose and showing them how to develop their vocabulary and write purposeful, meaningful and sophisticated sentences and paragraphs. By providing students with a range of annotated examples and step-by-step instructions on how to write with clarity and purpose, this textbook helps every VCE English and EAL student achieve success.