

# THE SENIOR ENGLISH WRITING HANDBOOK

3RD  
EDITION

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES, RESOURCES  
AND TOOLS FOR EVERY SENIOR  
ENGLISH STUDENT

TICKING  
MIND 

## *THE SENIOR ENGLISH WRITING HANDBOOK*

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The production of a Ticking Mind textbook requires a great deal of work from a small, but dedicated group:

Bridget Quin and James Pinnuck who produce the text and argue about what it should be; Lucy Filor who edits with humour and accuracy; Tasha Hassapis who designs and makes everything beautiful.

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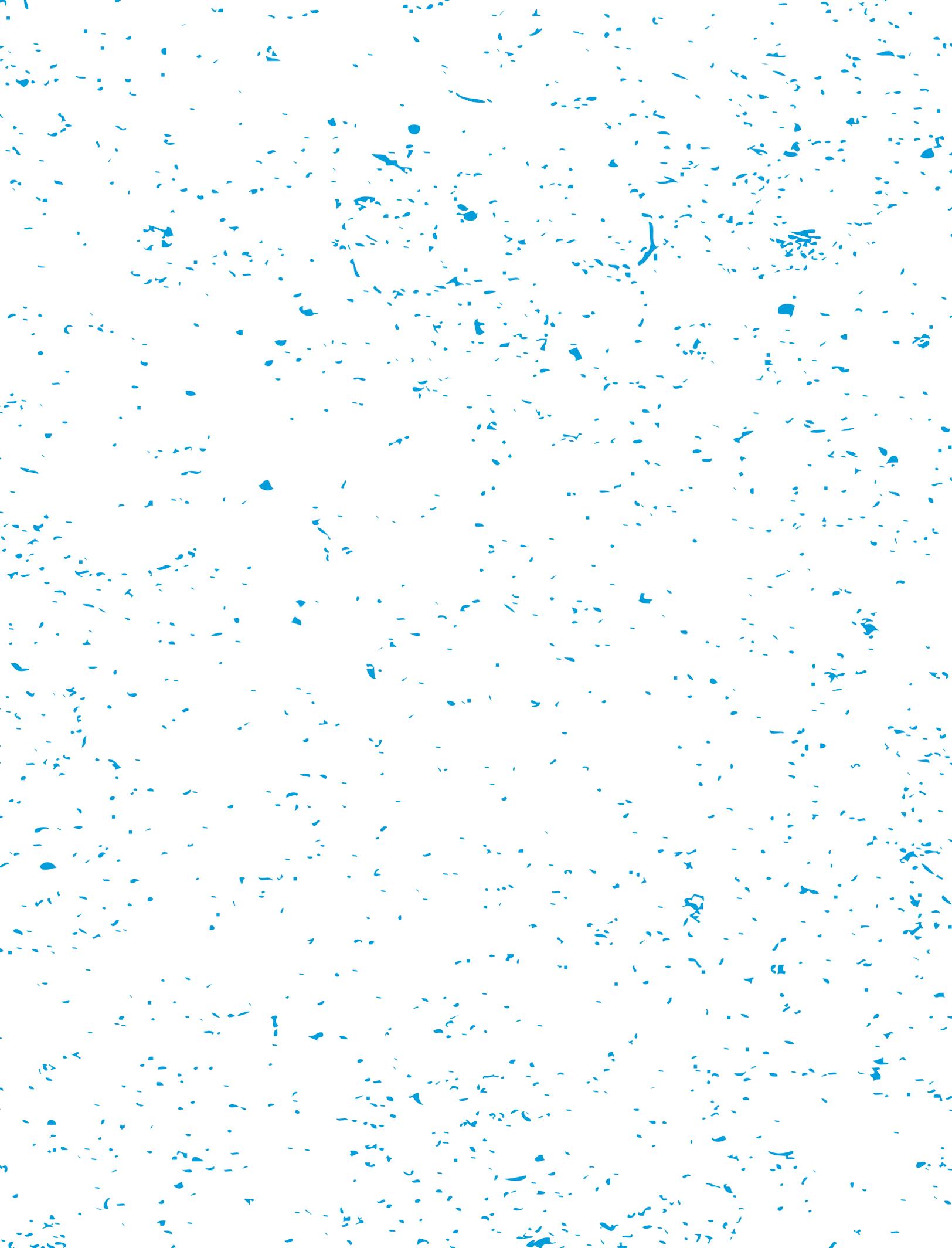
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# 1. WRITING PERSUASIVE PIECES

This chapter will look at three types of tools you can use to construct effective persuasive pieces:

## 1. Generating arguments:

- Basic arguments for and against
- Consider all factors
- The big picture
- Identify and match arguments to the audience

## 2. Structuring your ideas for persuasive writing:

- Starting a persuasive piece
- Building a case over the whole persuasive piece
- Finishing a persuasive piece

## 3. Polishing and perfecting your writing:

- Persuasive phrases
- The rule of three

## 4. Oral presentation strategies

## GENERATING ARGUMENTS:

# Basic arguments for & against

### Why come up with new arguments when there are perfectly good old ones?

The table below lists a series of basic arguments that have been around as long as people themselves. If you are arguing about why we should or shouldn't implement a change (such as a new law, rule, technology or way of doing things), then start by looking at this list. For the particular issue you are looking at, which of these arguments applies and can be used to make an effective case?

For example, if we were considering the proposition, 'we should go from having no school uniform to having a school uniform', we might select these arguments against:

- It's expensive
- It impacts on people's individual freedoms - their right to choose and do what they want
- What's wrong with what we're doing now?

Once you've selected basic arguments, the next thing you can do is brainstorm all the reasons to support them.

### For example, uniform is expensive because:

- You have to buy a whole range of different uniform
- It's not like you can get a cheap version - there's just one place that supplies uniform for the one price
- Uniform often isn't great quality and you have to keep replacing it

BASIC ARGUMENTS FOR	BASIC ARGUMENTS AGAINST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress is good - we need to live in the 21st century, not in the past. We can't be left behind</li><li>• If we do things the same way we will only get the same results - doing something is better than doing nothing</li><li>• We need to think about what's best for most people - not just some people who don't want to change</li><li>• We all need to be responsible</li><li>• The benefits are long term / it will be cheaper in the longer term</li><li>• If we don't do it, we'll regret it later</li><li>• Other people are doing this, so we should as well</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If we let this happen...what will be next?</li><li>• It's impractical - it'll never work</li><li>• It's expensive</li><li>• It impacts on people's individual freedoms - their right to choose and do what they want</li><li>• What's wrong with what we're doing now?</li><li>• We've heard these arguments before - they've never made sense in the past and they don't now / This hasn't worked in the past, it won't now</li></ul>

## GENERATING ARGUMENTS:

# Consider all factors

Often when we brainstorm arguments for or against a topic, our thinking can be limited to the most obvious factors and ideas. For example, if we were given the topic: 'We should create more national parks', we would immediately think of the environment. If we were given the topic, 'The drinking age should be raised to 21', the factor of safety would come to mind. But for any issue there are a whole range of factors that need to be considered beyond the obvious. The more broadly we consider what factors are relevant to a topic, the more ideas we can generate.

On the next page you will find a Consider All Factors Chart. This chart lists a whole range of factors that could be relevant to an issue you are thinking about.

### Use this resource to help generate arguments for or against a topic:

1. Begin by using the resource as a checklist. Without considering whether you are for or against a topic, simply read through the factors and tick off the ones that are in any way relevant to the issue
2. You will probably tick off between 8-10 factors. Look back through what you ticked off – prune these down to the five most important factors to the issue
3. Now, create a for and against chart as in the example below. Considering each factor one by one, you should decide what would be a for argument and what would be an against argument. Sometimes you might not be able to identify both a for and against argument. In that case, simply put in a question mark like in the example below.
4. Which side is strongest? Pick this side to make your case.

TOPIC: THE YEAR 12 ENGLISH EXAM SHOULD BE DONE ON COMPUTERS		
	FOR	AGAINST
<b>MONEY</b>	Computers are now pretty cheap.	It will cost a lot of money to make sure there is a computer for every student to do the exam on.
<b>PROGRESS</b>	Producing work on computers is the way the real world runs. Shouldn't we also do this on our exam?	?
<b>PRACTICALITY</b>	?	What happens if the computers break down during the exam?
<b>SECURITY</b>	There are now a lot of tools available to keep computers secure and stop people using them the wrong way.	What happens if people find a way to cheat using the computers?
<b>FAIRNESS FOR ALL</b>	What about all the students who have messy handwriting - or type faster than they write?	What about if some students aren't good at typing or using computers?

## GENERATING ARGUMENTS:

# Consider all factors

---

<b>MONEY</b> Will cost be a consideration?	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> Will this impact on the environment?	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b> Will this impact jobs?
<b>EDUCATION</b> Will this impact on the education of people?	<b>HEALTH</b> Will this impact on the health of people?	<b>SAFETY &amp; SECURITY</b> Will this impact on the safety and security of people?
<b>PROGRESS</b> Is there a question of whether this will help us progress or take us backwards?	<b>PRACTICALITY</b> Is there a question of how practical or easy this is to do?	<b>EXTENT OF BENEFIT</b> Is there a question of how much this will really benefit people?
<b>MORALS/ETHICS &amp; JUSTICE</b> Will there be a question of whether this is morally right or wrong or whether it will provide justice?	<b>RIGHTS AND BELIEFS?</b> Will people's individual rights or beliefs be affected?	<b>TRADITIONS, CULTURE &amp; LIFESTYLE</b> Will this impact on the traditions, cultures or lifestyle of people?
<b>FAIRNESS FOR ALL</b> Will this impact on all people in the same way? Is there a question of whether people from different backgrounds or areas will be affected differently?	<b>GENDER</b> Is there a question of how it will affect females or males in particular?	<b>POPULARITY</b> Is there a question of how much people will like this?
<b>AGE AND GENERATION</b> Is there a question of whether this will impact differently upon people of different ages?	<b>LOCAL/NATIONAL /GLOBAL</b> Is there a question of how this will impact a local area, the country or the world?	<b>SECRET REASONS</b> Is there a question of why this is really being done? Is there a reason that could be being kept secret?

## GENERATING ARGUMENTS:

# The big picture

---

Generating arguments for and against a topic sometimes means we focus on the small picture and we lose sight of the bigger things that are at stake. Big picture thinking works with issues where there is a principle at stake that is bigger than just immediate practical concerns for people. It's about asking the question: 'What type of society do we want to live in and how can our response to this issue help us shape this type of society?'

**On the next page you will find a list of big picture principles. Begin by identifying which principles are relevant to the topic.**

For example, if we were debating the topic

**'Energy drinks should not be sold to people under 18',**

We could circle all of these principles:

- Public health: Is this a serious public health issue?
- Government policy: Is this an issue about the responsibility of the government to make laws that take care of its citizens?
- Individual autonomy: Is this an issue about the rights of the individual to do what they want without being restricted?

**We now need to pick which principles are the most important.**

If we were going to argue against energy drink bans, we might say,

*'This is ultimately an issue about the rights of the individual and how governments shouldn't control every aspect of our lives'.*

**In other words:**

Do we want to live in a world where the government is always telling us what to do?

Alternatively, if we were advocating the ban on energy drinks we might say,

*'This is really an issue about public health and what the government should be doing to protect public health'.*

**In other words:**

'Don't we want to live in a society where we make laws that are in the best interests of everyone's health?'

Later in this chapter is a series of phrases you can use to argue the bigger picture to an issue in your writing.

## GENERATING ARGUMENTS:

# Big pictures

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<p><b>SOCIAL / WELFARE</b></p> <p>Is this an issue about how we behave and relate to each other as individuals and groups?</p> <p>Is it about how well we look after each other in our society?</p>	<p><b>JUSTICE, FAIRNESS &amp; EQUALITY</b></p> <p>Is this an issue about people being treated fairly according to the law or according to what most people would perceive as fair?</p> <p>Is it about people being treated the same?</p>	<p><b>MORAL &amp; ETHICAL</b></p> <p>Is this an issue about accepted codes of conduct in certain situations?</p>
<p><b>ECONOMY &amp; PRODUCTIVITY</b></p> <p>Is this an issue about money or employment and the opportunities individuals and families have to financially look after themselves?</p> <p>Is it about how efficiently we are using our resources?</p>	<p><b>RELIGIOUS FREEDOM</b></p> <p>Is this an issue to do with people's spiritual or religious beliefs?</p>	<p><b>CULTURAL HERITAGE</b></p> <p>Is this an issue to do with the traditions, institutions, and ways of behaving of groups, communities or nations?</p>
<p><b>ENVIRONMENTAL/ ANIMAL RIGHTS</b></p> <p>Is this an issue about how best and most sustainably we can use our resources?</p>	<p><b>PUBLIC HEALTH</b></p> <p>Is this an issue to do with what is in the best interest of keeping us all healthy and safe from physical dangers?</p>	<p><b>DEMOCRACY, FREE SPEECH &amp; INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY</b></p> <p>Is this an issue to do with our freedom to make decisions and to decide who governs us?</p> <p>Is this an issue to do with our democratic rights and our rights as individuals?</p>
<p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <p>Is this an issue to do with how well we are educating the people in our society or what opportunity they have to access quality education?</p>	<p><b>GOVERNMENT/ POLITICAL</b></p> <p>Is this an issue about what governments should be doing to best help their people?</p>	<p><b>PRIVACY</b></p> <p>Is this an issue to do with the rights of people to control information about themselves?</p>

## GENERATING ARGUMENTS:

# Identify & match arguments to the audience

---

When writing a persuasive piece, your task isn't just to generate 3-5 effective arguments. Your task is to convince a particular audience of your contention. This means that you need to identify an audience and consider which arguments might be most persuasive for this audience.

The checklist below will help you to identify the type of audience you want to engage in a persuasive piece.

### WHAT TYPE OF STAKEHOLDER IN THIS ISSUE IS MY AUDIENCE?

Start by identifying which general statement best identifies the audience you are interested in addressing. After this, you can consider whether there is a more specific group of people who will be your audience (i.e. parents, teenagers, politicians, business owners, etc -). There won't always necessarily be a specific group of people like this.

- My audience is people who know a lot about this issue and are directly affected by it
- My audience is people who know the issue somehow involves or affects them but haven't thought much about it
- My audience are people who don't realise this issue involves them somehow

### WHAT IS THEIR OPINION?

- My audience has a strong opinion about the issue
- My audience is people whose minds aren't made up about the issue
- My audience is people who haven't thought about the issue or actively don't care

### WHAT ACTION DO I EXPECT THE AUDIENCE TO TAKE?

- Direct action: I want my audience to actively do something towards this issue
- Indirect action: I want my audience to support the actions of others towards this issue
- Change of attitude/opinion: I want my audience to change their attitude or opinion about the issue

Your next step is to consider which arguments and language features will most engage and convince the audience you've chosen. The planning template below will help you begin to organise your thoughts.

MY AUDIENCE	ARGUMENTS I'M GOING TO USE	LANGUAGE FEATURES MOST APPROPRIATE FOR THIS ARGUMENT AND MOST LIKELY TO APPEAL TO MY AUDIENCE
My audience has this involvement in the issue:		
My audience has this opinion about the issue:		
I want them to have this response to the issue:		

**DOWNLOAD A BLANK COPY FROM:**

[www.tickingmind.com.au/persuasive-planning-template](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/persuasive-planning-template)

## TOOLS FOR STRUCTURING PERSUASIVE WRITING:

# Starting a persuasive piece

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After you have developed arguments to write about and identified your audience, the next thing to think about is how to structure your piece in a way that is most likely to convince this audience.

Having a dynamic opening to your persuasive piece - that targets particular points of interest or relevance for your audience - is one of the most basic ingredients of effective argumentative writing.

On the chart below and on the next page are seven ways a persuasive piece can open. Pick out three that might be particularly effective for your specific audience.

### ANECDOTE:

Starting with an anecdote about your own personal experience with a topic or issue can engage an audience because they can see that you know what you're talking about.

*I know what it's like to be in a crash and witness the effects of drink driving and speeding. I have been as close to it as you can get...*

### THIS IS YOUR ISSUE:

With this beginning, you are establishing that the issue currently impacts on the lives of the people in your audience - or will impact them in the future.

*Each day, each of you in the audience contribute to the devastation of the environment. Each of uses....*

*If you think this issue doesn't affect you, you are wrong. By the time all of us in this room are 30, eight of us will have been....*

### QUESTIONS:

Asking an audience a question or series of questions at the start of a presentation can get an audience to instantly see how they have a stake in the topic being discussed. This technique is most effective when you actually get the audience to put their hands up.

*How many of you have been affected by bullying?*

*How many of you have spent money on something you don't actually need?*

### STARTLING/SHOCKING FACT:

Engage your audience by starting with a shocking fact (or a shocking picture).

*Last night, while you watched TV, texted your friends, or updated your Facebook page, 1000 people died of poverty.*

### MENTAL PICTURE:

We can also engage our audience at the start by painting a picture of a horrible future society that could come into being if we don't stop doing something (or don't start doing something).

*Picture a world where your every move is tracked. Where everything you buy is collected on a database, everything you...*

### BULLET PROOF ARGUMENT:

This is the argument everyone (or most reasonable people) would agree with. Starting with this means the audience is more likely to agree with what comes next.

*You can't argue with the fact that...*

*We all accept that...*

### ESTABLISHING THE BIG PICTURE AND CLAIMING THE HIGH MORAL GROUND:

This strategy is about identifying the big picture principle that is at stake in the issue. By arguing from the start that you know what the most important principle at stake is, and your position supports this principle being upheld, you force the audience to accept that your argument has moral value.

- *What we're not talking about is the real issue...*
- *We need to remind ourselves...*
- *It needs to be clear that...*
- *This is not a debate about... it is really an issue of...*
- *What is at stake here is not just... but...*
- *We need to see the bigger picture here. What is at stake is...*
- *Of fundamental importance in this debate is the principle of...because...*
- *The bigger issue here...*
- *On one level this is an issue about...But on a bigger level this is a matter of...*
- *What's most important here...*
- *At its most basic level, this debate is about...*
- *Let's be clear, what we're really arguing about here is...*

# Building a case over the whole persuasive piece

---

How you build your case over the course of a whole piece is an important consideration.

It's not simply a matter of writing out arguments in the order that they first occur to you. You need to think about the sequence of arguments which will present your case most persuasively and how one argument can build upon the previous one in a way that makes your case seem entirely convincing

Here are two ways of structuring your persuasive piece:

## **1. THREE-PRONGED ATTACK**

Rather like music, arguments can sound more effective when they build to a crescendo: when they start quietly but then finish with a boom. The three pronged argument is a way of structuring your persuasive writing so that one argument snowballs into the next until you have a very big snowball by the end of your piece and everyone will be utterly convinced of what you are saying (you hope!).

In the three pronged argument you brainstorm a range of points and choose your best three. After this, you rank these three best arguments from the most to least strong.

You start your case with the weakest argument, before introducing a stronger one and concluding with your strongest argument.

One reason for sticking to three arguments is that it's easier for the human brain to process things in three – in other words, you're creating a memorable set of arguments.

Another reason for the three-pronged approach is that by finishing with your strongest argument, you create an impression of authority and gravity in what you are saying. In the following table there is a selection of word combinations you can use at the start of each of your three body paragraphs to incrementally introduce your points and build towards your stunning conclusion.

## Here is an example of these phrases in action:

To begin with, *changing school uniforms will be immensely unpopular...*

On top of the *unpopularity of the move, is the cost of the change...*

But above all, *changing school uniform will take away the very thing that makes this school great: its diversity...*

<p><b>1.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To begin with...</li><li>• To start with...</li><li>• In the first place...</li><li>• At first glance / We can see at first glance...</li><li>• What strikes you first about this issue...</li></ul>	<p><b>2.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As if this wasn't enough reason, there is also....</li><li>• On top of that...</li><li>• Added to that...</li><li>• More importantly / significantly...</li><li>• Besides / Apart from the fact that...</li><li>• It's also the case that...</li><li>• Over and above this...</li><li>• Of greater concern / interest...</li></ul>	<p><b>3.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Above all / But above all / Yet above all...</li><li>• More than this / But more than this / Yet more than this...</li><li>• But of most importance...</li><li>• Of primary importance though...</li><li>• However, of even more importance than...</li><li>• However, these first two reasons pale into insignificance compared to...</li><li>• Even if you don't accept the first two reasons, you cannot argue with...</li></ul>
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## 2. ATTENTION-HEART-HEAD-SOLUTION

A different way of structuring a persuasive piece is around the types of emotions you want your audience to feel.

In the Attention-Head-Heart-Solution structure, we begin by engaging the audience's attention using any of the strategies outlined at the start of this section.

The body of the persuasive piece then revolves around appealing to the audience's head (with reason) or their heart (with emotion).

The piece can then conclude by offering a 'simple' solution to the audience, appealing to everyone's natural inclination to see uncomplicated fixes as the best ones.

Below are some suggested words and phrases you can use for emotional appeals or appeals to logic. You can begin your body with either emotional appeals or appeals to logic, as long as you consider which appeal is likely to make the most impact.

APPEALING TO THE HEART WITH EMOTIVE LANGUAGE:	APPEALING TO THE HEAD BY OUTLINING THE FACTS OF THE ISSUE:	OUTLINE A SOLUTION:
<p><i>dire, disastrous, catastrophic, extreme, drastic, severe, exceptional, valuable, efficient, effective, impressive, difficult, problematic, painful, arduous, complicated, significant, important, crucial, serious, fundamental, historic</i></p>	<p><i>The facts on this issue/matter can't be argued with...</i></p> <p><i>The most essential facts are...</i></p> <p><i>The key to understanding this issue is to realise that...</i></p> <p><i>Experts are saying...</i></p> <p><i>Researching is showing beyond any doubt...</i></p> <p><i>The figures don't lie...</i></p> <p><i>This will be... simple, easy, cheap, uncomplicated, straightforward</i></p>	<p><i>The answer is simple...</i></p> <p><i>The only genuine solution is...</i></p> <p><i>The way forward couldn't be more clear...</i></p> <p><i>When it boils down to it, this is plainly a case of...</i></p> <p><i>There's nothing complicated about what needs to be done...</i></p> <p><i>When all the shouting is over, the simple solution that is left...</i></p> <p><i>There's nothing difficult about solving this problem...</i></p>

## TOOLS FOR STRUCTURING PERSUASIVE WRITING:

# Finishing a persuasive piece

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A strong persuasive piece will be book-ended by a dynamic opening and closing. While the opening will seek to engage the audience in the issue - and will probably contain a reasonable amount of detail - the closing should be simple and sleek.

Below are four different ways a persuasive piece can finish. You must choose one, or a combination, that would best suit your piece.

### TAKE AWAY MESSAGE

This technique aims to summarise the core of your argument into one (slogan like) sentence:

*In a nutshell, the message is...*

*To put it bluntly...*

*When it's all said and done, it's clear that...*

*We must do this for...for the...and for the...*

### CALL TO THINK

Not all arguments are about taking immediate action - some messages are about considering what has been said and being prepared to change opinion:

*It would be the easiest thing in the world to ignore what has been said today. But it must be thought about...*

*I've made my case, now it's up to you to think about...to consider...*

### CALL TO ACTION/ARMS

With this conclusion, you challenge your audience to take immediate action:

*Action can't wait until next year or next month. It must start now. We must...*

*This is not someone else's problem, this is your problem...*

*This is not some hypothetical problem - it's real and it's happening now. We must...*

### BLACK AND WHITE CHOICE

This strategy is about reducing the two sides of the case to a black and white choice:

*In the end the choice is simple:  
We can...or we can...*

*On the one hand you can believe that...  
But on the other hand you can see the vision of...*

## PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE:

# Phrases

More than any other type of writing, persuasive writing uses 'set' phrases. These phrases have been crafted and utilised over millennia of rhetorical writing and speaking and are important to provide cues to the audience about what they should think or feel towards the content of a persuasive piece.

As you craft your piece, look through the list of phrases below and on the next page and try to use at least two or three of them.

### I STRONGLY BELIEVE

It is clear to me...

It is beyond doubt...

It's a fundamental truth...

There can be no question...

It's always been my view that...

The facts are plain...

### WE MUST ALL

We must...

We all...

We all believe...

We all feel...

Who hasn't thought...

You all know...

It's occurred to all of you at some point...

It's happened to all of us...

Who/which of us hasn't this affected?

Who/which of us doesn't believe this?

### COMMAND PHRASES

Imagine what (we could achieve...)

Imagine what (could happen if...)

Picture it...

Think about...

Consider how...

Put yourself in...

Remember...

Look at (the example of...)...

### LET'S BE CLEAR

Let's be absolutely clear about something...

Let me speak frankly...

Let's cut to the guts of this issue...

Let's talk about the thing that matters most...

Make no mistake...

Really, what we're talking about here is...

While it's easy to get bogged down in the details, let's be clear...

# Phrases

---

## THE EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT...

It could not be clearer from the evidence that...  
Beyond all doubt, the facts tell us...  
The facts are black and white:..  
It's obvious from the statistics that...  
We can't argue with what the experts are telling us, which is...  
The overwhelming consensus amongst experts is that...  
The facts are staring us in the face and shouting that...

## YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH

You can't deny that...  
We all agree that...  
We all care about...  
We all recognise that...  
We all know that...  
We all know it's a basic truth that...  
We all accept...

## WE MUST (NOT) ACT NOW

Now is the time...  
If we are to...then we must act now...  
For too long...  
For far too long...  
For so long...  
In the past...  
We need to be careful...  
We need to tread warily...  
We need to slow down and consider...  
We need to do this properly, not quickly....

## REBUTTAL PHRASES

Those who oppose/support this... argue that...  
Those who oppose/support this... complain that...  
Those who oppose/support this... suggest that..

+

What's ridiculous about these arguments...  
What's fundamentally wrong about this is...  
What's fundamentally flawed about this is...  
What's specious in every way about this thinking...  
What they don't tell you is...  
What they ignore is...

## PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE:

# The rule of three

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Effective arguments should have good ideas, good structures and good words.

See what we did there? We used a rule of three (known formally as a tricolon): a list of three things in a sentence or a series of three sentences that start (or are structured) the same way.

Like the basic arguments we covered at the start of this chapter, the rule of three has been around ever since people started arguing about who should get the drumsticks from the dinosaur they just killed. It's an extremely effective technique because it creates that mysterious thing called 'flow' in your writing.

A series of three things in your writing just sounds good – and it makes you seem impressive.

### Consider these sentences:

*National parks – the heart, the lungs, the soul of our country – must be protected.*

*We must save our national parks. We must protect them. We must nurture them.*

Good things come in packages of three.

**On the following pages you will find more examples about the rule of three, along with suggestions about how to integrate them into your writing.**

## EXAMPLES:

*“Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”*

*“Friends, Romans, Countrymen. Lend me your ears.”*

*“Government of the people, by the people, for the people”*

*“I came, I saw, I conquered”*

## PHRASES:

- It's not only...but it's also...and...  
*It's not only good for families, but it's also good for the unemployed and the disempowered.*
- It isn't just...it's also...and...  
*It isn't just wrong, it's plain stupid and illogical.*
- The reasons for this are threefold: it's..., it's..., and it's...  
*The reasons for this are threefold: it's wrong, it's plain stupid, and it's illogical.*
- It...It's...It's...  
*It makes sense. It's easy. It's cheap.*
- We must..., ....., and.....  
*We must work hard, work long, and work well.*

## TIPS FOR INTRODUCING 'THREES' INTO YOUR PRESENTATION:

- Circle adjectives you have used to describe things (i.e this is a bad idea). Try using not one, but three adjectives (*This is a cruel, stupid and bad idea*)
- If you are praising an idea, action or person, use a series of three descriptions to praise it
- If you are attacking an idea, action or person, use a series of three descriptions to attack it
- If you use a phrase such as 'we must', or 'we should' try following it with three actions instead of one
- Use a series of three in your opening
- Circle the main idea in a topic sentence. Use a series of three to describe or discuss this main idea
- Develop a slogan or key sentence for your presentation which has a series of three in it

# Oral presentation strategies

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## FORMAT THE TEXT OF YOUR PRESENTATION SO IT'S EASY TO READ

The transcript of your speech or presentation needs to be set out in a way that is easy to read and allows you to annotate spots where you should pause, repeat information or change tone. If you are using a lectern for your presentation, then print out your speech on A4 pages but separate each sentence. This will make it much easier to implement some of the strategies suggested below.

Here is an example of the first three sentences on a persuasive piece contending that more needs to be done to reduce the road toll of young people:

*Dozens of families every year receive a visit from the police at Christmas.*

*The news is that their children, their brothers, their sisters have died in a car accident.*

*Every Christmas from now on will be without them. Lives will never again be the same.*

If you're not using a lectern for your presentation, and can't rest A4 pages against something, then it's highly advisable that you put your presentation on cards. If you have your presentation on A4 pages, then you'll tend to spend most of your time reading from the sheets, rather than looking at the audience and actively engaging with them. If your hands are nervously shaking, A4 pages will also shake - something you want to avoid.

Cards should:

- Be small enough to be held in one hand. While you can use two hands to hold the cards for parts of the presentation, you still want to be able to use both hands to make hand gestures. A good size for a card is an A4 page that has been divided into quarters.
- Be written with the phrases separated - the same as suggested above for a presentation written out on an A4 page
- Have only 2-3 sentences so they're easier to read
- Be numbered

## MAKE EYE CONTACT AT THE END OF SENTENCES

Your brain can read written text faster than you speak it. Effective speakers start by reading aloud a sentence, but as they read it aloud, their eyes scan through and process the rest of the sentence. This means you know the words which finish a sentence before you read them aloud. When you know how a sentence finishes, you can look up, make eye contact with different sections of the audience and finish saying aloud the sentence as you do.

### Try this technique now.

Read and speak aloud the sentence below and let your eyes scan through the whole sentence as you speak it aloud. Try looking up and saying the last few words of the sentence from memory:

**The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog because there was a bowlful of hotdogs on the other side.**

## **MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE ROOM**

The audience of people you will be speaking to can be divided into different 'sectors':

- The sector of people to the right
- The sector of people to the front
- The sector of people to the left
- The sector of people at the back of the room
- The sector of people at the front of the room

Your task isn't to eyeball specific people in the crowd, but to look at different groups of people in the crowd. Try:

- Looking at a different sector of people every time you make eye contact at the end of a sentence
- Looking at more than one sector of people when you look at the audience.  
For example, look to the right and then the left, or look at the back and then the front
- When you use the rule of three, you should take the opportunity to make eye contact with a different section of the audience at the end of each phrase

## **GO SLOWLY, REPEAT KEY INFORMATION & ROUTINELY PAUSE**

Listening to a presentation requires different processing skills than reading. When we read, we can read at our own pace and re-read things we don't understand. However, when we listen to a presentation, we need to listen at the speed a person is talking and we can't go back and re-read what we missed. As presenters, we need to be aware of this. Speak slowly so the audience can absorb what you have to say. You will have important facts, statistics and examples in your piece. Repeat these and pause after them ensuring the audience has time to think about them.

## **CHANGE YOUR TONE WHEN YOU USE EMPHATIC LANGUAGE**

Throughout your piece you will use emphatic language: strong or emotive words that describe and label the things you are persuasively speaking about. Circle these words in the transcript of your presentation to help you remember to say them with some kind of emphasis.

This may include:

- Deepening your voice
- Saying the word more slowly or loudly for emphasis
- Making eye contact with the audience as you say the word
- Gesturing

## POINTED FINGER



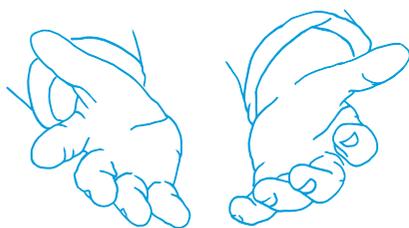
The pointed finger is often used like an exclamation mark in presentation. It indicates points that an audience should pay particular attention to or points that can't be argued against.

## FLAT, SIDE ON HAND



Like the spreading hands, the flat, side on hand, can be used to indicate that something is reasonable or that it's common sense. It can also be used to accompany lists or series of steps.

## TWO SPREADING HANDS



The spreading hands can be used as an invitation for the audience to see that something is reasonable. It can also be used as an emotional plea to the audience to see that they should do something about an issue.

## PRACTISE USING SOME HAND GESTURES

Hand gestures are the tools we use to visually punctuate our presentations. They emphasise key points and provide important cues to the audience about what they should think or feel at certain points of our presentation.

Hand gestures are most effective when coupled with eye contact towards the audience. The key to using hand gestures effectively is to rehearse your presentation standing and to practise using your hands to complement your presentation. You need to do this until you feel comfortable using hand gestures. There are dozens of different ways hands can be used throughout your presentation. The diagram on the left demonstrates three basic ways you can gesture.

## PRACTISE A STANDING POSITION THAT LOOKS ASSURED

Since most students aren't used to public speaking, they will often appear awkward and uncomfortable when standing up before a large crowd.

Practising your presentation isn't just about making sure you read at the right pace and don't trip up over any words, it's also about making sure you feel comfortable standing a certain way to deliver your presentation. Audiences will naturally trust speakers more if they seem assured in their physical body language.

When you rehearse your presentation, practise standing up before a fake audience or practise standing behind something like a lectern (if you're doing your speech behind a lectern) and work out how and where you should stand to feel and look assured. Filming yourself or doing this in front of a mirror will provide useful feedback to you about how you look when you give a presentation.

# Writing a statement of intention

Your persuasive piece will need to be accompanied by a written statement of intention.

The statement of intention should outline:

- The issue you are writing about
- Your contention on the issue
- The audience you are writing for
- An explanation of the arguments you chose to convince your audience
- An explanation of the language features you'll use to make your case. This should include a discussion of why you've structured your piece the way you have, and, if it's for an oral presentation, how you will use oral presentation language features such as eye contact, hand gestures, pace and tone

In fact, it's a lot like language analysis, except in this case you're analysing your own persuasive writing.

*Recently there have been calls for the Year 12 English exam to be completed on computers rather than with pen and paper. **It's my intention in this speech** to argue that we should in fact use computers for the exam. **My audience are senior education bureaucrats with VCAA** - the government body that makes decisions about how students are assessed. This is a speech that would be given to them in a forum where people can give feedback about this issue.*

A summary of the issue. Since this is a statement of intention, it emphasises what the student will do in their presentation.

The statement of intention specifies the audience and a context in which the presentation would be given.

*Since people who work for VCAA are **unlikely to be moved by emotional appeals** - and will want to think about the rational upsides and downsides to using computers for exams - **I'll employ a reasonable, measured tone in the way I present my piece.***

An identification of the features and arguments which are most likely to appeal to the target audience.

My speech contains three key arguments that I think are most likely to appeal to education administrators:

- How computers are successfully being used elsewhere
- How using computers for the exams can be cost effective
- How computer use is linked to students' educational and work futures

To support these arguments, I will use a range of **persuasive language features**, which will convince my audience both of the thought I have put into crafting my contention and of the essential truths of the arguments I am making. The first argument will be proven with a range of **anecdotal evidence** from other countries and school systems, building a picture of the ease of incorporating computers into an educational system. **I will support the argument about the cost effectiveness of computers with both statistics and with graphic representations of these statistics.** The visual of facts and figures will help my audience to consider and understand the figures I am presenting, allowing my argument greater opportunity to convince them of the truth of what I am saying to them.

In my final argument, I will use **first person pronouns** a great deal, demonstrating to my audience how I, as a young person, will be affected by their decisions. **The combination of seeing me standing before them and my impassioned use of 'me', 'mine' and 'I' will force my audience to see me and my future as intrinsically linked to their decision making.**

By allowing them to see me as a person, my audience is far more likely to agree with my arguments.

An acknowledgement of oral presentation conventions that will be employed.

Use of metalanguage to demonstrate understanding of how language is used.

An explanation of how different persuasive approaches work to support an argument.

An understanding of the way in which the form of a piece can affect the audience.

Furthermore, I have carefully considered the structure of my argument and the order in which I have placed each argument. **I've decided to start my piece by creating a picture of what type of education system we want.** This will seek to appeal to my audience's natural desire to want to have the best education system. After this, I'll follow up by outlining how computers are already being used to examine students in other countries. This is a powerful argument because it addresses the two concerns of 'can it be done?' and 'are we keeping up with what others are doing?' **I'll build upon this evidence with statistics about the cost effectiveness of computers in English exams.** This technique will endeavour to reassure the question that many people in my audience will have about whether this proposition can be afforded. Some of these statistics I'll repeat and pause after - to allow their significance to sink in. The final argument is that using computers for English exams is more relevant to students' futures than pen and paper. I'll finish with this because it's my strongest argument and will return my audience to the key theme I started the piece with: developing the best education system we can.

An explanation of why a piece has been structured the way it has.

An explanation of how arguments have been crafted to build on each other.

An explanation of how pause will be used to make the presentation more persuasive.

# 2. TEXT RESPONSE ESSAY WRITING

This chapter will look at three types of tools you can use to construct insightful text response essays:

## 1. Tools to generate ideas for your text response essays:

- Underline and create questions
- Not only, but also
- Using contradictory examples
- Checklist planning

## 2. Tools to structure your ideas into an essay:

- An essay is not a hamburger

## 3. Writing introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions:

- The introduction
- Writing about ideas in a body paragraph
- What does analysis look like in a body paragraph
- Using quotes in a body paragraph
- Writing about poetry
- The conclusion

## TOOLS TO GENERATE IDEAS FOR YOUR TEXT RESPONSE ESSAYS:

# Underline and create questions

---

Most of us are familiar with the basic essay question planning strategy of underlining key words.

As an example, here's a typical text response essay question about the Harper Lee's classic novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*:

**Despite Atticus' dedication to achieving justice in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, injustice remains at the end of the novel. Discuss.**

If we were to underline the key words, it would look like this:

Despite Atticus' dedication to achieving justice in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, injustice remains at the end of the novel. Discuss.

It's fairly easy to underline key words in an essay topic – because most of the words are key words!

After this, the typical next step in the essay planning procedure is to start brainstorming ideas and examples to write about.

The problem with this is that we tend to focus on the obvious parts of the question. To take the above example, we might come up with examples of the experiences of how Atticus fights for justice throughout the novel.

So we're answering the question, right? Yes.... to a degree. But in focusing on the obvious elements of the question, we can sometimes miss the deeper levels of a topic.

Think about an essay topic as being like this: a big question which is made up of many smaller questions. When we answer these smaller questions, we successfully answer the bigger question. Instead of just underlining key words in a topic, we can first underline and then turn these key words into further questions.

For each word (or phrase) we underline, we need to generate essential questions that need to be answered (in terms of the text).

Our questions should start with these words:

- Who
- What
- How
- Why
- Which

or:

- Does/Did/Doesn't/Didn't?
- Is/Are/Isn't/Aren't?

The key words from the question about *To Kill A Mockingbird* can be turned into these questions:

- What is justice in the world of *To Kill A Mockingbird*?
- How is Atticus dedicated to justice?
- Why is justice achieved or thwarted at the end of the novel?
- Who else is concerned with justice in this novel?

Notice that three different question words (What, Why, How and Who) are used?

This ensures that we're looking at the question from different angles. In order to answer the whole essay topic well, we need to answer all of these smaller questions.

Of course, many of these smaller questions overlap – but often they can be neatly divided into groups that can become the basis for the body paragraphs in our essay.

## **WITH THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, WE COULD PLAN AN ESSAY THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS:**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Define key terms

(more on this later in the chapter)

- All of the four questions
- 

### **BODY PARAGRAPH 1:**

Key question –

**How is Atticus dedicated to the fight for justice?**

- What motivates Atticus?
  - Examples of what sets Atticus apart from other people in the town
- 

### **BODY PARAGRAPH 2:**

Key question –

**How is justice achieved and how is justice thwarted at the end?**

- The guilty verdict of Tom Robinson and his death
  - The continuing presence of racism in Maycomb
  - The death of Bob Ewell
  - What Scout learns about people's humanity
- 

### **BODY PARAGRAPH 3:**

Key question –

**Who else is concerned with justice?**

- Calpurnia
  - Miss Maudie
  - Boo Radley
- 

### **CONCLUSION:**

Key question –

**What is the ultimate message the text conveys about the key questions explored in this essay?**

- Many characters are concerned with justice - not just Atticus
  - Harper Lee suggests that in an imperfect world, justice can never entirely be achieved
-

## TOOLS TO GENERATE IDEAS FOR YOUR TEXT RESPONSE ESSAYS:

# Not only, but also

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For many essay topics we get, there will be a rich amount of material to write about if we are able to unlock everything a topic is asking us to consider. Using a process such as the one modelled above will help in this. But sometimes we get questions where we think: Yes, this is true – but how will I write a whole essay on this?

For instance:

**Images of voyeurism are essential to the characterisation of Jefferies as an observer rather than a participant in life in *Rear Window*. Discuss.**

In considering this topic above we might think: Yes, there are some images on voyeurism in the film – but I don't know if I can write three pages about just that!

In thinking this, we are falling into the trap of focusing on the most obvious thing in the essay topic: 'images of voyeurism'.

Let's look again at the key words in the topic:

**Images of voyeurism are essential to the characterisation of Jefferies as an observer rather than a participant in life in *Rear Window*. Discuss.**

'Images of voyeurism' is actually only one part of the question: 'essential' and 'characterisation' and 'observer rather than participant' are also important parts. In order to answer this question we need to discuss 'images of voyeurism' but we are also invited to write about what is 'essential' to the 'characterisation' of Jefferies as an 'observer rather than participant'.

In other words, we can turn 'essential,' 'characterisation' and 'observer rather than participant' into these further questions:

- Do the images of voyeurism characterise Jefferies in ways other than an 'observer rather than participant'?
- Are there other 'essential' techniques used in the 'characterisation' of Jefferies as an 'observer'?
- Is Jefferies characterised in ways other than as an 'observer'?

This type of response is called a 'What else' or a 'Not only...but also' response because we are asking 'What else is this text about?' and we can say: 'It's not only about...but it also explores...'. For instance, in a 'Not only...but also' introduction in response to the above *Rear Window* essay topic could state:

*While an important focus of Hitchcock's *Rear Window* is how people observe the lives of others, it also explores how its protagonist needs to focus more on his own life. The film's main character, Jefferies, watches the lives of others through the lenses of his camera while ignoring his relationship with Fremont. His insular nature is contrasted throughout the film to Fremont's more vibrant and involved character. However, because Jefferies is confined to a wheelchair, during the course of the narrative he realises that he must rely upon others and learn to accept the love that is offered to him.*

## **'WHAT ELSE/NOT ONLY...BUT ALSO' RESPONSES SHOULD BE LIMITED TO TYPES OF QUESTIONS SUCH AS:**

### **IS QUESTIONS:**

Example topic:

**'The Golden Age is as much about gain as it is about loss.' Do you agree?**

*Both gain and loss are important ideas in The Golden Age, but Joan London's novel also explores the related idea of identity.*

Example topic:

**'Barriers and boundaries are central to Skrzynecki's poems.' Discuss.**

*Skrzynecki's poetry offers a powerful exploration of the barriers and boundaries of the world, but also of experiences of dislocation.*

Example topic:

**How is Rooke's sense of identity changed by his experiences in New South Wales?**

*Rooke's identity undergoes a fundamental transformation during his time in New South Wales but this transformation is also rooted in his experiences before he arrives at the colonial settlement.*

---

### **THE TEXT IS ABOUT, EXPLORES, SHOWS US, HIGHLIGHTS (OR VARIATIONS OF THESE WORDS) SOMETHING:**

Example topic:

**Rear Window shows that marriage for some people can be a prison. Discuss**

*What else does Rear Window show us?*

Example topic:

**The struggles of women in Persepolis highlight the repressive nature of the world they live in. Discuss.**

*What else highlights the repressive nature of the world in Persepolis?*

Example topic:

**Frankenstein demonstrates that without control human creativity is destructive. Discuss.**

*What else is destructive in Frankenstein?*

## TOOLS TO GENERATE IDEAS FOR YOUR TEXT RESPONSE ESSAYS:

# Using contradictory examples

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Text response questions are often reasonable sounding statements that invite us to write about examples that affirm whatever the topic says is true.

Take this topic as an illustration of the point:

**Joan London's *The Golden Age* explores how difficult it can be for people to come to terms with changes in their lives. Discuss.**

Since there are lots of examples in the text *The Golden Age* of people who do find it difficult to come to terms with change, then we can easily go on our merry way discussing how these examples show the topic to be true. But what about the people in the novel who don't have trouble with change? There are some – so we could write an essay with the contention: “Many people in *The Golden Age* have difficulty coming to terms with change, but not all” – and we could write three paragraphs about the characters who do and one about those who don't.

However, text response essays are much better when they don't just write about the what (as in what are examples of characters that have trouble with change and what are examples of those that don't?), but when they reflect on the why and how (as in, why do some characters have trouble with change and others don't?).

It's about not just asking this question:

- What examples support this statement?

But moving onto these questions:

- What examples don't support this statement?
- How and why are the examples that don't support this statement different from the ones that do and what does this show us?

In terms of *The Golden Age*, the generic questions above would look specifically like this:

- Which characters have difficulty coming to terms with changes?
- Which characters don't have difficulty coming to terms with changes?
- Why do some characters not have a problem with changes and how are they different to the ones that do?
- What do the characters who don't have a problem show us about the characters who do have a problem?

At the end of this process we still might have three paragraphs about the characters who support the statement and one about those who don't, but we will now be focused on writing about the why and how, rather than just the what.

## TOOLS TO GENERATE IDEAS FOR YOUR TEXT RESPONSE ESSAYS:

# Checklist planning

All of the above strategies are essentially about breaking a broad essay question/topic into smaller, more specific questions which can be answered throughout an essay response. Yet we still have to generate actual examples to write about in order to answer the questions.

Checklist planning is a basic, but effective tool for ensuring that we're considering all the possible things we could write about.

People who use checklists to pack before travelling don't forget things and pack better (as opposed to those who don't and who end up leaving behind their undies or their wallet).

The same is true of essay writing: people who remind themselves of all the things they could write about – include a greater range of more interesting examples than those – who get stuck writing about just a limited range of obvious examples.

This strategy involves making a checklist of all the elements from the text that could be discussed in a text response essay even before looking at a question.

Below and on the next page are example checklist headings for each type of text that can be responded to.

### FOR A NOVEL, FILM, PLAY OR NON-FICTION TEXT

<b>MAJOR CHARACTERS/PEOPLE</b>	<b>MINOR CHARACTERS/PEOPLE</b>	<b>FEATURES OF THE SETTING: PHYSICAL &amp; SOCIAL</b>
<b>TECHNIQUES/DEVICES</b> (such as narrative voice, narrative structure, camera angles, stage directions or characterisation)	<b>SYMBOLS/IMAGES</b>	<b>THEMES/MOTIFS</b>

### FIND BLANK COPIES OF THESE CHECKLISTS FROM:

[www.tickingmind.com.au/text-response-checklists](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/text-response-checklists)

## FOR A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES

STORIES	STORY 1				
Features of the setting					
Features/attributes of the major character					
Features/attributes of minor character					
Type of problem in the story					
Techniques/Devices					
Symbols/Images					
Themes/Motifs					

## FOR A COLLECTION OF POEMS

POEMS	POEM 1	POEM 2	POEM 3	POEM 4	POEM 5
Speaker/Persona/ Poetic voice					
Tone					
Techniques/Devices					
Symbols/Images					
Themes/Motifs					

Once we've made such a list, we can then consider the essay topic (using any or all of the strategies above to generate further questions) and then use our checklist to identify the actual examples we can write about.

The point of checklisting is that it reminds us of all the things we could include – not just the obvious things that first occur to us.

You might be asking yourself how this will help you in the exam – after all, checklists are easy and effective to use at home when planning a text

response essay, or planning a response in class for practice. But in the exam you can't bring anything in and you don't really have the time to draw out an elaborate checklist grid like the ones above.

One key purpose of using checklists when planning responses is that you will internalise this checklist in your mind and be able to access it from memory in an exam.

## TOOLS TO GENERATE IDEAS FOR YOUR TEXT RESPONSE ESSAYS:

# Think carefully about setting

In the previous section we listed ‘features of the setting’ as a category of example that can be checked for texts.

### WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH SETTING?

Setting is both the physical place a text is set in and the social conditions of that place.

These two types of settings can impact on the lives of characters or people in a text and can be an important feature to discuss in a text response essay. In filling out ‘features of setting’ for a checklist, the table below will help you identify setting attributes and the possible impact they have on characters.

SETTING	POSSIBLE FEATURES OF SETTING	POSSIBLE IMPACT ON CHARACTERS
<b>PHYSICAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Isolated / Small</li><li>• Confined / Walled in</li><li>• Crowded / Large</li><li>• Old / Historic</li><li>• Hot / Intense</li><li>• Cold / Difficult</li><li>• Harsh / Barren</li><li>• Colourful / Exotic</li><li>• Colourless / Bland</li><li>• Natural</li><li>• Unnatural</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trapped</li><li>• Disconnected</li><li>• Restricted</li><li>• Unfulfilled</li><li>• Hopeless</li><li>• Powerless</li><li>• Poor values / Poor attitude</li><li>• Distorted view of the world</li><li>• Lack of identity / individuality</li><li>• Lack of ambition</li><li>• Lack of belonging</li></ul>
<b>SOCIAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong attitudes about traditions or cultures that need to be maintained</li><li>• A strong attitude about ‘what is normal’ to think and do</li><li>• An attitude that everyone must conform</li><li>• Powerful groups or people and powerless groups or people</li><li>• Division of people into groups in which they must stay</li><li>• Division of people into insiders and outsiders</li><li>• Influential people who have poor attitudes or values</li><li>• A peaceful environment / A violent environment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Little true understanding of themselves or the world around them</li><li>• Innocence / Naivety</li><li>• Ignorance</li><li>• Arrogance / Pride</li><li>• Ability to create own pathway</li><li>• Galvanise strengths</li><li>• Opportunities to learn about themselves and other people</li><li>• A selfish interest only in their own needs and desires</li><li>• Creating ambition to escape</li></ul>

## Writing about the historical setting

If you're studying a text that is set in a historical period, you'll probably learn things about this period of time to help you understand the text. Understandably, students often want to refer to this information in their essays. But there are good ways and clunky ways of doing this.

Here is an example which isn't very good:

*The Lieutenant is set at a time which was very racist when white people like the British thought indigenous people weren't as good as them. White people were very patronising and arrogant towards indigenous people and expected them just to follow their orders and to also live separately from them.*

The problem with this example is it doesn't refer to the text to illustrate what the setting or world of the novel was like. Rather, it reads very much like a Year 7 or 8 history report that is just summarising what a student has learnt from Wikipedia. In English, you don't write history reports - you interpret texts.

Here is a better example:

*Many of the attitudes of the white characters in The Lieutenant embody the racism prevalent in the era. This is particularly evident in the first encounter the British colonisers have with the indigenous inhabitants of Botany Bay. The patronising way Gilbert and others wave 'trinkets' before the 'natives' and refer to them as 'Mr Darkie' demonstrate the colonisers' belief in the primitive and childlike nature of the indigenous people whose land they want to conquer. But Rooke's attitude challenges this prevalent racism. He sees before him, not inferior beings, but "men like himself".*

This second example analyses the text by discussing how character actions represent the nature of the world they live in. The same phrases used in the example above can be used for any text. The key is to discuss how the actions or attitudes of major or minor characters (individually or as groups) either represent or reject what was normal to do or think during that period of time.

Below are some words and phrases that will help you write about setting:

STARTERS	VERBS	PHRASES
Many of the attitudes of...	represents	the dominant values of society
Many of the actions of...	embodies	the prevalent racism of the time
The actions of...	typifies	the era's sexist attitude to women
The attitudes of...	emblematises	the era's misogynist attitude
[Character's name]'s belief that...	evinces	the socially conservative nature of the era
	manifests	the repressive social norms of the time
	are governed by	the sexually repressive attitudes of the time
	stem from	the normative social values of...
	transgresses	the social divisions within the society
	contravenes	the entrenched class structure
	challenges	
	are in opposition to	

## TOOLS TO STRUCTURE YOUR IDEAS INTO AN ESSAY:

# An essay is not a hamburger

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An essay is like a hamburger, isn't it? The introduction and conclusion are like the bun halves on the top and bottom of the burger, and the body paragraphs are like the filling. Maybe – if you're in Year 7!

The hamburger analogy is fine as a starting point for younger students learning about essays, but for older students like you it is important to move onto something that is more sophisticated.

Below you will find a visual of the structure of an effective text response essay.

### Some important things to note about this:

- A good introduction is not just a list of the things you are going to say in the rest of the essay but defines what the key ideas in the essay topic mean and what needs to be discussed in order to respond to these ideas (more on writing good introductions in the next section of this chapter)
- The first body paragraph should discuss the most important point -think carefully about which idea needs to be written about before the other ideas can be discussed
- A conclusion is not simply a mirror of an introduction. Whereas an introduction should define the key ideas and indicate how these will be discussed in the body of an essay, the chief task of a conclusion is to succinctly outline the bigger, fundamental message of a text

### INTRODUCTION

- State the big picture purpose of a text by using verbs such as 'explores', 'shows', 'seeks to', 'depicts'
- Define the key ideas in an essay topic by using your own words to discuss and elaborate on them
- Signal the types of features/examples from a text that will be used to discuss the ideas from the essay topic

### BODY PARAGRAPH 1

Typically, the first body paragraph analyses and discusses the most obvious examples in response to the main part of the topic

### OTHER BODY PARAGRAPHS

In other body paragraphs, you should explore less obvious examples and respond to all of the implications of the topic

### CONCLUSION

A succinct analysis of:

- The most important point about the essay topic and (optionally) an important alternative point
- The ultimate message of a text in terms of the essay topic

## The introduction

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A good introduction does more than just tell us what the rest of the essay will be about – it defines what it is about.

To define what your essay is about is to explain the key terms -to put forward your own interpretation of them, and what they mean for the text you are analysing.

It's no surprise that most good quality text response essays begin with phrases like this:

- In *Like A House On Fire*, Cate Kennedy...
- Throughout Joan London's *The Golden Age*, ...
- In Rayson's *Extinction*,...
- In the world of Sartrapi's *Persepolis*,...

All of these phrases can begin a sentence outlining the way the text explores an idea. [Let's consider the Romeo and Juliet essay topic again:](#)

**In Shakespeare's play, Romeo and Juliet's actions are inevitable because they live in a violent world. Discuss.**

'Inevitable' and 'violent' are two key ideas that we need to define in our introduction. But this doesn't mean writing something clunky like: "Violent means to hit someone else."

[You should be aiming to define what those words mean in the context of the play:](#)

*Shakespeare depicts the world of Romeo and Juliet as brutal and aggressive – not just physically – but emotionally.*

Notice how the word 'violent' from the essay topic wasn't repeated? Instead 'brutal and aggressive' were used to show the understanding of the essay topic and define what 'violent' means.

Furthermore, putting the author's name and the text's name along with a 'construction' verb like 'depicts' allows us to craft a powerful introductory statement about the purpose of a text.

Typically, one sentence will not always do all the defining required in an effective introduction.

[These next two sentences follow on from the example introductory statement above, and provide an example of how to elaborate on key ideas mentioned in an introductory statement:](#)

*Physical violence is graphically represented throughout the play by the murders, brawls and fights. However, Shakespeare also demonstrates that emotional violence is everywhere, represented through the way characters routinely attack each other's emotions.*

The word 'in' and 'throughout' helps us define what ideas mean in a text, the phrase 'as well' signals that there is more to what the words mean and 'through' and 'by' help us write about how the ideas are shown in the text. The words 'through' and 'by' begin to give us an overview of what we'll discuss in the rest of the essay.

## SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

There are three things you need to do to craft an introductory statement that will make an impact:

- Identify alternative words you can use to define the key ideas in the essay topic.
- Use one of the phrases in the first column below to begin your statement, combined with one or more words or phrases from the other columns to shape a statement about the author, text, purpose and big idea.
- To begin with, try using one word from each column in the order they appear. After this, experiment with changing the order of words to put your own unique spin on the introductory formula.

TEXT, SETTING, AUTHOR INFORMATION	VERB	INTERPRETATION	EXTRA INFORMATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>...</li> <li>• In Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>....</li> <li>• Throughout <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, Shakespeare....</li> <li>• Set against a backdrop of..., Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>...</li> <li>• Set in a world where/of..., Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>...</li> <li>• Centering on..., Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>...</li> </ul>	<p>depicts represents portrays reveals demonstrates illustrates</p> <p>we witness we see we are shown</p> <p>is an...</p> <p>exploration of depiction of portrait of representation of</p>	<p><b>CHARACTER</b> character's name (e.g. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>'s)</p> <p>+ search for, quest for, struggle for/to be</p> <p><b>THEME OR IDEA</b> the conflict between... the struggle over...</p> <p>+ theme word (e.g. the conflict between reason and passion)</p> <p><b>ACTION / EVENTS</b> what happens when... how people can...how society can.... how...can drive/cause/ create...</p> <p>+ actions / events (e.g. what happens when emotion overwhelms reason...)</p>	<p>and when in during through by with</p> <p>in a world where in times that</p> <p>while although despite</p>

An effective introduction only needs to be 3-4 sentences long.

After you have crafted your introductory statement, your task is to elaborate on the big ideas in the first sentence and signal the types of examples and points you will use throughout the essay to discuss these ideas.

Here's an illustration of this in an introduction to the novel *The Golden Age*:

*In her novel The Golden Age, Joan London explores the yearning people have for a better time and place when their lives seem filled with disappointment, illness and regrets (Author + Text + Purpose + Big Ideas). The novel focuses on Frank Gold, who comes to believe he has a vocation for a world in the present that is characterised by intellectual ideals and beauty, far removed from the limitations of the body (Elaboration of big ideas + signaling of main point). Yet many of the adults in The Golden Age feel a nostalgia for the past, for a time when their lives had less disappointment and heartbreak (Signalling of main point/example plus further or alternative point/example).*

The words below can be used as a starting point to shape the second, third and fourth sentence of your introduction.

WORDS TO ELABORATE ON BIG PICTURE AND SIGNAL THE MAIN POINT/EXAMPLE		WORDS TO INTRODUCE A FURTHER POINT
The [text name] focuses on... The [text name] centres on... [Author] depicts... [Author] characterises...	[protagonist's name], who... the protagonist's...* *need for *search for *desire for	Moreover,... What is more,... Further underlining... Further emphasising... Epitomising...is...
[Author] portrays... [Author] represents...	[protagonist's name] as...	WORDS TO INTRODUCE AN ALTERNATIVE POINT
Central to [idea] is... At the centre of the text's concern with... At the core of the text's depiction of... Fundamental to the text's portrayal of...	is the characterisation of... is the depiction of is the imagery of... are the symbols of... are devices such as... is a sense of...	However... However, some of the characters... However, some of these images... Yet, many of the characters... However, not all... But on another level... Yet the text also... However, juxtaposing this [idea/ image]...

# Linking ideas to actions in a body paragraph

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There are many things that you can do to improve the quality of a body paragraph in a text response essay but in this section we'll focus on just three:

1. Make your sentences about ideas
2. Use strong verbs (action words) combined with extra information words to write about what ideas, texts or techniques do
3. Create links between sentences

## MAKE YOUR SENTENCES ABOUT IDEAS

Here's a test for you.

Which of the things in the following list is an idea and which is an event?

Hunger, Your 18th Birthday, Bitterness,  
Inspiration, Driving to school one day last  
week, Hate

Most people will separate out words like 'hate' or 'inspiration' as ideas while saying that things such as 'driving to school one day last week' or 'your 18th birthday' are events: and they'd be right. And while there are a range of interesting things you might say about the event of driving to school one day last week, it is, in the end, one solitary action.

Hate, however, is a big idea and in discussing it we could use many examples. So what's all this got to do with text response writing?

Consider these two examples of body paragraph topic sentences:

- *Romeo fights Tybalt.*
- *Romeo's impetuous passion drives many of his actions throughout the play.*

The first topic sentence - which focuses on an event or character action - will invariably lead us to summarise the fight scene between Romeo and Tybalt and will result in very low level text response writing.

The second sentence though, which concentrates on the idea of 'impetuous passion' provides us with the opportunity to link and analyse multiple examples of Romeo's impetuosity in the play. When this happens, there's a great likelihood of deep level analysis occurring.

So it's important that topic sentences in particular are driven by ideas. You should also look for opportunities to structure the rest of your sentences in a body paragraph around ideas as well.

Here are some suggestions about how you can structure topic sentences and other sentences to be about ideas:

- Start a sentence with a character's qualities or attributes: Youthful impatience and naivety define Romeo's character throughout the course of events in *Romeo and Juliet*
- Start a sentence with one of the big ideas (such as themes) from a text: Fate dominates the doomed lives of Romeo and Juliet, looming in the background of every scene and action.
- Start a sentence with a word that labels a technique or device in the text (such as symbol, imagery or characterisation): The recurring symbolism of poison in *Romeo and Juliet*, creates a strong sense of foreboding and disaster.

## USE STRONG, SPECIFIC VERBS IN YOUR SENTENCES.

And combine them with extra information words

Believe it or not, not every sentence needs to contain the verbs 'is' or 'are'. 'Is' and 'are' can be used to create some great sentences but about half your sentences in a body paragraph should use verbs other than them. Why? Because although 'is' and 'are' can convey insightful ideas, they do this best when used in conjunction with other, more specific verbs.

Think about this example:

*Romeo and Juliet are passionate characters.*

If we re-write the sentence without 'are' and use a much stronger, more interesting verb, we can achieve this:

*Passion compels Romeo and Juliet towards their fate.*

Using verbs other than 'is' and 'are' helps us to construct more insightful sentences. So if we can't use 'is' and 'are' what can we use?

The list opposite is by no means exhaustive but simply provides you some starting stimulus. It's your task to find the right verb for your sentence.

You'll notice in the table opposite a section which says 'extra information words'. These are the words we use to create more detailed and even more insightful sentences.

Consider this example of an idea driven sentence again:

*Fate dominates the doomed lives of Romeo and Juliet, looming in the background of every scene and action.*

There are six 'extra information words' in the above sentence. Good text response writing will have a high frequency and large range of 'extra information words' - it's not just a matter of putting 'and' into a sentence several times. Every time you write a sentence, think: 'And what more can I say? How can I say it in a way other than using 'and'?'

### HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS:

#### INSTEAD OF WRITING THAT A CHARACTER 'IS', WRITE THAT A CHARACTER:

acts, accepts, approaches, achieves, believes, challenges, confronts, continues, develops, exists, employs, endures, experiences, encounters, finds, lives, maintains, journeys, reacts, realises, sees, seeks, survives, undergoes, understands

#### INSTEAD OF WRITING A THEME OR FEELING 'IS', WRITE THAT A THEME:

blocks, blinds, consists, confronts, challenges, compels, contributes, causes, creates, drives, dominates, evades, features, forces, impels, informs, impacts, motivates, influences, pervades, prompts, underscores, underlines, overwhelms, exerts

#### INSTEAD OF WRITING THAT A TECHNIQUE/DEVICE 'IS', WRITE THAT A TECHNIQUE/DEVICE:

emphasizes, reinforces, shows, connects, illustrates, creates, highlights, represents, symbolises, characterises, recurs, features, suggests, denotes, focuses, captures, marks, reveals, manifests, presents, serves to, contrasts, compares, links, parallels, juxtaposes, allows, aids

#### INSTEAD OF WRITING THAT A TEXT 'IS', WRITE THAT A TEXT/AUTHOR:

explores, shows, seeks to, demonstrates, depicts, represents, portrays, creates, draws, presents, creates, highlights, illustrates, captures, draws, critiques

#### EXTRA INFORMATION WORDS:

- and, along with, also, but, or, either; because, since, to, leading to, resulting in, impacting, influencing;
- such as, evident in, illustrated by; by, through, into, throughout, with, from, for, of, about, at;
- while, when, which, that; -ing words: i.e shaping, causing, influencing, creating, forcing

## CREATE LINKS BETWEEN SENTENCES

‘Flow’ and ‘fluency’ are words that teachers can often throw around in describing what we should aim for in our writing. But what does it mean for our writing to have ‘flow’? It could mean lots of things, but most often ‘flow’ refers to the connections between sentences.

Consider this paragraph:

*Romeo is a passionate character. Romeo shows his passion by killing Tybalt and marrying Juliet. The play makes Romeo seem very impatient because of his passion. Romeo’s passion makes him do things that aren’t wise and result in a bad end for Romeo and Juliet. A big problem in the play is Romeo’s passion.*

This paragraph lacks flow and the main reason for this is that every sentence begins with ‘the’, ‘a’, or the name of a character or thing. It’s effectively a list of statements – rather than sentences that connect with each other. How can we improve this?

### CREATING FLOW STRATEGY #1:

The same paragraph could instantly have more flow if we used these words at the start of sentences instead of ‘the’, ‘a’ or the name of a character or thing:

- He/She/It/They
- His/Hers/Their/This
- An alternative word for a key term mentioned in the previous sentence

*Romeo is a passionate character. His emotions (alternative word for passion) cause him to kill Tybalt and marry Juliet. The play makes Romeo seem very impatient because of his passion. It characterizes him as someone who makes decisions that aren’t wise and result in the bad end for himself and Juliet. The feeling (alternative word to just passion) of passion is big problem in the play for Romeo.*

You can see that this paragraph is better than the previous effort because ‘his’, ‘it’ and ‘feeling’ create better connections with the previous sentences and this results in ‘flow’.

You will notice that when we changed the beginning of the sentence, we also had to change parts of the rest of the sentence: not only did the sentence connect better with the previous sentence or sentences, but the sentence as a whole was more interesting. Thinking carefully about how sentences connect results in more insightful writing.

### CREATING FLOW STRATEGY #2:

The paragraph about Romeo could be even better if we used a variety of these linking words at the start of sentences throughout the paragraph:

- In, Throughout, During, By
- But, Although, Despite, While, However, Nevertheless, Moreover, Furthermore
- So, Consequently, Ultimately, From This, In, Therefore, For

*In Romeo and Juliet, Romeo is portrayed as a passionate character. His emotions cause him to kill Tybalt and marry Juliet. But the feeling of passion is destructive for Romeo. Although he succeeds in marrying Juliet, he is very impatient because of his passion and his plans are badly thought out. The play characterises Romeo as someone whose decisions are controlled by emotion rather than wisdom. For Romeo, his death comes about because of his passion.*

The paragraph above is known as an In-And-But-So paragraph because it uses the connectives ‘in’, ‘but’ and ‘so’ (or variations of them) at the beginning, middle and end of the paragraph to create details, complexity and flow in the writing.

This is a structure you can experiment with in your own writing:

IN-AND-BUT-SO STRUCTURE		
<b>IN</b>	Use one of these words at the start of the paragraph to create a context for the idea you are writing about and to add detail	In, Throughout, During, By, While  and/or  The text's... The author's... The character's...
<b>AND</b>	Use one or more of these words or phrases at the start of sentences or within sentences in the body paragraph to add further examples	Additionally, Furthermore, Similarly, Moreover, Also, Along with, Including
<b>BUT</b>	Use one or more of these words or phrases at the start of sentences or within sentences in the body paragraph to provide a contrasting example	But, Although, Despite, However, Nevertheless, In spite of this, In contrast  and/or  This/these... Through this/these... By this/these... From this/these... Resulting from this/these...
<b>SO</b>	Use one of these words (or a variation of them) at the opening of a sentence at the end or towards the end of your paragraph to summarise or conclude the analysis within the paragraph	As a result of... The result of... As a consequence... Inevitably... Ultimately...  Therefore...  All of these... Each of these...  Through (highlighting...) By (highlighting etc...)

**The In-And-But-So structure is not something that is meant to be followed rigidly.**

If all of your body paragraphs begin with the word 'in' and use 'but' and 'so' in pretty much the same way later in the paragraph, then your writing will come across as formulaic. You should vary how your sentences begin throughout all your paragraphs – but always keep in mind this one consideration: how does the beginning of my sentence create a connection to the previous sentence?

### CREATING FLOW STRATEGY #3:

Rather than always beginning your sentences with the name of the author or the name of a character, you can begin your sentences by using an ‘-ing’ word.

These words typically force you to think more deeply about how a sentence flows on from the previous one or into the next one. Any of the verbs in the ‘Strong verbs’ grid above can be turned into an ‘-ing’ word like the ones below and put at the start of a sentence:

- Highlighting
- Illustrating
- Representing
- Creating
- Depicting

*Acting with characteristic impetuosity, Romeo marries Juliet with little thought or planning.  
Depicting Romeo as rash and impetuous, Shakespeare shows us the marriage of the young lover to Juliet in Act 3.*

‘By’ and ‘through’ are two words that are often used before ‘-ing’ words at the start of a sentence.

For example:

*By illustrating the responses of both Juliet and Romeo to their banishment one after another in Act IV, Shakespeare allows the audience to observe the marked difference in their characters.*

Two things to be careful about ‘-ing words’ are these.

- Don’t overuse them. If you have any more than two sentences in a paragraph which begin with an ‘-ing’ word then you are at risk of creating a convoluted essay or one that lacks variety.
- Make sure the sentence makes sense. Many students start a sentence with an ‘-ing’ word and then only write half a sentence.

Here’s an example:

*Romeo marries Juliet without her parents’ permission. Risking everything for the passion he feels.*

The trick is to remember to always include the name of the character, author, text or technique within a sentence that begins with an ‘-ing’ word.

So the above sentences could have been written:

*Risking everything for the passion he feels, Romeo marries Juliet without her parents’ permission.*

# What does analysis look like in a body paragraph?

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The previous section built your understanding of the types of language we use to ensure our writing is focused on ideas rather than surface level summaries of character actions, events or content.

The aim of this section is to emphasise the difference between summarisation and analysis in text response writing.

For text response writing to be analytical, it needs to meet one or more of these criteria:

- Discusses how a text has been constructed
- Cites and links examples
- Interprets aspects of a text that aren't immediately obvious

Described below are strategies or phrases you can use to engage in each of these types of analysis.

## **DISCUSSING HOW A TEXT HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED**

It's important that one or more of the sentences in your body paragraph begin with the name of the author of a text or include a reference to a technique. If this is not the case, then you are at risk of writing statements that just retell the content of the play, novel, film, poem or short stories you are writing about. By focusing on how an author is constructing a text, you are analysing something that isn't immediately apparent to anyone who reads the text for themselves.

Any of the verbs under the headings 'techniques' or 'text/author' in the verb grid in the previous section can be utilised to write about how a text has been constructed.

## **CITING AND LINKING EXAMPLES**

- The...(character) says/believes/thinks/feels...
- The...(character) (action verb)...
- These values are epitomised by...
- [Author's name] draws a parallel between...
- The experience of [character] shows us that...
- This is portrayed when...
- This is evident when...
- The incident/moment where... suggests that...
- [The author] portrays this through...
- This idea is represented when...
- The author uses the scene...to show us...
- This idea is epitomised by...

## INTERPRETING ASPECTS OF A TEXT THAT AREN'T OBVIOUS

- Use an '-ing' word: revealing, reflecting, showing, illustrating, representing, emphasising, creating, disclosing
- The reader/viewer can see from this that...
- It is evident from this moment/scene that...
- It is clear from this moment/scene that...
- Central to the narrative is the concept of...
- What is most important in this example is...
- What is portrayed in this is that...
- When this evidence is combined with the fact...we can conclude that...
- One of the most important moments in the text is when (a character says or does). This shows us that...
- What is important about this (example) is... Furthermore...
- A crisis emerges when...demonstrating that...
- The pattern that emerges from these examples is...
- In other words...
- These [words/ideas/beliefs/thoughts etc...]...reveal/show/illustrate...

As with the In-And-But-So paragraph written about in the previous section, it's critical that you don't see the above list of phrases as something that needs to be followed rigidly in a text response piece, but as suggestions to get you started.

# Analysing poetry

## STRUCTURING AN ESSAY ABOUT POETRY

Often, writing about poetry can seem very difficult at first, because you don't have obvious features to respond to, like characters. However, this provides you with an opportunity to write a sophisticated and insightful essay about other literary features. There are two main ways you can write an essay about poetry.

The first of these is a 'block' essay, where each paragraph of your essay focuses upon a different poem and demonstrates how this poem explores the topic you are responding to. The other type of essay you can write will focus upon the different features of a collection of poetry, as indicated by the template below.

FOCUS OF PARAGRAPH	EXAMPLES
<b>Imagery within the poems</b> (how do the images demonstrate the ideas of this essay topic?)	
<b>Symbols within the poems</b> (is there a symbol that this poet uses again and again that demonstrates the ideas within the essay topic?)	
<b>Persona of the poet</b> (is there a certain type of character the poet uses to show an idea?)	
<b>Settings of the poems</b> (how does the setting of the poems demonstrate an idea?)	

## WRITING ABOUT POETIC DEVICES

Often you will spend a great deal of time learning about the ways in which poems are put together, and will then want to apply this learning to your essay. This can lead to some formulaic writing that does not demonstrate much analysis.

Look at the example below to see how writing about poetry can be formulaic and uninteresting:

*Skryzynecki uses lots of sounds in his poems, such as in 'Immigrants at Central Station'. He uses strong sounding words like 'railway' which is a sad sound and shows how sad it is to be an immigrant.*

A better way of writing about poetic devices is to analyse only the techniques that illustrate the idea you are discussing.

Below is an example fragment of an essay that discusses the importance of the sound of the words Skryzynecki chooses and analyses why this is important to an understanding of the poem.

*The desolation of immigrants is epitomised by the wailing 'ai' sound that repeats through the first stanza of 'Immigrants at Central Station': the consistent moaning through 'train's', 'railway' and 'rained' represents the inner sorrow of these silent, waiting people. Readers are forced to confront the devastating reality of migration and of the sorrow felt by people who are leaving their country for a new life.*

In the table below are some poetic devices and sentence stems that might help you to analyse the device rather than just describe it.

DEVICE	EFFECT IN POEM	EFFECT ON READER
caesura	pauses in the middle of the line breaks the rhythm of the poem stops the flow of reading	forces the reader to pause, mimicking... creates a sense of space which... interrupts the momentum of... emphasises the idea that... isolates the idea... isolates the image...
rhyme	links words to emphasise their connection	provides a repeated sound for the reader that reminds them of... creates the sound of...which... provides an inescapable image of... creates a driving focus on... represents the sound of... mimics the sound of... builds an image of...
sonnet	compares two opposing ideas	juxtaposes the sense of...with... allows the reader to understand the contradictory nature of... demonstrates the ...and...of...
's' sound or susurration	sounds like whispering	mimics the whispering of... enhances the secret sense of... provides a strong sense of... provides a visceral sense of...

### SENTENCE STEMS FOR ANALYSING OTHER DEVICES

This [device] highlights/epitomises the idea that...

By...[poet] intensifies the feeling of...

Underlining the importance of this idea is the...

This [device/image] accentuates the sense of...

This [device/image] subtly emphasises...

This [device/image] echoes in our minds as...

This [device/image] captures a sense of...

## Using quotes in a body paragraph

Apparently, there are lots of ways to skin a cat. We can't speak to the truth of this suggestion, but we can tell you that there are more ways than one to use quotes in an essay. In fact, there are stacks of them.

Below you will see examples of the myriad ways you can insert a quote into a sentence. Like so many of the suggestions in this book, using this resource is about being willing to experiment with your writing.

Experiment with using quotes in at least two different ways in your essay –don't settle for a formulaic use of them.

<b>STRAIGHT INSERT</b>	<i>Max is portrayed as “king of all the wild things.”</i>
<b>SINGLE WORD QUOTE</b> Particularly important in poetry analyses	<i>The description of Max as “lonely” emphasises how important relationships are to him.</i>
<b>IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANOTHER QUOTE</b>	<i>While Max was “king of all the wild things,” he was also “lonely.”</i>
<b>IN A CLAUSE (ONE SECTION OF A MULTI-PART SENTENCE)</b>	<i>We come to see that Max, mostly through scenes such as when he is “king of all the wild things”, is a character in desperate need of control and empowerment in his life.</i>
<b>STRAIGHT INSERT WITH COMMA AND FOLLOW UP EXPLANATION</b>	<i>When Sendak writes that “Max was king of all the wild things,” he highlights Max’s need to have control.</i>
<b>INTRODUCED WITH A COLON</b>	<i>It is in his own mind that Max sees himself as being in control: “Max was king of all the wild things.”</i>

# The Conclusion

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A good conclusion contains two things:

- A core topic statement: **What is the key idea in response to the essay topic?**
- A big picture statement: **What is the significance of a character's actions, an idea in the text or the author's purpose?**

An effective conclusion should contain between three and four sentences. Any more than four and it's in danger of becoming 'waffly'.

Consider the conclusion below in response to this essay topic:

**In Shakespeare's play, Romeo and Juliet's actions are inevitable because they live in a violent world.**

*Romeo and Juliet are ultimately forced to act in the way they do because of the violent physical and emotional culture of the society of Verona. They are surrounded by people for whom it's a norm to engage in brawls of the heart and of the sword. Shakespeare shows us that when such values are normal, then the passion of young lovers is doomed.*

Three sentences does the trick in the above case.

## THE CONCLUSION IS STRUCTURED LIKE THIS:

Core topic statement:

*Romeo and Juliet are ultimately forced to act in the way they do because of the violent physical and emotional culture of the society of Verona that they find themselves in.*

Further information about the core topic statement:

*They are surrounded by people for whom it's a norm to engage in brawls of the heart and of the sword.*

Big picture statement:

*Shakespeare shows us that when such a norm is the case, then the passion of young lovers is doomed.*

Taking two sentences to adequately summarise a core response to the topic is typical. Your task isn't to summarise everything you've written about in your essay – just the guts of it. The last sentence should show that you understand the bigger picture of what the text is about.

### You will find these words/phrases useful to begin a conclusion:

- Ultimately
- In the end
- In the final analysis
- In essence
- For the most part
- [Character/idea] is presented throughout the text as...
- [The text] is a story of...which demonstrates

### You will find these words/phrases useful to make a big picture statement:

- The text leaves us with...  
...the message that...  
...an image of a world where...  
...a vision of world in which...
- The text...  
...warns the reader...  
...cautions us...
- Through...  
the actions of...  
the focus on...  
the images of...  
  
the text...  
  
...highlights for the reader...  
...demonstrates that...
- The text...  
...imparts a message of...  
...offers a message of...
- The text demonstrates that...can / can't...  
...triumph over...  
...succeed against...
- The text concludes that it is... only possible / impossible...  
...to triumph over...  
...succeed against...  
  
...when/if...
- Underscoring the whole text is...  
...the idea that...  
...the notion that...

# 3. COMPARING & CONTRASTING TEXTS

This chapter will look at three elements of compare and contrast writing for texts.

## 1. The purpose of compare and contrast writing?

- The purpose of compare and contrast writing
- Example annotated essay

## 2. Planning for compare and contrast text writing

- Brainstorming connections between the texts
- Turning concrete connections into big picture idea connections
- Compare and contrast plan

## 3. Writing introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions

- Writing introductions
- Writing body paragraphs
- Writing conclusions

# The purpose of compare & contrast writing

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Of course, at a fundamental level, compare and contrast writing is about identifying similarities between two texts. But there are features of compare and contrast writing beyond this basic aspect.

Listed below are a series of important purposes of compare and contrast writing that might seem obvious - but many students fail to appreciate:

## **IDENTIFYING DIFFERENCES IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS DISCUSSING SIMILARITIES:**

This shouldn't need to be pointed out, but so many students fail to do this. Texts are never identical, and the richness of your analysis can come equally from discussing the differences as from the similarities.

## **IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BIG IDEAS:**

Effective compare and contrast writing shouldn't get bogged down in listing the small ways texts are similar or different. It should start by looking at the big ideas, like the quest for identity, or overcoming grief, and then look at how the smaller things like characters and events show this in both texts.

## **IDENTIFY WHAT AUTHORS/DIRECTORS/PLAYWRIGHTS ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE:**

Although the ideas between texts will be similar, the author, director or playwright could be expressing entirely different viewpoints on the one topic. Identifying and discussing variations in perspective is one of the most important things you can do in compare and contrast writing.

## **DISCUSSING THE WORLDS OF THE TEXT IS IMPORTANT:**

Authors, directors and playwrights construct the world of a text to shape the lives of the characters who inhabit it. The lives of these characters - what happens to them - ultimately illuminates the message of the text. It's important, then, to always discuss how the worlds of the two texts have been constructed similarly or differently.

## **WRITE A LOT OF DETAIL ON A FEW THINGS:**

It's easy to write lots of short body paragraphs focusing on a range of small details that are different or similar between the texts. You can't write about everything. Focus on a few ideas and write on these in detail.

# Looking at a compare & contrast essay

Below is an example compare and contrast text essay about the novel *Ninety Eighty-Four* and the film *Gattaca*. The essay is annotated to include some basic, important features of compare and contrast text response writing. Later in this chapter, these features will be described in more detail and you'll be given some tools and resources to help you implement these features in your own writing.

Before reading through the example essay, though, take a moment to consider these essential similarities and differences between responding to a single text and comparing two texts. This will highlight for you that many of the things you need to do well for a single text response essay are things you also need to do well for a compare and contrast essay.

SINGLE TEXT RESPONSE ESSAY	COMPARE & CONTRAST TEXT ESSAY
Introduction addresses essay topic and provides a perspective about it	Introduction begins by discussing something about the bigger picture (genre or topic) that connects the two texts before addressing the topic
Topic sentences are about ideas	Topic sentences are about ideas but also articulate how these are present in one or both texts
Body paragraphs focus on analysis rather than summarisation	Body paragraphs identify key features of both texts before comparing and analysing
Setting is one feature of a text that you could discuss	The similarities and differences in how the setting affects our understanding of the world of the character must always be discussed
Strong, analytical verbs are used throughout	Strong, analytical verbs are used throughout
A variety of ways to start and link sentences are employed	A variety of ways to start and link sentences are employed

## TOPIC:

### NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR AND GATTACA BOTH PRESENT BLEAK VISIONS OF DYSTOPIAN SOCIETIES.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY	IMPORTANT FEATURES
<p><u>Since science fiction texts are concerned with how humans utilise technology, the genre generally presents us with a picture of oppressive societies where science is used to control individuals.</u> In other words, science fiction explores our fears about how we might use technology to gain power over each other. This is certainly the case in George Orwell's novel <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> and the film <i>Gattaca</i>, directed by Andrew Niccol. <u>Both texts show us a grim world where there is limited, if non-existent, privacy and where technology is used by powerful organisations to control citizens.</u> But there is an important difference in the message each text gives us in the end about the capacity of humanity to overcome dehumanising societies. Orwell's text says to us at its conclusion that humans, working as individuals, are ultimately too weak to defeat more powerful groups who have dominant technology. <u>However, Niccol's version of the science fiction story is much more hopeful: individual's humanity is not only able to overcome the powerful forces that oppress him, but also to provide an inspiration to others around him.</u></p> <p><u>Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four are each set worlds where powerful organisations seek to control their individuals in order to create what they believe is a better society.</u> The product of this control is not, in fact, a perfect place to live, but rather a grim environment of conformity and fear where individuals have lost the thing that gives them their humanity: individuality. <u>In Niccol's depiction of a dystopian future, genetic engineering of children has become the norm.</u> Before conception, parents choose the genetic features they want their children to have. A child's genetic makeup becomes their "passport", governing what jobs and life they can have in society. The opening shot of the film, where we see a colourless, featureless factory-line of workers going into the <i>Gattaca</i> corporation, establishes that the product of trying to make all humans "perfect" is actually to make them the same. The technology in <u>Orwell's dystopian world of Nineteen Eighty-Four</u> might be different, but the society is the same soulless, grim place as <i>Gattaca</i>. In <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i>, 'Big Brother' is the powerful government that controls its citizens through a pervasive surveillance system of listening devices, cameras and spies. It's a society in which "You had to live...in the assumption that every sound you made was... scrutinized" meaning that "There seemed to be no colour in anything." <u>The lives of the people in the worlds of both Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four contain no hope of being able to do anything other than what the powerful, governing forces allow.</u></p>	<p>Introductory statement: What do texts of this genre or about this topic seek to explore/ show us?</p> <p>Identification of similarities - particularly setting</p> <p>Identification of differences. Use of colon to elaborate</p> <p>Topic sentence about key idea: i.e. control</p> <p>Succinct identification of text elements such as plot, techniques or setting</p> <p>Alternative ways of referring to the text other than just its name</p> <p>Uses alternatives to starting sentences with 'In both...'</p>

## COMPARATIVE ESSAY

## IMPORTANT FEATURES

However, as in all science fiction texts, Orwell's novel and Niccol's film features protagonists who struggle against the grimness of the oppressive society they find themselves in. The characters mirror each other, not just in their attitudes, but in their physical characterisation. Winston is a "smallish, frail figure", while Vincent's non-genetically engineered body has a defective heart which precludes him from the job as astronaut with *Gattaca*, which he desperately wants. Unlike the other characters in their world who seemingly accept their fate, both protagonists dream about defying the oppressive societies they find themselves in. Winston believes "there is hope" and constantly thinks of ways he would like to defy Big Brother and its lackeys, fantasising about infecting "the whole lot of them with leprosy." Yet while Winston dreams about insurrection, Vincent's acts upon his guiding belief that "There is no gene for fate," and he sets out on a path in the film to overcome genetic discrimination by faking his genetic credentials. Portrayed as physically inferior, the characters of Vincent and Winston each capture the powerlessness of the individual in their bleak societies, with Orwell emphasising the pointlessness of individuals attempting to rise up against the system but Niccol celebrating the potential of individuals to triumph.

Similar as they appear, Vincent and Winston differ significantly in the courage and strength they ultimately display in each text. While Winston fantasises about destroying Big Brother, in the end he lacks the moral and physical capacity to do this. He is not able to endure pain - something he must confront when arrested by Big Brother and taken to the infamous Room 101 - where "you could not feel anything except pain and foreknowledge of pain". When confronted by his deepest fear of rats gnawing his face, Winston not only capitulates himself to Big Brother, but also betrays his lover Julia. The words "All you care about is yourself," which Winston says at the end of the novel, highlight the bleakness of Orwell's nightmare world in Nineteen Eighty-Four. It's bleak because there are no heroes who can stand up and fight the system. Winston is an ordinary person who represents the weaknesses of ordinary people. Vincent, in contrast, is a much more heroic figure in *Gattaca*.

Topic sentence contains both transition phrase and key idea (protagonists who struggle)

May discuss one text less than the other in a paragraph (but discussion of both texts should balance out over the course of the whole essay)

Conclusion to body paragraph refers to both texts emphasising the similarities and differences

Strong verbs to compare the texts - not just 'are' or 'is'

Use of short quotes

## COMPARATIVE ESSAY

## IMPORTANT FEATURES

*Throughout his journey in the film he displays physical heroism in his endurance of brutal surgery that extends the height of his legs, his success in daily training regimes designed for people without his heart problem, and his fearless swimming into the ocean. While Vincent doesn't succeed solely because of his own efforts, the help he receives from other characters in the film is a product of their admiration for his resilience and resolve. So although Gattaca's world of genetically determined futures is a bleak one, Vincent provides hope that humans can - through courage and determination - overcome the forces that seek to dehumanise us.*

*In the final analysis, the worlds of Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four are **fundamentally** the same. They each imagine a bleak society in which individuals must conform and live out lives controlled by powerful forces. **What makes Gattaca a less grim version of a dystopian world is that it offers us hope, that even in the grimmest of societies, humanity can triumph. In contrast, George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four presents us with a story without such hope, whose 'hero' is weak and is finally crushed by the system, and which serves as a stark warning to readers about what will happen if we let powerful organisations destroy our individuality.***

**Word length: 1007 words**

Use of adjectives or adverbs to identify the extent of similarity between texts

Identification of key differences - there will always be at least one

Conclusion to essay discusses the message of the texts

Word length is longer than an essay on just one text

## PLANNING A COMPARE & CONTRAST TEXT ESSAY:

# Becoming familiar with the connections between the texts

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Before you begin to write about both of the texts you are comparing, you must be familiar with each of them as individual texts. You will be, in all probability, discussing one or two main themes that connect the texts and then a series of smaller themes that may be common across the texts, or may be different in each of them. Generating ideas that connect the two texts will be your first step to analysing them.

One effective tool to use when brainstorming ideas to write about in response to a compare and contrast essay topic is this planner on the next page.

The process of using this template begins with identifying the key idea of an essay topic. After this, the questions in the left hand column become a checklist for considering points of similarity and difference between the two texts in terms of the key idea.

**A BLANK COPY OF THIS BRAINSTORMING TEMPLATE CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM:**

[www.tickingmind.com.au/comparative-brainstorming-checklist](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/comparative-brainstorming-checklist).

## BRAINSTORMING TEMPLATE

KEY IDEA:		
	Text 1:	Text 2:
1. Point of comparison: Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the setting show this idea?</li> <li>How does the setting affect the lives and experiences of people in the world of a text in a way that shows this idea?</li> </ul>	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
2. Point of comparison: Major characters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do major characters act or how are they affected in a way that shows this idea throughout the text?</li> </ul>	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
3. Point of comparison: Supporting characters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do supporting characters act or how are they affected in a way that shows this idea throughout the text?</li> </ul>	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
4. Point of comparison: Techniques/Devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do techniques/devices show this idea throughout the text?</li> </ul>	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
5. Point of comparison: Ending/Overall Message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the ending of the text ultimately show about this idea?</li> </ul>	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:

## PLANNING A COMPARE & CONTRAST TEXT ESSAY:

# Generating statements to turn small ideas into big ideas

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The comparative Brainstorming Template on the previous page is great to identify concrete similarities and differences between the texts. But remember: good compare and contrast writing is about the big ideas, not small, concrete details. So, you need to be able to turn your concrete connections between the texts into ideas that connect the texts.

The table on the next page is a tool to help you articulate how concrete features of texts, such as characters and setting, represent ideas like ‘fear’ and ‘identity’ that bond the texts.

In the left hand column of the table, are words that represent features of texts. Based on the brainstorming you did on each of these features with the comparative Brainstorming Template, connect these concrete text features with a verb, idea phrase and idea to articulate a bigger picture statement about the connection between texts.

At the bottom of the grid are some basic sentence starters and extra information words you can use to begin your sentences and add more detail.

## IDEAS CHART

CONCRETE TEXT FEATURES	VERBS	IDEA PHRASES	IDEAS
protagonist	investigates	confrontation with...	power
central characters	reflects on	the challenge of...	identity
minor character	portrays	failure to...	control
supporting characters	challenges	fear of...	autonomy
symbol	illustrates	anxiety of...	relationships
imagery of...	captures	attempt to...	men and women
setting	questions	conflict of/between/ over...	discrimination
world of the text...	asserts	the search for...	prejudice
the society/ies of...	explores	the coming to terms with...	misunderstanding
the cultures in...	considers	the striving for control over...	family
narrator	emphasises	the achievement of...	friendships
author/director/ playwright	scrutinises	the struggle for...	conformity
motif	comments	the desire for...	adapt to new situations
	seeks	the need for...	grief
	illuminates	the experience of...	loss
	creates	a journey of...	redemption
			destiny
			love
			understanding
			courage
			justice
			powerlessness
			disconnection
			isolation
			forgiveness

- In each text, in both texts, for both texts, similar in the texts, common to both [text name] and [text name]
- because, since, in order to, through, by, with, in, for, from, along with, not only...but also, creating, showing, causing, illustrating, emphasising

## PLANNING A COMPARE & CONTRAST TEXT ESSAY:

# Creating a plan

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So far you have completed two preparatory activities: the Brainstorming Template provided you with concrete connections between the texts, and the Ideas Chart, which helped you turn concrete features into 'big picture' writing.

This big picture writing can then become the basis for your essay plan. Effective essays begin with effective topic sentences. You'll see in the essay planning template on the next page that there is a space at the start of each body paragraph to write your topic sentence.

### Using the Ideas Chart you should:

1. Pick out the best 3-4 sentences which will be the start of your 3-4 body paragraphs
2. Merge some of your similar sentences together to reduce your ideas down to 3-4

### Once you've put your topic sentences in, you should:

3. Use the brainstorming template to help you fill in examples to support your idea
4. Consider statements you might make in your introduction and conclusion

**A BLANK COPY OF THIS PLANNING TEMPLATE CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM:**

[www.tickingmind.com.au/comparative-essay-planning-template](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/comparative-essay-planning-template).

## PLANNING TEMPLATE

	TEXT 1	TEXT 2
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> Important vocabulary:	Introductory statement:	
	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
<b>BODY PARAGRAPH 1</b> Important vocabulary:	Topic sentence:	
	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
<b>BODY PARAGRAPH 2</b> Important vocabulary:	Topic sentence:	
	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
<b>BODY PARAGRAPH 3</b> Important vocabulary:	Topic sentence:	
	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
<b>BODY PARAGRAPH 4</b> Important vocabulary:	Topic sentence:	
	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
<b>CONCLUSION</b> Important vocabulary:		

## The introduction

---

Write a big picture statement about the purpose of texts that explores the same ideas as the texts you are comparing. Good introductions to compare and contrast essays don't simply start by discussing the two texts you are being asked to compare.

The first sentence or sentences of a good compare and contrast essay typically identify how the big theme, idea or genre that connects the texts is commonly explored in literature:

*Since science fiction texts are concerned with how humans utilise technology, the genre generally presents us with a picture of oppressive societies where science is used to control individuals. In other words, science fiction explores our fears about how we might use technology to gain power over each other. This is certainly the case in George Orwell's novel **Nineteen Eighty-Four** and the film **Gattaca**, directed by Andrew Niccol.*

Here is another way this introduction could have started:

*Coming to terms with the future and the kind of society we will face is an eternal source of material for writers and directors. George Orwell's classic dystopian novel **Nineteen Eighty-Four** depicts an unrelentingly hopeless view of the future, where unseen governments control both the actions and thoughts of their people and any resistance is futile.*

These phrases, or your own variations of them, can be used to formulate opening introductory paragraph sentences such as the ones above:

- Texts that deal with the idea/topic/issue of...seek to explore/depict/represent...
- Films and plays/novels that explore... frequently/commonly explore/depict/represent...
- The idea of/issue of...is commonly explored in texts which shows us/reveal to us/depict how...
- The idea of/issue of...is commonly explored through stories/narratives of...
- Dealing with/confronting/exploring/coming to terms with/facing....is an idea/issue that...

## Identify the obvious link between the texts and directly engage with the essay topic

After the opening, big picture statement, effective introductions to compare and contrast essays will then identify the broad link between the texts in a way that is relevant to the essay topic:

*Both texts show us a grim world where there is limited, if non-existent, privacy and where technology is used by powerful organisations to control citizens.*

The sentence starter below can be coupled with the phrases underneath it to craft statements that articulate the basic connection between texts:

*Both texts show us/give us/depict/portray/represent/reveal...*

- ...worlds of/worlds where/societies in which...
- ...lives of...
- ...characters who...
- ...struggles against...
- ...journeys to/of...

## Identify the less obvious similarities between the text or key differences between them

The next few sentences of the introduction are where you write about connections between the text that are more interesting than just the obvious, big link. A connection might be further similarities, but it could also be key differences:

*But there is an important difference in the message each text gives us in the end about the capacity of humanity to overcome dehumanising societies. Orwell's text says to us at its conclusion that humans, working as individuals, are ultimately too weak to defeat more powerful groups who have dominant technology. However, Niccol's version of the science fiction story is much more hopeful. In his text, the individual's humanity is not only able to overcome the powerful forces that oppress him, but also to provide an inspiration to others around him.*

Try experimenting with writing statements that use two or more of the words and phrases on the next page to express the deeper similarities or differences between texts. You can use the words and phrases on the next page in the order you feel best works, and, of course, you can modify them to better suit the sentences you are writing or the texts you are writing about. However one thing that does need to be stressed about compare and contrast writing is this: when comparing two texts, it's important to find different ways of referring to the texts other than just constantly using their titles. So try using variations of the phrases in the 'Ways of referring to texts' list to label the texts in different ways.

**WORDS FOR DESCRIBING THE DEGREE TO WHICH PARTS OF TEXTS ARE SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT:**

- subtle/subtlety
- significant/significantly
- essential/essentially
- fundamental/fundamentally
- crucial/crucially
- in part/partly
- partial/partially

**PHRASES FOR INTRODUCING HOW SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT TEXTS ARE:**

- at their core/heart/centre
- central to both texts
- on the surface each text...But beyond this is...
- at a basic level both texts...However, on a deeper level...
- in essence...
- fundamental to each text is...
- shared by each text is...
- common to each text...
- where the texts differ
- the difference/separation/divergence in the texts comes where/because/since...
- most
- far more
- far less

**WORDS FOR DESCRIBING THE CENTRAL IDEAS IN A TEXT**

- message of...
- purpose to/of...
- representation of...
- depiction of...
- characterisation of...
- perspective of...
- viewpoint of...

**WAYS OF REFERRING TO THE TEXT**

- The (Author's/Director's/Playwright's)...
- text/narrative/story
- version of...
- representation of...
- depiction of...
- narrative/story of...
- vision/imagining of...  
(importantly, each of these words/phrases above can be preceded by describing words: i.e uplifting representation, ultimately tragic depiction of...)

# The body paragraph

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## WRITE TOPIC SENTENCES WITH STRONG VERBS AND VARIATION

As discussed in the previous chapter on text response writing, good topic sentences should focus on ideas and feature strong verbs. In the examples of topic sentences below, 'struggle' 'feature' and 'create' are instances of such strong verbs.

Another simple, but important feature of effective topic sentence writing for compare and contrast essays is variation. Notice how the topic sentences below each start in a different way and refer to the texts in different ways. You can get ideas about how to refer to the texts differently by looking at the 'Ways of referring to texts' list in the section on the previous page, and for starting your sentences differently by looking at the 'Transition words' section on the next page.

*Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four are each set in a world where powerful organisations seek to control their individuals in order to create what they believe is a better society.*

*However, as in all science fiction texts, Orwell's novel and Niccol's film features protagonists who struggle against the grimness of the oppressive society they find themselves in.*

*Yet, similar as they are, Vincent and Winston differ significantly in the courage and strength they ultimately display in each text.*

It doesn't just need to be about the words you use, punctuation - particularly the colon - can be used to create variety in topic sentences and introduce more complex ideas.

Here's an example:

*Orwell's novel is imbued with the fear of the loss of autonomy, and Niccol's film echoes this concern: their worlds are places where citizens are sorted, grouped and controlled by the arbitrary decision-making of governments.*

## ALTERNATE WRITING ON EACH TEXT

In your body paragraphs, your task is to explore each text equally. One thing that can initially help you to do this is to ensure you're writing an equal number of sentences on each text. Consider how, in the example body paragraph below, the writer

has sentences on both texts at the start, middle and finish of the body paragraph. In between each of these sections, the writer alternates equally in writing on one text and then the other.

<p><i>However, the way in which power is most insidiously wielded is not through technology, but through the means by which governments control and manipulate the minds of its citizens. Orwell is far more explicit about this in Nineteen Eighty-Four, writing that '[p]ower is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing' - by manipulating the language in which its people speak, the Party can control the ways in which they think and communicate with each other. The control in Gattaca is not so categorical, but it is nevertheless apparent that the characters within this world accept the premise that genetically modified people are 'the best' of their parents' DNA. In both texts, the cultural setting is such that it prevents alternative ways of viewing the world, the dominant paradigm is so successful that people are brainwashed into accepting a certain viewpoint. Orwell is extremely critical of the way in which people accept these dominant societal thought patterns, observing that the 'choice for mankind lies between freedom and happiness' but that the vast majority believe 'happiness is better'. For the reader, this is both observation and warning - Orwell cautions that we surrender freedom at our peril. The message that Niccol offers is both subtler and more hopeful. On the one hand, he cautions that to accept a scientific measure of perfection is both flawed and dangerous, but the chain of characters who allow one man to overcome this system of discrimination demonstrates to his audience his point that 'there is no gene for the human spirit'. Niccol's film suggests that each person, from Jerome, to Dr Lamar to Irene, are each willing to buck the system into which they have been indoctrinated, allowing Vincent to achieve his dreams. While Orwell suggests that people lose their sense of self when their minds are controlled, Niccol is more optimistic, allowing that individuals will never be defeated by the strictures of society.</i></p>	<p>Both 1984  Gattaca Both 1984  Gattaca  Both</p>
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The structure of the paragraph above is one you can use (and then vary) in your own body paragraphs:

- Topic sentence about both texts
- 1 sentence about text 1
- 1 sentence about text 2
- Middle sentence about both texts
- 2 sentences about text 1
- 2 sentences about text 2
- Concluding sentence about both texts

## CONSTRUCT COMPARE & CONTRAST SENTENCES IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

### BY USING A MIX OF TRANSITION WORDS:

Because you are linking two texts in compare and contrast writing, the fluent use of transition words is a crucial part of your writing, to signal to your reader that you are moving from one text to another.

In the left hand column of the grid below is a list of basic transition words - you'll need to use a variety of these throughout your writing and monitor that you're not routinely using the same ones.

In the right hand column is a list of more advanced transition words and phrases.

Try using at least one or two of these throughout your writing. By doing so, you'll not only achieve variety in your writing, you'll also use sentence constructions that will prompt you to think more deeply about the connection between the texts.

BASIC TRANSITION WORDS AND PHRASES	ADVANCED TRANSITION WORDS AND PHRASES
Moreover	Further to this...
Furthermore	In addition to this...
However	Providing a point of contrast...
Yet	Providing a further point of similarity is...
Although	Mirroring...
While	Paralleling this...
On the one hand	Appearing on the surface as similar, but in fact quite different, is...
On the other hand	Departing from...
Similarly	Diverging from...
Likewise	Starkly contrasting this...
Unlike	Offering a (different/similar)...
In comparison	Creating a (different/similar)...
In contrast	Corresponding to this...
Conversely	This...is mirrored by/through/with...
	This...is paralleled b/through/with...

## BY STRUCTURING YOUR SENTENCES IN DIFFERENT WAYS:

Students often have a ‘default’ way they begin their sentences and then structure them. This ‘default’ can become a problem when nearly every sentence sounds the same. As a rule, try to do something different with each sentence in your

body paragraphs. This might be starting them differently or adding extra information in different ways.

Below is a basic guide to how to open and extend your sentences in a variety of ways.

Use this chart as a reference when writing a body paragraph slowly, concentrating on crafting a range of sentence types.

OPENER	MAIN PART	EXTRA INFORMATION PART
<p><b>With a basic transition word:</b> While, Although, Despite, On the one hand</p> <p><b>With an -ing transition word:</b> Mirroring, paralleling, echoing, departing, contrasting</p> <p><b>With an -ed word:</b> Pervaded by fear, the setting of...</p> <p><b>With an -ly word:</b> similarly, differently, conversely, alternatively</p> <p><b>With an extra information word:</b> with, by, through, throughout, since, at, for, from</p>	<p>the author/director/ playwright/s</p> <p>the text/s</p> <p>the idea/s</p> <p>the character/s</p> <p>the technique/s</p> <p>+ verb</p>	<p><b>An extra information word:</b> or, either, which, who, that, because, since, and, along with, such as, for, from, at, in, into, by, with, through, not only...but also...</p> <p><b>A list:</b> The portrayal of Winston’s actions shows us the fear of the citizens, the depth of of Big Brother’s power and the destructiveness of totalitarian regimes.</p> <p><b>An -ing word:</b> i.e. showing, illustrating, emphasising, depicting, portraying, causing, resulting in</p>

## BY USING A VARIETY OF COMPARE AND CONTRAST VERBS

Compare and contrast writing can easily become formulaic. If you don't think carefully about how you're crafting your sentences and employing a variety of ways to express the connection between the texts, you will rapidly begin to produce writing that features the same sentence structures and transition words and is very simplistic because of it.

One of the traps you can fall into in producing formulaic compare and contrast writing is to constantly use the verbs 'is' and 'are' in sentences like:

**Both texts are similar in the way they...**

Or:

**Each text is....**

Below is a list of verbs which can be used to express similarities and differences between texts. For example:

**Both texts share a vision of the future which...**

Or:

*To Kill A Mockingbird* **varies from** *In The Name of The Father* **through...**

Try using these verbs once or twice in your body paragraphs:

INSTEAD OF WRITING 'ARE SIMILAR'	INSTEAD OF WRITING 'ARE DIFFERENT'
compares	contrasts
echoes	differ
follows	diverge
shares	depart
converges	deviate
unites	varies
connects	reverses
links	inverts
parallels	

## BY USING QUOTES IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

It's important that you refer to textual evidence throughout your essay, particularly in the form of quotes. There are three main ways you can embed quotes from the two texts into your compare and contrast writing.

These methods are modelled below. Try using at least two in your essay.

<p><b>Different character quotes, same sentence</b></p>	<p><i>Like Mandela who sees that the <u>“cycle”</u> of revenge must be interrupted and changed, so too does Achilles know that <u>“something new and unimaginable”</u> is required to end his cycle of grief.</i></p>
<p><b>Different character quotes, single successive sentences</b></p>	<p><i>Mandela sees around him a world that has fallen into a <u>“cycle”</u>, where black South Africans want to take revenge on whites and where whites view Mandela as a terrorist. In the same way, Achilles, who every day desecrates the body of Hector, has fallen into a pattern of grief which he must <u>“break”</u>.</i></p>
<p><b>Different character quotes, multiple successive sentences</b></p>	<p><i>Mandela sees around him a world that has fallen into a <u>“cycle”</u>, where black South Africans want to take revenge on whites and where whites view Mandela as a terrorist. Mandela knows that to change this world, he must <u>“break”</u> this cycle. In the same way that Mandela’s realises his world is gripped by a destructive pattern of behaviour, Achilles, who every day desecrates the body of Hector, understands he has fallen into an implosive pattern of grief which he must <u>“break”</u>. He realises that it is only <u>“something new and unimaginable”</u> which can end his grief.</i></p>

# The conclusion

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The conclusion of any essay should never just be a re-wording of what was in your introduction: it should be a thoughtful selection of the most important perspectives you discussed in your essay along with an insight into the importance of the message of both of the texts. Three to four sentences is a good length for a conclusion, as is apparent in the example conclusion below.

First sentence of the conclusion begins with an authoritative statement:

*In the final analysis, the worlds of Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four are fundamentally the same.*

The middle of the conclusion summarises what is most essential about the similarities or differences:

*They each imagine a bleak society in which individuals must conform and live out lives controlled by powerful forces. What makes Gattaca a less grim version of a dystopian world is that it offers us hope, that even in the grimmest of societies humanity can triumph. In contrast, George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four presents us with a story without such hope, whose 'hero' is weak and is finally crushed by the system,...*

The end of the conclusion offers insight into the importance of the texts or their message

*...and which serves as a stark warning to readers about what will happen if we let powerful organisations destroy our individuality.*

The words in the grid on the next page can be used in the beginning, middle and end of your conclusion.

Keep in mind that conclusions do not necessarily need to begin with a concluding word or phrase, they just need to have an authoritative statement interpreting the texts.

In your conclusion, try using a more interesting verb than 'show' or 'explores' to discuss what texts do. At the top of the second column on the following page are a series of suggestions.

CONCLUDING WORD/PHRASE	POINTS OF CONNECTION	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT, TEXTS OR THEME	
<p>In the final analysis, Ultimately, In the end, Fundamentally, In essence, At their core,</p>	<p>both texts... imagine, create, envisage, construct express, articulate, demonstrate, present, convey, caution, affirm, warn, challenges highlights, underline, emphasise provide, give the reader/viewer, offer the reader/viewer</p> <p>underling both texts is their shared... connecting each text is their... throughout both texts...</p>	<p>(our) sense of.. (our) belief in... vision of...reminder that...reflection of portrait of...depiction of...celebration of representation of critique of...indictment of...condemnation of... powerful poignant stark grim complex hopeful optimistic uplifting important</p>	<p>a world where humanity morals morality the capacity of people to the need to our inability to the significance of the power of the triumph of the subjection of the failure to flawed corrupt destructive weak influential strong overwhelming</p>
	<p><b>POINTS OF DIFFERENCE</b></p> <p>what separates the texts is their differing/ varying... what draws a line between the text... what divides the texts is their diverging/ conflicting... the essential point of difference between the text is...</p>		

# An upper range example of a compare & contrast essay

The essay annotated at the beginning of this chapter is an example of a strong response. However, it is by no means a perfect essay. The example below is a more sophisticated essay, which makes use of different constructions and language to compare and contrast *Gattaca* and, *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*. Read through it and consider and identify the features that make this a strong essay:

## Introduction

*Coming to terms with the future and the kind of society we will face is an eternal source of material for writers and directors. George Orwell's classic dystopian novel **Nineteen Eighty-Four** depicts an unrelentingly hopeless view of the future, where unseen governments control both the actions and thoughts of their people and any resistance is futile. Moderating this bleak view of the future, Andrew Niccol's *Gattaca* encapsulates both the pervasive fear of a world in which bureaucrats determine the fate of our genetic material and a nostalgic yearning for the simplicity of a 1950s lifestyle. While both texts point an accusing finger at an unreasonable level of government control, and the increasing bureaucratization of society, Niccol's uplifting and hopeful ending creates, for his audience, a sense of relief in the idea that individual ambition and talent will triumph; Orwell gives his reader no such hope for the future, committing his reader to a bitter and bleak end where society breaks all that we hold most dear.*

SOPHISTICATED FEATURES OF THE INTRODUCTION:		
STRONG VERBS	DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEGINNING SENTENCES	TRANSITION WORDS/ PHRASES

## Body Paragraphs

Orwell's novel is imbued with the fear of the loss of autonomy, and Niccol's film echoes this concern: their worlds are places where citizens are sorted, grouped and controlled by the arbitrary decision-making of governments. In Orwell's world, everyone 'accepted the lie which the Party imposed' and allowed themselves to be controlled by 'an unending series of victories over [their] own memory'. It is therefore nearly impossible for people, who have a shifting sense of reality, to gain a clear path for determining their own future; Orwell argues that 'who controls the past controls the future' - by removing control from their past, Orwell's government removes individual autonomy. In a similar manner, Niccol's government has 'discrimination down to a science' - people's lives are determined by their genetic code, rather than the aspirations of the individual. However the protagonist of each text has a completely different response to the governmental controls of their society; while Vincent complains that he will 'never understand' why his mother didn't ask 'her local geneticist' to create him, suggesting his acceptance of the the cultural mores, Winston 'kept his back turned to the telescreen' - both metaphorically and literally rejecting the control of his government. But it is the message of the texts that holds the overwhelming philosophical difference - ultimately Niccol's suggests that the individual can overcome the strictures of a totalitarian society, while Orwell demonstrates that the individual will never have enough strength or courage to defeat cultural norms.

The power that societies have to create cultural rules stems, in each text, from the advances in technology, which both Orwell and Niccol are critical of. In each, the technological advances are a product of the cultural context in which the text was created - Orwell views surveillance as the greatest tool for control, while Niccol critiques the scientific discoveries that can lead to genetic manipulation. Both texts are critiquing the technologies relevant to their own time frame, extending the possibilities these developments offer, so that they become insidious instruments of governmental control of the people. Rather than envisaging technology as a way of helping society evolve and as a tool for the people, these men present it as a weapon to be used against the people, to control the individual and repress personal expression. While the technologies themselves are superficially different - one is a method for watching people, while the other is designed to manipulate the health of people - Orwell and Niccol suggest that any technology is dangerous when placed in the hands of bureaucrats. Niccol expresses this as 'the burden of perfection' while Orwell points out that surveillance means that nothing is 'your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull'.

However, the way in which power is most insidiously wielded is not through technology, but through the means by which governments control and manipulate the minds of its citizens. Orwell is far more explicit about this in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, writing that '[p]ower is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing' - by manipulating the language in which its people speak, the Party can control the ways in which they think and communicate with each other. The control in *Gattaca* is not so categorical, but it is nevertheless apparent that the characters within this world accept the premise that genetically modified people are 'the best' of their parents' DNA. In both texts, the cultural setting is such that it prevents alternative ways of viewing the world, the dominant paradigm is so successful that people are brainwashed into accepting a certain viewpoint. Orwell is extremely critical of the way in which people accept these dominant societal thought patterns, observing that the 'choice for mankind lies between freedom and happiness' but that the vast majority believe 'happiness is better'. For the reader, this is both observation and warning - Orwell cautions that we surrender freedom at our peril. The message that Niccol offers is both subtler and more hopeful. On the one hand, he cautions that to accept a scientific measure of perfection is both flawed and dangerous, but the chain of characters who allow one man to overcome this system of discrimination demonstrates to his audience his point that 'there is no gene for the human spirit'. Niccol's film suggests that each person, from Jerome, to Dr Lamar to Irene, are each willing to buck the system into which they have been indoctrinated, allowing Vincent to achieve his dreams. While Orwell suggests that people lose their sense of self when their minds are controlled, Niccol is more optimistic, allowing that individuals will never be defeated by the strictures of society.

Of course, the settings in which each society is placed profoundly influences the individual freedoms of the characters within them. Winston lives in a bleak, comfortless world that smells of ‘cabbage and old rag mats’ - his costume is limited to the blue overall that is the uniform of the Party and artwork is limited to enormous posters of the mustachioed Big Brother. By allowing the characters of his world to have no individuality, Orwell indicates that the societal control is far greater. It is only outside the city limits that Winston and Julia have the illusion of freedom, but Orwell disproves even this - while wilder environments might encourage wilder thoughts, returning to the ‘civilised’ world means returning to its strictures. Niccol’s version of the future is far more nostalgic, conjuring the fashions of the 1950s and the seditious atmosphere and speak-easies of the 1930s. While the evocation of the 1950s suggests that people are conformist, the presence of unknown bars allows for freedom and individual thought. The settings of each text represent the limits of their societies.

### SOPHISTICATED FEATURES OF THE BODY PARAGRAPHS:

STRONG VERBS	DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEGINNING SENTENCES	TRANSITION WORDS/ PHRASES

### Conclusion

Ultimately, each text critiques an idea of the future and the sorts of societies that are made possible by combined effects of the people, the settings and the technologies they produce. Both Orwell and Niccol advocate for maintaining individual autonomy and thought, and caution against allowing governments and institutions to control this. Both texts point out the limitations their protagonists face if they accept the dominant cultural paradigms presented, although Niccol is far less certain that this acceptance is the fate of individuals. Nineteen Eighty-Four is far less sanguine in its outlook, and Orwell urges his readers not to accept happiness while giving up freedom. The settings of each text provide a clue to the amount of individual autonomy its characters can accept, with both Orwell and Niccol suggesting that abandoning simple individual freedoms of dress and housing lead to the acceptance of complying with other strictures. Each text, in its own way, is fundamentally a cautionary tale about placing too much confidence in technological advances and turning our backs upon the human.

### SOPHISTICATED FEATURES OF THE CONCLUSION:

STRONG VERBS	DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEGINNING SENTENCES	TRANSITION WORDS/ PHRASES

# 4. CREATIVELY RESPONDING TO TEXTS

This chapter on creative writing will outline ten steps to creatively respond to a model text. For each step, the chapter will provide resources and strategies to ensure your response thoughtfully responds to the themes and style of your model text.

1. Identify a response option
2. Think about the themes and issues of the text
3. Consider how characters will represent themes and issues
4. Establish narrative person and tense
5. Identify a relevant setting
6. Plan a structure
7. Think about word and sentence style
8. Plan a creative response
9. Look at example responses
10. Plan a written explanation

# Identify a response option

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The first step in the creative response process is to consider how you might creatively respond to a model text. The chart on the next page outlines the basic options available to you for writing a creative response. In looking at these choices, you need to make decisions about:

## ***SETTING YOUR RESPONSE WITHIN THE WORLD OF THE TEXT OR OUTSIDE IT***

In responding creatively to a model text, you can choose to write a piece that is set ‘within the world of a text’ or ‘outside the world of a text’. Responses set ‘within the world of the text’ use actual characters, settings and events from the text. Typically, this would involve writing a new scene; alternatively, you could rewrite a scene from the perspective of a different character, demonstrating new insights and ideas that are relevant to this character’s perspective. Creative responses written ‘outside the world of the text’ involve students coming up with their own, unique story ideas that are not from the text. Though set outside the world of the text, these stories must meaningfully connect to the original text, which means the stories must explore ideas and employ literary devices and techniques that are found in the original text.

## ***WRITING A REFLECTIVE OR NARRATIVE PIECE***

A narrative is any creative piece that tells a story by relating an event or series of events. A reflection, on the other hand, is more of a ‘personal essay’ that describes what a character is thinking or feeling. Each of the further steps in this chapter will give you some things you need to consider, depending on whether you are writing a narrative or reflective piece. There is both an example narrative and an example reflective piece at the end of this chapter.

INSIDE THE WORLD OF THE TEXT		OUTSIDE THE WORLD OF THE TEXT	
SAME FORM	DIFFERENT FORM	SAME FORM	DIFFERENT FORM
<p><b>Narrative –</b> Write a new scene that takes place:</p> <p>before the text/short story starts</p> <p>after the text/short story finishes</p> <p>between one of the existing scenes in the text/short story</p> <p><b>Narrative –</b> Rewrite an existing scene and change:</p> <p>The events</p> <p>The focus</p> <p>The ending</p> <p>The characters in the scene</p> <p>Narrative person</p>	<p><b>Narrative –</b> Re-write one scene as a film script (if a novel or short stories)</p> <p><b>Reflective –</b> Write a personal reflective piece from the perspective of one character</p> <p><b>Narrative –</b> Re-write one scene in prose (if a play or film)</p>	<p><b>Narrative –</b> Take the plot and theme of an existing story or scene from the text and transport it to a new setting (new time, place or country)</p>	<p><b>Reflective –</b> Write a first person reflection of a character from a different time/place facing a similar situation to that of the a character in the novel, play, film or short stories</p>

# Think about the themes and issues of a text

Your creative response needs to thematically link to the model text. One way you can do this is by thinking about themes not just as individual topic words like *love* or *death* but as issues characters face in a text.

*For example: throughout the collection of short stories Island by Alistair Macleod, change is a dominant theme. Specifically, characters struggle with: the collision between new ideas and cultures and the desire to follow traditions from the past.*

Your narrative or reflection needs to be about a

theme which connects with the model text, but also needs to represent a particular struggle characters experience. In the chart below are a list of basic themes and corresponding issues and struggles which are evident in many texts.

**Use the table below and on the next page to help you identify the themes and struggles from your model text that you will write about.**

	ONE SIDE OF AN ISSUE	ALTERNATIVE SIDE TO THE ISSUE
<b>IDENTITY</b>	Certainty about 'who I am'	Confusion about 'who I am'
	Fulfilling one role with one group or with one person	Fulfilling a different role with another group or person
<b>BELONGING</b>	Wanting to belong	Wanting to be separate
	Wanting to belong	Being excluded
<b>GENDER</b>	Men treated one way	Women treated another way
	Conforming to gender stereotypes	Challenging gender stereotypes
<b>POWER, CLASS AND STATUS</b>	Being able to achieve things because of your class, status or power	Being restricted from achieving things because of your class, status or power
<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b>	Responsibility to others	Duty to yourself
	What others want	What you want
<b>HOPE AND DREAMS</b>	Being motivated by hope	Believing there is no hope
<b>GRIEF</b>	Being able to move on from a tragic event	Being trapped by a tragic event

	ONE SIDE OF AN ISSUE	ALTERNATIVE SIDE TO THE ISSUE
<b>THE PAST</b>	Engaging in and appreciating the present and the future	Wanting to live in the past
<b>GROWING UP</b>	Wanting to be adult	Behaving as a child
	Growing up over time	Suddenly being forced into the adult world
	The simple world of children	The complex world of adults
<b>MORALITY</b>	Doing the moral thing	Doing the practical or easy thing
	Believing that what is right is clear and straightforward	Being confronted by a world where what is right is confusing and complex.
<b>COURAGE</b>	Putting yourself at risk	Keeping yourself safe
<b>FATE AND DESTINY</b>	Believing that we control our own lives	Believing that some external force controls our lives
<b>CHANGE</b>	Believing that change is possible and positive	Thinking that change is impossible or destructive
<b>SURVIVAL</b>	The instinct to survive	Giving up
	The instinct to do whatever needs to be done to survive	Believing that we cannot do inhumane things to survive

# Consider how characters will represent the issue

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Authors represent issues through characters who experience conflict about an issue in two ways:

## **INTERNAL CONFLICT**

This is where a character is torn between wanting to do two different things.

*For example: in the novel The Lieutenant by Kate Grenville, Daniel Rooke wants to help the indigenous characters but also wants to do his duty as a soldier to the British Government (who want to hunt the indigenous characters). He becomes conflicted within himself about what to do.*

## **INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT**

This is where a character is sure of something they want to do, but other characters have an attitude which conflicts with them.

*For example: in the novel Burial Rites, Toti wants to help the convicted murderer Agnes tell her story, but Blondal wants Toti to make Agnes feel guilty and ashamed about what she has done. Blondal and Toti have conflicting attitudes.*

When you are planning your creative response, you will need to think about how you are going to represent an issue. Reflective writing tends to describe an internal conflict and emphasises the thoughts and difficulties a character has with an idea or situation. So when you choose a character for your reflective writing, you should think about a person who is on the verge of a big decision, or is observing someone else making a choice. On the other hand, narrative writing tends to have more characters and these characters come into conflict or disagreement with each other; this interpersonal conflict should be representative of the different ways a reader can think about an issue. Therefore, the characters you write about in your narrative should represent different ideas and opinions.

# Establish narrative person and tense

## NARRATIVE PERSON

Before you begin writing, you need to decide who's going to be telling the story. The table below will help guide you to identifying which narrative person your model text is written in, and give you an idea of why the author has made that decision. Then you should decide which person you will write in for your creative response. You will need to be able to justify your decisions in your Written Explanation.

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE AND EFFECT
<b>1ST PERSON</b>	Many contemporary novels are written in first person ('I did this and then I did something else, while I felt...').	Writing in first person gives the reader the sense of understanding the inner thoughts of a character. It is more intimate.
<b>2ND PERSON</b>	This is the rarest form to find in any writing, it is usually only found in short stories ('You do this and then you do something else, while you felt...').	This gives the reader a direct sense of involvement and ownership over the story. It transports the reader into the 'shoes' of the character. It is also very difficult to sustain effectively.
<b>3RD PERSON</b>	In this style of writing, there is a narrator who is not a character in the book. The words he and she and character names are used to tell the story: 'She said this' or 'Steve went over there.' Third person writing can be either distant from the characters (that is, telling each character's story roughly equally) or close to one character in particular (so that we get the thoughts and feelings of a protagonist almost as though we are sitting on their shoulder: 'she couldn't believe the stupidity of the people around her.').	The great advantage of this style of writing is that the writer can give the reader equal insight into multiple characters, giving the impression that the writer is all-knowing. However, close third person provides the reader a more intimate view of a character's inner workings.
<b>SCRIPT FORMAT</b>	Play or film scripts don't technically have a narrative person, but each person represents their own thoughts and feelings.	The audience makes up their own mind about whether the thoughts and actions of the characters match, or whether they are hypocritical. The writer can't tell the audience how to interpret the character.

## TENSE

You will also need to consider the tense used in the model text and therefore which tense you will use to write your own creative response. As with narrative person above, you should decide whether or not the tense of your piece will match the tense of your model text, and justify your decision in your Written Explanation.

<b>PAST TENSE</b>	This is the most common tense to find in writing; in this tense, everything has already happened, the writer is able to reflect on it and give an accurate account of the 'truth' ('Everyone who saw what happened was astonished...').	In this tense, the writer has an authority about all of the events being related.
<b>PRESENT TENSE</b>	In present tense the action is unfolding as it is being written, like a sports-commentary ('Everyone who sees what happens is astonished...')	Writing in present tense gives the reader a more immediate and urgent sense of the action or character's feelings.

# Identify a relevant setting

If you are writing a narrative response, setting is an important consideration; it's less important in a reflective response. Your narrative needs to take place in a setting that connects to one of the settings from the model text.

- If you're writing a creative response set within the world of the text, you should use a setting that is featured or mentioned in the text
- If you're producing a creative response outside the world of the text, then you need to have a setting that clearly reflects the setting of the text

At the most basic level, you will need to decide *where* your response is set and *what time of day* it will be.

These two things should not be randomly selected, but should represent something about a character's experience in the world.

For example, consider the following settings in some of the model texts:

*Rear Window*: a small apartment during the day, represents Jefferies' confinement and his need to fill in the day when he can't go to work.

*The Golden Age*: the institution is named after a mythological time, when everything is perfect, representing the nostalgia the characters feel for other times and places in their lives; it is often late afternoon, when light is softer and more forgiving.

*Burial Rites*: the farmhouse is small and confined, representing the limited time and life Agnes has left to her; the harsh daylight highlights the need to shine a light on the events of her life.

Use the table below to help you establish when and where your narrative will be set.

In your Written Explanation you, should discuss how a setting represents an emotional experience.

		POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS
WHEN	Morning	Fresh start
	Noon	Optimism
	Afternoon	Change
	Twilight	Things coming to an end
	Night	Difficulties Hardship Work is done Isolation Fear Blindness Reflection time

		POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS
WHERE	Inside	Ordinary
	Outside	Extraordinary
	Vast	Alien
	Small	Familiar
	Natural	Restricting
	Urban	Liberating
		Inspiring
		Terrifying

In order to emphasise the emotions a character is experiencing, authors will often focus on particular features of a setting that somehow symbolise that emotion. For instance, in *After Darkness*, Christine Piper frequently describes the weather to represent the turmoil of the protagonist, Dr. Ibaraki.

Authors focus on particular features of a setting to represent what it might feel like for a character. Look at the list of setting features below and identify the ones your model text regularly describes.

**You should draw upon these in your own response and in your Written Explanation discuss how you are using them.**

- sounds
- physical appearance
- smells
- light
- sky
- the texture of natural elements
- size
- age (ancient or new)
- the sun
- the moon
- weather
- temperature
- buildings
- nature
- the feeling of the setting
- animals
- what is happening close by
- what is happening in the distance

# Identify a structure

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## OVERALL STRUCTURE OF YOUR PIECE

Whether you are writing a reflective piece, a narrative piece or a scene in script format, it will need to have a structure to it. Since you are responding to a narrative text of some kind, it makes sense to first observe the structure of moments within that text.

These are five basic phases to a narrative scene:

- **Orientation:** This tells the reader where the piece is set, when it's set and who is involved
- **Complication:** This is the problem a character faces
- **Rising tension:** The problems a character faces become increasingly difficult
- **Moment of most tension:** The problem arrives at its most difficult point
- **Finish/Resolution:** At the end of this moment, the problems a character faces can be solved or left unresolved

Choose a chapter, section or scene from the your model text that most closely links to the ideas you want to explore in your creative response.

Use the chart on the opposite page to help you identify the way the author of that text constructs their scenes and then model your own writing upon this.

STAGE	WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN
<b>ORIENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A character's action, appearance or feelings are described</li> <li>• The setting (time or place) is described</li> <li>• The passage of time is described</li> </ul>
<b>COMPLICATION</b>	<p><b>A character doesn't want to/doesn't know how to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss an issue/topic with another character</li> <li>• Carry out an action they don't want</li> </ul> <p><b>A character is confronted with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A situation that confuses them</li> <li>• Circumstances that threaten them</li> <li>• A difference of opinion</li> </ul>
<b>RISING TENSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characters openly disagree</li> <li>• A disagreement emerges between characters – but it is not openly stated</li> <li>• A character is blocked from doing what they want</li> </ul>
<b>MOMENT OF MOST TENSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A character is faced with a difficult choice</li> <li>• A character understands the true nature of their situation/problem</li> <li>• A character realises that what they previously thought/felt is wrong</li> </ul>
<b>FINISH/ RESOLUTION</b>	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences are resolved</li> <li>• One character gains power or influence over another character</li> <li>• A character knows what they must do next</li> </ul> <p><b>Not resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A character is left confused or undecided</li> </ul>

Later in this chapter there will be a template to help you plan your response.

# Think about word and sentence style – developing voice

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Every author has their own individual style: that is, they use combinations of words, images and phrases in their own way. All of these individual elements combine to create something called *authorial* voice. This section will help you to identify the types of words, sentences and phrases that are used within your model text so that you can adapt and transform them in your own creative response. This section has been divided into looking at sentences and words for narrative writing and for reflective writing. Even though you will only be writing in one style, we advise you to look through both the sections since each of these types of writing will often incorporate elements of the other.

## NARRATIVE WRITING

### PLOT SENTENCES VS. DESCRIPTIVE SENTENCES

One of the most basic and important things to understand about narrative writing is that there needs to be a balance between plot sentences and descriptive sentences.

Here's an explanation about the difference between the two:

<b>PLOT SENTENCE</b>	<p>Sentences that narrate what events and actions happen. These sentences move the story forward.</p> <p><i>Jane strode to the door, opened it, and without looking back, disappeared into the stormy night.</i></p>
<b>DESCRIPTIVE SENTENCE</b>	<p>Sentences that describe how characters, actions, settings and objects look like, act, sound, and feel. These sentences create a detailed visual picture of the scene as it unfolds.</p> <p><i>Alone in the cabin now, John felt the wind outside clamouring against the house, furiously thumping and shaking the walls as if it were trying to get at him.</i></p>

As an example of the balance between plot and description sentences, here's a paragraph from Joan London's *The Golden Age*. In bold is the plot sentence. All other sentences are descriptive:

*All day long the desert easterly blew through the suburb, and by sundown, though the wind had dropped, the air hung hot and close in the house. **Margaret left the baby on the rug in the shadowy lounge room,** where Sally lay sprawled on the couch. Fat Jane smiled in her chins and waved her chunky arms, but Sally was listening to *The Argonauts* on the wireless. She wasn't as helpful with Jane as Elsa had been. In fact, ever since she'd had to take on Elsa's tasks, Sally had been in a bad mood.*

Often sentences won't be purely descriptive or plot based – they'll combine the two. However, typically writers will spend more time describing things than they will narrating events. This is because authors use description to show us what a situation is like, rather than simply telling us directly. Your task is to do the same in your own creative response. To prepare yourself to do this, read through a few passages of the model text.

Use the table below and on the next page to help you note down the sorts of description an author includes.

<b>DETAILS AN AUTHOR MIGHT DESCRIBE</b>	
<b>SETTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sounds</li> <li>physical appearance</li> <li>smells</li> <li>light</li> <li>sky</li> <li>the texture of natural elements</li> <li>size</li> <li>age (ancient or new)</li> <li>the sun</li> <li>the moon</li> <li>weather</li> <li>temperature</li> <li>buildings</li> <li>nature</li> <li>the feeling of the setting</li> <li>animals</li> <li>what is happening close by</li> <li>what is happening in the distance</li> </ul>
<b>OBJECTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>things a character holds or interacts with</li> <li>decorations or features of a room</li> <li>furniture</li> </ul>

## DETAILS AN AUTHOR MIGHT DESCRIBE

<b>THE MANNER OF A CHARACTER'S ACTIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>how they speak</li><li>how they move</li><li>how they position their hands or body</li><li>what they do as they speak</li><li>what they do as another character speaks</li><li>how a character seems to be thinking or feeling</li></ul>
<b>THE MANNER OF A CHARACTER'S SPEECH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>pace</li><li>tone</li><li>emphasis</li><li>facial gestures</li><li>hand gestures</li></ul>
<b>A CHARACTER'S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>face</li><li>body</li><li>gestures</li><li>movements</li><li>clothes</li><li>distinguishing physical features</li></ul>
<b>A CHARACTER'S RESPONSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a character's facial or physical expression</li><li>a character's inner thoughts or feelings</li></ul>
<b>MEMORIES AND PLANS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>what events have happened in the past</li><li>what a character has done before this</li><li>what a character remembers</li><li>what a character is planning to do</li></ul>

# WRITING DESCRIPTIONS

Once you know the types of things you need to describe in your narrative, you need to think about the words you can use to describe them. Here are three types of words to think about when planning and writing your creative response:

## 1. ADJECTIVES AND DESCRIBING THINGS

Adjectives are describing words like "green" or "scary" and are usually the word type we most associate with creative writing because we're always told to describe things in creative writing. While this advice has some truth in it, it's better to say that variety is more important than having a bucketload of adjectives. There are many different ways of using an adjective in a sentence.

Look at the example sentences below. The adjectives are in bold and have been put in different places to create different effects.

### MOST COMMON WAYS OF USING ADJECTIVES IN A SENTENCE

The **dark and foreboding** forest stood in front of us.

The forest in front of us was **dark and foreboding**.

### LESS COMMON WAYS OF USING ADJECTIVES IN A SENTENCE

The forest stood **dark and foreboding** in front of us.

**Dark and foreboding**, the forest stood before us.

The forest stood before us, **dark and foreboding**.

Here's an example of the use of adjectives in a sentence from Joan London's *The Golden Age*:

A flock of **stout** crows strutted like **black** dogs, **raucous, demanding, entitled**.

It is a common pitfall to constantly crowd your sentences with too many adjectives; even though London's sentence above has many adjective, she also has sentences without any, such as:

Later they wondered if he could have caught polio queuing up in the fish and chip shop.

So, vary your use of adjectives.

## 2. VERBS AND ADVERBS

Students often make the mistake of only using adjectives to describe characters and settings.

Here's an example:

*Stella was a middle-aged woman, with greying short hair and a stocky build. She was a nurse.*

This is a fairly accurate description of the character Stella from *Rear Window*, but it's pretty boring – more like a police report than a piece of creative writing. It's a classic example of a student telling the reader, rather than showing the reader. You'll rarely see authors in any type of good quality narrative writing telling rather than showing. You need to aim to show in your narrative piece as well. Let's look at an example of showing from Cate Kennedy's short story 'Flexion', in the collection *Like a House on Fire*:

*Frank's wife notices the dust floating like a heat mirage as she drives up the track with the weekly shopping. She stares blankly at the silhouette on the horizon for what seems like a long time before she realises it's the huge rear wheel of the tractor she's looking at, the vehicle tipped upside down like an abandoned toy.*

One way this piece shows rather than tells is by using verbs and adverbs.

Consider this sentence:

*She stares blankly at the silhouette on the horizon...*

The words "stares blankly" create a particular picture in our minds of how Frank's wife is struggling to understand her husband's accident.

So your task is to think about how you can employ verbs and adverbs to show us things about characters rather than just tell us.

Below are some examples of more specific verbs (and adverbs that can go with them) that you can use in place of the general verbs (at the head of each column).

Some of these might be appropriate to use in your piece – but you should look through the model text and take note of the types of verbs the author of that text uses when considering how you might use the same or similar ones in your own piece.

VERBS (I.E ACTION WORDS)				
LOOKED	MOVED	CAME	WENT	GOT
eyed	walked	appeared	exited	gained
viewed	ran	breezed in	hightailed	received
saw	waddled	arrived	left	procured
stared	stalked	rocked up	departed	grabbed
glanced	marched	entered	escaped	grasped
peered	sauntered	emerged	took off	cherished
glared	strolled		vanished	inherited
inspected			absconded	earned
spied				
ADVERBS AND ADVERBIAL PHRASES (I.E. WORDS AND PHRASES THAT DESCRIBE HOW SOMETHING IS BEING DONE)				
quickly	accidentally	fiercely	righteously	with...
sharply	boastfully	helplessly	perfectly	with a...
carefully	bravely	gracefully	rudely	with a look of...
easily	cheerfully	greedily	recklessly	with a glance of...
eagerly	ferociously	frenetically		with a note of...
loudly		lovingly		
patiently		powerfully		
quietly				

### 3. EXTRA INFORMATION WORDS FOR MORE DETAIL:

These are little words like *in, on, with, to* and *from* which we don't normally associate with creative writing but which, in fact, authors use by the bucketload to add extra information about when, where, how and why things are happening.

Here are a few sentences from Katherine Boo's non-fiction book *Behind The Beautiful Forevers* with the extra information words in bold:

*Dawn came gusty, **as** it often did in January, the month **of** treed kites **and** head colds. **Because** his family lacked the floor space **for** all **of** its members **to** lie down, Abdul was asleep on the gritty maiden, which **for** years had passed **as** his bed. His mother stepped carefully **over** one **of** his younger brothers, **and then** another, bending low **to** Abdul's ear.*

Your task is to consider the style an author has in adding extra information in their text. Look through some passages of the text you're responding to and be alert to the extra information words the author is using. Think about when, where and how often an author uses these words, and experiment with this in your own writing.

The table below will provide you with a list of the words you can look for.

WHERE & HOW		WHY	WHEN	AND
about	inside	because	already	and
above	into	since	prior to	but
across	like	so that	previously	or
after	near	in order to	before	yet
against	of	as	earlier	so
along	off		at last	
among	on		at that moment	
around	onto		at that time	
at	out		at that point	
before	outside		at that instant	
behind	over		as	
below	past		just as	
beneath	since		then	
beside	through		next	
between	throughout		after	
beyond	till		afterwards	
but	to		soon	
by	toward		soon after	
despite	under		soon afterwards	
down	underneath		subsequently	
during	until		from there	
except	up		from that point	
for	upon		later	
from	with		sometime later	
in	within		eventually	
	without		finally	

# SENTENCE STRUCTURES

## SIMILES

Similes are a core element of creative writing and there are many ways of structuring them. In the table below you will find examples of numerous variations of the basic simile structure. Use this list to help you identify the types of simile structures employed in the model text.

SIMILE TYPE	EXAMPLE
Basic, short simile	<i>He looked like a beetle.</i> <i>He was small and beady-eyed as a beetle.</i>
Basic simile with explanation	<i>He looked like a beetle, small and scuttling.</i>
Basic simile with tricolon	<i>He looked like a beetle, small, scurrying and insignificant.</i>
Basic simile at start of sentence	<i>Like a beetle, he scuttled away.</i> <i>Just as if he were a beetle, he scurried away.</i>
Basic simile – mid sentence	<i>He scuttled, just like a beetle, away to his office.</i>
Simile with additional information.	<i>He looked like a beetle – the small, nasty sort – as he scuttled away.</i>
‘As if’ simile	<i>He looked as if he were a beetle, scuttling away.</i>
Follow on simile	<i>He was like a beetle. He crept, scurried and hid here and there.</i> <i>He was like a beetle: he crept, scurried and hid here and there.</i>
‘Appear’, ‘look’, ‘seem’, ‘reminds’ simile	<i>Scurrying here and there, he seemed like a beetle.</i> <i>He had the appearance of a beetle, small and scuttling.</i> <i>He had the look of a beetle about him, small and scuttling.</i> <i>It reminded him of a beetle, small and scuttling.</i> <i>He brought to mind the image of a beetle, small and scuttling.</i>

## DIALOGUE

If you're writing a narrative you may be thinking about having dialogue in your creative response, especially if there is more than one character. The table below has a breakdown of different ways to set out dialogue.

DIALOGUE STYLE	EXAMPLE
Just dialogue	"Go away!"
Dialogue followed by "said"	"Go away," she said.
Dialogue + "said" + further description	"Go away," she said, spitting her words out like venom. "Go away," she said and stared at him malevolently, waiting for him to leave. "Go away," she said angrily. "Go away," she said with a hiss.
Dialogue + more specific attributing verb than said such as: whispered, yelled, shouted etc.	"Go away," she hissed. "Go away," she whispered. "Go away," she screamed.
Dialogue + reporting verb + more dialogue	"Go away," she said. "I want to be alone." "Go away," she screamed at the top of her voice. "Leave me alone."
Description + dialogue	She stared at him. "Go away." She stared at him menacingly. "Go away." With a hiss she said, "Go away." She stared at him and hissed, "Go away".

In novels and short stories, writers will use different ways of setting out dialogue. They may employ one style more than others in order to achieve a certain creative effect. If you're responding to a novel or to short stories, look through some passages featuring dialogue and see if you notice a pattern in the style of dialogue the author uses. If there is one, you should adopt this in your own piece.

## PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE (IF YOU ARE WRITING IN PROSE FORM)

Just like a regular essay, a creative piece of writing needs to be divided into paragraphs that each focus on one point. However, *unlike* a regular essay, paragraphs in creative writing can vary widely in length: they may be one sentence long or they may be over a dozen sentences long.

Consider this example:

*His ankle still hurt from the fall, but that was not the pain at his heart.*

*His attic in Church Street wrapped its corners and angles around him, the shape of his own odd self. At the Academy, the cold space of the bleak dormitory sucked out his spirit and left a shell behind.*

*Walking from the Academy back to Church Street every Saturday evening to spend Sunday at home was a journey between one world and another that wrenched him out of shape each time. His mother and father were so proud, so warm with pleasure that their clever son had been singled out, that he could not tell them how he felt. His grandmother might have understood, but he could not find the words to tell even her how he had lost himself.*

From *The Lieutenant* by Kate Grenville

If you are responding to short stories or a novel, flip through your text and look at paragraph length. Read through them and think about how the differences in length achieves these effects:

- **One–two sentence paragraphs:** These are like a ‘close up’ in a film. They focus on just one action or feeling and this ‘close up’ can have a more powerful impact on the audience than a longer paragraph would have.
- **Longer paragraphs:** Events and characters will need to be described at regular points with detail that helps illustrate the issues at the core of the text.

No matter what type of text you’re responding to, if you’re writing a reflective or narrative response, you will need to consider which paragraphs in your piece might be shorter and which longer to achieve certain effects.

One final thing to consider about paragraphs: they can be structured in different ways. They might start with an event, then include a character action, a description of the setting and another character action. Or things might happen in a completely different order.

## CONCLUDING SENTENCES

Ending a creative piece well can be difficult and students often want to wrap things up neatly with endings like this:

- In the end, everything was all right.
- Everyone was happy in the end.

Good creative writing rarely finishes in such a simple, obvious way. Instead, authors often employ endings that suggest possibilities about how characters think or feel. Below are examples of endings to chapters or narratives from different model texts. Look through the endings of passages and chapters in your own model text and identify which of the styles below it employs. After this, you can think about how you might finish your own piece.

- **Character makes some type of key decision**

*He intended to remember this and every other truth The Master spoke.*  
From *Behind The Beautiful Forevers* by Katherine Boo.

- **Character reflects on something important**

*In company with Tagaran he had glimpsed how everything found its place with everything else. He was afraid that was all he would ever have: a glimpse.*  
From *The Lieutenant* by Kate Grenville.

- **A concluding action**

*Then as Jameela raises the camera I feel two arms on either side of me, stretching tentatively round my waist, drawing me tighter, and in spite of everything, I smile.*  
From *Like A House On Fire* by Cate Kennedy.

- **Dialogue**

*“Look,” said Carver, with the certainty that marked everything he did. “Look, Archibald,” he said. “We know. We know. We really know.”*  
From *Island* by Alistair MacLeod.

- **A description about a character**

*They set off back together through the grasses to the others, small lurching figures beneath the luminous sky.*  
From *The Golden Age* by Joan London.

- **A description about the setting/scene**

*The woman looked up into the blank sky. The sudden sound of the first axe fall echoed throughout the valley.*  
From *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent.

## REFLECTIVE WRITING

### OBSERVATIONAL VS. EXPLANATORY AND DESCRIPTIVE SENTENCES

In reflective writing, you don't necessarily have to have a plot. Instead, your creative piece will be made up of a series of observations and explanations. In most reflective writing, you will be trying to add detail to an event (or series of events) or to a character, so instead of having plot sentences and descriptive sentences, you will alternate between sentences where you give an opinion (observational) and sentences where you justify or give further details about this opinion (explanatory and descriptive sentences).

In the example reflective response to the film *Rear Window* below, the observational sentences have been put in bold, the other sentences are explanatory or descriptive:

***If you ask me, Mr Jefferies was looking for trouble. And boy, did he find it! Caught up in his spying, like he was in some kind of detective novel. Like he was going to solve anything from his wheelchair. But that's men for you – thinking they can solve the problems of the world from the comfort of their living room while the women go 'round doing all the heavy lifting. I'll admit that I was surprised, in the beginning, that a sensible girl like Miss Fremont would get caught up in it. I thought she was just humouring him – you know, going along with his ideas just to keep him happy. It wouldn't be the first time a girl did that to catch a man. I thought they were missing the real tragedy – that poor lonely woman, alone in her apartment. That was a real life tragedy, right there in front of them, and the two of them could only see their little murder mystery.***

Many observational sentences will start with versions of 'I think'. The particular type of phrase you use will provide a strong sense of the character's voice. For example, the phrase 'if you ask me' brings to mind a certain picture of a character who would say these words. Your task is to think about the character writing your reflective voice.

On the opposite page there are some sentence starters that you can look through. You should choose phrases your character would use and that would help give the reader a sense of the sort of person your character is.

I...	I AM/WAS...	I HAVE...	I CAN/ COULD..	OTHER PHRASES
think feel admit see accept understand realise (now, now that...) know (for certain, for sure) consider	ashamed to admit not ashamed to admit clear eyed enough to see realistic enough to see	always, for a long time, sometimes, never  known thought realised believed imagined felt said said time and again said it once and I'll say it again considered	tell you tell you for nothing see see easily enough believe readily enough now accept believe	Events have made me realise... What I think is... What I personally believe is... As far as I was concerned... If you ask me... If it were up to me... It was obvious to me that... It's my opinion that... It's logical enough for anyone to see....

In your reflective piece, you might also directly address the audience reading the piece. Look through the phrases below and choose phrases that your character might use.

OBSERVATIONAL SENTENCES DIRECTED TO THE AUDIENCE	
As you might have already guessed... Well, you know I... And so, dear reader... While I can imagine what you think... You can only guess... For those of you... You might well think...	You're wondering... You see... I might have given you the impression... I should explain to you... There you have it... You see, the thing is... You know what?

## CONVERSATIONAL WRITING:

Reflective writing tends to be conversational. That means it's written in a way a character might speak in conversation. If you're writing in the voice of a character from a text, look over their dialogue in the text and identify patterns in the words and phrases they use to express themselves. When considering how your character speaks, think in particular about these three common characteristics of speech and how you might use them to represent the voice of your character:

### 1. EXCLAMATIONS

Something that can really help you capture the 'voice' of your character is to think about the way they might exclaim: the way they use little words and phrases like 'hell' or 'oh boy!' to show agreement, disagreement, excitement or dismay. Characters, like real people, will often have unique ways of exclaiming.

You can see in bold the exclamation that the character of Stella is using in the example below:

*If you ask me, Mr Jefferies was looking for trouble. **And boy, did he find it!** Caught up in his spying, like he was in some kind of detective novel. Like he was going to solve anything from his wheelchair.*

**On the opposite page is a short list of exclamations. Use this as a starting point to think about how your character speaks and choose phrases which build up a sense of who your character is and the sort of world they live in.**

ERA	EXCLAMATIONS ABOUT POSITIVE SITUATIONS (THOUGH MAY BE USED IRONICALLY)	EXCLAMATIONS THAT COULD BE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE	EXCLAMATIONS ABOUT NEGATIVE SITUATIONS
<b>OLDER TIME PERIOD</b>	Hurrah Hallelujah Huzzah Hear me on this	Ahem Ah Ha Whatever for? Eh? By Jove Upon my word	Alas Heaven forbid Oh horror Go to the devil Begone It is wickedness I won't have it
<b>20TH CENTURY</b>	Shucks Whoopee Right then Cheers	Goodness Phew Golly My word My oath In the name of... I don't believe it Impossible	Phooey Jeepers Hell Cripes Damn Go to hell
<b>MODERN</b>	Wow Incredible Amazing Perfect Thank Christ Great	Jeez Jesus	That makes about as much sense as... Yeah right What a joke What the hell Give me strength Nah
<b>TIMELESS</b>	Excellent Hooray	Hmmm. Oh Really? No doubt Look Well I must say	My God! By God! Dear me! Ugh! Indeed! Of course!

## 2. JOINING OR BRIDGING WORDS AT THE START OF SENTENCES

One of the big differences between how we speak and write is the words we use at the start of our sentences. When we speak we often use joining words or bridging phrases at the start of our sentences. Bridging words and phrases are words like ‘um’ or ‘you see’ or ‘well’ which we often use at the start of sentences to pause and gather our thoughts before we speak. In conversation, we also use lots of common joining words like ‘and’ or ‘but’ (instead of more formal words like ‘moreover’ or ‘however’) to keep stringing our thoughts together.

Here’s a list of common joining and bridging words your character can use to start their sentences:

- And, But, Because, So
- Now, Indeed
- Well, Anyway, Anyhow, In any case

## 3. SHORT SENTENCES

All creative writing has a variety of longer and shorter sentences. However, in first person reflective writing, as opposed to third person narrative writing, short sentences will often begin with exclamations and joining words. You can see this in the example below:

*I’ll be honest with you – that man had me puzzled. Why, he was a man who had made a career out of looking at people, taking photographs of them, and she sure was made to be looked at. Any other man woulda snapped her up. **But not him.** And why she was hooked on him was beyond me. **But there it was. None of my business.** I was just paid by the insurance company until he got that cast off.*

But remember – like everything in creative writing – don’t over-use this technique.

# Plan a creative response

Planning your creative response involves more than writing down a few dot points on a piece of paper. You need to be clear on how:

- Your piece responds to themes and issues within the text
- Your piece responds to stylistic features of a text
- You will not just summarise events and actions but engage in writing that shows rather than tells

The following section contains templates and advice for planning and developing your narrative or reflective response.

## PLANNING A NARRATIVE RESPONSE

Perhaps the most important thing about planning a narrative response is the right hand column of the planning template below: 'Things to describe'. There should be more dot points in this column than in the 'Action/Events' column. While some things do need to happen in your piece, your task is to spend more time describing things in a way that shows us what a situation is like, rather than simply tells us.

NARRATIVE RESPONSE PLAN		
Set within which world?	<input type="checkbox"/> Within the world of the text	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside the world of the text
Narrative person	<input type="checkbox"/> 1st person	<input type="checkbox"/> 3rd person
What issue from the text will your response explore?		
What techniques will link the narrative style of this piece to the original text?		
Brief overview of response		
NARRATIVE STAGE	ACTIONS/EVENTS	THINGS TO DESCRIBE
Orientation / Complication		
Increasing tension		
Moment of most tension		
Conclusion/resolution		

**FIND A BLANK COPY OF THIS TEMPLATE AT:**

[www.tickingmind.com.au/narrative-response-planning-template](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/narrative-response-planning-template)

## PLANNING A REFLECTIVE RESPONSE

Like a narrative response, a reflective response also needs to have a structure that moves from an orientation through to rising tension and finally a resolution. However, since you aren't so much interested in narrating events in a reflective piece, the stages in a reflective piece have different names and different things to focus upon.. In the reflective response plan below, you'll see four stages listed with some questions to help you think about the types of things you might include in each stage.

REFLECTIVE RESPONSE PLAN		
Set within which world?	<input type="checkbox"/> Within the world of the text	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside the world of the text
What issue from the text will your response explore?		
What techniques will link the reflective voice of your narrator to the original text?		
Brief overview of response		
REFLECTIVE STAGE	KEY POINTS	FEELINGS / THINGS TO DESCRIBE
<b>Topic orientation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What part of a situation will you be focusing on?</li> <li>• What feeling will you be focusing on?</li> <li>• What has happened to lead to this situation or feeling?</li> </ul>		
<b>Contributing issues, factors and causes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What qualities do you or the other characters you're reflecting on have that have led to the issue you're focusing on?</li> <li>• What other deep rooted causes are there for the situation you are focusing on?</li> </ul>		

REFLECTIVE STAGE	KEY POINTS	FEELINGS / THINGS TO DESCRIBE
<p><b>The centre of the problem or anxiety:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the thing that is most frightening about the situation you are reflecting on?</li> <li>• What is the thing you are most unable to make a decision about?</li> <li>• What is at centre of the problem you are discussing?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Final thoughts</b></p> <p>In the end what:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you learned?</li> <li>• Have you realised?</li> <li>• Have you decided?</li> <li>• Are you unable to decide?</li> </ul>		

**FIND A BLANK COPY OF THIS TEMPLATE AT:**

[www.tickingmind.com.au/reflective-response-planning-template](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/reflective-response-planning-template)

If you're writing a reflective response, look carefully through this example plan below as well as the example reflective response in the next section to gain a clear idea about what types of things you should be describing in this type of response.

### EXAMPLE REFLECTIVE RESPONSE PLAN FOR *THE GOLDEN AGE* BY JOAN LONDON

Set within which world?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Within the world of the text	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside the world of the text
What issue from the text will your response explore?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Wanting to belong vs. Wanting to be separate</i></li> <li>• <i>What others want vs. What you want</i></li> </ul>	
What techniques will link the reflective voice of your narrator to the original text?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Use of actual words that London keeps associating with Olive Penny like “instinct” and “beautiful”</i></li> <li>• <i>Olive Penny’s dialogue in the book is polite and almost semi-formal in tone. I’ll borrow words from her dialogue in the novel (such as “Goodness”) to give the reflection a similar tone.</i></li> <li>• <i>Use of extra information words at the start of sentences as London does like ‘after’, ‘beyond’ and ‘for’.</i></li> </ul>	
Brief overview of response	<i>After coming across Frank Gold’s first published book in a bookshop, Sister Penny (now in her 80s) reflects back on her time at The Golden Age and her feelings about relationships.</i>	

REFLECTIVE STAGE	KEY POINTS	FEELINGS / THINGS TO DESCRIBE
<b>Topic orientation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What part of a situation will you be focusing on?</li> <li>• What feeling will you be focusing on?</li> <li>• What has happened to lead to this situation or feeling?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*<i>Finding the book</i></li> <li>*<i>How long ago The Golden Age was</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*<i>Recognising the name on the cover of the book</i></li> <li>*<i>Instant recall of Frank</i></li> <li>*<i>What was special about Frank, Elsa and The Golden Age</i></li> </ul>
<b>Contributing issues, factors and causes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What qualities do you or the other characters you’re reflecting on have that have led to the issue you’re focusing on?</li> <li>• What other deep rooted causes are there for the situation you are focusing on?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*<i>Resigning after the incident with Frank and Elsa</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*<i>Her attitude to Frank and Elsa versus the attitude of others</i></li> <li>*<i>Relationship with The Golden Age had come to an end like so many other relationships</i></li> </ul>

REFLECTIVE STAGE	KEY POINTS	FEELINGS / THINGS TO DESCRIBE
<p><b>The centre of the problem or anxiety:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the thing that is most frightening about the situation you are reflecting on?</li> <li>• What is the thing you are most unable to make a decision about?</li> <li>• What is at centre of the problem you are discussing?</li> </ul>	<p><i>*Reflections on her own loneliness in relationships</i></p>	<p><i>*Her increasingly distant relationship with her daughter</i></p> <p><i>*The relationships she had after The Golden Age</i></p> <p><i>*Enjoying independence versus the loneliness of not being in a relationship</i></p>
<p><b>Final thoughts</b></p> <p>In the end what:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you learned?</li> <li>• Have you realised?</li> <li>• Have you decided?</li> <li>• Are you unable to decide?</li> </ul>	<p><i>*Accepting the life she has lived</i></p>	<p><i>*Quoting a line from one of Frank's poems as a way of showing her acceptance of life</i></p>

# Look at example responses

## EXAMPLE NARRATIVE RESPONSE TO THE LIEUTENANT

NARRATIVE SECTION	NARRATIVE	COMMENTS
Orientation	<p><i>On the day that Silk came to visit Rooke, two weeks before he would be carried away forever from Botany Bay, the dawn emerged slowly.</i></p> <p><i>Rooke was still in his hut. Despite his defiance, the Governor had not taken his observatory from him, and he was grateful for that. He had stayed there, making his observations, tallying his figures, looking for the comet that never appeared. Once a week he would make the short trip down to the settlement for his rations. He had hoped at first that one of the soldiers would nod in a way that would say You were right to act that way you did. But no soldier would look at him. Each time, the journey to get the rations became more like the trip he made as a schoolboy, returning from his home in Portsmouth to the academy on Monday mornings, from one world where he belonged to another he didn't.</i></p>	<p>The setting is described.</p> <p>The background to events is described.</p>
Complication	<p><i>When Silk appeared in Rooke's door, his figure – small and slight as it was – temporarily blocked the midday sun. Rooke looked up and took in Silk's blank face. For once he could not read his intentions.</i></p> <p><i>“Well, Rooke,” Silk said. “It seems that you still have a chance.”</i></p> <p><i>Rooke looked away from Silk and turned his attention to the column of figures on rainfall in front of him.</i></p> <p><i>Silk stepped into the hut and removed his hat. “The Governor will let you stay if you apologise. Is it such a big thing, Rooke, to apologise? To tell the Governor it was simply a misunderstanding.”</i></p> <p><i>Rooke turned the word over in his head. Misunderstanding. It had not been that at all. In fact what he had done, what he had experienced, was, if anything, the antonym of a misunderstanding. When he had uttered the words to the Governor that there had been an intention of evil behind Captain Silk's party, he had spoken with a kind of clarity that he had never felt before.</i></p> <p><i>Silk stared at Rooke intently, and for a moment Rooke saw in him shadows of the friend who spoke so enthusiastically about the voyage to another land. Then the shadow passed.</i></p>	<p>The introduction of another character into the scene also introduces the complication.</p>

NARRATIVE SECTION	NARRATIVE	COMMENTS
Rising Tension	<p><i>“No,” Rooke said quietly. “No, I don’t think I want to do that.” Outside he could hear that the breeze had risen slightly and the branches of the trees were brushing against each other. Some parrots alighted from the shifting trees and called to each other as they flew upwards, above the temporary rush of air, and then turned and forded the vast expanse of the sky in the direction of the outcrop on the other side of the bay. In his mind, Rooke followed them, picturing himself looking down at the straggle of soldiers below. He could no longer see himself amongst those soldiers, as he once had.</i></p> <p><i>“But as your friend, I ask you old fellow,” Silk said and he took a few uncertain steps in the direction of Rooke. He looked at the chair in front of him as if he would sit down, moved towards it and then decided to remain standing.</i></p> <p><i>“You are a man of principle, my friend. That is to be respected, I’ll grant you that. But this is a simple enough thing. To apologise. To put this whole thing behind you. To save your career.”</i></p> <p><i>Rooke looked again at his friend’s face. The blankness he came with had vanished, replaced with a furrowed expression of pity and desperation. He could see now that Silk was not arguing for an apology so Rooke could be forgiven. Silk was arguing for his own sake. To apologise would be to accept that Silk’s actions had not been a big thing. It would relieve Silk of his own guilt.</i></p> <p><i>“I cannot apologise, my friend,” Rooke said. “Not even for you. There would be no logic in that, to accept that something was right when it was wrong. To say I can be part of His Majesty’s Marines, when I cannot.”</i></p> <p><i>Silk shifted his hat from one hand to the other and looked absently in the direction of the telescope. “Then don’t do it for my sake, but for our friendship’s sake.”</i></p>	A disagreement develops between the two characters and tension rises.

NARRATIVE SECTION	NARRATIVE	COMMENTS
<p><b>Moment of most tension</b></p>	<p><i>Rooke stood up then, and took three steps across the hut so he stood opposite Silk. “We must part soon enough, and I would do it on terms of friendship, not of enmity,” Rooke said. Then he offered his hand to Silk. Rooke had pictured this moment, the last parting with Silk, as he had pictured the goodbye to Tagaran that was still to come. Silk looked down at Rooke’s hand and for a moment Rooke thought he would not shake it. But then the moment moved forward in a rush not at all like it had played out in Rooke’s mind. Silk quickly took Rooke’s hand, shook it once, and turned towards the door.</i></p> <p><i>Turning back to look at Rooke, he said, “Good luck, old fellow.” In the doorway he paused to put his hat on and again his figure eclipsed the sun, darkening the hut. Then he had stepped out into the light and the space was empty.</i></p>	<p>The moment of most tension happens when it seems as if there is no satisfactory resolution to the problem or as if the characters’ relationship is beyond repair.</p>
<p><b>Resolution</b></p>	<p><i>Walking outside, Rooke gazed after Silk as he made his way down the hill. The day had become still again and two parrots fluttered down to perch on a nearby tree. Life would go on, of that much Rooke was certain. There would be a continual cycle of rising winds and shifting trees, of shadow and light. And he, Rooke, would be there at its centre, navigating the rise and fall.</i></p>	<p>The resolution to the scene is reflective. Description of the setting shows the character’s feelings.</p>

## EXAMPLE REFLECTIVE RESPONSE TO REAR WINDOW

REFLECTION STAGE	REFLECTION	COMMENTS
<p><b>Topic orientation</b></p>	<p><i>I'll be honest with you – that man had me puzzled. Why, he was a man who had made a career out of looking at people, taking photographs of them, and she sure was made to be looked at. Any other man woulda snapped her up. But not him. And why she was hooked on him was beyond me. But there it was. None of my business. I was just paid by the insurance company until he got that cast off.</i></p> <p><i>I mean, it was obvious to me. All those side remarks about marriage. Why? Because he fancied himself footloose and fancy free. Men! Can't see what's right under their noses. There I was, coming in every day. There she was, seeing to his needs when I wasn't there. Like he could manage on his own. That's what led to him breaking his leg in the first place. That's why men need to get married. They can't look after themselves and can't admit that they need women to take care of them. Oh, they'll spout all kinds of modern nonsense about compatibility this and independence that. In my day it was much simpler – you saw each other, you liked each other, you got married.</i></p> <p><i>In a way, it was kinda convenient that Thorwald killed his wife. Oh, I'm not saying that she deserved to die, but she didn't seem to get much out of life, lying there like an invalid, and it was her death that brought Miss Fremont and Mr Jefferies together. Not to mention saving the life of poor Miss Lonely-Hearts. But Thorwald was a low kinda man and I'm glad we got him.</i></p>	<p>The narrator introduces the feeling, person and problem they'll be focusing on and provides some background detail about how a situation has arisen.</p> <p>Reference to model text.</p>

REFLECTION STAGE	REFLECTION	COMMENTS
<p><b>Contributing issues, factors and causes</b></p>	<p><i>If you ask me, Mr Jefferies was looking for trouble. And boy, did he find it! Caught up in his spying, like he was in some kind of detective novel. Like he was going to solve anything from his wheelchair. But that's men for you – thinking they can solve the problems of the world from the comfort of their living room while the women go 'round doing all the heavy lifting. I'll admit that I was surprised, in the beginning, that a sensible girl like Miss Fremont would get caught up in it. I thought she was just humouring him – you know, going along with his ideas just to keep him happy. It wouldn't be the first time a girl did that to catch a man. I thought they were missing the real tragedy – that poor lonely woman, alone in her apartment. That was a real life tragedy, right there in front of them, and the two of them could only see their little murder mystery.</i></p> <p><i>But it was then that I could see what a pair they both were, caught up in their little adventure. Anyone could see that they were in over their heads. Any mention of the practicalities of murder and they went all squeamish. Me, I've seen too much of life to be very surprised by the things people will do to each other. In hot weather, people just snap! Wham! But, like everything in life, death creates a mess. Miss Fremont and Mr Jefferies, they just didn't see that. Kind of squeamish they were. I was just trying to be practical. Stands to reason, doesn't it? There wasn't a body – so it must have been cut up. We couldn't see blood everywhere, Thorwald musta had the sense to cut her up in the bathtub.</i></p> <p><i>I've never been an educated woman, but it just seems to me that some of these things are common sense.</i></p>	<p>The narrator describes the qualities of a character that created the problem and her feelings about those qualities.</p> <p>Refers to statements character makes in model text.</p>

REFLECTION STAGE	REFLECTION	COMMENTS
<p><b>The centre to the problem or anxiety</b></p>	<p><i>Anyway, I'll tell you right now I got kind of caught up in it all. It was like a detective novel. There he was, the independent private eye, and there she was, the plucky little woman. I could see it right then. How they fitted together. And I think Mr Jefferies could see it, too. He stopped looking at her and starting really seeing her, if you know what I mean. I suppose he'd probably dismissed her as just decorative before this. Only for looking at, but not really for someone like him. Someone who was used to action.</i></p> <p><i>But he couldn't see that most women are readier for action than men think. She was just waiting for a chance to prove herself. And me? Well, it was kind of interesting. I spend half of my life in other people's houses, watching and listening. And sometimes I wonder. Mr Jefferies was caught up in his neighbours' lives, trapped in his apartment all day. I could see where he was coming from, watching them.</i></p> <p><i>And I guess I'm a romantic. Myles and I have been real happy, you know. I knew those two were meant to be together. But Mr Jefferies, he couldn't see past his limited view of the world. It was like when he was looking out the window, and he couldn't see Miss Lonely Hearts was getting ready to kill herself, right in front of his eyes. All he could see was the story. What I could see was one girl ready to risk herself for the man she loved and another girl ready to kill herself because she didn't have a man. And what were the men doing? Absorbed in their own little worlds. But, you ask for trouble and you get it. He involved Miss Fremont in this little drama, and she got involved. Nearly got killed, too. It's probably what made him realise he couldn't live without her.</i></p> <p><i>Nearly got himself killed, too, of course. But that's men for you.</i></p>	<p>The narrator describes the essential problem of the character she's focusing on.</p>
<p><b>Final Thoughts</b></p>	<p><i>I guess they'll be happy with each other. Oh, they'll have the usual kind of trouble. But they both know what kind of a bargain they got with each other.</i></p>	<p>The narrator reflects on the key thing two characters learnt.</p>

# Planning a written explanation

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Creative responses to texts will need to be accompanied by a written explanation that outlines how your piece meaningfully responds to a text. If you've thought critically about the choices you make in your creative effort, and have used tools and techniques from this chapter, then putting together a written explanation should be easy enough.

An effective written explanation should be about three paragraphs long and include these three sections (see a complete example reflection at the end of this section):

## WHAT IS THE TEXT ABOUT?

The first paragraph of a written explanation should read almost like the introduction to a text response essay (or the introduction and conclusion combined). The purpose of this part of the written explanation is to show your understanding of the key themes of the model text.

Here are some helpful phrases:

- *[Text name] explores...*
- *The key issue at the heart of [text name] is...*
- *At the centre of [text name]...is the struggle between...and...*
- *The protagonist in this text is torn between...*
- *The protagonist in this text must confront...*
- *The protagonist in the text, who..., must choose between...*
- *The protagonist in the text finds themselves in a world where...and must...*
- *This struggle is represented in the central character who...*
- *This struggle is represented in the lives of the characters by...*
- *On the one hand in this text are characters who...on the other hand are characters who...*
- *Ultimately the text demonstrates/reveals...*

## LINKING YOUR CREATIVE RESPONSE TO THE MODEL TEXT

Having established what the model text is about, the task of the second paragraph of the written explanation is to outline how your own creative effort links in with it.

You should include:

- **An explanation of the central idea behind your piece**
- **An explanation of where your writing would fit in the events of the model text**
- **The particular features of the settings, characters and problems your story is adopting**
- **A reflection on why you think the moment you explore in your creative piece is important**

Here are some helpful phrases:

- *In my response...*
- *In my piece...*
- *I chose this moment to focus on because...*
- *I chose this format because...*
- *I focus on the issue of...by...*
- *I emphasise the struggle between...by...*
- *I have sought to highlight...by...*
- *Importantly, it emphasises how...*
- *Significantly, it represents how...*

## WHAT TECHNIQUE DO YOU USE IN YOUR RESPONSE?

The final paragraph of the written explanation must focus on how your creative piece adopts the specific techniques of the model text. You should describe at least 2–3 techniques an author uses, why and how they use them, and outline how you use them in your own piece. This may include citing actual examples or quotes from your own piece or from the model text.

Here are some helpful phrases:

- *In order to reflect the style of [author] in [text name] I have adopted the techniques of...*
- *To respond to [author's name's] style, I have used...in my piece to...*
- *To mirror the tone and voice of [author] in [text name] I have adopted the techniques of... Throughout [text name], [Author name] utilises... to...I also have...*
- *[Author name] employs...to create.... In my piece I have done this by...*
- *For example, in my piece...*
- *In another part of my response, I...*

## EXAMPLE WRITTEN EXPLANATION

*The Lieutenant by Kate Grenville is a narrative about the conflict that emerges between duty to one's morals and duty to one's country. The protagonist at the centre of this story, Daniel Rooke, is a social outsider because of his low class status and social awkwardness; he has spent his life trying to be accepted. However, it is his perspective and experience as an outsider that finally gives Rooke the courage to stand against the immorality of the orders to capture and execute indigenous Australians.*

*In my response, I seek to emphasise Rooke's moral conflict by writing about a part of the story that is mentioned but never detailed: the time between Rooke's public reproach of Gilbert and his return to England. Grenville narrates this section briefly and mentions that an opportunity was given to Rooke to be forgiven for his action if he apologised. In my story, Silk visits Rooke and urges Rooke to apologise. This offers an opportunity to emphasise the conflict between Silk's pragmatism and Rooke's deeper moral principles.*

*Stylistically, my narrative adopts a number of the features of Grenville's writing in order to mirror her voice. In the novel, Rooke frequently reflects on the subtle meaning of words and phrases. This demonstrates how he is concerned with discovering the true nature of things in a scientific fashion. In my response, Rooke's thinking about the meaning of words is indicated in italics as Grenville does: "To apologise would be to accept that Silk's actions had not been a big thing." I also describe the natural setting of Rooke's hut a number of times throughout the piece. Grenville uses descriptions of the natural setting to emphasise the feelings of characters, often through contrast. For example, the freedom of birds is often in contrast to how restricted Rooke or other characters feel.*

# 5. WRITING ANALYSES OF ARGUMENT

This chapter will look at how to develop ten key skills to write effective analyses of argument:

1. Identifying the contention
2. Identifying the central arguments
3. Identifying the intention and audience
4. Analysing how sections of a piece contribute to its overall intention
5. Writing introductions
6. Structuring analyses of arguments
7. Writing topic sentences
8. Analysing persuasive language and visuals
9. Structuring body paragraphs
10. Writing comparatively

# Identify the contention

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The contention is the main thing an author is arguing.

Typically this is either:

- A belief that something is good (e.g. Tourism is good for our region.)
- A belief that something is bad (e.g. Tourism is harmful for our region.)

Since this task is about analysing argument, your first step in reading any persuasive piece is not to circle and annotate persuasive language, but to identify the contention. The contention could be anywhere in a piece – the first line through to the last line. Your task is to identify the sentence (which could even be the heading) you believe provides a nice summary of the author’s contention.

**On the next few pages are two persuasive pieces on the issue of regulating energy drinks. Follow these steps to practise finding the contention in a piece:**

1. Read through each piece once
2. Look through each piece again and identify the sentence that best summarises the contention

## Background:

‘Energy drink’ is the popular name for caffeinated soft drinks in Australia, which include brands like Monster. Energy drinks are widely consumed, particularly by teenagers. In the last five years there has been debate about the health impact of these drinks, prompted by several deaths attributed to their consumption.

The following blog on the issue of regulating energy drinks is from the website: [www.SmartParents.com.au](http://www.SmartParents.com.au)

## BAN 'ENERGY' DRINKS SO WE CAN RAISE ENERGETIC KIDS

By Sherryn Furter

Posted: 19/2/2015

*I can't remember the last time I was talking with other parents and we discussed how many short blacks our toddlers were consuming in the morning. I can't remember it because it never happened. I don't know a single parent who thinks it's okay to serve their child caffeine. But somehow, we seem to ignore the caffeine our children consume in energy drinks. We ignore this on a personal level, and, more alarmingly, we ignore it on a societal level.*

*As a society, we must ban the sale of energy drinks to children. Caffeine is a substance suitable for adults and must be marketed as such.*

*While ad campaigns of people sipping a short black are usually of the George Clooney, sexy older man type, ad campaigns for energy drinks are typically of young men playing video games. Even though energy drinks usually have over twice the amount of caffeine in them.*

*Children's bodies are not designed to absorb caffeine – they're generally smaller than adults, so caffeine will affect children more; their heart rate is faster than that of adults, so they don't need caffeine speeding it up any more; and children need far more sleep than adults, and we all know that caffeine can disrupt sleeping patterns.*

*This is looking at caffeine consumption at a basic level, without taking into consideration current trends in children's health. By now, anyone who doesn't live under a rock will know that anxiety levels in children are generally climbing. Caffeine increases the experience of anxiety. So more caffeine equals more anxious children.*

*But this is still too simplistic: energy drinks are more than caffeine, they also contain bucket-loads of sugar. And we all know that the obesity epidemic is getting worse. Energy drinks are encouraging a whole generation of obese, paranoid teenagers. And still we do nothing about it.*

*Look at the ad for Mountain Dew Kickstart: three young men sit soporifically on the couch playing a computer game. At least one of the boys is overweight. This is the demograph PepsiCola are appealing to. Even the Vikings in V's advertising campaign are fairly lethargic and large. Obesity is an accepted phenomenon in the world of energy drinks. Purveyors of energy drinks know their demograph: average, overweight young men.*

*Of course, this is not to say that energy drinks can't be aspirational as well: many ads for energy drinks portray elite, muscled athletes at the height of their skills. It's just that most of the people who are drinking energy drinks aren't actually burning through energy at these levels. Most of the young men who are drinking energy drinks are spending the vast amount of their time on their backsides, watching TV.*



*There is very little parents of teenagers can do against the juggernaut of popular culture. Our personal values of health and well-being are increasingly marginalised by the ad campaigns of multi-million dollar corporations. Increasingly, to the jaded ears of our teenage sons, we sound like the toothless counsellor from South Park, Mr Mackey, who intones, 'H'mm, drugs are bad, okay?' We need public support and campaigns to support our efforts.*

*Seat belts are compulsory. Cigarette smoking has been banned in most public spaces. Alcohol consumption is restricted. But in spite of our interest in public health campaigns, nothing has been done to restrict or monitor the sale of energy drinks to children. This is unacceptable and must change. We need to act now. We need to help our children. We need to restrict the sale of energy drinks.*

The following blog appeared on the website: [www.BewareTheNannyState.com.au](http://www.BewareTheNannyState.com.au)

## IT'S ABOUT YOUR FREEDOMS AND RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE YOUR OWN CHOICES, STUPID!

By Clive Post

Posted: 4/10/15

*Most adults begin their day with a coffee – it's an ingrained part of our culture, and no one questions it. But many people don't like the taste of coffee. Their energy requirements (their desire for a caffeinated jolt to kick start their day) are just as high, but they'd prefer to drink something else. That's where energy drinks come in. And that's OK.*

*For some reason – perhaps it's because of the tremendous success of the Monster Energy Drink, which markets itself with the number of the devil, 666 – energy drinks have taken a place in modern, moralistic culture as some kind of demon. But they're just a drink, a bit of caffeinated fluid to help us through the day. Not a malignant force of evil.*

*Let's take some of the emotion out of the debate and focus upon the facts.*

*Fact Number One: Most energy drinks have the same amount of caffeine as the average cup of coffee.*

*Fact Number Two: Energy drinks are not targeted at small children, most consumers are young adults (and no one is preventing them from drinking coffee).*

*Fact Number Three: Energy drinks ARE regulated by the same bodies that regulate the rest of the food we consume.*

*Fact Number Four: No one is being forced to drink energy drinks.*

*Amidst all the hype of energy drinks, we all seem to have missed the point that people have a choice in what they consume and parents have a responsibility to monitor what their children are drinking. If parents don't want their children drinking energy drinks, they have a simple solution: don't buy them.*

*For some reason, there is a significant body of parents who want to give up on their responsibilities and ask others to make decisions for them. They want a nanny state. Rather than asking for a nanny state, I have some simple advice for these parents: If you can't do it yourself, hire an actual nanny.*

*Let the rest of us get on with making our own decisions for what we consume. Let the rest of us drink our caffeine in any form we damn well choose.*

# Identify the central arguments

Everything in this task comes back to you showing an understanding of how an author is presenting arguments to convince their audience. To do this, you need to go beyond merely identifying the contention – the main thing an author believes. You must also show you understand how the central argument appeals to the target audience. The central argument will typically outline a positive or negative consequence. Here is an example of the contention and central argument (of negative consequences) in Sherryn Furter’s piece ‘Ban Energy Drinks So We Can Raise Healthy Children’:

- Contention: *Energy drinks are bad for children.*
- Central argument: *Energy drinks have negative impacts on children’s health.*

If you put your identification of the contention and central argument together in the one statement, it would look like this:

In her blog, Furter contends that energy drinks are harmful and her arguments focus upon the negative health impacts of these drinks.

**The words and phrases in the chart below will help you construct clear statements identifying both the contention and either the positive or negative central argument. Use this table to practise writing sentences, working from left to right.**

AUTHOR AND CONTENTION	ACTIVE VERB	POSITIVES OR NEGATIVES
<p>[Author name] contends* [quote contention here] and...</p> <p>The writer of this piece contends* [quote contention here],...</p> <p>*Alternatives to contends: proposes, asserts, urges</p>	<p>...outlines the...</p> <p>...highlights the...</p> <p>...focuses on the...</p> <p>...emphasises the...</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>...outlining the...</p> <p>...highlighting the...</p> <p>...focusing on the...</p> <p>...emphasising the...</p>	<p>benefits of...</p> <p>positive impact of...</p> <p>progress that can be achieved by...</p> <p>advantages of...</p> <p>solutions to...</p> <p>opportunities that can be brought about by...</p> <p>drawbacks of...</p> <p>threats posed by...</p> <p>negatives of...</p> <p>difficulties with...</p> <p>difficulties this will create for...</p> <p>negative impacts of...</p> <p>negative impacts on...</p> <p>harmful consequences of...</p> <p>disadvantages of...</p>

When you feel you've mastered writing about the positive or negative central argument, there is a more advanced step you can take: introduce a description of the argument.

Look at the statement below about Furter's piece:

*In her blog, Furter contends that 'we should ban the sale of energy drinks to children' and focuses on the public health advantages of such a ban.*

In this statement, the benefits have been described as 'public health advantages' – a more sophisticated analysis than simply writing 'positives for children's health'.

Practise writing statements like this by using the chart below:

AUTHOR AND CONTENTION	ACTIVE VERB	ARGUMENT DESCRIPTION	POSITIVES OR NEGATIVES
<p>[Author name] contends* [quote contention here] and...</p> <p>The writer of this piece contends* [quote contention here]...</p> <p>*Alternatives to contends: proposes, asserts, urges</p>	<p>...outlines the...</p> <p>...highlights the...</p> <p>...focuses on the...</p> <p>...emphasises the...</p> <p>or</p> <p>...outlining the...</p> <p>...highlighting the...</p> <p>...focusing on the...</p> <p>...emphasising the...</p>	<p>economic</p> <p>social</p> <p>environmental</p> <p>public health</p> <p>public safety</p> <p>practical</p> <p>humanitarian</p> <p>long term</p> <p>libertarian</p> <p>cultural</p> <p>moral</p> <p>ethical</p> <p>educational</p> <p>community</p> <p>individual</p> <p>family</p> <p>short term</p> <p>employment</p>	<p>benefits of...</p> <p>positive impact of...</p> <p>progress that can be achieved by...</p> <p>advantages of...</p> <p>solutions to...</p> <p>opportunities that can be brought about by...</p> <p>drawbacks of...</p> <p>threats posed by...</p> <p>negatives of...</p> <p>difficulties with...</p> <p>difficulties this will create for...</p> <p>negative impacts of...</p> <p>negative impacts on...</p> <p>harmful consequences of...</p> <p>disadvantages of...</p>

# Identify the audience

Although students often write that a piece is directed at a ‘general adult audience’, this is rarely the case, and in fact there are some fairly straightforward assumptions that you can make about who the audience might be.

Look at the table below to help you think in general terms about the audience of the piece you are analysing:

TEXT TYPE	AUDIENCE AND INTEREST
Blog	Readers are likely to be interested in the blogger or the blog’s topics since they would need to seek it out.
Newsletter	These are typically distributed to communities and readers are likely to have some type of personal connection to the organisation writing the newsletter.
Community paper	These are typically read by residents of a district who are likely to be interested in the development of that community.
Presentation or Speech	Audience members have chosen to attend this because they are interested in the idea or the community being represented.
Letter in response to an issue	These normally appear in newspapers and are generally read by people who have been following the issue.
An opinion piece from a general circulation publication	These pieces, like letters, are often read by people who have some type of prior interest or knowledge of the topic.

If we use the table to think about Sherryn Furter’s piece, we can work out:

- It’s a blog
- Because it’s a blog, it means her audience have found this site to read themselves and are probably interested in, or agree with, what Furter says

We can go one step further and think about this:

**What does either the name of the publication or the title of the piece tell us about what might attract or interest the audience?**

In the case of Furter’s piece, her blog comes from a site called ‘Smart Parents’.

We can work out from this that:

- The readers are specifically parents
- These parents probably like to think of themselves as ‘smart’ – people who make good, informed decisions about their parenting

In summary, when reading a persuasive piece there are two things to identify and then think about to help you discuss the audience:

INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEXT	ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE AUDIENCE
Text type	Likely audience and their interest
Publication name or title of piece	Opinions or feelings the audience might have about the topic or author

Using this information, we can write statements like:

*In her piece, Furter contends that ‘we should ban the sale of energy drinks to children’ and focuses on the negative impacts energy drinks have on children’s health. This argument is directed at parents and their likely interest in the health and wellbeing of their children.*

Below are some basic and more advanced phrases you can use to write statements about the audience:

BASIC PHRASES		
[Author]’s audience is...	...and his/her argument is aimed at...	...their likely interest in... ...the value they likely put on... ...their probable feeling that... ...their likely belief that... ...their likely concern over...

MORE ADVANCED PHRASES		
The author’s argument that...	...directly targets... ...is aimed squarely at...	...his/her reader’s... ...his/her audience’s...
The speaker’s argument that...	...goes to the heart of... ...appeals directly to...	...probable interest in... ...likely belief that... ...value they put on... ...concern for...

# Identify the intention

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So far, you have worked out what the main opinion (contention) of an author is and why they think that (the central argument). You have also identified the audience and their interest. Now you need to have something to say about how the author wants the audience to act and feel in response to the persuasive piece. This is the author's intention. Your first response when asked how the author intends the audience to respond might be: to agree. But you need to do better than this.

Generally there are two ways an author might lead their audience towards their intention:

1. First experience an emotional response to the author's argument and then acknowledge there is a logical action to take
2. First acknowledge the logic of a case and then be directed to an emotional response

For example:

*In her piece, Furter contends that 'we should ban the sale of energy drinks to children' and focuses on the public health advantages of such a ban. The intention of her persuasive piece is to alarm the parents who read her blog about the unhealthiness of energy drinks and move them to recognise the logic of a ban.*

To write about the intention of a piece, you can follow either of these simple sentence models below:

*The intention of the piece is to first **logically persuade** and then subsequently **emotionally persuade** the reader.*

OR

*The intention of the piece is to first **emotionally persuade** and then subsequently **logically persuade** the reader.*

However, these are not very insightful sentences to write and they are not specific to the text you are analysing, so you should practise this basic sentence model by substituting in different phrases for 'emotionally persuade' and 'logically persuade'.

**Use the chart on the opposite page to write about the specific emotional or logical responses an author might intend.**

## LOGICALLY PERSUADE

### Position the audience to...

doubt the wisdom of...  
see logical flaws in...  
accept that this is the logical solution to...  
accept that there are alternatives to...  
consider the logic of...  
recognise that there...  
view...as a kneejerk response to...

### Create / generate...

doubt about...  
recognition of...  
acceptance of...  
appreciation for...

## EMOTIONALLY PERSUADE

### Fuel / Inspire / Ignite the audience to feel...

energy for...  
excitement towards...  
inspiration about...  
hope for...  
pride in...  
a sense of urgency towards...  
anger/outrage at...  
fear/horror of...  
concern, alarm at...  
reassured that..  
distrustful of...  
responsibility for...  
empathy/sympathy/compassion for...  
shame/guilt about...

### [insert verb] the audience to...

#### verbs:

energise  
excite  
inspire  
horrify  
alarm  
reassure  
shame

# Writing introductions

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Now you've identified the contention, central argument, audience and intention, you have all the ingredients you need for an effective introduction. Here's an example introduction to an analysis of the piece by Sherryn Furter:

*The debate about the health consequences of energy drinks and whether their sale should be restricted has been explored in many blogs. Sherryn Furter is a parent who has written on this issue, contending in her blog that 'we should ban the sale of energy drinks to children'. She focuses on the public health advantages of such a ban and the intention of her persuasive piece is to create alarm in her audience of parents at the unhealthiness of energy drinks, particularly to children, and move them to recognise the logic of a ban.*

Here's what the introduction would look like if it were analysing both the Furter and Post piece. This time the example has been annotated to show the elements of a good introduction:

<b>Outline background to the issue</b>	<i>The debate about the health consequences of energy drinks and whether their sale should be restricted has been explored in many blogs.</i>
<b>Introduce author, identify their contention and central argument</b>	<i>One opinion on this issue is from Sherryn Furter, who contends in her blog that 'we should ban the sale of energy drinks to children'. She focuses on the public health advantages of such a ban and</i>
<b>Identify intention</b>	<i>the intention of her persuasive piece is to create alarm in her audience of parents at the unhealthiness of energy drinks, particularly to children, and move them to recognise the logic of a ban.</i>
<b>Introduce additional author, identify their contention and central argument</b>	<i>Opposing Furter's position is Clive Post, who contends in his blog that any ban on the sale of caffeinated drinks to children would restrict people's right to 'choice in what they consume'. Post adopts a libertarian argument</i>
<b>Identify intention</b>	<i>and intends to fuel his freedom loving readers' outrage that their freedom and rights could be curtailed.</i>

The chart below provides different phrases and sentence starters you can use to write each part of your introduction:

INTRODUCTION ELEMENT	HELPFUL WORDS AND PHRASES
Outline background to the issue	<p>The problem of...            The issue of...            The controversy surrounding...            The question of...</p> <p>...has been debated...            ...has been explored...            ...has been hotly contested...            ...has been disputed...</p>
Introduce author, identify their contention and central argument	<p>In response to this issue* there have been a number of points of view. One such point of view is...            Presenting their point of view on this issue is...who...            One response to this issue is from...who...</p> <p>contends / urges / demands / pleads / calls for / advocates / pushes for / lobbies for / campaigns for</p> <p>*controversy/debate/argument</p>
Identify intention	<p>The intention of the piece is to...            The writer intends to...</p>
Introduce additional author, identify their contention and central argument	<p>An opposing view is offered by...who...            In opposition to this is...who...</p> <p>A different perspective is offered by...who...            A slightly different perspective is offered by...who...</p> <p>A similar point of view is put forward by...who....</p> <p>contends / urges / pleads / calls for / advocates / pushes for / lobbies for / campaigns for</p>
Identify intention	<p>Unlike [first author], [second author]'s intention is to...            Similarly to [first author], [second author]'s intention is to...</p>

# Identify how the sections of a piece (including visuals) contribute to its overall intention

In the body of your analysis, you need to examine the logical development of argument in a piece, so you will need to split a persuasive piece into different sections and consider how each section contributes to the overall intention. Persuasive pieces can usually be fairly easily divided into three sections: the opening, the body and the closing and your analysis can be based around how each of these sections builds a writer's case.

Writers can call upon a range of strategies in each section of their piece to assist them to achieve

their overall aim. For example, let's say the intention of the persuasive piece written by Clive Post from earlier in this chapter is this: Post's intention is to move his audience to feel outraged that their everyday right to consume caffeine could be taken away.

Below, you can see the piece divided into three sections and each section annotated with a key strategy or strategies that helps Post achieve this overall intention:

SECTION	TEXT	STRATEGY
Opening	<p><i>Most adults begin their day with a coffee – it's an ingrained part of our culture, and no one questions it. But many people don't like the taste of coffee. Their energy requirements (their desire for a caffeinated jolt to kick start their day) are just as high, but they'd prefer to drink something else. That's where energy drinks come in. And that's OK.</i></p> <p><i>For some reason – perhaps it's because of the tremendous success of the Monster Energy Drink, which markets itself with the number of the devil, 666 – energy drinks have taken a place in modern, moralistic culture as some kind of demon. But they're just a drink, a bit of caffeinated fluid to help us through the day. Not a malignant force of evil.</i></p>	<p>Establish facts: Post wants the reader to see that drinking caffeine is an ordinary, every day right, so establishing the facts here is important.</p> <p>Present opposing arguments as narrow minded or ridiculous: The sillier the opposition arguments seem, the more outraged the audience will be.</p>

SECTION	TEXT	STRATEGY
<p><b>Body</b></p>	<p><i>Let's take some of the emotion out of the debate and focus upon the facts.</i></p> <p><i>Fact Number One: Most energy drinks have the same amount of caffeine as the average cup of coffee.</i></p> <p><i>Fact Number Two: Energy drinks are not targeted at small children, most consumers are young adults (and no one is preventing them from drinking coffee).</i></p> <p><i>Fact Number Three: Energy drinks ARE regulated by the same bodies that regulate the rest of the food we consume.</i></p> <p><i>Fact Number Four: No one is being forced to drink energy drinks.</i></p>	<p>Build credibility through facts: By dedicating the body of the piece to describing straightforward facts, Post builds his audience's outrage that such clear evidence could be ignored.</p>
<p><b>Closing</b></p>	<p><i>Amidst all the hype of energy drinks, we all seem to have missed the point that people have a choice in what they consume and parents have a responsibility to monitor what their children are drinking. If parents don't want their children drinking energy drinks, they have a simple solution: don't buy them.</i></p> <p><i>For some reason, there is a significant body of parents who want to give up on their responsibilities and ask others to make decisions for them. They want a nanny state. Rather than asking for a nanny state, I have some simple advice for these parents: If you can't do it yourself, hire an actual nanny.</i></p> <p><i>Let the rest of us get on with making our own decisions for what we consume. Let the rest of us drink our caffeine in any form we damn well choose.</i></p>	<p>Present a simple solution: The audience is more likely to be outraged that solutions aren't being adopted when those solutions are presented as simple.</p> <p>Build to a climactic conclusion: Finishing on an authoritative note emphasises the simple solution that Post began the closing with.</p>

After you identify the contention, central argument and intention, split the persuasive piece into the three sections of opening, body and closing by putting a line around them or between them. These are some important things to be aware of when you do this:

- Sometimes the opening and body might only be a sentence or so long.
- Sometimes it might not be clear where the opening finishes or the closing begins. In this situation – don't worry. There can be a range of 'right' answers – your task is simply to find a way of dividing the persuasive piece up that makes sense to you.

After you've split the piece into sections, you need to think about what strategies a writer is mainly using in each section and how these strategies help achieve the overall intention.

The chart below lists a range of possible strategies that could be employed in each section. Annotate each section of a persuasive piece with one or more of these strategies and some notes about how these strategies help build argument.

### PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES OF OPENINGS

- Establish/outline facts
- Establish how the issue has come about
- Establish seriousness of the issue
- Pose problems/issues
- Establish credentials/trustworthiness of author
- Establish a connection or shared values with the audience
- Challenge audience assumptions
- Gain the audience's attention
- Present opposing arguments as narrow minded
- Introduce first reason supporting the argument

### PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES OF BODIES

- Build credibility through facts
- Pose problems and solutions
- Appeal to emotion and logic
- Connect emotions and logic
- Rebut opposing views
- Introduce further, stronger reasons supporting the argument

### PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES OF CLOSINGS

- Call for action
- Outline a clear choice
- Present a solution
- Emphasise a moral/ethical responsibility
- Emphasise a logical next step
- Emphasise urgency in taking action
- Urge further thought
- Build to a climactic/strongest argument

# Structuring an analysis of argument

At its heart, every analysis of argument will be based around discussing the opening, body and closing. If you're responding to just one persuasive piece, the structure of your analysis could look like this:

PARAGRAPH	FOCUS
Introduction	Summarise issue background Identify writer, contention, central argument and intention
Body Paragraph 1	Analyse how the opening contributes to achieving the writer's overall intention
Body Paragraph 2-3*	Analyse how the body contributes to achieving the writer's overall intention
Body Paragraph 4 (Conclusion)	Analyse how the closing contributes to achieving the writer's overall intention

*\*Note: Depending on the length of the persuasive piece being analysed, you might have more paragraphs analysing the body.*

**At the end of this section, there is an example analysis of a single persuasive piece.**

**However, if you're analysing the arguments or more than one piece, you have some choices about how to structure your analysis. Here they are:**

## 1. THE BLOCK STRUCTURE

The block structure has this name because one whole ‘block’ or section of your analysis focuses on just one persuasive text and the other ‘block’ focuses on the other persuasive text. Typically, you spend more time focusing first on a longer text before analysing a shorter text. If you are analysing two texts of roughly equal length then you can spend equal time on both texts or choose to spend more time on the text you have the most to say about.

Here’s what the structure could look like:

PARAGRAPH	FOCUS
Introduction	Summarise issue background Identify writer, contention, central argument and intention of first piece and second piece
<b>Analyse the longer persuasive piece</b>	
Body Paragraph 1	Analyse how the opening contributes to achieving the overall intention
Body Paragraph 2	Analyse how the body contributes to achieving the overall intention
Body Paragraph 3	Analyse how the closing contributes to achieving the overall intention
<b>Analyse the shorter persuasive piece</b>	
Body Paragraph 4	Analyse how both the opening and body contribute to achieving the overall intention and how they compare or contrast with the first piece analysed  <b>Or:</b> Analyse just the opening and how it contributes to achieving the overall intention and how it compares or contrasts with the first piece analysed
Body Paragraph 5 (Conclusion)	Analyse how the closing contributes to achieving the overall intention and how it compares or contrasts with the first piece analysed  <b>Or:</b> Analyse both the body and the closing and how they contribute to achieving the overall intention and how they compare or contrast with the first piece analysed

At the end of this section, there is an example block analysis of two persuasive pieces.

## 2. THE INTEGRATED STRUCTURE

In an integrated approach, you don't separate your analysis of each piece into different 'blocks' in your essay but combine them.

This is what the structure could look like:

PARAGRAPH	FOCUS
Introduction	Summarise issue background Identify writer, contention, central argument and intention of first piece and second piece
Body Paragraph 1–2*	Analyse and compare how the openings of both pieces contribute to achieving the overall intention
Body Paragraph 3–5*	Analyse and compare how the body of both contribute to achieving the overall intention
Body Paragraph 6*	Analyse how the closing of both pieces contribute to achieving the overall intention

*\*Note: You might write more or fewer body paragraphs on any of these sections depending on how much you have to say*

At the end of this section, there is an example integrated analysis.

## EXAMPLES

### EXAMPLE ANALYSIS OF A SINGLE PIECE

*The consumption of energy drinks has led to considerable controversy within the community with this debate spilling into the media and many concerned commentators writing passionately about the issue. Sherryn Furter is one such writer and, in her blog Smart Parents, she contends that 'we must ban the sale of energy drinks to children'. Her arguments centre around the health concerns that these drinks create, and particularly the detrimental impact she believes they have on the health of children, which is likely to seriously concern her readers who are followers of her blog and would identify with the label of 'smart parents'. By relating to her audience, she intends to galvanise her readers into a concerted campaign that would prevent children buying energy drinks.*

*From the outset, Furter seeks to create a connection with the parents reader her blog, which she uses as a launching point for electrifying them into action as 'smart parents' who are concerned with the children's health. Her repeated use of 'I can't remember' would resonate with other parents who would also conclude that they can't ever recall having a conversation about 'how many short blacks our toddlers were consuming'. However, her sense of humour does not preclude her from alarming her readers: choosing words such as 'toddler' exaggerates the vulnerability of children, as these very young children are most in need of care and protection from their parents. She more explicitly raises the level of anxiety in her readers by choosing the phrase 'alarmingly, we ignore it on a societal level'. Here, she instructs her readers on how they should feel – alarmed – and places them at the forefront of a movement to create change. By aligning herself with her readers in the pronoun 'we', she implies that she and her fellow parents must make the societal changes necessary.*

## EXAMPLE ANALYSIS OF A SINGLE PIECE (Continued)

After beginning her piece so lightly, Furter moves quickly to a series of logically framed arguments, designed to demonstrate to her readers that as ‘smart parents’ their actions will be based upon facts, not just feelings. These facts provide evidence that energy drinks negatively impact upon children’s health. She points out that in contrast to coffee ads, which feature ‘sexy’ people such as ‘George Clooney,’ the advertisements for energy drinks ‘typically’ focus on ‘young men playing video games.’ She is suggesting that energy drinks fundamentally promote an unhealthy lifestyle and in making this claim she targets her audience’s aversion as parents to their children being put in a position where they’ll become sick or unfit. The following two paragraphs reinforce her logic: she points to medical facts such as the heart rate and sleeping patterns of children and uses phrases such as ‘trends in children’s health’. All of these make her seem informed and educated about paediatric health, as well as resonating with her readers’ concerns about their children’s sleeping patterns and that most emotive of organs: the heart. Furter’s logic cleverly bridges the gap between medical logic and the protective instinct of parents.

Having established herself as something of an expert on children’s health, Furter expands her argument into another current medical concern: obesity and sugar. Here, where she perhaps feels herself to be on firmer ground, she paints a vivid word-picture of ‘obese, paranoid teenagers’. This image of angry and fat youths is a far cry from the innocent ‘toddlers’ she evokes in her opening; with this image, Furter is playing upon the fears of every parent, who would prefer their own children to grow into healthy and happy young people, rather than the grim, dystopian image presented. To complement this bleak image, she has included an image of an energy drink can, which is designed to look like ‘toxic spew’. The black, radio-active can is representative of a future filled with deadly and noxious substances as represented by energy drinks: a future that would be most threatening to her readership. She describes two ads for energy drinks, choosing parts of them that most align with her early bleak words, playing with the alliteration of ‘lethargic and large’, so that the image must be imprinted firmly and indelibly in parents’ minds. It is clear that Furter is offering two alternatives to parents who read her blog: support the ban on selling energy drinks to children, or watch your own children turn into ‘average, overweight young men’.

Moving from these helplessly grim pictures, Furter begins to urge action from her readers, reassuring them that it isn’t their fault and that they need help in raising beautiful, healthy children; it is here that she comes to the crux of her argument. By placing her readers in opposition to popular culture, she begins to urge action from the readers, blaming popular culture, which she describes as a ‘juggernaut’, for the health of children. By describing culture as a juggernaut, she insinuates that it is an unstoppable and invasive army and that parents must fight against it, as anyone would fight against an invasion. Continuing this bellicose imagery, she empathises with parents who might feel ‘toothless’ and therefore helpless and old in the face of the world that their children occupy. However, she reassures them that they need ‘public support and campaigns’ – that is, parents should enlist the help of everyone in society to fight for their children.

The final part of Furter’s closing emphasises the seriousness of the health threat energy drinks pose and makes it clear that ‘smart parents’ must act against this risk. Her closing is filled with reminders of other successful campaigns that have raised awareness of public health needs, choosing three of the most obvious and significant to parents: seat belts, smoking and alcohol. Her final rallying call involves a tricolon of repetition, reminding her readers of three things they ‘need’ to do. This urgency and repetition is designed to motivate her readership of parents into action.

## EXAMPLE BLOCK ANALYSIS OF TWO PIECES

The consumption of energy drinks is raising considerable controversy within the community, and this debate is spilling into the media, with many concerned commentators writing passionately about the issue. Sherry Furter is one such writer and, in her blog *Smart Parents* she contends that 'we must ban the sale of energy drinks to children'. Her arguments centre around the health concerns that these drinks create, and particularly the detrimental impact she believes they have on the health of children, which is likely to seriously concern her readers who are followers of her blog and would identify with the label of 'smart parents'. By relating to her readers, she intends to galvanise her audience into a concerted campaign that would prevent children buying energy drinks. Raising an alternative view is the blogger Clive Post who brings a libertarian perspective to the debate and argues that people should make their 'own decisions for what [they] consume'. This is a view likely to resonate with his readers who follow a site called *Beware the Nanny State* and would therefore be people more likely to oppose any laws infringing upon personal freedoms. Post intends that his readers, like him, should advocate for the status quo.

From the outset, Furter seeks to create a connection with the audience, which she uses as a launching point for electrifying her readers into action as 'smart parents' who are concerned about their children's health. Her repeated use of 'I can't remember' would resonate with other parents who would also conclude that they can't ever recall having a conversation about 'how many short blacks our toddlers were consuming'. However, her sense of humour does not preclude her from alarming her readers: choosing words such as 'toddler' exaggerates the vulnerability of children, as these very young children are most in need of care and protection from their parents. She more explicitly raises the level of anxiety in her readers by choosing the phrase 'alarmingly, we ignore it on a societal level'. Here, she instructs her readers on how they should feel – alarmed – and places them at the forefront of a movement to create change. By aligning herself with her readers in the pronoun 'we', she implies that she and her fellow parents must make the societal changes necessary.

After beginning her piece so lightly, Furter moves quickly to a series of logically framed arguments, designed to demonstrate to her readers that as 'smart parents' her readers' actions will be based upon facts, not just feelings. These facts provide evidence that energy drinks negatively impact upon children's health. She points to medical facts such as the heart rate and sleeping patterns of children and uses phrases such as 'trends in children's health'. All of these make her seem informed and educated about paediatric health, as well as resonating with her readers' concerns about their children's sleeping patterns and that most emotive of organs: the heart. Furter's logic cleverly bridges the gap between medical logic and the protective instinct of parents. Having established herself as something of an expert on children's health, Furter expands her argument into another current medical concern – obesity and sugar – painting a vivid word-picture of 'obese, paranoid teenagers'. This image of angry and fat youths is a far cry from the innocent 'toddlers' she evokes in her opening; with this image, Furter is manipulating the fears of every parent, who would prefer their own children to grow into healthy and happy young people, rather than the grim, dystopian image presented. To complement this bleak image, she has included an image of an energy drink can, which is designed to look like 'toxic spew'. The black, radio-active can is representative of a future filled with deadly and noxious substances as represented by energy drinks: a future that would be most threatening to her readership.

Moving from these helplessly grim pictures, Furter begins to urge action from her readers, reassuring them that it isn't their fault and that they need help in raising beautiful, healthy children; it is here that she comes to the crux of her argument. By placing her readers in opposition to popular culture, she begins to urge action upon the readers, blaming popular culture, which she describes as a 'juggernaut', for the health of children. By describing culture as a juggernaut, she insinuates that it is an unstoppable and invasive army and that parents must fight against it, as anyone would fight against an invasion. Continuing this bellicose imagery, she empathises with parents who might feel 'toothless' and therefore helpless and old in the face of the world that their children occupy. However, she reassures them that they need 'public support and campaigns' – that is, parents should enlist the help of everyone in society to fight for their children.

## EXAMPLE BLOCK ANALYSIS OF TWO PIECES (Continued)

*In stark contrast to Furter’s emotionally charged blog, Post writes a short and pointed opinion on the consumption of energy drinks, arguing for the right of individuals to choose. Like Furter, he too opens his blog with a comparison of energy drinks to coffee, but Post emphasises that ‘many people don’t like the taste of coffee’, and appeals to the value his audience places on individual differences. Unlike Furter, Post acknowledges that his audience has diverse tastes and this spotlight on individuality underscores his central argument that individuals have the right to choose. He also wants to reassure his readers about the differences in what people like, which is why he ends his introduction with ‘And that’s OK’, which epitomises the value Post places upon individuality.*

*Just as Furter moves on to illustrate to her audience that her case is based upon proof, Post’s strategy in the body of his piece is to list four key facts that create a sense of the evidence being comprehensive, straightforward and unambiguous. This in turn feeds into his central concern that individuals are able to make decisions for themselves based on reason. His first fact directly addresses claims such as Furter’s about caffeine levels in energy drinks. Post states that ‘most energy drinks have the same amount of caffeine as the average cup of coffee.’ Like Furter, Post generalises with the word ‘most’ to create the impression his argument is researched, while actually appealing to the audience’s natural emotive inclination to agree with sweeping statements. Two of Post’s facts focus on the issue of who consumes energy drinks and at whom they are aimed to further instill the audience with the belief that the proposed ban on energy drinks is an unreasonable response. His final fact epitomises his central argument that people should be able to choose what they consume and that, at the moment ‘no one is being forced’, but that people are making choices about what they drink, a position that would appeal strongly to readers who want to ‘beware the nanny state’.*

*The final paragraph of each blog is a call to some kind of action from the readers, and each writer asks the readers of their blog to act upon what they have read. Furter’s final rallying call involves a tricolon of repetition, reminding her readers of three things they ‘need’ to do. This urgency and repetition is designed to motivate her readership of ‘smart parents’ into action. On the other hand, Post exhorts his readers to continue to make the choices that suit their own lifestyle, highlighting the importance of being able to make this choice with the word ‘damn’, which indicates he is contradicting societal rules, as ‘damn’ is not generally a word that would be included in more formal articles, and is a reminder to his readers that he makes his own choices.*

## EXAMPLE INTEGRATED ANALYSIS OF TWO PIECES

The consumption of energy drinks is raising considerable controversy within the community, and this debate is spilling into the media, with many concerned commentators writing passionately about the issue. Sherryn Furter is one such writer and, in her blog *Smart Parents* she contends that ‘we must ban the sale of energy drinks to children’. Her arguments centre around the health concerns that these drinks create, and particularly the detrimental impact she believes they have on the health of children, which is likely to seriously concern her readers who are followers of her blog and would identify with the label of ‘smart parents’. By relating to her readers, she intends to galvanise her audience into a concerted campaign that would prevent children buying energy drinks. Raising an alternative view is the blogger Clive Post who brings a libertarian perspective to the debate and argues that people should make their ‘own decisions for what [they] consume’. This is a view likely to resonate with his readers who follow a site called *Beware the Nanny State* and would therefore be people more likely to oppose any laws infringing upon personal freedoms. Post intends that his readers, like him, should advocate for the status quo.

Both bloggers begin by comparing energy drinks with the more ubiquitous cup of coffee, using this familiar image to relate to their readers and frame their arguments about the impact of consuming energy drinks. However, each blogger opens in the way most likely to appeal to their audience. Furter begins her blog with a humorous imagined anecdote and draws upon a common experience for parents: that of chatting with other parents. In comparison, Post emphasises that ‘many people don’t like the taste of coffee’, highlighting that individuals are different and appealing to his audience’s interest in diversity and individual freedoms, and therefore instantly accepting the individual differences of his readers and of people in general. Furter further highlights the collective experience that connects her to her readers and builds their respect for her opinion, by repeating ‘I can’t remember,’ which would resonate with other parents who would also conclude that they can’t ever recall having a conversation about ‘how many short blacks our toddlers were consuming’. Post, however, continues to focus on the differences between his readers and wants to reassure them about these differences, which is why he ends his introduction with ‘And that’s OK’. This everyday language epitomises Post’s belief that differences and freedoms are normal. While Furter is trying to establish the similarities between herself and her readers, Post blogs about the individuals within the population, arguing that health and drink consumption is a personal choice.

Having established a connection with their audiences, each writer goes on to argue the facts of their cases, so that their readers can be assured that their decisions will be based upon logic and reason, not merely a sense of identification with the writer. Furter points to medical facts such as the heart rate and sleeping patterns of children and uses phrases such as ‘trends in children’s health’. All of these make her seem informed and educated about paediatric health, as well as resonating with her readers’ concerns about their children’s sleeping patterns and that most emotive of organs – the heart. Post is even more explicit in his statement of facts, numbering and listing them so they build an overwhelming sense of clarity and simplicity for his case. He keeps these facts short and to the point, making it seem ridiculous that anyone could argue against them, and compelling his readers to believe that anyone who would oppose his points is overcomplicating a simple issue. Each writer uses the sorts of facts most likely to appeal to their particular readership. Furter’s logic cleverly bridges the gap between medical logic and the protective instinct of parents, appealing to the idea of them as parents who think. Post has no interest in appealing to the emotions of his readers when writing his list of facts, relying instead upon shaping his arguments in as brief a space as possible, making them appear as incontrovertible as possible. His final fact epitomises his central argument that people should be able to choose what they consume and that, at the moment ‘no one is being forced’, but that people are making choices about what they drink, a position that would appeal strongly to readers who want to ‘beware the nanny state’.

## EXAMPLE INTEGRATED ANALYSIS OF TWO PIECES (Continued)

Each writer takes their case to the extreme, imagining the worst case scenario of our society and playing upon the fears of their readers, to ensure that their arguments have full force. Furter paints a vivid word-picture of 'obese, paranoid teenagers,' playing upon the fears of every parent, who would prefer their own children to grow into healthy and happy young people, rather than the dystopian image presented. To complement this bleak image, she has included an image of an energy drink can, which is designed to look like 'toxic spew'. The black, radio-active can is representative of a future filled with deadly and noxious substances as represented by energy drinks: a future that would be most threatening to her readership. In contrast, Post ridicules these types of fears, arguing that energy drinks are 'Not a malignant force of evil' and belittling those who demonise these drinks as 'moralistic'. As someone who advocates for personal liberties, Post is appealing to his readers as individuals and people who are unlikely to want to ascribe to collective morality, but more likely to have a personal set of ethics. This denigration of 'modern, moralistic culture' underpins his argument for personal choice.

Both authors propose actions in their closings which they see as not only logical, but urgent and necessary responses to the facts they outlined in the bodies of their piece. However, they differ significantly in the actions they propose. Furter lays the groundwork for her proposed action, by blaming the disastrous impact of energy drinks on popular culture, which she describes as a 'juggernaut', for the health of children. By describing culture as a juggernaut, she insinuates that it is an unstoppable and invasive army and that parents must fight against it, as anyone would fight against an invasion. Furter asks for parents to enlist the help of others, while Post tells parents to manage for themselves, arguing that 'parents have a responsibility to monitor what their children are drinking.' The only help Post suggests parents ask for is to 'hire an actual nanny', insinuating that parents who ask for help are derelict in their duty and it is the job of individuals (and of individual parents) to make decisions for themselves and for their families.

The final paragraph of each blog is a call to some kind of action from the readers, and each writer asks the readers of their blog to act upon what they have read. Furter's final rallying call involves a tricolon of repetition, reminding her readers of three things they 'need' to do. This urgency and repetition is designed to motivate her readership of 'smart parents' into action. On the other hand, Post exhorts his readers to continue to make the choices that suit their own lifestyle, throwing out the word 'damn' to indicate that he is contradicting societal rules, as 'damn' is not generally a word that would be included in more formal articles, and is a reminder to his readers that he makes his own choices.

# Writing topic sentences

Effective topic sentences at the start of your body paragraphs are essential.

The topic sentence of your body paragraph must include:

- **Section:** Indicate the section of a persuasive piece you're focusing on
- **Strategy:** Identify a key strategy in the section you are focusing on (Use the chart from 'Identify how sections of a piece contribute to its overall intention' to help you with this)

The second sentence should include:

- **Link:** Identify a link between this strategy and the overall intention or central argument of a piece

When you have mastered putting this information into the first two sentences, then you can experiment with combining it all into the one topic sentence.

In either an integrated analysis or in the body paragraphs of a block analysis where you are looking at a second piece, you should also include:

- **Comparison:** Identify a point of comparison or contrast between one piece and the other

Below are examples of poor topic sentences and good topic sentences. Notice that the poor examples just nominate one technique or simply identify an argument. In other words, they don't introduce *how an argument is being developed*. In contrast, the good examples feature all of the information outlined in the dot points above.

## Poor topic sentences that focus only on identifying an argument or technique:

*Furter opens her piece by using lots of inclusive language.*

*In the body of her piece, Furter employs facts and examples to support her case.*

*Post argues at the start of his piece that drinking coffee is normal and 'OK'.*

## An example of a good single topic sentence that includes section, strategy and link to overall intention:

*From the outset, Furter builds alarm in her audience at the unhealthiness of energy drinks, establishing that we're missing the obvious unhealthiness of energy drinks in everyday life.*

## An example of a good topic sentence that includes section and strategy and a second sentence that outlines the link to overall intention:

*Having created alarm in her audience, the body of Furter's blog encourage her readers to act on this emotion and see a 'ban' on 'the sale of energy drinks' as logical. She outlines a series of facts aimed at both increasing the alarm level of the audience and allowing them to think that a ban on energy drink sales to children would be based on facts and reason, not just emotion.*

*In his opening, Post, like Furter, presents a picture of coffee drinking being 'part of our culture'. However, unlike Furter who quickly moves onto creating an alarming picture of children drinking coffee everyday, Post wants to reassure, not alarm his audience, about the consumption of energy drinks, so uses the everyday phrase 'OK' to describe how 'many people' who don't like coffee still want caffeine so drink energy drinks instead.*

Below is a list of sentence starters and phrases you can use in your topic sentences to analyse the logical development or argument.

Block Topic Sentences	Integrated Topic Sentences
<b>OPENING</b>	
<p>Since the [author's name's] overall intention is to...</p> <p>Since [author's name] is attempting to...</p> <p>As the key argument of the [author's name's] piece is...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...they open by...in order to...</li> <li>• ...they begin with...to...</li> <li>• ...they commence their piece with...so that...</li> <li>• ...from the outset they...in order to...</li> <li>• ...their initial strategy is to...so that...</li> </ul>	<p>From the outset, both pieces... in order to...</p> <p>In each of their openings, [Author 1 name + Author 2 name]...so that...</p> <p>While their contentions differ, both authors intend...so in their openings...</p>
<b>BODY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having...</li> <li>• established...</li> <li>• created for the reader...</li> <li>• argued....</li> <li>• dismissed....</li> <li>• introduced</li> <li>• outlined</li> <li>• established</li> <li>• made clear...</li> <li>• positioned the reader to see...</li> </ul> <p>...the author seeks in the body of their piece to...</p> <p>...the author turns their attention in the middle of their piece to...</p> <p>...the author builds on this in their body by...</p> <p>The author's intention in the body of the piece is to...</p> <p>Central to the author's strategy in the body of the piece...</p> <p>Essentially, in the body of the piece the author...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the majority of the body of the piece the author...</li> <li>• builds upon...</li> <li>• capitalises on...</li> <li>• develops...</li> </ul>	<p>Each author uses the body of their piece to build upon the opening and further their intention of their piece by...</p> <p>The central strategy of both authors in the bodies of their pieces is to...so that...</p> <p>The authors diverge in the bodies of their pieces in how they...and build upon...</p>

Block Topic Sentences	Integrated Topic Sentences
<b>CLOSING</b>	
<p>In closing, the author...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reinforces...</li> <li>• underlines...</li> <li>• returns to...</li> </ul> <p>In closing, the author...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presents...</li> <li>• urges...</li> </ul> <p>which...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• builds on...</li> <li>• capitalises on...</li> <li>• transforms the audience from...to...</li> </ul>	<p>The closings of both...and...feature..., which bring the audience from a position of...to...</p> <p>The closings of both...and...feature..., which urge the audience to move from feeling... to...</p> <p>Both authors progress from...in the bodies of their pieces, to...in their closing, but...</p> <p>Both authors return to...in their closings in order that...</p>

# Analysing language and visuals and writing body paragraphs

In your body paragraphs, you will need to analyse how persuasive language and visuals are used by an author to develop an argument. Here are three steps you can take in your body paragraphs to achieve this:

## 1. PICK THE BEST EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE TO FOCUS ON

So far, you have identified the contention and intention of a piece, broken a piece into parts and identified the purpose of each part, but not actually circled or annotated any examples of persuasive language. Of course you'll need to do this, but you need to be crystal clear about something first: the task of your analysis of argument is not to analyse all the persuasive language an author employs. Rather, your mission is to pick

the best examples of how an author uses persuasive language to help develop their case.

Consider the opening of Sherryn Furter's piece below. If we were just to circle examples of persuasive language and annotate them, it might look something like this:

PERSUASIVE TEXT	PERSUASIVE DEVICES
I <b>can't remember</b> the last time I was talking with other parents and we discussed how many short blacks our toddlers were consuming in the morning. I <b>can't remember</b> it because it never happened. I <b>don't know</b> a single parent who thinks it's okay to serve their child caffeine. But somehow, we seem to ignore the caffeine our children consume in energy drinks. <b>We</b> ignore this on a personal level, and, more <b>alarmingly</b> , <b>we</b> ignore it on a societal level.	Anecdote Repetition Anecdote
As a society, <b>we</b> must ban the sale of energy drinks to children. Caffeine is a substance suitable for adults and must be marketed as such.	Inclusive language, appeal to fear Inclusive language

Now look again at the example of an effective analysis of argument below. Notice how it doesn't discuss all of the examples put in bold above or in fact use any of the names of persuasive devices written in the annotations? That's because this body paragraph focuses on Furter's argument that 'we're missing the obvious unhealthiness of energy drinks being part of everyday life' and analyses only the examples of language which demonstrate this.

*Furter begins to build alarm in her audience at the unhealthiness of energy drinks from the outset, outlining in her opening how we're missing the obvious unhealthiness of energy drinks being part of everyday life. Furter points out that while adults will regularly discuss their coffee drinking habits, they would naturally think it outrageous to talk of 'toddlers' 'consuming' some 'short blacks'. The mention of 'toddlers' – as opposed to*

*teenagers or youths – associates the issue for the audience with the youngest and most vulnerable section of our society, meaning they are more likely to be alarmed by the health consequences of energy drinks on this group. To follow this up, Furter states that we 'ignore' the fact that 'children consume...energy drinks,' emphasising again the vulnerable group of 'children' and pushing her audience to feel both alarm and guilt that the health of 'children' is in peril because of the audience's negligence and inaction.*

So, when you're circling examples of persuasive language make sure:

- A. You are clear about the writer's purpose at this point
- B. You are clear about how this part of the piece fits into the argument
- C. You pick the best examples of language that demonstrate this purpose

## 2. USE ANALYTIC VERBS TO INTRODUCE AND TO ANALYSE EVIDENCE

Verbs are action words like *jumps*, *drives* or *eats*. In analysis of argument, we use verbs to describe the actions of an author and the impact of these actions on the audience.

In the example sentences below, the verbs have been put in bold:

*Furter first **establishes** that energy drinks have 'twice the amount of caffeine' in them as a regular coffee. She never **states** any actual numbers, but the phrase 'twice the amount' both **conveys** a sense of Furter's case being based on evidence, while also **creating** an image of the level of caffeine in energy drinks that is likely to **startle** and further **alarm** the audience.*

Sometimes students overuse a few verbs in their writing like these ones here:

THE AUTHOR...	IT...THE AUDIENCE
uses	makes
says	helps
wants	impacts on

These verbs aren't bad to use sometimes, but you should employ a range of more specific, interesting verbs in your analysis of argument. On the next page is a chart of a range of verbs you can employ to say more analytic things.

	AUTHOR ACTION	IMPACT/READER RESPONSE
<b>The author writes/ thinks/says</b>	urges, posits, puts forth, makes the case, reasons, contends, disputes, challenges, opposes, contests, demands, claims, calls on, calls for action, appeals for action, believes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*addresses the reader's...</li> <li>*activates the reader's...</li> <li>*alarms the reader that...</li> <li>*allows the reader...</li> </ul>
<b>The author is supportive</b>	praises, celebrates, champions, supports, approves, advocates, applauds, credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*captures the reader's...</li> <li>*challenges the reader to see... as...</li> </ul>
<b>The author is negative</b>	labels, dismisses, attacks, insults, rejects, denigrates, criticises, lambasts, demeans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*clarifies for the reader...</li> <li>*confronts the reader...</li> <li>*compels the reader to...</li> </ul>
<b>The author emphasises</b>	emphasises, underscores, underlines, repeats, reiterates, reinforces, strengthens, exaggerates, generalises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*creates for the reader...</li> <li>*directs the reader to...</li> <li>*elicits from the reader...</li> </ul>
<b>The author connects two or more things</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>links...</li> <li>connects...with...</li> <li>likens...to...</li> <li>compares...to...</li> <li>associates...with/to...</li> <li>relates...to...</li> <li>equates...</li> <li>parallels...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*encourages the reader to...</li> <li>*engages the reader...</li> <li>*forces the reader to focus on...</li> <li>*fosters the reader's view that...</li> <li>*impresses upon the reader...</li> <li>*invites the reader to see...</li> <li>*influences the reader to see...as..</li> </ul>
<b>The author creates an association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suggests to the reader...</li> <li>creates in the reader's mind...</li> <li>evokes for the reader...</li> <li>draws for the reader...</li> <li>invites the reader to picture or imagine...</li> <li>triggers for the reader...</li> <li>prompts the reader to see...</li> <li>implies...</li> <li>creates the connotation...</li> <li>establishes for the reader...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*leads the reader to...</li> <li>*prompts the reader to</li> <li>*provokes the reader...</li> <li>*positions the reader to...</li> <li>*reassures the reader...</li> <li>*results in the reader...</li> <li>*serves to...</li> <li>*simplifies for the reader...</li> <li>*shocks the reader...</li> <li>*startles the reader...</li> <li>*triggers in the reader...</li> </ul>

	AUTHOR ACTION	IMPACT/READER RESPONSE
<b>The author uses evidence</b>	cites, refers (to), references, draws on, quotes, provides, points out/to, presents, lists, outlines	You can write about the impact of the actions on the left using any of the phrases in this column on the previous page.
<b>The author uses a technique</b>	utilises, employs, demonstrates... by/with... supports their case with...	
<b>The author tries</b>	attempts, endeavours, aims, seeks	

In many of the sentences of your body paragraphs, you will need to have three elements:

- Author action
- Evidence
- Analysis

Here is a guide to three basic ways you can combine these elements with verbs:

SENTENCE TYPE	EXAMPLE	NOTES
<b>Author action + evidence + analysis</b>	<i>Furter claims that energy drinks have 'twice the amount of caffeine' as coffee, alarming her audience at this startlingly high figure.</i>	You put verbs into different forms, such as giving them an '-ing' endings like 'alarming.' You can often put these in the second half of your sentences to introduce analysis.
<b>Evidence + analysis</b>	<i>The words 'twice the amount of caffeine' alarms and shocks the audience.</i>	Try varying your sentence structures by starting with evidence.
<b>Analysis + author action + evidence</b>	<i>To create shock and alarm in her audience, Furter claims that energy drinks have 'twice the amount of caffeine' as coffee.</i>	You can put 'to' in front of verbs so you can use them at the start of sentences.

### 3. ADD DETAIL TO YOUR SENTENCES

When we analyse evidence, we should always be attempting to move beyond obvious statements and say something that is insightful. This is why you need to be conscious of how you can add detail to your sentences to improve your analysis. There are two levels of analysis we can employ in our sentences:

- **Primary analysis:** This is normally the first thing which occurs to us about some evidence
- **Secondary analysis:** This is where we've thought a bit harder and have something extra, usually more insightful, to say

Here are three examples of primary and secondary analysis structured in different ways in a sentence:

*Furter claims that energy drinks have 'twice the amount of caffeine' as coffee, alarming her audience at this startlingly high figure (primary analysis) and causing them to panic at what they now perceive is the dangerous current state of things (secondary analysis).*

*The words 'twice the amount of caffeine' alarms and shocks the audience (primary analysis), triggering them to panic at what they now perceive is the dangerous current state of things (secondary analysis).*

*To first create shock and alarm in her audience (primary analysis) and then drive them to panic at the current state of things (secondary analysis), Furter claims that energy drinks have 'twice the amount of caffeine' as coffee.*

The most basic way you can add secondary analysis to your sentences is to simply add 'and' followed by some further analysis. However, you also want to mix up 'and' with some other words to extend the analysis of your sentences.

The chart below lists a range of words you can employ to create more detailed sentences:

AND	BECAUSE	THROUGH	WHICH	'-ING' VERBS
and	since	through	which	'-ing' verbs such as:
and also	because	by	by which	resulting in
not only...but also	in order to	for	through which	creating
both...and	to create	with		producing
	to cause			compelling
				positioning

## 4. ANALYSE VISUALS

There are two ways to approach analysing a visual, depending on its relationship to a persuasive piece:

- The visual is part of a persuasive piece
- The visual is a separate persuasive piece

### If a visual is part of a persuasive piece: integrate analysis of the visual with analysis of the writing.

Many of the visuals you will be asked to analyse will be part of a written piece and will somehow support the author's perspective. When tackling such visuals, the important thing is not how much you say about the visual, but how well you link its purpose to that of the written piece.

Here is an example:

*After beginning her piece so lightly, Furter moves quickly to a series of logically framed arguments, designed to demonstrate to her readers that as 'smart parents' her readers' actions will be based upon facts, not just feelings. These facts provide evidence that energy drinks negatively impact upon children's health. She points to medical facts such as the heart rate and sleeping patterns of children and uses phrases such as 'trends in children's health'. All of these make her seem informed and educated about paediatric health, as well as resonating with her readers' concerns about their children's sleeping patterns and that most emotive of organs – the heart. Furter's logic cleverly bridges the gap between medical logic and the protective instinct of parents. Having established herself as something of an expert on children's health, Furter expands her argument into another current medical concern – obesity and sugar – painting a vivid word-picture of 'obese, paranoid teenagers'. This image of angry and fat youths is a far cry from the innocent 'toddlers' she evokes in her opening; with this image, Furter is manipulating the fears of every parent, who would prefer their own children to grow into healthy and happy young people, rather than the grim, dystopian image presented. To complement this bleak image, she has included an image of an energy drink can, which is designed to look like 'toxic spew'. The black, radio-active can is symbolic of a future filled with deadly and noxious substances as represented by energy drinks: a future that would be most threatening to her readership.*

There are two key ingredients to this visual analysis:

1. Link the purpose of the visual to the purpose of the written piece: *To complement this bleak image, she has included an image of an energy drink can, which is designed to look like 'toxic spew'.*
2. Analyse the strategy and impact of the visual: *The black, radio-active can is symbolic of a future filled with deadly and noxious substances as represented by energy drinks: a future that would be most threatening to her readership.*

The chart below will supply you with some useful words and phrases to write about the link between a visual and a written piece and to analyse its strategy and impact.

LINK		STRATEGY AND IMPACT	
graphically	highlights	by creating...	It creates for the reader/viewer/audience...
ividly	illustrates	through characterising... as...	... an image that will...
visually	represents	through depicting...as	
clearly	reinforces	by illustrating...	It characterises...as...,which will create for the audience a sense that...
	underscores	by zooming in on...	
	adds to	by accentuating...	It represents...as...,which will...the audience...
		by emphasising...	
		it [analytic verb*] the audience...	It illustrates for the audience that...,which will...
		*For ideas about verbs to put here, look at the 'Impact/Reader Response' column of the analytic verb chart above	

Sometimes you will be asked to analyse visuals that are separate to a written piece. If the visual supports the perspective of the written piece, it's often a good idea to integrate your analysis of the visual with your analysis of the writing in the manner outlined above.

However, if the visual doesn't agree with the written piece – or is a very substantial and complex visual – then it will warrant a separate paragraph of its own. In this case, you will need to employ some of the writing strategies outlined in the final section of this chapter.

# Structuring body paragraphs

Your body paragraphs need to have a logical structure that supports you to analyse the development of argument in a persuasive piece.

Below is an example of a structure that all excellent analytic writing features in one form of the other:

<b>Topic sentence or sentences</b>	<i>In her closing, Furter presents the ban on the sale of energy drinks as an urgent and rational solution to the alarming crisis scenario she has created throughout her persuasive piece.</i>
<b>Evidence and analysis</b>	<i>She conveys this urgency with phrases like ‘we need to act now’ and that ‘nothing has been done’.</i>
<b>Link to overall intention, further examples or a related strategy</b>	<i>But she also wants her audience to feel that this is a reasonable course of action...</i>
<b>Evidence and analysis</b>	<i>so she emphasises how a ban on energy drink sales to children is in line with other safety measures we accept as commonsense such as seat belts being ‘compulsory’ or alcohol being ‘restricted’.</i>
<b>Concluding sentence: Key impact or combined impact of strategies</b>	<i>Furter ultimately positions her audience to feel that, because of their deep alarm, it’s logical to ban energy drinks for children because ‘we need to help our children’.</i>

The key ingredients in the paragraph above are the sentences in the grey rows which all discuss the development of argument across the whole piece. Students are normally fairly good at supplying evidence and some kind of analysis – but it’s making links to the overall development of argument they often struggle with. Be alert to this when you write your paragraphs.

We've already discussed effective topic sentences, but below are some words and phrases you can use in the middle and at the end of your paragraphs to focus on the development of argument.

Words and phrases to link to overall intention, further examples or a related strategy	Words and phrases to conclude and analyse the key impact or combined impact of strategies
<p>...again uses...</p> <p>...repeats...</p> <p>...further this point...</p> <p>...combines this with...</p> <p>...emphasises this point...</p> <p>...moreover...</p> <p>...continues to...</p> <p>...underscores this through...</p> <p>...adds to this by...</p> <p>Changing tack...</p> <p>Altering their strategy...</p> <p>Having (done one thing)...the author then...</p> <p>Having come at the issue from the angle of..., the author then comes at it from...</p>	<p>Ultimately, this...</p> <p>The combined effect of...is to...</p> <p>The cumulative effect of...is to...</p> <p>The result at this point is to...</p> <p>All of this allows the author to...</p> <p>By this point, the author has been able to...</p> <p>This again emphasises the author's intention to...</p> <p>This ultimately underscores the author's intention to...</p>

# Comparing persuasive pieces

If you are asked to analyse the arguments of more than one persuasive piece, then it is critical that you engage in effective comparative writing. This comparative writing needs to go beyond the odd linking phrase such as ‘In contrast’ or ‘On the other hand’. Instead, you will need to use a rich range of words and phrases to compare the development in argument of two pieces. In a block essay, your comparison will happen when you introduce the second piece. In an integrated essay, the comparison will happen throughout. Consider the comparative language in the example paragraph below:

*In opposition to Furter’s position is Clive Post’s blog which contends that the sale of energy drinks shouldn’t be regulated. Like Furter, Post emotionally sways his audience while attempting to have his case come across as based in reason. In his opening, Post presents a similar picture of coffee drinking being ‘part of our culture’ to Furter’s opening. However, unlike Furter who quickly moves onto creating an alarming picture of children drinking coffee everyday, Post wants to reassure, not alarm his audience, about the consumption of energy drinks so uses*

*the everyday phrase ‘OK’ to describe how ‘many people’ who don’t like coffee still want caffeine drink energy drinks instead. He builds upon this calming effect in the body of his piece which he introduces by saying ‘Let’s take some of the emotion out of the debate and focus upon the facts.’ Just as Furter sought to build credibility in the body of piece, so does Post through the authoritative statement of facts. Similarly to Furter, Post’s claims in his body have the appearance of factual evidence without any hard numbers or information actually being cited. For example, in the same way Furter does, he uses the word ‘most’ to create the impression his argument is researched, while actually appealing to the audience’s natural emotive inclination to agree with generalisations.*

**When you compare and contrast pieces, you can use linking words or phrases at the start of sentences or within a sentence. The table below sets out a range of words and phrases you can use at either of these points in your sentence:**

COMPARATIVE SENTENCE OPENERS	INTERNAL COMPARATIVE PHRASES
Unlike...	[Author 2] presents, employs, utilises, follows...
Like...	a similar...
Similarly to...	a very similar...
In stark contrast to...	a quite different...
Just as...so too does...	(structure, argument, devices, strategies)
In the same way as...	to...[Author 1]
Instead of employing [Author 1’s] tactic of... [Author 2]...	[Author 2] focuses more on...and less on/not at all on [Author 1’s] concern for...
Whereas in their (opening/body/closing) [Author 1]...in [Author 2’s] piece, he/she...	[Author 2] emphasises to a greater degree...and ignores [Author 1’s] emphasis of...
	[Author 2] spends more time on...and less time considering [Author 1’s] focus on...
	[Author 2’s]...(opening, body, closing, tone, argument) ...is far more...

# 6. RESPONDING TO THE EAL LISTENING TASK

EAL students will need to know how to take effective notes when listening to a text and then be able to present these notes in a clear way or use them to respond to questions.

This chapter will look at three different strategies you can use to respond to the listening task:

## 1. Strategies for taking notes as you listen to a text

- Note form summaries
- Listening to the text
- Visual cues

## 2. Strategies for presenting your notes

- Organising notes about persuasive audio
- Organising notes about informative audio

## 3. Strategies for responding to questions about a text you listened to

- Identify or give an example of what a speaker says
- Explain, describe or give an example of how a speaker communicates their points
- Alternatives to common question words
- Useful words for your short answer responses

# Strategies for taking notes as you listen to a text

## NOTE FORM SUMMARIES

Note taking means not writing down everything word for word, but just noting down the most important words or information. You will need to use abbreviations and symbols to do this - especially when listening to a text. It's a good idea to practise using these when you are taking notes in class so that you use them quickly and easily when you need to.

In the table below, there is a list of common abbreviations for the words you'll need to use when taking notes. Use these abbreviations in your note taking.

### LIST OF COMMON ABBREVIATIONS FOR NOTE TAKING

b/c	because
C	Century (e.g. 20C is "Twentieth Century")
ea	each
e.g.	example
etc.	et cetera, and the rest, and so on
i.e.	that is, that means, in other words
imp	important
re	regarding
w/	with
w/o	without
vs	in opposition to
+	and, also, in addition
-	without, minus
≠	does not equal
≈	approximately
<	less than
>	more than
↑	increase (two arrows for rapid or great increase)
∴	therefore
→	leads to, causes
#	number
@	at

## LISTENING TO WHAT IS BEING SAID

Once you have practised with these symbols and abbreviations, it's time to actually use them to take notes as you listen to a text. The table below will help you with this. It's been broken into segments of time so that you take notes about each part of the text.

When you begin note taking, you will notice that it is hard to listen consistently to what someone is saying, so you might just practise by listening to the text and then writing down what they are saying at certain points, keeping a timeline of the text.

For your assessment, you will be given the opportunity to listen to the text twice. The first time you listen, you should just focus upon what is being said and write notes in the first column. Keep an eye on a timer while you use the table below to help you practise.

TIME	WHAT THE SPEAKER IS SAYING	HOW THE SPEAKER IS MAKING HER/HIS POINT
0.30		
1.00		
1.30		
2.00		
2.30		
3.00		
3.30		
4.00		
4.30		
5.00		
5.30		
6.00		

**YOU CAN DOWNLOAD A BLANK COPY OF THIS NOTE TAKING TABLE FROM:**  
[www.tickingmind.com.au/note-taking-timeline](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/note-taking-timeline)

## LISTENING TO HOW A TEXT IS BEING SPOKEN

The second time you listen to a text, focus on how a person is speaking.

Consider:

- Is the speaker raising her or his voice?
- Are they speaking slowly or quickly?
- Are there particular words they are emphasising?

GESTURE	HOW IT IS USED	POSSIBLE INTENTION
VOLUME OF VOICE	Louder	Indicates passion (either anger or excitement)
	Softer	Suggests that an idea is a secret or secretive (or perhaps a little bit forbidden)
SPEED OF VOICE	Faster	Suggests excitement or enthusiasm for an idea and that there is so much information to learn
	Slower	Indicates that this is an important point that must be listened to extremely carefully
SILENCE	Length of pause	Gives audience time to think about or consider what is being said
CONVENTIONAL PHRASES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks</li> <li>• Thank you</li> <li>• It's a privilege to be here</li> <li>• It's exciting to be here</li> </ul>	By being polite or enthusiastic, a speaker comes across as someone reasonable and respectful of others
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That's a good question</li> <li>• Thanks for asking that question</li> <li>• That's a good point</li> </ul>	By being positive about questions or points others make, a speaker appears more agreeable and less argumentative
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You might be thinking</li> <li>• You might be asking yourself</li> <li>• You might want to know</li> </ul>	The speaker understands what people are thinking about this issue, but wants to gently point out their mistakes

## ANALYSING VISUALS

Your listening task might also involve watching a video of a person speaking or being interviewed. If this is the case, you should also take notes about the gestures a speaker uses. You write notes about these things in the right hand column of your note taking table. Your notes can be very simple as you listen to the text. Afterwards, you should take a few minutes to add detail or explain them better.

In the table below are some common ways people gesture when they speak and what these gestures achieve:

GESTURE	HOW IT IS USED	POSSIBLE INTENTION
<b>ARM WAVING AND HAND MOVEMENT</b>	Indicating the whole audience	Ensures everyone in the audience feels included in what is being said
	Waving arms wildly around head	Indicates an idea is crazy or outside the box
	Fist shaking or punching	Demonstrates passion, enthusiasm or success
	Pointing	Indicates a particular person or idea
	Placing hand on heart or chest	Demonstrates a personal connection or an idea that is important to the speaker
	Holding hands apart	Indicates the size of an issue (that it's big)
	Holding fingers a little way apart	Indicates a very small thing or idea
<b>HEAD MOVEMENTS</b>	Nodding	Indicates agreement with an idea and (hopefully) gets audience agreement also
	Shaking	Indicates disagreement with the idea
	Tilting head to the side	Indicates that an idea is being considered or thought out

## EXAMPLE NOTES

On the following page is an example of notes taken on a talk entitled 'Please, please, people. Let's put the awe back in awesome' by US comedian Jill Shargaa. Look carefully at the use of symbols in the left hand column. Also notice that in the right hand column gestures and other persuasive techniques have been written down.

**You can watch through the talk online here:**

[www.ted.com/talks/jill\\_shargaa\\_please\\_please\\_people\\_let\\_s\\_put\\_the\\_awesome\\_back\\_in\\_awesome?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/jill_shargaa_please_please_people_let_s_put_the_awesome_back_in_awesome?language=en)

TIME	WHAT THE SPEAKER IS SAYING	HOW THE SPEAKER IS MAKING HER/HIS POINT
0.30	awesome = use many times ea day <u>awesome = incorrect use</u>	fingers to count shakes head @ audience
1.00	e.g. *cafe → waitress → order = awesome *coworker → pdf = awesome examples ≠ awesome	Pauses - lets people laugh Shows slides Says 'anything' - long, slow
1.30	great ≈ now awesome Webster dictionary → awesome = fear + admiration sandwich ≠ awesome	Slide of dictionary
2.00	the way we use awesome < actually meaning	Points @ slide Leans forward = emphasis
2.30	If use awesome always = awesome no meaning	'Poor schmuck' 'Jackass'
3.00	Ten things = awesome *Wheel *Pyramids - <u>tall</u> awesome	Holds up 10 fingers. Change tone - wheel (excited) / bend over = hard to carry Hands - building pyramids = hard
3.30	*Grand Canyon - old *Invention of photos	'C'mon' 'When you took a photo' / points @ audience = incl. language
4.00	*D Day *Bee - make food - awesome	Hands → wide apart = big Questions e.g. 'Did you eat?' → slide of bee
4.30	*Moon landing	Change tone - v important → falls to knees
5.00	*Woodstock	'You can't even buy a freakin' T-Shirt'
5.30	*Sharks - <u>30,000</u> teeth in life' awesome *Internet - 1982	'Hell, yeah' Jumps up + down
6.00	*This PPT ≠ awesome This crowd → most recent	Joke Shakes head - her speech ≠ awesome

# Strategies for presenting your notes

Once you have taken note of what is being said and how it is being said, it is time to organise your notes so that ideas are linked together. The activities below will help you to organise your initial notes into a more meaningful order so that they can be presented for assessment.

## ORGANISING NOTES ABOUT PERSUASIVE AUDIO

In Units 1 & 2, your listening task will be included as part of the Analysing and Presenting Argument area of study. There are two strategies you can use to help you take notes about a persuasive audio:

1. Identify contention
2. Organise notes in a contention-argument-examples chart

OR

organise notes in a problem-solution chart

## IDENTIFYING THE CONTENTION

Usually, the contention of an argument is found in the first few minutes of the speech, but it can also be toward the end and can be difficult to identify when you are first taking notes. It's a good idea to wait until the text is finished and then think about the contention. If you can explain what the text was about in 20 words or less, you will probably have identified the contention.

But here's a little template to help you get started:

**The speaker, [speaker's name], argues that...and wants his/her listeners to...**

For example:

*The speaker, Jill Shargaa, argues that we should use the word 'awesome' better and wants her listeners to understand what is awesome and what is not awesome.*

Instead of always writing 'argues' or 'wants', you can use a range of different verbs to help you write about the contention of the piece. Look the the table below for a range of different words to use.

ARGUES ABOUT	AND WANT HIS/HER LISTENERS TO...
examines the issue of...	angles his/her listeners to...
discusses the importance of...	directs his/her listeners to...
reviews the treatment of...	calls for his/her listeners to...
disputes the existence of...	suggests to the audience that...
debates the idea of...	requests his/her audience to...
advances the notion of...	
proposes...	
challenges the accepted wisdom of...	
questions the need for...	
refutes the idea of...	
counters the commonly-held conception of...	

## CONTENTION-ARGUMENT-EXAMPLES CHART

If post-it note organisation doesn't provide enough direction for you, you could try taking notes in the Contention-Argument-Examples Chart. For this, all you need to do is identify the main arguments the speaker is using and put these arguments in the middle column. Then, usually straight after the speaker makes a point, dot point the reasons or examples that support the argument in the right-hand column. You can leave the overall contention (which goes in the left-hand column) for last, and write it in when you have finished making your other notes.

CONTENTION	ARGUMENT	EXAMPLES

**YOU CAN DOWNLOAD A BLANK COPY OF THE ABOVE TEMPLATE FROM:**  
[www.tickingmind.com.au/contention-argument-examples](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/contention-argument-examples)

## PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS CHART

Occasionally, you won't be listening to a single speech at all, but an interview. This might call for a different approach to your note-taking. You can use the chart below to record all of the problems, challenges or questions raised by the interviewer in the left-hand boxes (and remember that sometimes a problem can be raised more than once) and then the responses to this problem in the space on the right. Keep in mind that you might need to use the space on the right more than once, if the interviewer returns to a similar problem.

PROBLEM		SOLUTION
PROBLEM		SOLUTION
PROBLEM		SOLUTION
PROBLEM		SOLUTION

**YOU CAN DOWNLOAD A BLANK COPY OF THE ABOVE TEMPLATE FROM:**  
[www.tickingmind.com.au/problems-solutions](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/problems-solutions)

## ORGANISING NOTES ABOUT INFORMATIVE AUDIO

In Unit 3, you may be asked to listen to informative audio. In this case, you can draw up charts like the ones below to organise information.

FACTS	EXAMPLES

WHAT PERSON 1 SAYS	WHAT PERSON 2 SAYS

# Strategies for responding to questions about an audio text

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As well as taking notes about the text you are listening to, you will be required to answer a series of questions that demonstrate your comprehension and inference skills.

**There are two main types of questions you will be asked:**

- Identify or give an example of **what** a speaker says
- Explain, describe or give an example of **how** a speaker communicates their points

**These two main question types are checking for:**

1. Knowledge and comprehension of what was said
2. Analysis and inference (reading between the lines) of why the speaker said it
3. Analysis of the method in which it was said

Below is an example of the kind of questions you might be asked, using an example speech that is easily available on the internet. To understand this example, you should listen to the TED Talk by Jill Shargaa titled ‘Please, Please, People, Let’s Put The Awe Back in ‘Awesome’.

**You can find the talk here:**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/jill\\_shargaa\\_please\\_please\\_people\\_let\\_s\\_put\\_the\\_awesome\\_back\\_in\\_awesome?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/jill_shargaa_please_please_people_let_s_put_the_awesome_back_in_awesome?language=en)

## IDENTIFY OR GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT A SPEAKER SAYS

Below is a range of examples of what these questions or tasks might look like:

### Multiple choice format:

Tick the correct box.

Which of these does Jill Shargaa believe is not 'awesome'?

- The pyramids
- Saving files as PDFs
- The Grand Canyon
- Landing on the moon

### Single word or very short response task:

Identify **one** thing Jill Shargaa believes is not awesome:

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### A question that might require a longer answer:

What does Jill Shargaa say is the main problem with using the word 'awesome' too much?

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### A task that requires you to quote an example:

Give a phrase from the text which shows Jill Shargaa believes people who overuse the word 'awesome' are silly.

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### Filling out a table:

Jill Shargaa lists a number of things that she thinks are either awesome or not awesome. In the table below, list two examples in each column.

EXAMPLES OF THINGS THAT ARE AWESOME	EXAMPLES OF THINGS THAT AREN'T AWESOME

## EXPLAIN, DESCRIBE OR GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A SPEAKER COMMUNICATES THEIR POINTS

These types of questions will require you to write at least one complete sentence and often 2-4 sentences in response. Here are some examples of short answer questions:

Explain how Jill Shargaa uses humour in her speech. Give at least one example to support your explanation.

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Explain at least one way, apart from humour, that Jill Shargaa engages her audience. Support your answer with examples of her choice of language and delivery.

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When responding to short answer questions, it will help you to go through these steps:

1. Highlight key words in the question
2. Brainstorm other words for these key words
3. Use the two tables (on the next two pages) to help you brainstorm other words and write your answers:

Here is an example response to each of the questions above:

Explain how Jill Shargaa uses humour in her speech (**talk**). Give at least one example (**instance**) to support your explanation.

*Jill Shargaa makes lots of jokes throughout her talk because she wants her audience to see that using the word 'awesome' in the wrong way is silly and stupid. One instance of a joke is when she says that someone who thinks finding change in their pants is 'awesome'. is a 'poor schmuck.'*

Explain at least one way (**method**), apart from (**besides**) humour, that Jill Shargaa engages (**interests**) her audience. Support your answer with examples of her choice of language and delivery.

*Besides humour, Shargaa also keeps the interest of her audience by speaking directly to them. She uses words like "you" and "ladies and gentlemen" so the audience know they are part of what she's talking about and should listen.*

## ALTERNATIVES TO COMMON QUESTION WORDS

COMMON QUESTION WORDS	OTHER WORDS
<b>ADVERB</b>	
apart (e.g. Apart from...what does the speaker also say will...?)	besides, as well as, in addition to
<b>ADJECTIVES</b>	
some (e.g. What are some important facts the speaker mentions?)	a few, one..is...another is...
important (e.g. What are some important facts the speaker mentions?)	significant, key, essential
particular (e.g. What is one particular fact the speaker mentions to support their claim that...?)	specific, special, definite, clear
good (e.g. What does the speaker believe is a good way to solve the problem?)	effective, practical, useful, fair, interesting, positive, better, clear
<b>VERBS</b>	
can (e.g. How does the speaker believe more money can solve the problem?)	could, might, should
shows (e.g. What words does the speaker use to show their politeness?)	illustrates, demonstrates
engages (e.g. Explain one way the speaker engages their audience?)	connects, addresses, maintains attention of
believes (e.g. What does the speaker believe is a good way to solve the problem?)	thinks, considers
responds (e.g. How does the speaker respond to the interviewer's question on whether more money will fix the problem?)	answers, replies

## USEFUL WORDS FOR YOUR SHORT ANSWER RESPONSES

WORDS TO IDENTIFY WHAT A SPEAKER IS ARGUING	WORDS TO EXPLAIN ARGUMENTS	WORDS TO IDENTIFY EXAMPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Speaker] asserts that...</li> <li>• [Speaker] argues that...</li> <li>• [Speaker] believes in...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the reasons for the speaker's argument that...is...</li> <li>• The speaker lists several arguments such as...</li> <li>• The first reason for [speaker]'s response is...</li> <li>• The second reason is...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An instance of...is...</li> <li>• One of the instances of...is when...</li> <li>• The most obvious example of...is...</li> <li>• Another example [speaker] provides is...</li> </ul>
WORDS TO EXPLAIN EXAMPLES	WORDS TO IDENTIFY EXAMPLES OF MANNER	WORDS TO EXPLAIN THE IMPACT OF MANNER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The speaker says...because</li> <li>• The speaker gives the example of...so that...</li> <li>• When the speaker says...it shows the listeners...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One way...</li> <li>• One method...</li> <li>• One technique the speaker employs...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way [speaker] uses her/his voice to...supports the listeners to...</li> <li>• The speaker changes his/her tone from...to...which...</li> <li>• The speaker employs words like... “...” in order to...</li> <li>• The speaker...[insert verb]... by/through/with...</li> <li>• Verbs: engages, emphasises, demonstrates, shows</li> </ul>
WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE INTERACTION OR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE:		
Positive	Neutral	Negative
friendly admiring enthusiastic curious engaged	respectful polite professional	adversarial argumentative angry critical judgemental

# 7. EXAM PREPARATION

Studying for English is a bit trickier than studying for other subjects. One reason for this is that your English exam is mostly about you performing the skill of writing well.

Of course to write well, you need to know things about the texts you're studying (whether it's themes in texts or features of different persuasive formats). But much more than other subjects, you just need to practise the skill of writing. This is where lots of students get stuck. Practising writing means writing whole essays, right? The answer is both yes and no. Yes, because in your exam you do need to have the skill of writing whole essays (by hand!) in a certain period of time. And no, because writing whole essays is not the only way of practising and studying for your English exam. Lots of students don't get started with English study because the mere thought of writing an essay makes them groan loudly. That's why this chapter will emphasise lots of little, more specific things you can do for English study to get prepared for your exam.

This chapter contains four sections which explain the steps you need to go through to study successfully for your English exam:

- 1. Start by identifying what areas you're on top of and where you need to improve**
- 2. Identify specific study strategies to help you improve in your areas of weakness**
- 3. Develop a study plan**
- 4. Get feedback about your progress**

# Start by identifying what areas you're on top of

## and where you need to improve in English

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To start studying for English, you first need to set some goals about what you need to know more about or do better in your writing. Here is a checklist to use to start setting those goals.

THINGS I NEED TO KNOW TO WRITE WELL			
<b>Text Response</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sort of</b>	<b>No</b>
I'm familiar with the text as a whole			
I'm familiar with a variety of obvious and less obvious examples			
I know how the cultural or physical setting is important in the text			
I can respond to not just easy questions about the text but harder ones about how an author or director <i>constructs</i> the text			
I understand all the main techniques and symbols in the text			
I know a range of quotes			
<b>Compare and contrast</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Sort of</b>	<b>No</b>
I'm familiar with both texts as a whole			
I'm familiar with a variety of key examples and ideas in each text			
I know a range of ways the two texts can be compared and contrasted			
I know a range of quotes from both texts			

## THINGS I NEED TO KNOW TO WRITE WELL

Analysis of argument	Yes	Sort of	No
I'm familiar with a range of different persuasive text types			
I know how to break a persuasive text into different sections and identify the purpose or argument of each section			
I know how to select effective examples of persuasive language to analyse how an author logically constructs an argument			
I know a variety of different verbs I can use to describe what the writer does and how the reader responds			
I'm familiar with a variety of different sentence types I can employ to analyse how a writer is being persuasive			
I know different elements of a visual I can focus on to analyse how it connects to the written arguments of a text			
I know how to structure an analysis to compare how arguments are presented in two or more texts			

## THINGS I NEED TO DO TO WRITE WELL

Skills I need to have to write well in each area of the exam	Yes	Sort of	No
I can write a detailed essay of between 700-800 words			
I can write an essay by hand within an hour			
I can develop effective plans quickly and structure my essays logically			
I can connect sentences with a range of linking words			
I can write longer sentences which elaborate upon ideas in my essay			
I can use a variety of sentence structures in my essay			
I can insert evidence seamlessly into my essay			
I can write analytically all of the time (and not retell the text or persuasive piece)			

# Identify specific study strategies

to help you improve in your areas of weakness in English

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Once you've worked out the areas you need to improve, you now need to identify specific strategies you can employ to make this improvement. Over the next few pages, you'll find lists of specific study strategies for each area of the exam. These study strategy lists have been organised in two different ways to help you search and pick out strategies which will be useful for you:

## Strategies to improve your knowledge:

In the left column, there are a list of strategies which will help you improve your knowledge. Pick strategies which will help you address your specific areas of weakness.

## Strategies to improve your ability:

In the right column, there are strategies which will help improve your writing ability. Pick strategies which will help you address your specific areas of weakness.

## 5 minute, 15 minute and 30 minute strategies:

The strategies have also been split into groups based on how long they take. Use these groupings to pick strategies you have the time to complete or to plan out the chunks of time you set aside for English study.

## ANALYSING ARGUMENT

In 5 minutes you can...

TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...	TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Circle all of the verbs you are confident using in the 'analytic verbs' list in the analysing argument section of this textbook. Have a go using these verbs in one of the activities in the right hand column. Repeat this process with a new word in another study session.</li><li>• Identify the intention, sections and arguments of a piece</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write an introduction in 5 minutes.</li><li>• Write individual sentences about examples of common persuasive techniques, focusing on writing with more interesting verbs than 'makes', 'helps', 'feels' or 'uses'</li><li>• Write more analytical sentences of 35 words or longer by adding in extra information words such as: 'and', 'through', 'by', 'with' and '-ing' words (i.e resulting in, leading to, creating).</li></ul>

## ANALYSING ARGUMENT

In 10-15 minutes you can...

TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...	TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...
<p>Read through the analysing argument section from one of the past exams on the VCAA website: <a href="http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/english/englishexams.aspx">http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/english/englishexams.aspx</a>.</p> <p>Spend time thinking about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. How you would use the background information in your introduction</li><li>B. What the author's intention is</li><li>C. How the author engages the audience</li><li>D. How the visuals connect to one or more of the author's arguments</li></ul> <p>Repeat the above process using a different past exam.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set yourself a goal to annotate a persuasive piece, plan a response and write the introduction in 15 minutes or less.</li><li>• Write about just the opening of a persuasive piece.</li><li>• Plan an analysis and write just the topic sentences, which include information on: i) the section or argument you're writing about; ii) how this links to the author's overall intention and purpose.</li><li>• Write one body paragraph and start all of the sentences in a variety of ways.</li><li>• Write a sentence analysing some persuasive language and then rewrite it in a different way to practise using variety in your language analysis.</li><li>• Write just about the visuals in a persuasive piece and where they connect to an author's arguments.</li></ul>

## ANALYSING ARGUMENT

In 30 minutes you can...

### TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...

Make a study plan for how you will complete a variety of analyses of arguments during the lead up to your exam. Below is a checklist of formats and features of persuasive pieces from past exams. Work out which ones you need to practise:

- Persuasive pieces without easily identifiable persuasive techniques
- Two pieces - of equal length
- Two pieces - one longer, one shorter
- One piece
- Simple visuals
- Logos
- Charts/graphs

Identify past exams from here which will help you practise responding to these features or formats: <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/english/englishexams.aspx>.

### TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...

- Practise using your reading time. Give yourself seven minutes to read a piece without writing on it. Read through the piece once, then read through it again - this time thinking about what the intention is and which examples you will comment on. After seven minutes, pick up a pen and annotate the piece and complete any of the options from the above 5 minute table.
- Read through two persuasive pieces on the same issue and writing a paragraph comparing the two.
- Write one paragraph. Read through your work and think about how you could improve the variety in your sentences by linking the different types of evidence together better or vary ing your language more. Then re-write this paragraph with the improvements you thought of.

## TEXT RESPONSE

In 5 minutes you can...

### TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...

- Memorise at least three quotes by writing them out, repeatedly saying them or using flashcards.
- Create a study plan for the types of essay topics you need to be better prepared to answer. Look through a long list of essay topics, ticking the ones you'd be confident responding to and putting a question mark or cross next to the ones you know you would have trouble with.
- Write a series of sentences linking themes to minor characters or symbols.
- Plan a response to an essay topic where you brainstorm evidence from two of these three categories: Major Characters / Minor Characters / Techniques & Symbols.

### TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...

- Pick a theme from the text and write one sentence of at least 35 words, linking it to a major character, minor character, image or symbol.
- Plan a response to an essay topic in 5 minutes.
- Write individual analytic sentences that begin in one of these ways:
  - The name of the author/director/text
  - In, Through, By
  - '-ing' verb (i.e 'Portraying', 'Creating')
  - With one of these phrases:  
The exploration of..., The depiction of...The symbol of..., The characterisation of...

## TEXT RESPONSE

In 10-15 minutes you can...

### TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...

- Compile a list of 15-20 important quotes from the text. Cut each quote down to the most important word or phrase and memorise each of these reduced quotes.
- Prepare a checklist of examples and ideas from the text (see Checklist Planning in the text response chapter).
- Use the checklist of examples and ideas from a text (see Checklist Planning in the text response chapter) to identify gaps in your knowledge and understanding. Read study notes to improve your understanding (Note: Shmoop, Enotes, Sparknotes and Cliffnotes all provide free study notes and may have resources on the text you're studying).
- Re-read 10 or more pages from your text / re-watch 15 minutes of your text.

### TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...

- Write one paragraph that focuses on the In-And-But-So model (see the text response chapter for an explanation about how this works).
- Develop a plan, write an introduction and start the first body paragraph in under 15 mins.
- Delete and replace with: Read through the weakest paragraph of your previous essay and think about how you could improve the variety in your sentences by linking the different types of evidence together better or vary ing your language more. Then re-write this paragraph with the improvements you thought of.
- Write a paragraph about just one scene, analysing how an author or director develops a character, image or theme in that scene.

## TEXT RESPONSE

In 30 minutes you can...

### TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...

- If you're studying a novel or film, create three columns on a page with these headings: Beginning / Middle / End. In 10 minutes, brainstorm as many examples as you can for each column. Work out which section of the text you have the fewest examples for and re-read/re-watch that section of the text for 20 minutes.
- If you're studying poems or short stories, make a heading for each poem or short story you've focused on and, in 10 minutes, brainstorm as many examples from each of the poems/short stories as you can. Work out which you have the fewest examples for and re-read those for 20 minutes.

### TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...

- Sort a series of essay topics from hardest to easiest. Develop a plan and start a response for the hardest question. Use the text and notes to help your response, then, a day or two later, try answering the topic without notes or the text.
- Complete one half of an essay in 30 mins one day and then complete the second half in 30 mins the next day.
- Re-write a whole essay you've already done and received detailed feedback on. Apply the feedback in your re-draft.

## COMPARATIVE

In 5 minutes you can...

TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...	TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Memorise at least four quotes - two from one text, two from the other.</li><li>• Switch between memorising a quote from one text and then the other.</li><li>• Test yourself on quotes you have previously learnt.</li><li>• Plan a response to an essay topic with the help of any type of notes, quotes or example lists from one text but not the other. The next time you do this activity, alternate the text you use notes for.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pick one of these groups: major characters, minor characters, setting, complication, symbols, techniques or endings. Completing one of these tasks (the next time you do this activity, do the other task):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- write one sentence comparing and contrasting the texts in terms of the group you picked. The sentence must be at least 35 words long.</li><li>- write one sentence on the group you picked that focuses just on one text and then a sentence following on from it that focuses on the other text.</li></ul></li></ul>

## COMPARATIVE

In 10-15 minutes you can...

TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...	TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read/watch through 3-4 pages/5 mins from one section of one text (i.e the beginning, the introduction of the problem, the climax, the conclusion) and then reading/watching through a similar section from the other text. After this, take 5 mins to list all the ways these two sections are similar and different.</li><li>• Under exam conditions, plan a response to an essay topic and then check your notes/quotes to see what you could have added.</li></ul> <p>Follow these two steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Plan a response to an essay task which compares and contrasts the texts in three of these categories:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- major characters</li><li>- minor characters</li><li>- setting</li><li>- symbols</li><li>- techniques</li><li>- complication</li><li>- resolution</li><li>- narrative structure</li></ul></li><li>2. Next time you complete this activity, choose three different categories.</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan a response to an essay topic write just one paragraph that focuses on using evidence from one text and explaining it, then linking it to evidence from the other text and explaining this link.</li><li>• Plan a response to an essay topic then write just one paragraph that focuses on employing a better variety of compare and contrast words to link the texts. See the compare and contrast chapter for word lists.</li><li>• Look over an essay you have previously written, picking one paragraph and highlighting the words you used to connect the texts such as: 'in contrast' or 'similarly' or 'also'. Rewrite this paragraph changing these transition words to different ones.</li><li>• Re-write the weakest paragraph of a previous essay making a deliberate effort to improve it.</li></ul>

## COMPARATIVE

In 30 minutes you can...

### TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...

- Pick an essay topic to respond to and take five minutes to generate some initial ideas to write about in response to the topic. After this, take at least 20 minutes to look through your notes to identify at least two more ideas/examples you could discuss in response to the topic.

Follow these two steps:

1. Pick an essay task and identify which of these areas you find easy to compare and contrast the texts for and which you would find difficult:
  - major characters
  - minor characters
  - setting
  - symbols
  - techniques
  - complication
  - resolution
  - narrative structure
2. Then, spend the rest of your time re-reading through notes about the texts or re-reading / rewatching the texts to improve your knowledge of the areas you would find difficult to compare and contrast.

### TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS...

- Sort a series of essay topics from hardest to easiest, then plan and start a response to the hardest question. Let yourself use the text and notes to help your response. Then, a day or two later, try answering the topic without notes or the text.
- Complete one half of an essay in 30 mins one day and then complete the second half in 30 mins the next day.
- Look over a draft of a previous essay you have written and highlight in one colour the sentences which are about one text and in a different colour the sentences about the other text. If you wrote more about one text than the other in any paragraph, re-write the paragraph and change this ratio.
- Rewrite an essay you have previously written, changing at least one of the points you made and improving the others.

## LISTENING TASK

In 5 minutes you can...

TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...	TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revise the list of common abbreviations (see page the Listening Task chapter) and circle three you don't currently use. Have a go at using them while doing the activities in the right hand column.</li><li>• Look at the Conventional Phrases (see page the Listening Task chapter). Think about phrases you hear all of the time from teachers, family or friends and add them to this list.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to the first two minutes of a speech or interview twice. In your first listen, jot down what is being said. The second time you listen, make notes about how it is being said.</li><li>• While listening to four minutes of a speech or interview, practise identifying the opinions of each speaker.</li><li>• Listen to four minutes of a speech or interview and note the conventional phrases that are being used.</li></ul>

## LISTENING TASK

In 10-15 minutes you can...

TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...	TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read through a sample exam provided by your teacher, paying extra attention to the background information at the top of the page.</li></ul> <p>Think about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How this information might give you clues about the speaker/s opinion or attitude</li><li>2. Are the speakers experts or everyday people?</li><li>3. What sorts of things the speaker/s might say</li></ol> <p>Identify which types of questions you find the hardest and then write a series of these sorts of questions to test yourself with.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respond to two or three “explain” questions, making sure that you have provided detailed reasons, used punctuation correctly and connected your points with words such as ‘also’ and ‘furthermore’.</li><li>• Respond to several “identify” type questions, and use alternatives to the phrase “one example of this...”</li><li>• Write an answer to a few “describe” type questions, putting in as much detail as possible to demonstrate your command of a range of sophisticated and interesting words.</li></ul>

## LISTENING TASK

In 30 minutes you can...

### TO IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE...

Look at online sites\* to help you find a range of listening tasks to practise with. Ensure you have a range of different types of listening tasks you might hear in the exam, including:

News reports

Interviews

Speeches

Lectures

Conversations

Here are some suggested sites to find audio:

<https://www.ted.com/talks>

<http://lingorank.com>

<http://bigthink.com>

Write your own questions for a listening task you have found, making sure that you have a range of possible question types, including:

Identify

Explain

Describe

Give an example

Be careful to make sure your questions ask about what the speaker is saying as well as how the words are being said.

### TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING...

- Complete an entire listening task, taking notes the first time you listen to the speech and then answering questions and expanding on your notes during your second listen.
- Read over your answers to a previous listening task and the feedback your teacher has given you. Complete the listening task again, paying attention to the feedback you have been given and applying it this time.
- Read over some of your answers to “explain” or “describe” questions. Think about how you could add more detail, or further demonstrate sophisticated or interesting language. Re-write your answers to these questions and then get feedback on your responses.

# Plan your study time for English

Once you've picked out some specific strategies that will help you improve your knowledge and writing skills, it's time to make a plan for how you will implement these strategies. It's good to have both a big picture plan to make sure you get in enough practice for all areas and a more detailed, week by week plan.

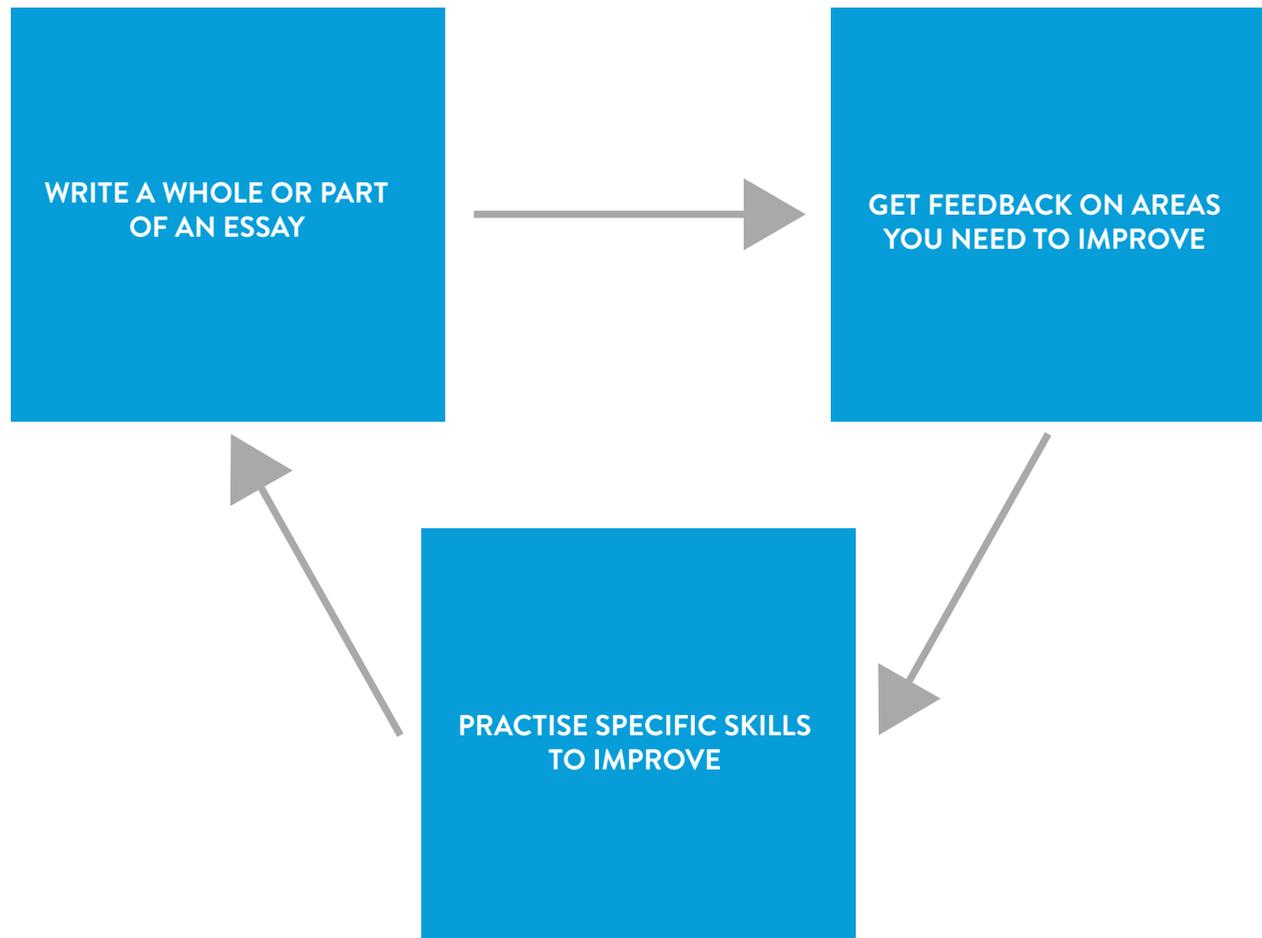
A big picture plan allows you to broadly map out when you will focus on each area of the exam. It gives you a general sense of your study direction.

This is an example:

SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI
SEP. 15 Focus on analysing argument	SEP. 16 Focus on analysing argument	SEP. 17 Focus on analysing argument	SEP. 18 Focus on analysing argument	SEP. 19 Focus on text response	SEP. 20 Focus on text response	SEP. 21 Focus on text response
SEP. 22 Focus on text response	SEP. 23 Focus on compare & contrast	SEP. 24 Focus on compare & contrast	SEP. 25 Focus on compare & contrast	SEP. 26 Focus on compare & contrast	SEP. 27 Focus on analysing argument	SEP. 28 Focus on analysing argument
SEP. 29 Focus on analysing argument	SEP. 30 Focus on analysing argument	OCT. 1 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 2 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 3 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 4 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 5 Focus on text response
OCT. 6 Focus on text response	OCT. 7 Focus on text response	OCT. 8 Focus on text response	OCT. 9 Focus on analysing argument	OCT. 10 Focus on analysing argument	OCT. 11 Focus on analysing argument	OCT. 12 Focus on analysing argument
OCT. 13 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 14 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 15 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 16 Focus on analysing argument	OCT. 17 Focus on analysing argument	OCT. 18 Focus on analysing argument	OCT. 19 Focus on analysing argument
OCT. 20 Focus on text response	OCT. 21 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 22 Focus on analysing argument	OCT. 23 Focus on text response	OCT. 24 Focus on compare & contrast	OCT. 25 <b>EXAM</b>	

Importantly, a big picture plan doesn't need to map out equal practice for all sections of the exam. It makes sense to spend more time on the section you find the hardest. The big picture plan can also change as you work out you need to spend less time on one area or more on another

Each week you should also make a more detailed plan. To really improve your essay writing skills, you need to engage in a writing/study cycle that looks like this:



This means that a weekly study plan might look something like this:

Day	Date	Study Plan
Sat	Sep 15	Specific analysing argument strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing longer sentences</li><li>• Writing sentences with better verbs</li><li>• Spend time reading and thinking about a past exam</li></ul>
Sun	Sep 16	Specific analysing argument strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing longer sentences</li><li>• Writing sentences with better verbs</li><li>• Spend time reading and thinking about a past exam</li></ul>
Mon	Sep 17	Write a whole language analysis essay - hand in to teacher
Tue	Sep 18	Specific analysing argument strategies based upon feedback from myself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practise writing with different sentences beginnings linking the sentence together.</li></ul>
Wed	Sep 19	Write a whole text response essay
Thur	Sep 20	Practise specific text response skills upon feedback from myself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revise notes about symbols</li><li>• Write about symbols.</li></ul>
Fri	Sep 21	Practise specific text response skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan a response to an essay topic, focusing on including discussion of symbols in the plan</li></ul>

# Get feedback about progress towards your goals

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You'll notice that in the above weekly study plan, a number of entries said, 'Based upon feedback to myself'. When you make your weekly study plan, there'll be things that you know you need to work on in terms of improving your skills and knowledge and you can plan for practising these areas of weakness. However, there will be other study goals you'll need to identify as you go along, because the point of doing whole practice essays is to test yourself on your current skills and knowledge so that you, or your teacher, can provide feedback on what you need to practise next.

Of course, your teacher will be a vital source of this feedback. But remember, your teacher is only human. While you should regularly show them your practice efforts, they may not always be able to get them back to you as fast as you would like.

Sometimes students use this as an excuse not to do any further practice essays. It is important to understand that you don't need to rely just on your teacher for feedback. There are many basic things which you can give yourself feedback on straightaway after completing a practice effort. In the chart on the opposite page are types of feedback a student can easily give themselves.

Use this as a self-checklist every time you complete a practice effort.

FEEDBACK STUDENTS CAN EASILY GIVE THEMSELVES	FEEDBACK REQUIRED FROM THE TEACHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did I write enough (i.e 700-800 words)?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did I write the essay in exam time (i.e 60 mins)?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did I use a variety of examples, including quotes? (i.e symbols, key scenes, narrative construction for text and comparative responses or examples from different places in the persuasive text)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did I write a range of longer sentences where I discussed ideas in depth?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did I get stuck at a particular point in the essay? Why?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Was one of my paragraphs too short? Why?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did I start my sentences in a variety of ways and link them to each other?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did I use analytic verbs?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did the student answer all areas of the essay topic, including key terms and modifiers?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Was this the same, better or worse than the student's previous effort?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What is working well, not working well about the quality of the student's analyses?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What are some specific things the student can do with their language to make their analyses better and more detailed?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What are some specific suggestions about examples or ideas the student is not writing about?</li></ul>

Ticking Mind also produces study notes  
on all of the texts you study for English.

Find them at:  
[www.tickingmind.com.au/students](http://www.tickingmind.com.au/students)





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