

Senior
ENGLISH
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PREPARING FOR VCE[®] ENGLISH

STUDY DESIGN 2024

—

Fabrice Wilmann

Senior

ENGLISH

SKILLS

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STUDY DESIGN 2024

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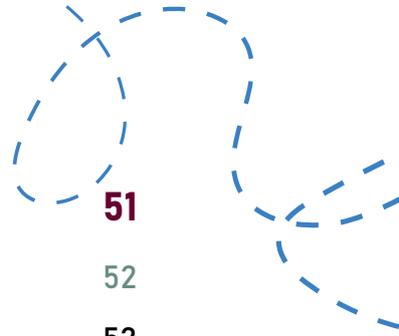
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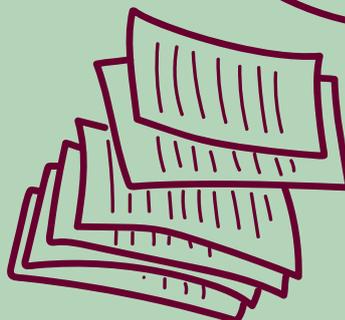
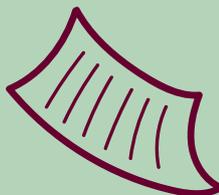
Section 1:

Analysing texts

This section will take you through the steps of text analysis. It focuses on writing about:

- * characters
- * narrative point of view
- * setting and context
- * plot and structure
- * themes
- * personal connections.

These chapters include a range of activities and exercises to help you to develop your analytical skills and to plan, write and edit complete responses. With sample analyses and personal responses to a diverse range of classic and contemporary texts, this section shows you different ways to approach your own analytical writing.



Studying literary texts

Creating a text information sheet

In order to write well about your text, you need to know it thoroughly. First, read or watch your text to get an overall idea of the storyline and characters.

After you've done this, fill in an information sheet, like the one on the following page, to summarise key information about your text.



1 Title and author/director of your text:

2 What is the text about?

3 What is the form of your text? (tick one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> novel | <input type="checkbox"/> biography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> short stories | <input type="checkbox"/> autobiography/memoir |
| <input type="checkbox"/> film | <input type="checkbox"/> poetry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> play | <input type="checkbox"/> other nonfiction |

4 When and where was the text written or created?

5 When and where is the text set? Why is this important?

6 List six key events in chronological order:

7 Who are the main characters? Give their full names.

8 Who are the minor characters? List up to five.

9 What are the main ideas or issues (themes) explored?

10 What do you think the author or filmmaker's main purpose might be?

Taking notes and annotating your text

As you re-read your text and study it in class, make more detailed notes in your workbook and (if possible) in the text. Jot down ideas and questions in the margins of each page and highlight quotations and ideas that seem significant.

Here is an example of the kinds of annotations you could add to your own texts.

Romeo's first words to Juliet

ROMEO [To JULIET] If I profane with my unwortheist **hand** — rhymes at line ends – like a poem
 This holy shrine, the gentle sin is **this**:
 My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready **stand** —
 To smooth that rough touch with a tender **kiss**. 'palmers' = pilgrims (who returned from Jerusalem with a palm leaf as souvenir)

JULIET Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too **much**,
 Which mannerly devotion shows in this,
 For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do **touch**,
 And palm to palm is holy **palmer's** **kiss**. a hint of what's to come (later they are married by a priest but despair is the result)

ROMEO Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:
 They pray, grant thou, lest **faith turn to despair**. — echoing 'my lips': playful language

JULIET Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.
Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged.

JULIET **Then have my lips** the sin that they have took.

ROMEO Sin from thy lips? O trespass sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again. — Juliet finishes Romeo's line; there's a strong connection already; 'by the book' = expertly

JULIET **You kiss by the book**.

NURSE Madam, your **mother** craves a word with you. — family interrupts them – a sign of the challenge they face to be together

[JULIET exits]

ROMEO What is her mother?

NURSE Marry, bachelor,
 Her mother is the lady of the house,
 And a **good** lady, and a **wise** and **virtuous**. — the Nurse has strong values – she won't want to do the wrong thing by the Capulet family
 I nursed her daughter, that you talked withal.
 I tell you, he that can lay hold of her
 Shall have the **chinks**.

ROMEO **Is she a Capulet?**
 O dear account! **My life is my foe's debt**. — chinks = coins, i.e. J's husband will become rich
 a turning point – for R this is now a matter of life and death; he can't turn back from here

Practise note-taking and annotating

- 1 Using the guidelines and examples on the previous pages, annotate the scene below from Randa Abdel-Fattah's YA novel *When Michael Met Mina*.

'So where are you from?' Jane asks after the bell has rung and we're walking to first period, English.

'Auburn Grove Girls High.'

'I'd hate to start a new school year in year eleven. It would be awful.'

I smile. 'I feel so much better now.'

She laughs guiltily. 'Sorry. So where are you from?'

'I told you. Auburn.'

'I mean *originally*.'

'Afghanistan.'

'Oh yeah. Ms Ham said that. Wow, you're Afghanistanian. That's so cool.'

'*Afghani*. And why *cool*?' I ask, a little dumbfounded.

'It's different,' she says with a shrug. 'Different's cool. Are you a refugee?'

I never know how to answer that question. Do you ever stop being a refugee? Even if at some point in your life the place of refuge becomes home?

She leads me through a labyrinth of corridors and stairwells. Finally we arrive at our classroom.

'Come and meet my best friend Leica. She's got Childs for home room but we have English together. You'll hit it off.'

'Okay,' I say hesitantly, mildly curious as to the basis upon which she's made this assessment given we've barely exchanged thirty words.

'She's half-Asian,' she adds by way of explanation.

I have no idea what to make of this so I decide silence is the best option.

I'm introduced to Leica who takes one look at me and says, in a wry tone, 'Excellent. We need more pepper in this place.'

I like her instantly.

- 2 Select a key scene in your text and annotate the page on which it occurs. (If your text is a film, make notes in your workbook.)

Decoding a text's meaning

Writers of narrative texts usually do not specifically state the features of a character's personality. Instead, they tend to describe the character's behaviour, and recount some of the character's actions. For example, if a character jumps out of a boat to save a child, we would infer that the character is brave.



Most of the important messages that you take from a text are inferred meanings. This means that you, as the reader, draw conclusions and 'read between the lines' to understand what the text really means.

The paragraph below is taken from the short story 'An Abduction' from Tessa Hadley's short-story collection *Bad Dreams*. Read the annotations to see how meaning can be inferred.

Conveys that Jane has low self-esteem and does not consider herself beautiful or worthy of the attention of boys.

Flowery, poetic language reflects Jane's 'schoolgirl crush' on Daniel

It didn't occur to Jane that the car would stop for her; she watched it hungrily, sifting the silky dust between her toes. Daniel, the driver, Jane saw at once, was the best-looking of the three; in fact, he was crushingly beautiful – his features smudged and vivid at once, as if sketched in black ink – and her heart fastened on him. When he had stopped the car, he asked her what her name was and she told him. – Want to come for a ride? he said kindly.

She hesitated only for a moment.

– Not in the back, she said, quite clear about it.

Already, she didn't care for Nigel.

Alludes to Jane's strong desire to grow up and have adult experiences.

Suggests that Jane is not helpless and has enough self-respect to demand certain things.

Implies that Jane is either an intuitive person or one who easily judges others based on appearances.

The paragraph below is the next scene from 'An Abduction'. Annotate it with inferred meanings.

On their way back to Nigel's house, Jane was an accomplice in an episode of shoplifting – which fortunately went undetected, or at least unreported. She had never stolen anything before; the possibility hadn't crossed her mind. But she was disorientated: as they drove along, Paddy had pulled the elastic bands off her two bunches so that her hair blew crazily into all their faces. Whipping across her vision, the strands of it were like a hallucination, distracting her from her larger bewilderment at half sitting on Paddy's knee, feeling Daniel ease his arm around her once ...

Writing about texts

Writing about characters

When we analyse a text, we go beyond 'what happens' to the characters and study how the writer explores key ideas and issues through the characters' actions and reactions.

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Wednesday created by Alfred Gough and Miles Millar (2022)

Despite her guarded and emotionless facade, Wednesday learns to open up to others while at Nevermore Academy. Her initial resistance to her roommate, Enid, is portrayed symbolically in the divide Wednesday creates in their room: her half in darkness and unadorned; Enid's in warm colours with playful accoutrements. However, by the end of the first season, Wednesday recognises the 'indelible' mark Enid has left on her, telling her: 'Anytime I grow nauseous at the sight of a rainbow or hear a pop song that makes my ears bleed, I'll think of you.'

Describing characters

The first step is to develop an understanding of your characters by describing their main attributes. Complete the table on the following page with key information about two characters from your text.



	Main character 1	Main character 2
Personal details their full name, age and where they live		
Personality their strengths, weaknesses and significant traits		
Background their families; their social and cultural context		
Motivations why they make the choices they do		
Relationships with other characters and with their surroundings		
Changes in their relationships, circumstances or attitudes		



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view an example of a completed character description table.

Once you have a basic understanding of the characters and some effective language for writing about them, you can begin to compose short descriptive summaries. Here is an example for the Netflix television show *Wednesday*, using vocabulary from the word banks below.

The main character in *Wednesday* is Wednesday Addams. She is a sixteen-year-old girl with psychic powers who has been sent to Nevermore Academy, a private boarding school for outcasts. Although she displays sadistic tendencies and rarely shows her emotions, she is perceptive and courageous. She has pale skin and long pigtails, and only wears black clothing. One of her most important relationships is with her manipulative mother, whom she resents. Another important relationship is with the loyal and compassionate Enid, who befriends her. Wednesday hopes to escape Nevermore but must first solve the local murder mystery in the town of Jericho.

Word banks for describing characters

Positive qualities (adjectives)

compassionate	devoted	kind	perceptive
considerate	generous	loyal	thoughtful
courageous	honest	noble	trustworthy

Negative qualities (adjectives)

bigoted	greedy	manipulative	selfish
corrupt	ignorant	naive	submissive
disloyal	immoral	prejudiced	unkind

Attitudes towards others (verbs)

adores	despises	hates	respects
deceives	encourages	loves	suspects
defies	fears	resents	trusts

Characters' goals (verbs)

The character hopes to ...

accomplish	defeat	protect	understand
achieve	discover	reconcile	unify
conclude	overcome	resolve	win

Describe characters

- 1 Complete the following sentences to create a paragraph on a main character in your text.

The main character in _____ (title of text) is _____ (character name). They are _____ (age) and live in _____. They are _____, _____ and _____ (list the character's main personal qualities). One of their most important relationships is with _____ (other character's name), who _____ (description of their relationship). Another important relationship is with _____ (name of another character), who _____ (main character's attitude/relationship to them). _____ (main character's name) hopes to _____ (goal/s).

- 2 Using the sentence starters on the previous page as a guide, write a paragraph describing another character from your text.

Analysing characters

The next step is to add evidence from the text to help develop an analytical interpretation of your character. One way to sort quotations is by linking them to the thoughts and actions of the character, as shown in the table on the following page.

Descriptors	Character's thoughts and actions	Quotations/evidence
protective	Wednesday stands up for characters, such as her brother, who are bullied.	'The only person who gets to torture my brother is me.'
confident	She is unafraid to boast about her perceived superiority to Bianca before the big boat race.	'For the record, I don't believe I'm better than everyone else. Just that I'm better than you.'
loyal	She threatens to harm Ajax if he disappoints Enid, who has a crush on him.	'If he breaks your heart, I'll nail-gun his.'

Complete the table below for a character from your text.

Descriptors	Character's thoughts and actions	Quotations/evidence

Now you can try to present this information in complete analytical sentences. One way to organise them is as follows.

- ✗ Identify the quality or attribute of the character.
- ✗ Give an example from the text of a behaviour or action that demonstrates this quality.
- ✗ Support your statement with a suitable quotation.

Here is an example for *Wednesday* using the information from the table on the previous page.

quality

Wednesday is paradoxically protective of and malicious to those she cares about, like her younger brother, Pugsley. Although she takes pleasure in tormenting him, she rushes to his defence when a group of bullies at their school tie Pugsley up and force him into a locker. Before releasing a bag of flesh-eating piranhas into the pool in which the bullies are swimming, Wednesday announces, stone-faced: 'The only person who gets to torture my brother is me.'

behaviour

supporting quotation

Sentence starters for writing about characters

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write analytically about characters.

- × The character's enduring struggles are evident in ...
- × Despite demonstrating loyalty towards various characters, ...
- × The character's flaws stem from ...
- × The character's concern with appearances is what ultimately prevents them from ...
- × Here, the character is shown to be both a leader and a friend, even in a situation in which ...
- × Despite feeling uneasy about the way in which others are treated, the character ...
- × The character's inability to address their past has negative ramifications for ...
- × The character's sense of belonging is predicated on their relationships with ...



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view additional character analyses for Magda Szubanski's *Reckoning* and Erin Gough's *Amelia Westlake*.

Analyse characters

- 1 Complete the following sentences to incorporate evidence into your discussions about a character in your text.

_____ (character's name) describes themselves as

_____ (description of personal quality). This is shown by their statement, _____

_____ (key quote from the character). It is also supported by

_____ (other character's name), who says, _____

(quote from other character). This has the effect of showing that

_____ (conclusion drawn from the quotes).

- 2 Using the sentence starters on the previous page as a guide, write a paragraph analysing a different character from your text.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of prompts you can use to practise analysing characters further.

Writing about narrative point of view

Who narrates a text will invariably affect how readers respond to and interpret characters and events. A first-person narrator (using 'I') encourages the reader to empathise with the character of the narrator, while a third-person narrator invites readers to observe events with a more critical, detached eye.

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Looking for Alibrandi by Melina Marchetta (1992)

Looking for Alibrandi is told through the perspective of the novel's protagonist, Josie Alibrandi. The first-person narration presents readers with Josie's view of other characters and events, colouring them with her preoccupations and values. At first, her narration is focused on superficial elements and mirrors the tumultuous process of growing up; however, as Josie's relationships and experiences throughout the course of the novel provide her with different perspectives, she begins to mature in her thinking. This is indicated in her more reflective and considered narration by the close of the novel: 'But the important thing is that I know where my place in life is.'

Areas of narrative point of view that you could discuss in an analysis are outlined below, with examples from *Looking for Alibrandi*.

	Description	Quotations/Evidence
Change in narration	Josie begins the novel presenting events in a dramatic and superficial light; however, she is more reflective and considered by the end of the text.	'So not being able to go out a lot is one of my many problems.' (p.6) → 'I want to keep on learning truths till the day I die.' (p.260)
Choice of narrator	Having Josie as the narrator gives the text a distinctive voice and highlights the themes underpinning the novel, namely growing up and finding yourself.	'I dream of being successful and of falling in love with someone with money.' (p.71)
Reliability of narrator	The fact that the novel is narrated by a seventeen-year-old who perceives all events as life-or-death points to an unreliable narrator, which leads readers to question the accuracy of the recounting.	'I was shouting and she was crying, but I was too shocked to care. Maybe I was wrong.' (p.217)

Complete the table below to explore the narrative point of view in your text.

	Description	Quotations/Evidence
Change in narration		
Choice of narrator		
Reliability of narrator		

Sentence starters for writing about narrative point of view

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write analytically about narrative point of view.

- ✗ The narrative perspective helps demonstrate the ...
- ✗ Despite the use of an omniscient narrator, ...
- ✗ The character's perspective is afforded greater weight through ...
- ✗ This character's narration significantly influences the audience's response to ...
- ✗ The style of narration encourages readers to reconsider ...
- ✗ The effect on the audience of this character being the narrator is ...
- ✗ Through the narrator's interrogatory style, the audience is presented with ...
- ✗ The use of an unreliable narrator is designed to make readers ...

Word bank for describing narrators / narrative point of view

compassionate	detached	judgemental	sympathetic
critical	dramatic	manipulative	understanding
deceptive	endearing	reliable	unreliable



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view additional analyses of narrative point of view for Alice Oseman's *Heartstopper* and Karen M McManus' *One of Us Is Lying*.

Analyse narrative point of view

- 1 What type of narrator is used in your text? Find a short quote that is a good example of this narrative voice.

- 2 Complete the following sentences to describe the effect of narrative point of view in your text.

The narrative point of view in this chapter is _____.

This narrative perspective influences the reader to feel _____

towards _____ (name of character). It does so by showing

_____ (character's name) to be _____.

- 3 Using the sentence starters on the previous page as a guide, write a paragraph analysing one element of the narrative point of view in your text.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of prompts you can use to practise your analysis of narrative point of view.

Writing about setting and context

The setting of a text (the places and times in which the action of a narrative takes place) can determine how characters respond to different environments as they deal with conflict and seek to achieve their goals. The events and circumstances outside the world of the text (i.e. historical, social and cultural context) also shape how characters act and react in particular ways.

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Growing Up African in Australia edited by Maxine Beneba Clarke (2019)

Growing Up African in Australia is an anthology consisting of personal reflections of people from the African diaspora who have grown up in Australia, and this setting influences all the unique stories explored in this collection. While the setting is Australia – and very often Melbourne – the context varies for each contributor. Many immigrated to find a new life, others fled as refugees and some discovered their African ancestry when they were young children. Commonly, these individuals encountered similar experiences in Australia, such as difficulty with police, primary school bullies and inexperienced hair salons. As Maxine Beneba Clarke states, ‘Our lives and stories are just as ordinary, extraordinary, joyous and devastating as those of any other group of Australians ...’ In the case of each of these stories, setting is more about finding yourself and your place in your community than finding a place to live.

Areas of setting and context that you could discuss in an analysis are outlined below, with examples from Robbie Arnott’s *Flames*.

	Analytical statements about setting/context
Place	<i>Flames</i> is set entirely in Tasmania, and while it is a work of sweeping imagination, many of the locations and landscapes depicted are real. The descriptions of wildlife, plants, geological features and local communities work to create a recognisable portrait of this island.
Historical context	Reflecting the Launceston floods of 2016 and the Dunalley bushfire of 2013, Arnott’s novel taps into the reality of the destructive force of nature.
Social context	Despite its fantastical nature, the text deals with human relationships such as the one between Charlotte and her absent father, Jack. The strained relationship is epitomised in Charlotte’s declaration that ‘her father had never known how to be a father’.
Author’s context	Writing from his experience growing up in Tasmania, Arnott blends the real, vivid landscape of the island with fantastical images from his imagination.

Word bank for describing setting/context

barren	flourishing	picturesque	scenic
bustling	foreboding	polluted	shadowy
conservative	harsh	progressive	sprawling
dark	imaginary	real	stark
domestic	majestic	repressive	traditional
dystopian	natural	romantic	utopian

Using the word bank above to help you, complete the table below to explore the setting and context of your text.

	Analytical statements about setting/context
Place	
Historical context	
Social context	
Author's context	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view additional analyses of setting and context for Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* and the television series *Derry Girls*.

Sentence starters for writing about setting and context

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write analytically about setting and context.

- ✗ The symbolism of the settings illustrates ...
- ✗ The characters inhabit a place that normally represents connections, yet they are ...
- ✗ While the setting is a site of discord for several characters, it is also ...
- ✗ As the character begins their life anew, they realise that tension can arise from ...
- ✗ The historical context of the period shapes the way characters deal with ...
- ✗ One of the most significant impacts of the political context is ...
- ✗ The change in setting reflects the characters' ...
- ✗ Reflecting events from the author's own life, the text ...

Analyse setting and context

- 1 Complete the following short paragraph to describe the impact of setting or context on a protagonist in one of your texts.

_____ (name of text) is set in _____
 (time and/or place). _____ (main character) finds their
 environment to be _____. As a result, they decide to /
 realise that _____
 _____.

- 2 Using the sentence starters above as a guide, write a paragraph analysing an element of the setting or context from your text.

- 3 Complete the following table detailing how particular settings inform readers about characters and plot. The first one has been done for you as an example.

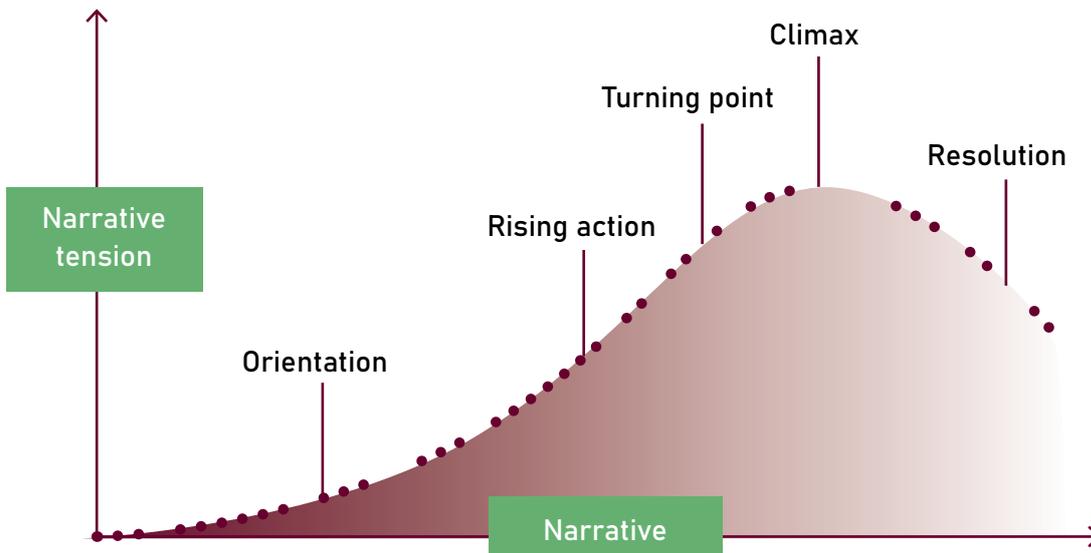
Type of setting	What it might tell you about characters/plot
an airport	Characters are able to find one another and reconnect, despite geographical barriers and long distances between them; however, at the same time, they can easily lose each other in this setting of constant movement and chaos.
an island	
a haunted mansion	
the countryside	
a courtroom	
a school principal's office	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of prompts you can use to practise your analysis of setting and context.

Writing about plot and structure

The plot of a narrative is essentially what happens in the story. In addition, authors give a shape to the story by creating key points or scenes that have rising and falling tension. This is referred to as the narrative structure, as shown in the diagram below.



SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Rear Window directed by Alfred Hitchcock (1954)

Rear Window engenders feelings of excitement and apprehension as it builds towards its suspenseful climax, culminating in the villain Thorwald's attempt to murder Jeff. Along the way, the audience is misled by several red herrings, designed to conceal the truth. At the same time, we are presented with the problematic relationship between Jeff and Lisa. They love each other but must overcome the customary generic obstacle before they can be united. This obstacle takes the form of a crisis point in their relationship, resulting from Lisa's desire for more commitment and Jeff's reluctance to give this commitment as he believes that it would compromise the career he loves. The murder mystery is, in fact, the narrative device that brings the pair together.

Summarise the plot of your text in the table below.

Term	Definition	Description of scene
orientation or exposition	The main characters and situation are introduced; the scene is set for a conflict of some kind.	
rising action or crisis point	A character is presented with a problem or challenge that tests their values and beliefs.	
turning point	A decisive change occurs; a character realises it is impossible to return to past circumstances.	
climax	The tension rises to a peak; the main conflict between characters and/or ideas comes to a head and must be resolved.	
resolution	The tension relaxes; conflicts, issues and relationships are resolved.	

Sentence starters for writing about plot and structure

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write analytically about plot and structure.

- ✗ Structurally, the book begins and ends with ...
- ✗ By connecting the two sections in this way, the author forces readers to confront their ...
- ✗ Although the text is structured chronologically, it is not simply ...
- ✗ The text's structure further supports the view that ...
- ✗ Despite the fast-paced description of events, the writer takes time to focus on ...
- ✗ The lead-up to the climax suggests ...
- ✗ With the major reveal at the end of the text, readers are encouraged to ...
- ✗ An ambiguous ending forces readers to make their own assumptions about ...

Word bank for describing plot/structure

captivating	deliberate	fast-paced	organic
circular	dramatic	intricate	relentless
climactic	elaborate	intriguing	slow-paced
complicated	engrossing	linear	tense
cyclical	exciting	nonlinear	thrilling



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view additional analyses of plot and structure for John Marsden's *Tomorrow, When the War Began* and Anh Do's *The Happiest Refugee*.

Analyse plot and structure

- 1 Complete the following sentences about the structure of your text.

One feature of the structure of _____ (name of text) is the use of _____ (structural feature such as flashbacks, flashforwards, circular structure). The writer's decision to structure the text in this way creates an effect of _____
_____.

The effect of this structural feature in terms of how we see the main character is _____
_____.

- 2 Using the sentence starters on the previous page as a guide, write a paragraph analysing an element of plot or structure from your text.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of prompts you can use to practise your analysis of plot and structure.

Writing about themes and ideas

The themes of a text are its most general statements – its ‘big ideas’ – about human experience. These are often the core focus of analytical responses in senior English.

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

After the Lights Go Out by Lili Wilkinson (2018)

Lili Wilkinson's *After the Lights Go Out* highlights values of community and kindness through its depiction of a catastrophe from the perspective of the daughter of a doomsday prepper. Raised with emergency drills and survival education, Pru Palmer should be well prepared for a crisis when, across town, all the power goes off. However, she finds herself torn between her father's philosophy of protecting oneself and one's family above all else, and her desire to help her fellow townspeople, who band together to support each other. By contrasting Pru's inherited individualistic survivalist mindset with the town's community spirit, Wilkinson emphasises the importance of teamwork, friendship and looking out for one another, no matter the circumstances: 'Whatever is out there, we'll deal with it together.'

Some common general themes/ideas – expressed as a single word and then as a possible contention – are shown in the table below. In the final three rows, list themes/ideas from your own text and a related contention for each.

Common themes/ideas	Contention
family	Family is the basis of an individual's happiness.
gender roles	Women have been limited by their traditional role in marriage.
growing up	Growing up is painful but necessary.
injustice	Injustice is often carried out by just individuals.
love	Love can help people to resolve conflicts.
power	Power can liberate individuals to follow their dreams.
survival	Survival depends on luck as well as inner strength.

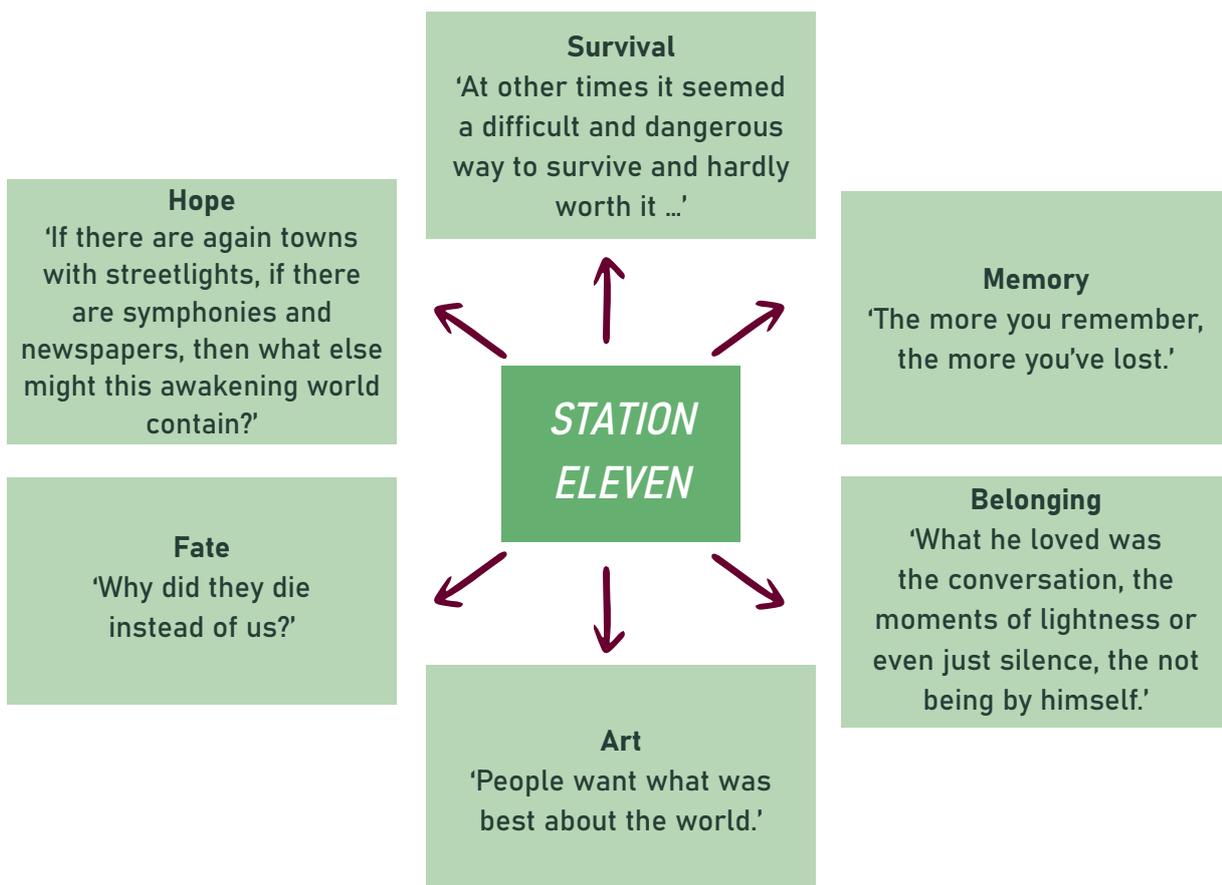


Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view additional analyses of theme for Alice Pung's *Laurinda* and the television series *Rick and Morty*.

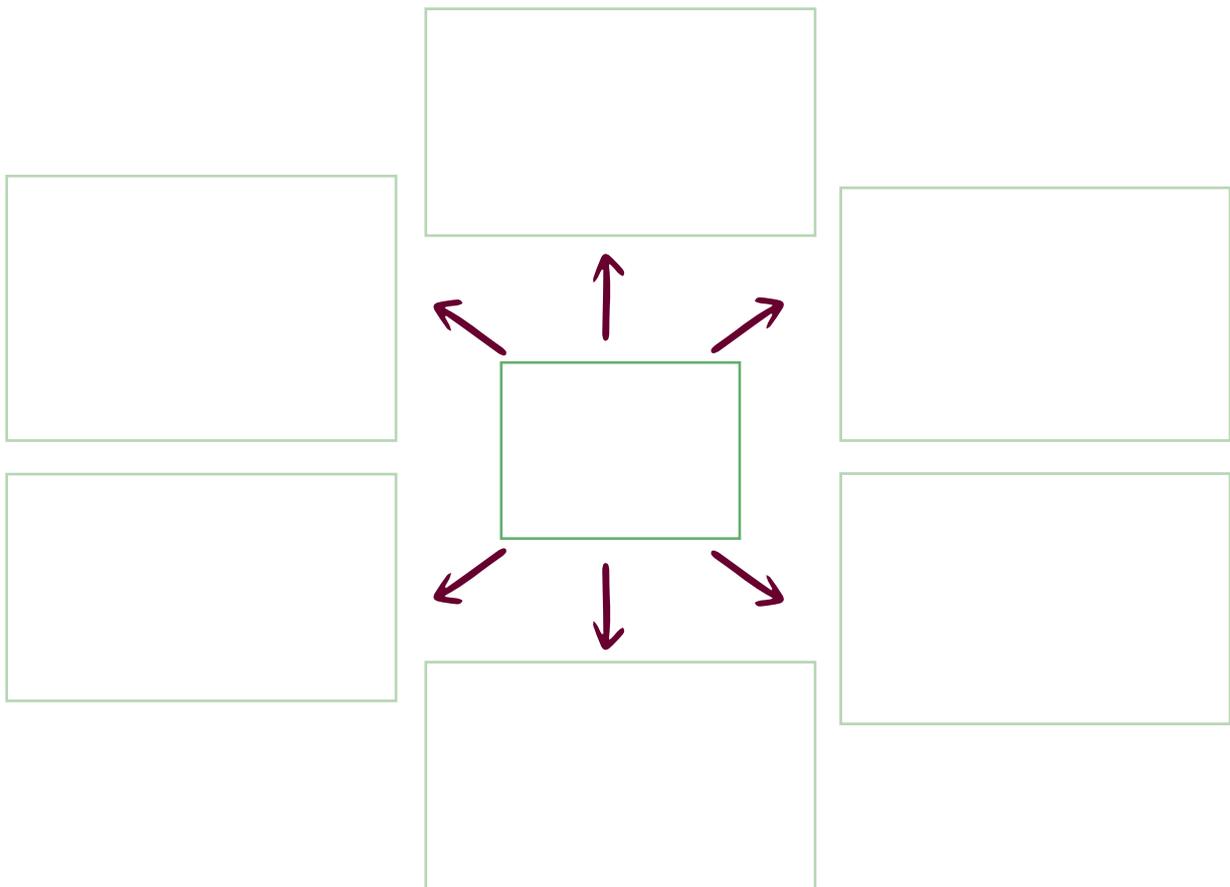
Word bank for describing theme

abstract	conventional	philosophical	religious
allegorical	existential	poetic	socialistic
central	feminist	postcolonial	tragic
classical	historical	racial	universal

Once you have identified the key themes in your texts, summarise them in a mind map, like the one below. Include a key quote for each key theme listed.



Create a theme mind map for your own text using the template below.



Sentence starters for writing about themes

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write analytically about themes.

- × Such harsh language exposes an implicit acceptance of ...
- × Ultimately, the author explores the fragile balance between ...
- × It is also evident that there are many oppressed and marginalised characters who ...
- × Ironically, the consequence of this is an implicit endorsement of ...
- × The idea of belonging is inextricably linked to the way in which ...
- × The ephemeral nature of truth is evidenced through ...
- × Nevertheless, the character perseveres, showing that ...
- × The importance of relationships and human connection is shown in ...

Analyse themes

- 1 Complete the sentences below to describe how your text's conclusion offers a viewpoint on one of the main themes.

A main theme explored in _____ (title of text) is _____
 _____ (main theme in one or two words). This theme is shown
 through _____

_____ (brief description of events). By exploring the
 theme in this way, the author suggests that _____
 _____ (point of view on the theme).

- 2 Using the sentence starters on the previous page as a guide, write a paragraph analysing a theme from your text.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of prompts you can use to practise your analysis of themes.



Writing about film

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Encanto directed by Jared Bush and Byron Howard (2021)

The mise en scène of *Encanto* is integral to the telling of a deeply cultural story. The film uses the visual style typical of Disney animation films, and blends this with the visual iconography of its Colombian setting. This combination is striking and works to create a visually engaging film. Colour explodes in every frame, with warm shades of terracotta juxtaposed with the jungle vegetation and natural flora. The effect of this mise en scène is to challenge the stereotypical portrayal of Colombia as a violent, drug-ridden state, and to place the focus on the diversity of Colombia, its art, its nature and, most importantly, its people.

When you are analysing a film, aim to refer to at least some of the relevant techniques. Discussions of themes and characters need to consider how visual and sound elements, as well as the dialogue and plot, support your interpretation.

Complete the table below to analyse a key scene in your film.

Film title:

Brief description of scene:

Element	Example	Effect
Setting		
Lighting		
Acting		
Cinematography (e.g. camera angles, focus)		
Editing		
Sound		

Sentence starters for writing about film

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write analytically about film.

- ✘ By making frequent use of close-up shots, the director leads the audience ...
- ✘ Suspense and tension are created through the use of ...
- ✘ The music conveys a sad/happy/melancholic atmosphere, encouraging viewers to ...
- ✘ The director aims to achieve a certain effect by ...
- ✘ This bird's-eye-view shot reveals ...
- ✘ Subdued/bright lighting is used to enhance the sense of ...
- ✘ A range of editing techniques is used to slow down the action, thereby ...
- ✘ The haunting musical score also contributes to the emotional journey that ...



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view additional analyses of film for *All About Eve* directed by Joseph L Mankiewicz and *The Hunger Games* directed by Gary Ross.

Analyse film

Using the sentence starters above as a guide, write a paragraph analysing an element of the film text you are studying.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of prompts you can use to practise your analysis of film.

Writing about drama

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Oedipus the King by Sophocles (c. 429 BCE)

Oedipus the King is a revenge play masquerading as psychological drama. The nature of the revenge is this: Laius and Jocasta are tested by the gods who deliver a prophecy declaring that the king will be killed by his own son. Exercising their free will, they decide to kill the child, but he is saved through the interventions of a kindly servant. The rest of the events in the Oedipus story are all contrivances by fate to punish the royal pair for their transgression. It may be the most elaborate revenge ever conceived, but it is in keeping with the ancient Greeks' conception of fate.

A play is a much more collaborative text type than a novel or a collection of short stories. The written play (script) is essentially the blueprint for the final product – a performance.

Consider how elements such as stage directions, speech and dramatic irony support your interpretation by completing the table below.

Play title:

Brief description of scene:

Element	Example	Effect
Stage directions		
Speech		
Dramatic irony		

Word bank for analysing drama

act	costumes	playwright	set
aside	dialogue	props	soliloquy
chorus	monologue	scene	stage direction

Sentence starters for writing about drama

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write analytically about drama.

- ✘ The stage directions for this scene set a dark mood by ...
- ✘ The character's soliloquy evokes feelings of ...
- ✘ Through the use of exaggerated humour, ...
- ✘ This is clearly evident in the play's second act, which shows ...
- ✘ Using this imagery is significant as it ...
- ✘ The chaotic dialogue reveals that this character is inherently ...
- ✘ This playful use of disguise foreshadows the ...
- ✘ The monologues/asides are intended to be heard only by the audience, thus ...



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view additional analyses of drama for Hannie Rayson's *Extinction* and William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Analyse drama

Using the sentence starters above as a guide, write a paragraph analysing an element of drama in your film text.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of prompts you can use to practise your analysis of drama.

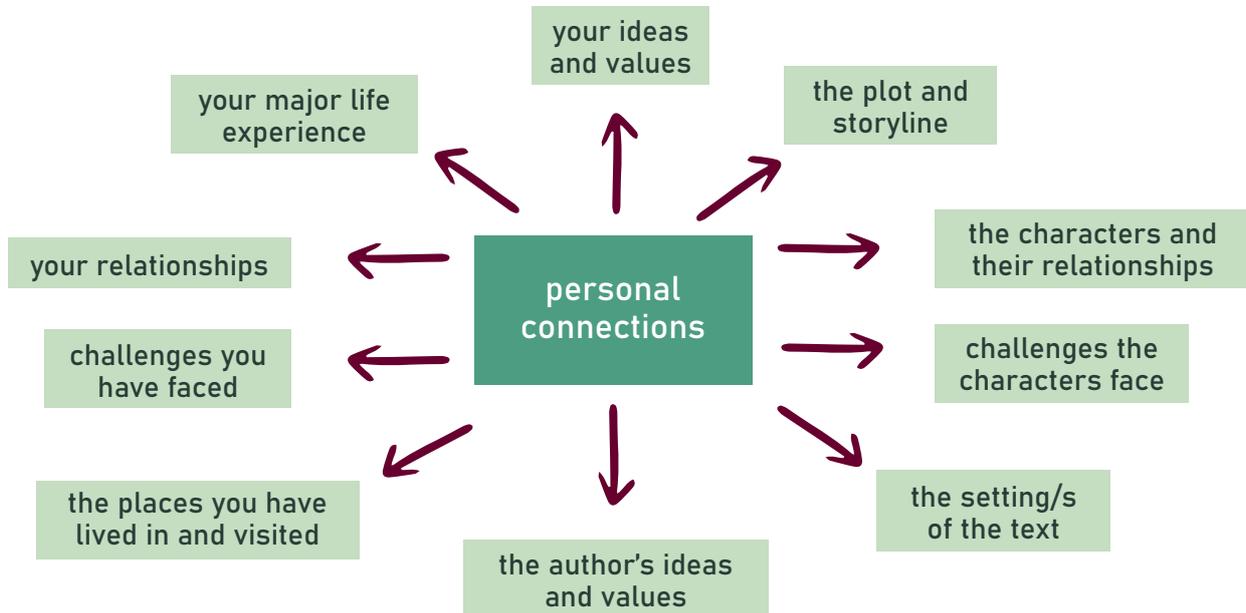
Writing about personal connections

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas (2017)

The key takeaway for me from Angie Thomas' YA novel *The Hate U Give* is that you have to speak out if you want to see change in the world. Similar to the way in which the Black community in the novel suffer from prejudice, as refugees in Australia my family and I are often judged and treated differently based on where we've come from. The journey that Starr undergoes in the text is one that I aspire to follow. Currently I relate to the character of Starr at the beginning of the novel, timid and afraid to speak out about the issues marginalised people face every day. Although Starr struggles to use her voice at first, each time she tells her story her confidence grows. While justice and structural change are not achieved in the resolution, Starr finds healing and empowerment through her voice, implying that others, like me, can too.

A considered personal response requires you to think deeply about your reaction to the text and the factors that prompt particular feelings. Such factors include those shown in the diagram below.



While exploring personal connections to a text will heavily feature experiences from your own life, you are also able to draw on and discuss connections to the wider world.

Complete the table below to identify connections between your life / the world and the text.

Feature	In the text	In my life / the world
Characters, people and relationships		
Plot and important moments		
Ideas and values		
Settings and places		



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a completed table identifying connections.

Sentence starters for writing about personal connections

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write about personal connections to a text.

- ✗ When I first discovered/experienced/understood/noticed ...
- ✗ The ... (event in the text) reminds me of a time when I ...
- ✗ In a similar way to ... (character/s), I have found that ...
- ✗ Reflecting on the values endorsed in the text, I personally think that ...
- ✗ A factor that influences my attitude towards ... (idea or aspect of the text) is ...
- ✗ Although my experience was different, I learned a similar lesson when ...
- ✗ The climax in the text mirrors a significant national event that ...
- ✗ I have encountered characters like ... (character/s) in my own life; for example, ...

Explore personal connections

- 1 Choose a character or characters with whom you identify. What similarities can you see between yourself and the character/s?

- 2 Complete the table below to explore personal connections with your text.

From the text	Your response
Quote:	My reaction to this quote is
Character:	A key connection with this character is
Setting:	Comparing the text's setting with my own reveals
Event:	This important event in the text suggests

- 3 Using the sentence starters on the previous page as a guide, write a paragraph exploring a connection between your life and the text.



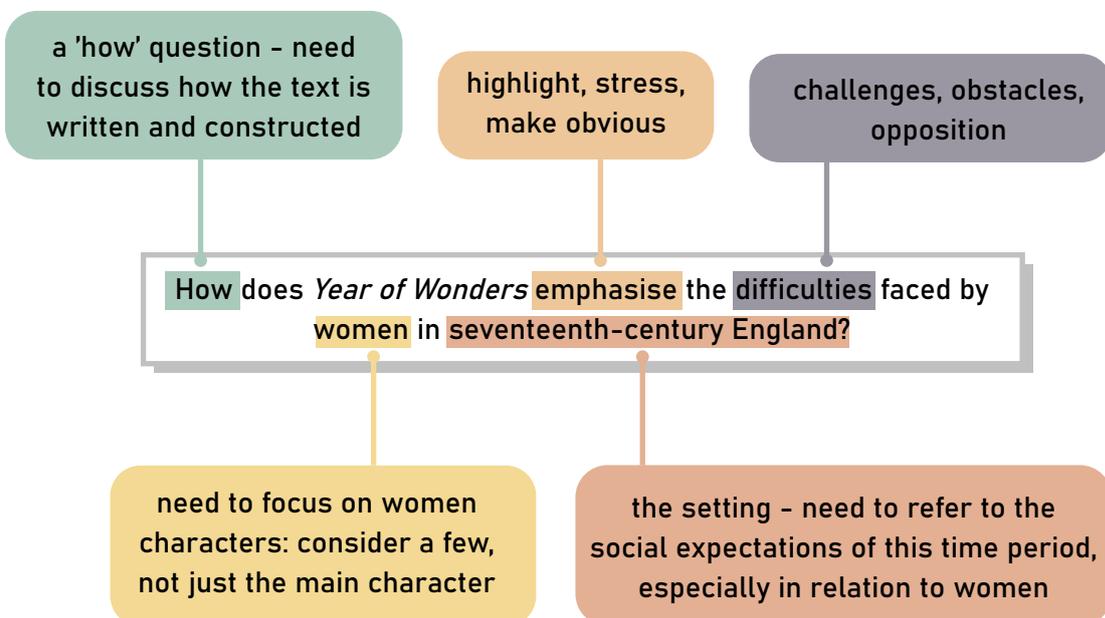
Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of prompts you can use to further explore connections with your texts.

Writing an analytical response

Analysing the topic/prompt

Whether you are writing a text response or a personal response, your first task is to analyse or break down the topic/prompt so you have a clear understanding of what it requires you to do.

Annotate the topic/prompt with notes about the main ideas, and synonyms and definitions for key terms, as in the example below.



Annotate topics/prompts

- 1 Using the example on the previous page as a guide, annotate the topics/prompts below.

'The characters in *Sunset Boulevard* seek the validation of others to give meaning to their lives.' Do you agree?

'*To Kill a Mockingbird* demonstrates the destructive power of racism.' Discuss.

Discuss the impact family relationships can have on our sense of self. Refer to both *My Brilliant Career* and your own experience.

- 2 Find or write a topic/prompt specific to your text, then annotate it.

Planning your text response

Brainstorming ideas

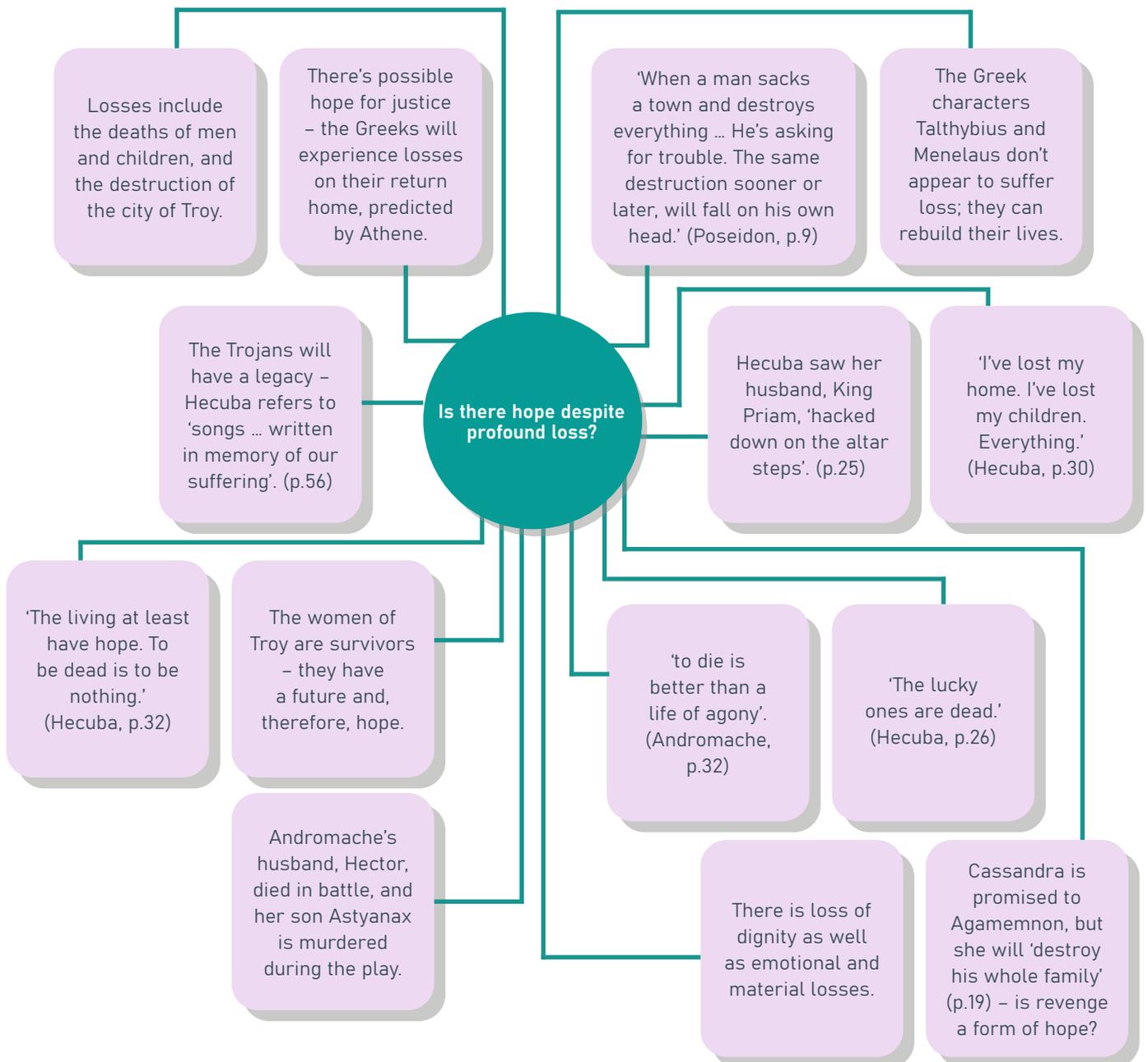
A good way to brainstorm ideas for a text response is to write the topic/prompt in the centre of a page and make notes around it.

Your notes should include:

- × examples and quotations from the text
- × relevant textual features (e.g. narrative voice, structure, language and imagery)
- × ideas, issues and values explored by the text that are relevant to the topic/prompt.

The example below refers to Euripides' play *The Women of Troy* (415 BCE); the quotes and page numbers are from the translation by Don Taylor (Methuen Drama, 2007).

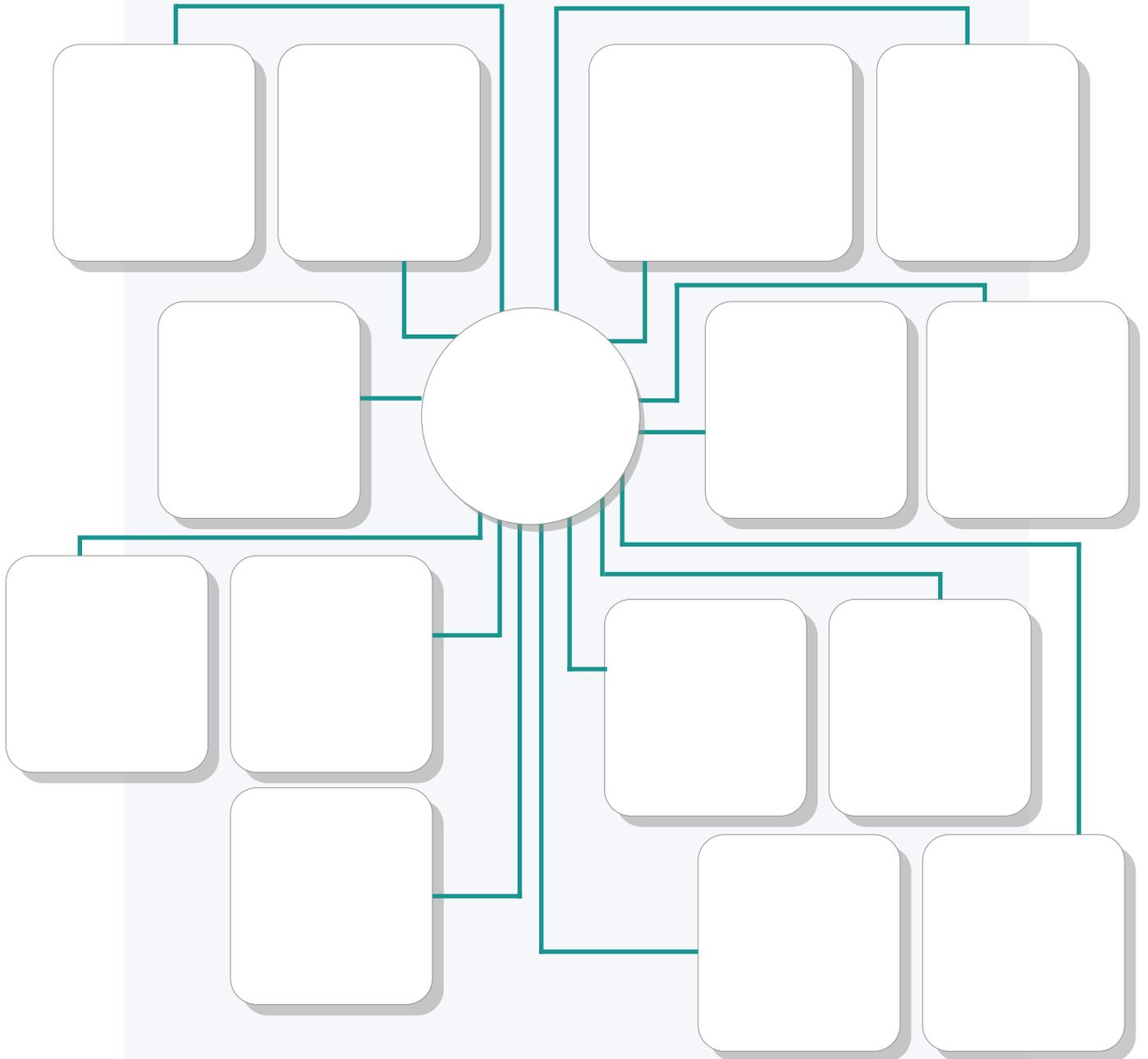
➔ **TOPIC:** 'In *The Women of Troy* there is hope despite profound loss.' Discuss.



Brainstorm ideas

In the space below, brainstorm ideas for your topic/prompt.

TOPIC/PROMPT:



Writing your contention and selecting evidence

Once you have brainstormed ideas, decide what your opinion is in response to the topic/prompt. This will form your contention, which should state your point of view and give a sense of why you hold this view. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer. For example, below are two possible arguments in response to the topic on *The Women of Troy* on page 37:

Despite the profound losses experienced by the women, they have survived the war and there is some hope for the future.

Or

The women have survived the war but have lost their families, their homes and their freedom, leaving them with no hope for the future.

Now spend some more time thinking about why you have reached this view on the topic/prompt. Why do you hold this view and how does the text support it? Your reasons will form the basis of your argument.

Write a contention and select evidence

- 1 Write a one-sentence response to a topic/prompt of your choice.

- 2 List three passages from your text (including page numbers) that are directly relevant to your essay topic and would be good supporting evidence.

- 3 Briefly say why each passage would support your argument.

- 4 Identify three key quotations that support your argument.

Developing a plan

A plan is a valuable outline of your essay. If you are writing under timed conditions (as in an exam), the plan can be brief, but it is still worth doing as it will keep your writing on track and relevant to the given topic.

Sample plan

The following sample plan on *The Women of Troy* responds to the topic about hope and loss on page 37, and draws on the brainstorming notes on the same page.

Topic: 'In *The Women of Troy* there is hope despite profound loss.' Discuss.

Contention: Despite the profound losses experienced by the women, they have survived the war and there is some hope for the future.

Body paragraph one

Topic sentence: Loss in *The Women of Troy* is comprehensive, from the loss of loved ones to the loss of their city.

Evidence:

- × Focus on the characters of Hecuba and Andromache.
- × Consider the impact of the deaths of Priam and Hector, and the destruction of Troy.

Body paragraph two

Topic sentence: These terrible losses mean the women have nothing to look forward to, only continued suffering.

Evidence:

- × The women face lives of slavery to men they detest, and the loss of dignity and status.
- × The tragic deaths of children such as Polyxena and Astyanax mean the women will not be able to watch their children grow up.
- × Andromache says 'to die is better than a life of agony' and Hecuba says 'the lucky ones are dead', although she later insists 'the living at least have hope. To be dead is to be nothing'.

Body paragraph three

Topic sentence: Nevertheless, there are sources of hope in the play, although for the women themselves these are limited.

Evidence:

- × The women have survived and will leave a legacy through the 'songs' that will be 'written in memory of our suffering'.
- × The Greeks will suffer on their return home – this retribution suggests justice can be upheld, as the Greeks have been brutal and inhumane.

Use the template below to outline what you will include in your response, as well as how you will order your various points/arguments.

Write your topic/prompt here: _____

What is your short response to the topic?

I think that _____

because _____

Write your contention in more formal language.

Identify your three main points/arguments, and list evidence from the text (e.g. character choices and actions, plot details, quotations) to support each reason.

Reason 1: _____

Evidence:

× _____

× _____

× _____

Reason 2: _____

Evidence:

× _____

× _____

× _____

Reason 3: _____

Evidence:

× _____

× _____

× _____

Writing your text response

The following sample paragraphs respond to the topic: **How does Satrapi use visual imagery to emphasise the emotional contrasts of Marjane's experience of the Revolution in *Persepolis*?**

Writing an introduction

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION

In Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel *Persepolis*, the extremes of young Marjane's experience of the Islamic Revolution in Iran are often represented through visual imagery. The black-and-white illustrations include a variety of techniques to illustrate the strong, contrasting emotions that Marjane experiences. Satrapi uses light and shade to emphasise significant plot points; close-up drawings of characters' faces to highlight the depth of their feelings and reactions; and highly stylised symbolic elements to convey her characters' experiences. These visual features help to provide a much deeper understanding of Marjane's personal feelings about her society, religion and the abrupt political changes that occur.

An introduction lets your reader know what lies ahead. It should provide a clear response to the topic and give your reader clues about the direction the response will take. Your introduction should include:

- × your main contention
- × essential information about the text
- × key terms from the topic
- × signposts to what you will discuss in the body paragraphs.

Write an introduction

Write an introduction to the topic you developed a plan for on page 41.

Writing body paragraphs

SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH

Satrapi's portrayal of the visually distinctive groups in Iranian society helps readers to understand the value that Marjane places on individuality and personal expression, but it also demonstrates her persistent passive resistance. Even though Marjane is portrayed in her uniform black headscarf at school, she eventually finds a way to distinguish herself from the crowd of black-clad women by donning a light, spotted headscarf. This differentiation visually emphasises her refusal to allow the situation to blunt her individuality or to temper her determination to resist; it also demonstrates how comfortable she feels when she is allowed to more fully express her individuality at home.

Body paragraphs develop and support the main argument. They need to clearly respond to the topic, use evidence from the text, and explain how this evidence supports the central argument and relates to the topic. Remember the following guidelines.

- ✗ Start each paragraph with a topic sentence, which is like a mini contention that you will 'prove' using textual evidence within the paragraph.
- ✗ Include at least one quotation in every body paragraph.
- ✗ Relate *all* the material in the paragraph back to the topic sentence.
- ✗ Keep the actual topic in mind at all times – link back to it at the end of each paragraph.

Use the following word banks and sentence starters to help you write fluent and coherent body paragraphs.

Terms to discuss a similar idea	Terms to present a different idea
additionally	by contrast / contrastingly
furthermore	conversely
just as ... so too	however
likewise	nevertheless
moreover	on the other hand
not only ... but also	whereas
similarly	yet

Terms to show a logical/ causal connection	Terms to indicate an exception/ variance
as a result	admittedly
consequently	occasionally
therefore	rarely
this is why / which is why	with the exception of

Sentence starters for incorporating quotes

Quotes from the text should be incorporated smoothly into your sentences. Here are some sentence starters and structures for including quotes as evidence.

- ✘ As (character's name) says/asks, '(quote character's speech)', suggesting that ...
- ✘ (Character's name) feels/thinks that '(quote showing feelings or thoughts)', which reveals ...
- ✘ The characters' close/distant relationship is shown by '(quote showing nature of relationship)'.
- ✘ The setting, which is '(quote describing setting)', affects the characters' lives through ...
- ✘ The opening of the text creates a sense of mystery/drama/tension through phrases/images such as '(quoted phrase)' and '(quoted phrase)'.
- ✘ The dramatic/reassuring/disturbing conclusion, in which '(quote showing what happens)', leaves the reader/audience with a sense of ...

Write a body paragraph

Using the word banks and sentence starters above and on the previous page to help you, write a body paragraph in response to the topic you developed a plan for on page 41.

Writing a conclusion

SAMPLE CONCLUSION

The stark black-and-white imagery in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* offers readers an insight into young Marjane's feelings and emotional conflict. As a young woman, suddenly forced to curb her interests and limit her own freedom, she is prevented from exercising her will outwardly, but her resistance is demonstrated through the visual imagery of the text. Satrapi's use of light and shade, symbolism and close depictions of Marjane's emotional reactions emphasise the extreme feelings produced by such a swift and radical change.

A conclusion draws your discussion to a close. It should always be included to ensure you submit a completed piece of writing.

A conclusion should:

- × sum up your supporting points and evidence
- × restate your main contention (using different words from those in the introduction)
- × link back to the topic.

Write a conclusion

Write a conclusion to the topic you developed a plan for on page 41.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a complete sample essay on *Persepolis*, and annotate it with the different elements of an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion.

Editing your text response

When you are editing and rewriting, begin by focusing on the bigger picture, checking for structure and meaning.

To edit and rewrite your essay use the following checklist.

- The introduction includes a clear contention that addresses the topic.
- The body of the essay presents a consistent line of argument.
- Each body paragraph contains a clear and relevant topic sentence.
- Statements about the text are supported by textual evidence and examples.
- Each paragraph contains a link back to the topic.
- Linking words are used to show a logical development of ideas.
- Sentence lengths and structures are varied, with some simple sentences and some more complex ones.
- The conclusion sums up the argument and is clearly still addressing the topic.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a mid-range sample response on Robbie Arnott's *Flames*. Use the checklist above to annotate the response, commenting on elements that are appropriately addressed as well as areas for improvement.

Once you have redrafted your essay to ensure that you have presented a clear and effective argument, the next step is to proofread it. This time, focus on the smaller picture, checking for appropriate language choices, and for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

To proofread your essay use this checklist.

- The title of your text is consistently underlined (or italicised if typed).
- Names of characters and places are correctly spelled.
- Quotes from the text are correct and are enclosed in quotation marks.
- Punctuation is correct – sentences begin with capital letters and end with full stops; quotation marks and possessive apostrophes are used correctly.
- The language style is formal – there are no contractions, colloquial expressions or instances of the first-person 'I' (except in the case of a personal response essay).
- Vocabulary is precise and varied.

Sample text response

The following sample text response responds to the topic: **'Everything Everywhere All at Once explores the effect of trauma on people's lives.'** Discuss.

Provides a broad overview of the text before presenting a contention in response to the topic.

Directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* deals with complex philosophical and personal issues through an absurdist, speculative lens. The driving force of the narrative is the generational trauma experienced by the Wang family, originating from the familial estrangement of the protagonist, Evelyn. Her repressed emotions and sullen outlook on the course of her life lead her to keep her husband, Waymond, and their daughter, Joy, at arm's length. Evelyn's lack of emotional engagement and understanding leads Joy to begin questioning the very meaning of her existence and, in an alternate yet connected reality, seek to destroy the entire multiverse. Although the film is focused on the negative consequences of trauma, its resolution shows the inner peace that can be found in addressing the mental anguish caused by past events.

Topic sentence clearly addresses the topic – in this case, exploring the ubiquity of trauma in people's lives.

Evelyn's trauma defines her whole life, from her mundane, all-consuming work at the laundromat to the relationships with her family. The root of Evelyn's trauma, being shunned by her father Gong Gong when she chooses to marry Waymond and move to the US, is shown multiple times throughout the film, as it represents the point at which Evelyn's life diverged into a multitude of other possible realities. The Evelyn the audience sees is described by Alpha Waymond as the worst version of Evelyn: 'I've seen thousands of Evelyns, but never an Evelyn like you. You have so many goals you never finished, dreams you never followed. You're living your worst you.' What initially began as a hopeful new life, shown in the sepia-toned flashbacks to Evelyn and Waymond smiling and laughing after they've purchased the laundromat, is now seen as a life 'just going around in circles. Doing laundry and taxes, and laundry, and taxes'. Having left her family to be with Waymond, she subconsciously blames him for taking her away from her family and the chance to fulfil her dreams, and this causes a rupture in their relationship, with Waymond wanting a divorce. The effect on Joy is even more profound, with Alpha Waymond noting that in his universe, 'you pushed your own daughter too hard until you broke her. You created Jobu Tupaki'.

Synonyms for the key word in the topic, 'trauma', are used throughout the response, showing varied and precise vocabulary.

Topic sentence links the idea of this paragraph to the previous paragraph, ensuring smooth flow of argument.

Whereas Evelyn bottles up her emotions and passive aggressively takes it out on loved ones, Joy is unable to cope with the existential crisis that haunts her psyche and, ultimately, she wants it all to end. While she is initially portrayed as a typical disgruntled teenager who fights with her parents, the audience soon discovers that she, or at least an alternative version of her from a different universe, is a powerful being who is trying to destroy the multiverse. This version of Joy, known as Jobu Tupaki, is born from the trauma of her relationship with her mother in that reality, which led her down the path of nihilistic thinking. Similarly, in the primary reality of the film, Joy is hurt by her mother's failure to acknowledge (to

A feature of film (here, cinematography) is identified and discussed in relation to its effect in portraying the main themes of the text.

Short quotes are seamlessly embedded into the response.

her grandfather) Joy's relationship with Becky. Joy's trauma is symbolised by the black-hole-like bagel that threatens to engulf all multiverses; however, Joy says her purpose in creating the bagel 'wasn't to destroy everything. It was to destroy myself'. The lasting and significant effects of trauma are highlighted through the character of Joy, who is not only caught in the intergenerational whirlpool of trauma but also in the existential questions that lead her to believe that 'nothing matters'.

It is not until the resolution of the film that the audience is shown how trauma can be addressed and the people who suffer from it can be healed. Having almost been drawn into Jobu Tupaki's plan to end everything by entering the bagel, Evelyn experiences an existential epiphany when she witnesses the peaceful way in which Waymond approaches situations in a number of realities. In their primary reality, he is able to de-escalate the crisis with Deirdre from the IRS, while in another he proclaims that 'the only thing I do know is that we have to be kind'. Evelyn follows her husband's humanist advice and uses her powers to identify the trauma experienced by Jobu's fighters and neutralise their pain. Realising her innate power, she is finally able to accept the past, telling her father, 'It's okay if you can't be proud of me. Because I finally am.' It is at this moment that Evelyn is able to shed her shame and pain and open her heart. For the first time in the film, she shows Waymond genuine affection, no longer blaming him for the issues with her father. Similarly, she is able to treat Joy with respect, introducing her daughter's girlfriend to Gong Gong with a smile on her face. The tearful climax between Evelyn and Joy outside the laundromat reaffirms that love is powerful enough to overcome any form of hardship.

Trauma permeates the world of *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. It is shown to have negative consequences for all the characters in the film, many of whom contribute to each other's sense of hurting. Evelyn's feelings of abandonment are caused by her father rejecting her for marrying Waymond; this in turn leads Evelyn to treat her husband and daughter with indifference. As a result, Waymond drifts away from his wife and seeks to leave her, while Joy is overwhelmed with existential angst and wants life to end. However, the resolution between Evelyn and Joy suggests that individuals can overcome trauma and begin the process of healing.

Well-chosen quote illustrates the idea of accepting trauma.

General analytical statement related to the topic follows specific discussion of the text.

Conclusion succinctly sums up the approach to the response.

Sample personal response

The following sample personal response responds to the prompt: **How do your own experiences and ideas connect with *Station Eleven*? Include reference to how humans respond to crisis.**

The opening sentence establishes the central ideas being explored in the response, with a direct link drawn to the text.

Clear topic sentence outlines the argument of the paragraph.

Links to the previous paragraph before introducing another point, contributing to a smooth flow of argument.

A direct connection is made between the text and a personal experience.

The emotions of fear, loneliness and hope that we collectively shared during the COVID-19 pandemic are reflected in Emily St John Mandel's *Station Eleven*. Although the pandemic at the heart of this text (the Georgia Flu) is different from the one we experienced in our reality, it nonetheless led to destruction and devastation on both an individual and global level – feelings that are all too relatable. Similar to the characters in *Station Eleven*, many of us were worried about getting sick or dying, dealt with loneliness in a world largely bereft of human contact, and continued to hope for better days.

Fear is a term that became synonymous with the pandemic, both for us and for the characters in *Station Eleven*. Although the fictionalised Georgia Flu in the text was far deadlier – killing over ninety-nine per cent of the world's population – we hadn't seen a virus on the scale of COVID-19 since the Spanish flu in the 1910s, and it prompted us to drastically change our way of life in order to combat it. Millions of people died from COVID-19, some within days of contracting it. Likewise, characters in the text quickly fall victim to the disease; for example, 'the bartender ... died three weeks later on the road out of the city'. I found this thought particularly frightening during our own pandemic, always worrying that one of my loved ones or I would die suddenly from the virus. Lethal pandemics like these highlight the arbitrariness of death and individuals' lack of power to control their fate.

As well as instilling fear in people, the measures put in place to avoid contagion led to increased loneliness. The text explores this theme through the depiction of characters who lost their loved ones and had to survive in a post-apocalyptic setting where no one could be trusted. In contrast, we were deprived of human connection with our friends and extended family through closed national and international borders and multiple lockdowns that restricted our movement outside of the home. Just as Kirsten was aware 'of the emptiness of the landscape [and] the lack of people ... around her', so too did I long to be able to move freely in the world and enjoy the company of friends and classmates and family. While the pandemics may have hampered human connection in some ways, they also served as a reminder of the importance of spending time with the ones we love. The members of the Travelling Symphony in *Station Eleven* know this to be true, banding together to form their own makeshift family; similarly, I became even closer to the friends and family members I was allowed to meet within my five kilometre radius.

Outlines the three areas that the body of the essay will explore in greater detail.

Identifies how personal links with the text can enhance its emotional impact.

Quotations from the text are embedded seamlessly into the discussion, and are related to a personal experience.

Despite all the negative consequences of living through a pandemic, there is a human tendency to hold on to a sense of hope. While the early years following the pandemic are a time of great despair for the characters in *Station Eleven*, the subsequent exploits of the survivors underscore the ability of humankind to overcome obstacles and inspire hope in one another. Similarly, I felt despair when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the first lockdown came into effect, but seeing people adapt to living and working from their homes showed me how resilient people can be. The return of technology in the world of the text, and the hope it instils in the survivors of the pandemic that civilisation can be reborn, mirrors the feeling of hope and relief that my family and I felt when a vaccine for COVID-19 was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration. In both cases, people were hopeful that the pain endured during the height of the respective pandemics could be a remnant of the past and no longer impact upon their lives.

Comparative phrases such as 'similarly' and 'mirrors' are used to draw connections between the text and personal experiences.

Succinct conclusion presents a final proposition that encapsulates the breadth of the issue.

There is no denying the enduring impact of pandemics such as the fictional Georgia Flu in *Station Eleven* and COVID-19. The intense emotions felt by the characters and people in each scenario share many attributes, highlighting the universality of the human experience in challenging times.



The structure of a personal response may differ from that of a text response, with greater freedom to explore and present personal connections to a text. However, it should still have a logical structure with topic sentences that reveal the argument being made and evidence from the text in support of these points.

Section 2:

Crafting texts

This section guides you through the process of producing your own writing. It focuses on the four main types of writing:

- * imaginative
- * reflective
- * informative
- * persuasive.

It includes a range of activities to help you to brainstorm topics, ideas and issues on which to write, and exercises to turn these into complete pieces of writing. With samples drawn from classic and contemporary texts, this section shows you the breadth of writing you can produce.

Chapter 9 discusses key ideas and mentor texts, providing examples that you may use to direct or inspire your writing.



Considering audience, context and purpose

Determining your audience

Before you begin writing, you should determine the audience you are addressing. The audience you have in mind will shape the form, structure and language of your piece. First, consider your potential audience in broad terms – for example, young adults, business leaders or healthcare workers. This will help you to begin to visualise your audience. Some common audience characteristics to consider are listed below.

- × age
- × background
- × gender
- × interests
- × job
- × location

Complete the table below by identifying the likely audience for the texts listed. The first one has been done for you as a guide.

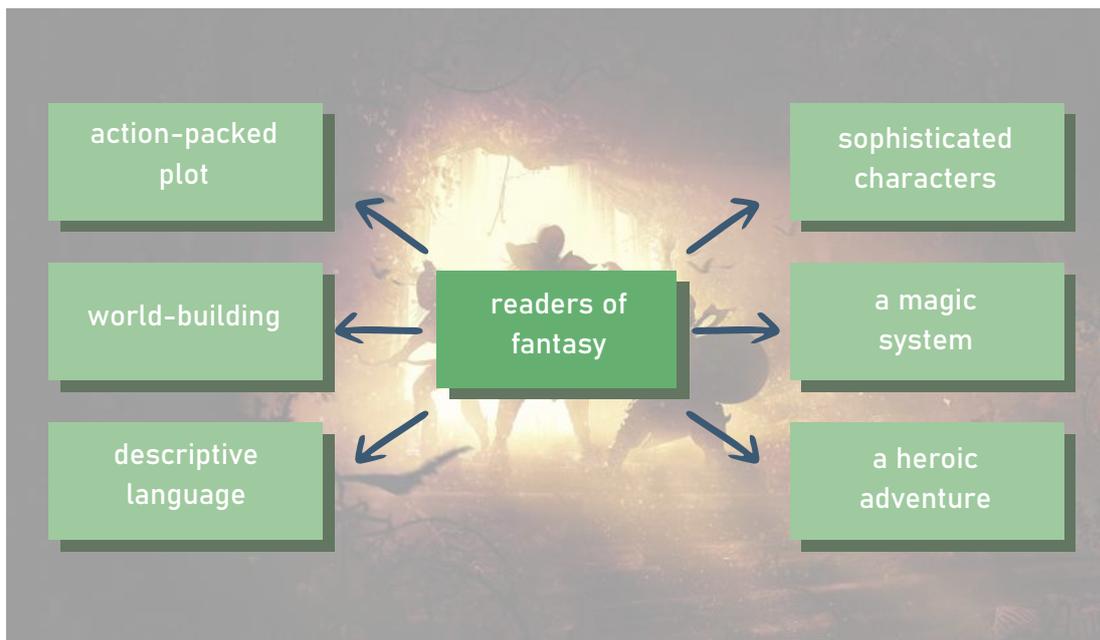
Text	Potential audience
An opinion piece arguing for more green spaces in Melbourne's CBD	<i>environmentalists (interests); parents with young children who live in or near Melbourne's CBD (location)</i>
A poem about the beauty of Uluru	

A debate on whether nurses should get paid more	
An essay on the representation of mothers in mainstream films	

Once you have a general idea of your audience, try to refine your understanding by considering questions like the ones below.

- × What do these people like or dislike?
- × What motivates them?
- × What are their values in relation to the topic/issue?

Record your findings in a simple diagram like the one below. (This example shows elements that are likely to appeal to readers of fantasy fiction.)

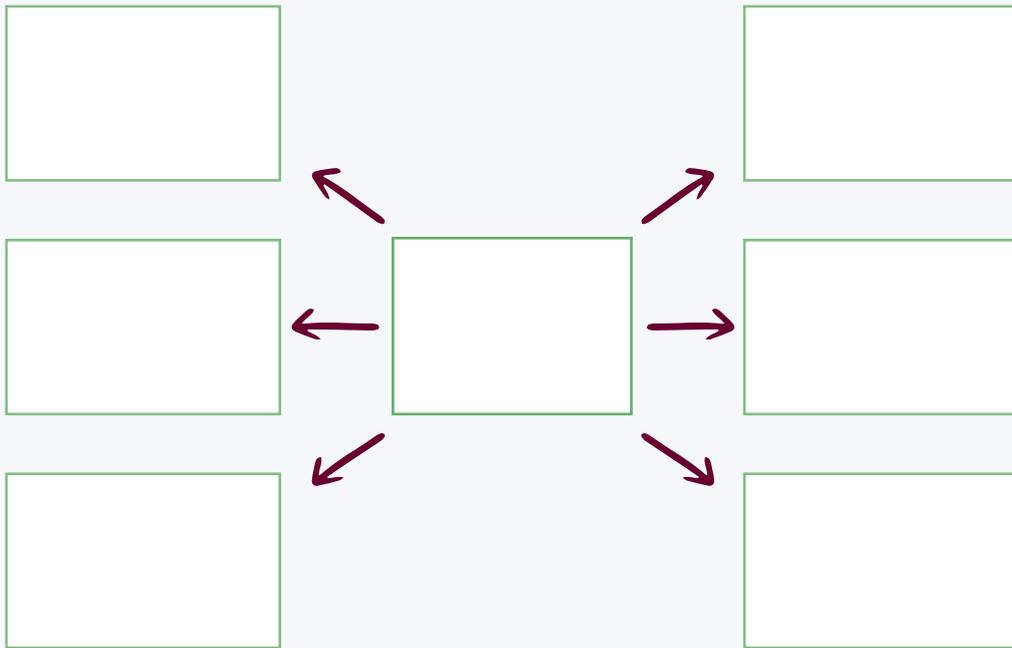


Sometimes the target audience of a text will be very specific; at other times, the intended audience is much broader. Some texts will be designed to appeal to several different target audiences.

Determine your audience

- 1 Select a topic that you would want to write a text about. Who do you think would be interested in this topic? Why?

- 2 Complete the diagram below by identifying elements that would appeal to your imagined audience.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an additional activity about audience.

Applying context

Context refers to the circumstances in which your text will be delivered. If you are writing the script for a podcast, for instance, your intention will be for it to be read aloud, recorded and then listened to by individual audience members. If you are writing a blog post, then the blog website, which is likely to be highly visual and interactive, forms part of the context for that post.

Complete the table below for the topic you wrote about on the previous page.

- × Topic: _____
- × Mode (e.g. writing, speaking): _____
- × Medium (e.g. print book, streaming service): _____
- × Form (e.g. blog post, play): _____
- × Imagined site of publication (e.g. local newspaper, YouTube channel):

Apply context

How would your chosen mode, medium and form affect the following elements of your text?

Structure of your text	
Use of features	
Language choices	

Writing for a purpose

The purpose of a text is the reason it has been written. As you begin crafting your own pieces of writing, you need to be clear about the purpose of each piece, as it will inform the vocabulary, structures and language features you use.

For example, if you're writing to express ideas and emotions, you probably won't fill your text with numerous facts and figures that might bore your audience.

The main purposes of writing are listed in the diagram below.



Once you have settled on a purpose for your writing and have an idea of your intended audience, you can select an appropriate text type. Below is a summary of common text types, grouped by purpose.

To express	To reflect	To explain	To argue
play script	autobiography	blog	debate
poem	journal entry	feature article	letter
screenplay	memoir	information report	opinion piece
short story	review	news article	speech



Note that text types can serve different or multiple purposes. For example, in addition to reflecting a writer's opinion, a review can also be informative and/or persuasive.

Determine purpose

- 1 Imagine yourself in the following situations. Decide the purpose of the piece you might write for each and outline how you might achieve this purpose through particular language choices. The first one has been done for you as a guide.

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

Purpose: to persuade. *I would use emotive language and an aggressive tone to detail my personal experience in an attempt to persuade the management team to address my concerns.*

You are writing an information report about the rise in popularity of media studies as a subject in Australian schools.

You are giving a speech about your experience volunteering at a homeless shelter.

You are writing a short story about a young boy who loses his beloved pet snake.

- 2 Complete the table below.

Context	Purpose	Audience	Form
Former reality-television competitors discuss their respective experiences.			debate on YouTube
Your family home was destroyed in the Black Summer bushfires.	to share your personal experience		

Pre-writing checklist

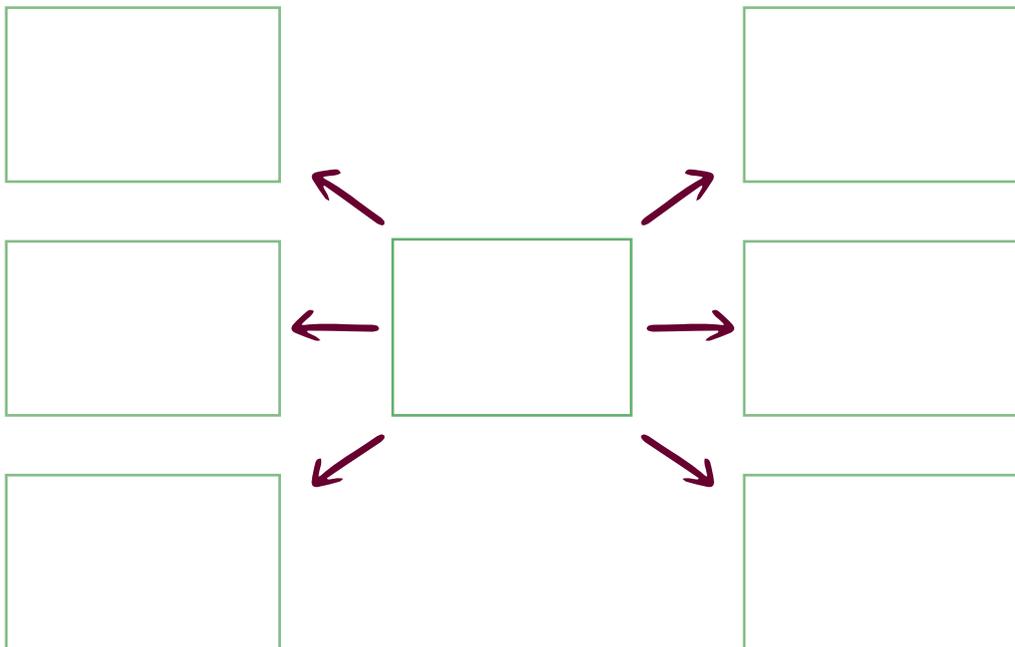
Each time you produce a piece of writing, use the following checklist to make sure you have appropriately considered audience, context and purpose.

Audience

- I have identified my primary audience.

Primary audience: _____

- I have chosen the elements that will likely appeal to my target audience.



Context

- I have decided the mode of my piece.

Mode: _____

- I have identified the medium of my piece.

Medium: _____

- I have decided the form / text type of my piece.

Form / text type: _____

- I have determined the real or imagined site of publication for my piece.

Site of publication: _____

Purpose

- I know the purpose/s of my piece.

Purpose/s: _____

- I have identified elements that will help me to achieve my purpose/s.

Structure: _____

Language: _____

Features: _____

Other notes

Writing imaginatively

Brainstorming story ideas

- ✕ ○ For many writers, brainstorming story ideas is the hardest part of imaginative writing. But it can also be a fun challenge. And once you have an idea you're passionate about, making it come to life on the page can feel natural and easy. Follow the tips below to help you generate engaging story ideas that you can explore throughout this chapter.

➔ **TIP 1: Start with what you know, then add an embellishment.** Using the example below as a guide, generate two story ideas by adding a twist to a specific experience from your life.

My family and I visit Echuca every year.	+	I read a news article about a cult leader in the US.	=	A family goes to Echuca for their annual getaway, only to find that a cult leader has taken control of the town.
	+		=	
	+		=	

➔ **TIP 2: Ask 'What if' questions.** Compelling 'What if' questions can provide the inspiration for great stories. Consider the examples below, then make up two yourself.

- × What if a child discovered their parents were secret agents?
- × What if robots inhabited Earth before humans?
- × What if _____ ?
- × What if _____ ?

➔ **TIP 3: Use writing prompts.** Writing prompts, which can be found on websites and on apps like Daily Prompt, can be a good place to start if you are struggling to come up with ideas. Consider the examples below, which include prompts in the form of images and words, and write a short description of the story you might write based on each of these.



×

The biggest mistake of my life has just been streamed to millions of people.

×

×



Bringing characters to life

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

SAMPLE TEXT

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins (2008)

When I was younger, I scared my mother to death, the things I would blurt out about District 12, about the people who rule our country, Panem, from the far-off city called the Capitol. Eventually I understood this would only lead us to more trouble. So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts. Do my work quietly in school. Make only polite small talk in the public market. Discuss little more than trades in the Hob, which is the black market where I make most of my money. Even at home, where I am less pleasant, I avoid discussing tricky topics.

Using the example below and the word bank on the following page to help you, build a profile for a character from one of the story ideas you brainstormed at the start of this chapter.

Katniss Everdeen

determined;
wilful; headstrong;
protective; clever

forced to partake in
the Hunger Games,
where death is
a likely outcome
(external obstacle)

initially distrusting
of others and
struggles to accept
help (internal
obstacle)



A large empty rectangular box for writing a character profile, with a smaller empty box above it. To the right of the main box are three smaller empty rectangular boxes stacked vertically. Hand-drawn green arrows point from the three text boxes on the left to the main box, and from the three boxes on the right to the main box.

Word bank for character traits

aggressive	easy-going	happy-go-lucky	opinionated
arrogant	egotistical	honest	prudent
bad-tempered	emotional	humorous	reliable
clever	friendly	impulsive	resourceful
confident	fussy	inventive	scatterbrained
determined	gentle	loud-mouthed	tenacious

Once you have a general idea about who your character is, build a time line of their significant life events leading up to the story, like the example from *The Hunger Games* below.

Example:

Katniss' father was killed in a mining accident.



Event 1



Katniss was forced to take on a parental role after her father's death.



Event 2



Katniss was saved from starvation by Peeta's act of kindness.



Event 3



Katniss learned to hunt alongside Gale.



Event 4



Your character:

When describing your characters, you should always *show rather than tell*. For example, instead of saying that your character is rude, you could depict them blowing cigarette smoke in someone's face.

Bring your character to life

1 Complete the character profile template below for another of your characters.

Character's name _____

What does the character look like?

What is the character's main motivation and what are the obstacles stopping them from achieving their goal?

What are three positive traits and three negative traits of your character?

2 Describe the relationship between two of your characters.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on building character.

Developing setting

Setting refers to the backdrop against which the characters act out the story. It includes all aspects of place and time and is one of the most important elements of a compelling story.

SAMPLE TEXT

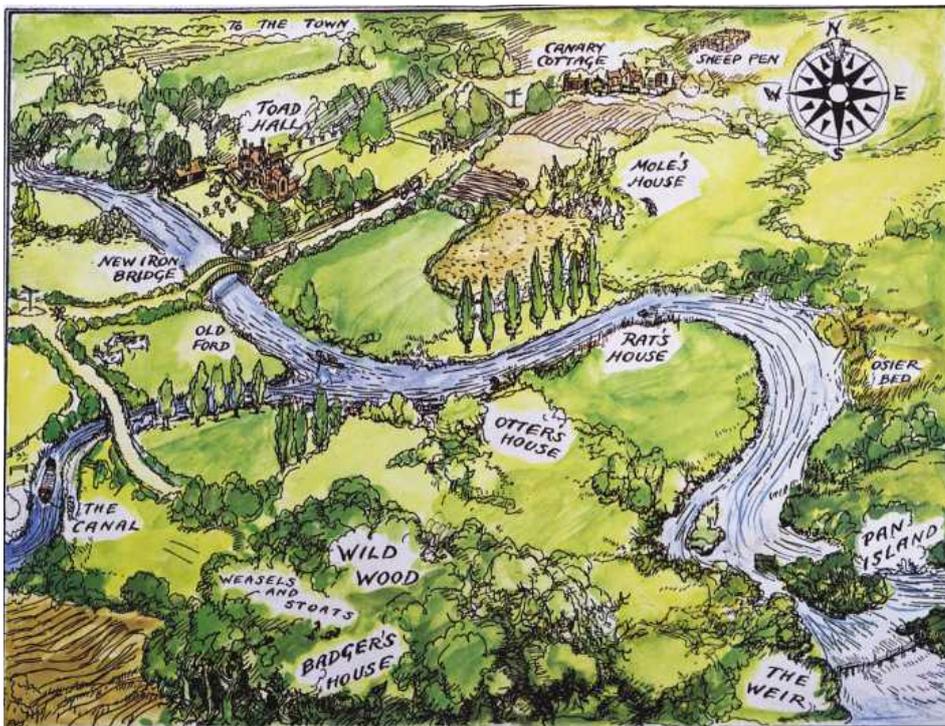
The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame (1908)

Leaving the main stream, they now passed into what seemed at first sight like a little land-locked lake. Green turf sloped down to either edge, brown snaky tree-roots gleamed below the surface of the quiet water, while ahead of them the silvery shoulder and foamy tumble of a weir, arm-in-arm with a restless dripping mill-wheel, that held up in its turn a grey-gabled mill-house, filled the air with a soothing murmur of sound, dull and smothery, yet with little clear voices speaking up cheerfully out of it at intervals. It was so very beautiful that the Mole could only hold up both forepaws and gasp, "O my! O my! O my!"

Knowing the world of your story will help you to bring it to life for your readers.

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

Take note of the map below, which details the setting of *The Wind in the Willows*.



Create a simple map outlining the main locations of your story in the space below. The scale of your map will depend on your story – it might be as small as a single room or as large as a galaxy.



In addition to how a setting looks, it is important to describe how it sounds, smells, feels and even tastes. For example, you could describe a chill in the air to create an eerie mood.

Word bank for types of setting

airport	cabin	desert	prison
alley	castle	garden	rainforest
beach	cave	medical laboratory	restaurant
bedroom	cemetery	palace	school
bridge	circus	plane	train station

Word bank to describe setting

awe-inspiring	earthy	homely	noisy
bright	familiar	imposing	ominous
cosy	gloomy	luxurious	smoky
crowded	grand	majestic	stifling
daunting	grim	mysterious	towering

Develop setting

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

- 2 Describe one of the locations from your map on page 66 using one or two memorable details.

- 3 Describe how the main character of your story would react if placed in each of the settings below.

Setting	Character response
A battlefield	
An enchanted forest	
A courthouse	
A doctor's office	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on setting.

Writing convincing dialogue

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

SAMPLE TEXT

Anything But Fine by Tobias Madden (2021)

'No ...' Talia whispers as she slips past me, 'she doesn't have favourites at all.'

I ignore her and jog over to Miss Gwen, who stays in her chair, gripping its plastic arms with her wrinkled hands. Miss Prue is fiddling with the stereo.

'This is a big year for you, Luca,' Miss Gwen croaks.

I nod.

'ABS auditions are only -'

'Six months and thirteen days away,' I say. 'I know.'

Miss Gwen exhales loudly through her nose. 'You've got all the potential in the world, Luca, but that counts for nothing if you don't put in the *work*.'

If you choose to include dialogue tags ('he said', 'she said') in your writing, try to vary them using the word bank below.

Word bank of dialogue tags

asked	growled	questioned	sobbed
commented	grunted	reported	whined
cried	mentioned	said	wondered
groaned	pondered	screamed	yelled



Note, however, that using dialogue tags can become repetitive or can distract readers and slow down the pace. They are not always necessary, and many contemporary writers choose to not use speech tags at all.

Readers can assume the characters present are taking turns to speak, or the speaker can be indicated by the action they perform (i.e. an action tag). For example:

- × 'Are you sure you want to do that?' Markus cocked an eyebrow.
- × Sergio collapsed onto the bed. 'I can't believe I told June I love her.'

Practise writing dialogue

- 1 Think back to the last memorable conversation you had. Write a dialogue that conveys the essence of this conversation.

- 2 Include an action tag for the pieces of dialogue below. The first one has been done for you as a guide.

'Are you blind?'

Marta smashed her racquet against the umpire's chair. 'Are you blind?'

'I don't know how I'll ever be able to forgive you.'

'If you can think you can take me on, then let's go!'

'Lina, you owe me big time for this.'

'One more time and your dog is out on the street.'



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an additional activity on dialogue.

Plotting an engaging story

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

SAMPLE TEXT

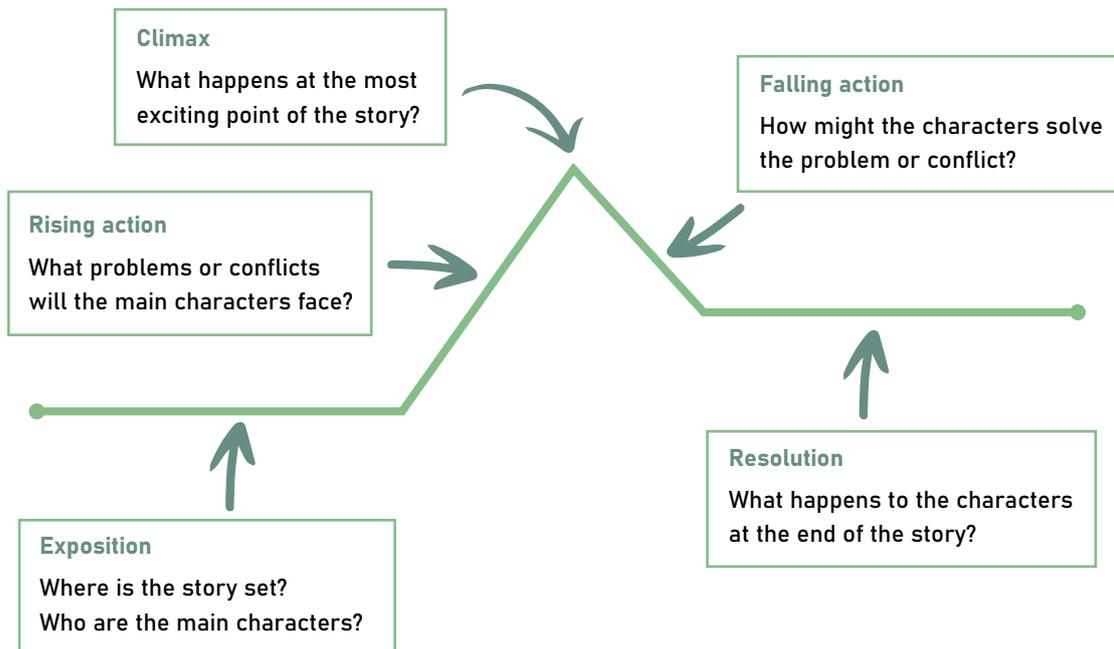
The Memory Police by Yoko Ogawa (2019)

I froze, instinctively grabbing the old man's arm. He held the music box on his lap with one hand, but the other arm he put around my shoulders. R had not flinched, but his eyes stayed fixed on the ceiling.

The bell continued to ring, and we could hear a fist pounding on the door ...

'Memory Police. Put your hands behind your head. Don't touch anything. Don't talk until we are finished. If you do not comply, you'll immediately be placed under arrest.'

A traditional plot structure includes the elements in the diagram below.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for activities on the plot of the sample text above.

Outline the plot of one of your story ideas in the table below.

Structure	Your story
Exposition	
Rising action	
Climax	
Falling action	
Resolution	

Model sentences to advance plot

Write one paragraph for each of these model sentences, using or adapting them to introduce a new plot development in a way that will engage readers and make them want to read on.

- ✘ Not again, Muhannad thought.
- ✘ Elspeth hadn't meant for it to happen.
- ✘ Walking along the empty street, Flavio couldn't shake the feeling he was being watched.
- ✘ Today she would find out if her entire life was a lie.
- ✘ With tears in his eyes, he turned around and began to walk away.
- ✘ When I turned on the radio that night, I couldn't believe the voice I heard coming through the speakers.
- ✘ The Uber driver suddenly turned left instead of right, and I had no idea where I was being taken.
- ✘ It was 2 am and the phone was ringing.

Writing short stories

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

Deciding on a point of view

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

SAMPLE TEXT

'Shu Yi' from *Foreign Soil* by Maxine Beneba Clarke (2014)

Shu Yi was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen – seemed so other-worldly I was convinced she was from another planet entirely. Her skin was a little lighter than mine, and her eyes a little more almond in shape. She blinked over caramel-coloured irises, nervously touched the straight charcoal hair cut close around her high cheekbones. The strands of Shu Yi's hair were thin and wispy, like the black threads which hung from the Hiawatha skirt my mother had made me for the book week parade earlier in the year.

Shu Yi was exactly what I would have been like, if I were a little less me. Where I was flat white with an extra shot, Shu Yi was coloured weak Milo.

Using one of the story ideas you brainstormed at the start of this chapter, write a short scene using the first-person perspective.

Point of view	Scene
First person	

Rewrite your scene from the previous page using the third-person perspective.

Point of view	Scene
Third person	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on point of view.

Beginning in the middle of the action

A good short story drops readers into the action and keeps them engaged the whole way through. One way to achieve this is to skip over the exposition and bring the reader immediately into the conflict by showing the main character in some sort of crisis.

SAMPLE TEXT

The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka (1915)

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked.

‘What’s happened to me?’ he thought. It wasn’t a dream.

For the prompts below, write engaging opening scenes that begin in the middle of the action.

Prompt	Engaging scene
	
<p>'I saw what you did last night. And I've told everyone.'</p>	
	

Writing play scripts

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

Building dramatic tension

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

SAMPLE TEXT

Oedipus the King by Sophocles (c. 429 BCE)

OEDIPUS:

What give up now, with a clue like this?

Fail to solve the mystery of my birth?

Not for all the world!

JOCASTA:

Stop in the name of god,
if you love your own life, call off this search!
My suffering is enough.

Describe how you would approach the following scenes to increase dramatic tension from the preceding scene.

Scene 1	Scene 2
A woman is arguing with her husband over burning dinner for the third time that week.	
A teacher catches a student cheating on their end-of-year exam.	
Two friends are unknowingly set up on a blind date by their other friends.	

Writing stage directions

Stage directions are instructions written into the script of a play, indicating the movement, position or tone of an actor, features of the set, and other elements of a production such as sound effects and lighting.

SAMPLE TEXT

Rainbow's End by Jane Harrison (2007)

The lights come up on DOLLY, who is peeling big dirty potatoes.

RADIO: [voice-over] It's Australia's Amateur Hour ... where we showcase Australia's most talented performers. Here's one of them now ...

We hear a man playing a gumleaf.

GLADYS enters and looks around conspiratorially.

GLADYS: Nan's out? This came for you.

She holds a letter. No response from DOLLY.

Aren't you going to read it? It's from the bank.

DOLLY: If you know so much, you read it.

GLADYS: It's an opportunity.

DOLLY: It's an interview for a job I'm not going to get. And that you want, not me. [*To herself*] Why doesn't anyone ask what I want?

Using contextual clues, write down what you think the missing stage directions might be in the following two scenes from JM Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904).

WENDY: Peter! (*She leaps out of bed to put her arms round him, but _____*
_____.)

PETER: You mustn't touch me.

PETER: (*with shameless glee.*) Wendy, I believe I shut her up in that drawer! (*He releases TINK, who _____*.)

You needn't say that; I'm very sorry, but how could I know you were in the drawer?



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an activity on stage directions and structuring your play.

Writing poems

Poetry is a type of imaginative writing that conveys a thought or tells a story through the lyrical arrangement of words.

Playing with rhyme schemes

The type of rhyme scheme you choose will affect how readers respond to your poem. The most common rhyme schemes are:

- × ABAB
- × AABB
- × ABBA.

You can also write in free verse, which does not have a consistent rhyme scheme or metrical pattern, or blank verse, which has unrhymed lines like the example below.

SAMPLE TEXT

'Cathedral Avenue' from *False Claims of Colonial Thieves* by Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella (2018)

This doesn't have to be a requiem,
no, not yet. Each breath these strong
old trees let us have is a breath that keeps
us going, keeps the pieces of belonging in place.

What is held in the cathedral
of salmon gums and wandoo?
The branches reach to hold
the sky in place, to keep

earth and sky connected.
Prayers in all languages
and all faiths collect in their
illustrative branches, echo in hollows –

all creatures that come and go,
that make life in their outreach
help us hear and see who we are,
singing past present future.

And the owl knows the cockatoo
and a galah cocks its comb at the sun;
the shade translates the writing of time
which the machinery would cut short.

Using the opening lines below, write four short poems in a rhyme scheme of your choice.

- × I wandered lonely as a cloud (William Wordsworth)

- × The school-bell is a call to battle (Imtiaz Dharker)

- × I tend the mobile now
like an injured bird (Carol Ann Duffy)

- × Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (William Shakespeare)



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

Using poetic devices

A poetic device uses words and sounds to convey meaning. More specifically, it combines literal meanings with connotative meanings, creating a memorable effect for the reader or listener. The table below outlines some poetic devices you might choose to use in your poems.

Poetic device	Definition	Example
Alliteration	the noticeable repetition of initial consonant sounds in successive words	She sells seashells by the sea-shore.
Apostrophe	a personal address to someone or something that is not present	Busy old fool, unruly Sun, Why dost thou thus, Through windows, and through curtains, call on us? (John Donne)
Assonance	the repetition of vowel sounds in words near each other	Strips of tinfoil winking like people (Sylvia Plath)
Cacophony	the use of unappealing or harsh noises to evoke chaos, disorder or dread	Beware the Jabberwock, my son! The jaws that bite, the claws that catch! Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun The frumious Bandersnatch! (Lewis Carroll)
Metaphor	a figure of speech suggesting a resemblance between unrelated things	Look sir, my hands are steady now, My brain a cloudless day. (Ian Hamilton)
Onomatopoeia	a word whose sound imitates its meaning	And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered, You heard as if an army muttered (Robert Browning)
Personification	the attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects or animals	The dolls awoke, alarmed, took inventory. (AE Stallings)
Simile	a figure of speech likening one thing to another using the words 'like' or 'as'	Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn. (William Shakespeare)



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on poetic devices.

Writing reflectively

Reflecting on past events

To reflect means to look back on the past and consider the effects of events or the impact of particular choices.

SAMPLE TEXT

Born a Crime by Trevor Noah (2016)

This particular Sunday, the Sunday I was hurled from a moving car, started out like any other Sunday. My mother woke me up, made me porridge for breakfast. I took my bath while she dressed my baby brother Andrew, who was nine months old. Then we went out to the driveway, but once we were finally all strapped in and ready to go, the car wouldn't start ... If it hadn't been for the Volkswagen that didn't work, we never would have looked for the mechanic who became the husband who became the stepfather who became the man who tortured us for years and put a bullet in the back of my mother's head - I'll take the new car with the warranty every time.

Follow these tips to develop skills to write reflectively about the past.

➔ **TIP 1: Record the major details.** Identify the who, what, where and when of the experience. Complete the table below detailing a significant event that you experienced in the last year.

Significant event	
Who	
What	
Where	
When	

➔ **TIP 2: Record your immediate reactions.** What did you think and feel at the time? What was running through your head? Be honest. Holding back won't help you to reflect.

A significant event that I experienced in the last year was _____

What I thought/felt at the time: _____



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an activity on incorporating fine details.

➔ **TIP 3: Identify the lasting impressions.** Ask yourself key questions that allow you to consider the significance or consequences of the event for your life now.

What I have taken away from this experience: _____

How it changed me: _____

Sentence starters for writing about past events

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write about past events.

- ✗ I wonder if ...
- ✗ All I can remember ...
- ✗ Worst of all ...
- ✗ To tell you the truth ...
- ✗ In that moment ...
- ✗ I'll never forget the day ...
- ✗ It's painful to think about ...
- ✗ Bringing up these memories makes me feel ...

Word bank for writing about past events

When did it happen?	How did it happen?	How did you feel?
after a while	abruptly	confused
at first	awkwardly	despondent
at that moment	cautiously	exhilarated
before long	expectedly	grateful
in the end	in the blink of an eye	hopeful
last week	just like that	hurt
this morning	suddenly	shocked
yesterday	without warning	terrified



Let some time pass after the event before starting to write your reflective piece. This will allow you to reflect thoughtfully on the event, its consequences and its significance in your life.

Reflecting personally on a text

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

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Reflection on Will Kostakis' *The Sidekicks* (2016)

I read Will Kostakis' novel *The Sidekicks* as part of a reading circle focusing on different perspectives. The novel features three main characters who are brought together when a mutual friend dies in an accident. Each character narrates a third of the book from their own perspective, so I thought it would be a great choice for the task.

What I didn't realise was how much this book was going to affect me. Seeing how these characters learned to cope with the loss of a friend was incredibly moving, and at times I felt a lump in my throat. They were different people, but they fought for their friend to be remembered, rather than his death being hushed up. I really admired them for it.

Identify the themes or ideas of your text and consider how they resonate with you. An example from *The Sidekicks* is included below.

Theme	How the theme resonates
Acceptance	Ryan got to me the most, as he spends most of his chapter afraid others will find out he's gay. When he is outed, it's Harley who steps up and becomes a supportive friend – which is unexpected as Harley is a rough, blokey character. But he recognised how afraid Ryan was and stood by him. It's something I felt I had in common with Ryan, and his story made me even more appreciative of my own friends who supported me when I came out.

Sentence starters for writing reflectively about texts

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write reflectively about your texts.

- ✘ The interaction between the characters made me feel ...
- ✘ The narrative structure led me to better understand ...
- ✘ I was able to draw a correlation between this scene and ...
- ✘ One thing it did make me re-evaluate was ...
- ✘ It made me wonder whether ...
- ✘ The themes at the heart of the text resonated with me because ...
- ✘ I could see myself reflected in this particular character, who ...
- ✘ Reading this text evoked in me feelings of ...

Reflect on a text

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

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

How did the book make you feel and what prompted this emotion?	
Did it challenge or reinforce particular values of yours? Why?	
What did you appreciate or admire about the way it was written?	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an additional activity on personal reflections.

Writing journal entries

Unlike most other forms of writing, journal or diary entries are generally written without an outside audience in mind. With no set rules, they allow you to express yourself freely, to chronicle what is happening in your life and to work through your emotions or feelings.

Recording the facts

The simplest way to approach journal writing is to detail events in your life; however, you may also choose to record emotions or feelings rather than concrete events, and even imaginary or fictional ideas.

SAMPLE TEXT

Creative Journal Writing by Stephanie Dowrick (2007)

Friday, 22 Nov. My room. 9.30 pm. Still hot and sticky. Insects on over-drive. Griffyn [one of our cats] trying to eat my pen. Gabe [my son] upstairs playing music as he writes. Nick Cave. Kezia [my daughter] out at training. House feels quiet despite Cave. In the cave. Restful. I used to play music while I write far more often than I do now. It feels like a loss, not a choice ... Griff finding it unbearable that he can't climb onto this journal that's edging him out of his rightful place on my lap. Geraldine [my sister] stayed Tues and Wed nights. What a treat. Small talks but not small talk in our nighties.

Complete the template below to write a journal entry about your day.

Dear journal,

This morning, I _____

The most challenging thing about my day was _____

The highlight of my day was _____

Write short journal entries for the scenarios below.

Scenario	Journal entry
<p>Write about the last fight or disagreement you had with someone you care about.</p>	
<p>Write about a place you'd like to visit.</p>	
<p>Write about something in your life that you wish would change.</p>	
<p>Write from the perspective of a fictional character you relate to.</p>	



When re-reading your journal, it can be easier to recall the feelings and emotions associated with an event if you recorded details of when and where it happened.

Adding creative flair

While journal entries can simply be a recounting of the events of your day, they can also be a way to express yourself creatively. Taking a more free-form approach to journal writing will help you to develop a 'voice' that is distinctly yours.

SAMPLE TEXT

Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging by Louise Rennison (1999)

I was glancing through *Just 17* and it listed kissing techniques. What I don't understand is how do you know when to do it, and how do you know which side to go to? You don't want to be bobbing around like pigeons for hours, but I couldn't tell much from the photos. I wish I had never read it. It had made me more nervous and confused than I was before. Still, why should I care? I am going to be staying in for the rest of my life. Unless some gorgeous boy loses his way and wanders into my street and then finds his way up the stairs into my bedroom with a blindfold on, I am stuck between these four walls forever.

– Georgia

Turn these simple journal descriptions into more creative entries. The first one has been done for you as a guide.

Simple descriptions	Creative adaptations
Joseph sick. Taking care of him.	Joseph has been bedridden all week. It has fallen to me to cook his meals, change his sheets and administer the particularly noxious-smelling medicine Dr Cortez prescribed.
Parents are away. Friends came over.	
Interview for job of my dreams. Sweaty palms.	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities to help you to develop creative journal entries.

Producing autobiographical writing

Autobiographical writing deals with the writer's own life and experiences. Autobiographies can take a variety of forms, from accounts of amazing exploits to reflecting on a low-profile yet meaningful life.

Crafting an autobiographical narrative

As autobiographical writing is a form of narrative, it is important that you employ techniques drawn from imaginative writing to craft an interesting narrative of your own life story.

SAMPLE TEXT

The Erratics by Vicki Laveau-Harvie (2018)

My mother's death takes me by surprise. It feels sudden and unexpected, against all logic, in spite of her great age. I haven't been expecting her to bury us all, as the saying goes, because I'm pretty sure she wouldn't bother, but I have expected her to outlive us. In my mind, she has remained indomitable, cast in bronze ... I tell her [my sister] that I feel differently about Mum's story now that the last page has been written. Only a bit. It's subtle, nothing dramatic, but the difference is there.

Complete the template below to include general information about your life.

Date and place of birth:	Passion and talents:
Early childhood and family:	

Select a moment in your life that would make a good subject for a brief autobiographical passage. What is its significance?

Construct a brief plan showing how you would sequence an autobiographical passage for the situation you listed above.

Leading up to the event	
Climax	
Consequences of event	

Pick three qualities about yourself that you would like your reader to understand. Then identify ways you could reveal this through characterisation.

Quality	How I could show this



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an activity on past and present perspectives.

Interpreting past events for an audience

Recording experiences for a personal record such as a diary or journal is quite different from writing about them in an autobiographical piece. This is because autobiographical writing must take into account the needs and expectations of the reader.

SAMPLE TEXT

Reckoning by Magda Szubanski (2015)

Then he would 'finish me off'. The deathblow wouldn't be a zinging forehand or an un-gettable smash, one of the big shots that he loved to see others play. My father would finish me off with a drop shot. A ridiculous, humiliating drop shot. Ignoble but effective. And when he had beaten me he would mock me ... He beat me because he wanted to teach me a lesson. He beat me to teach me how to keep fighting against an opponent even when there is no hope of winning. But mostly he beat me because he needed to. He needed to discharge the pent-up killer energy inside him. So periodically he would perform a ritual bloodletting, and I was the sacrifice. He had lost everything – the war, his family, his country. He needed to win at something.

Not everything that happens in your life is going to interest others. Choose experiences that:

- × were significant in shaping who you are today
- × other people might relate to
- × taught you important lessons from which others might learn.

Decide which of the following events you think would be engaging enough to be included in a piece of autobiographical writing. Explain your choices.

- × winning an Olympic gold medal

- × visiting a foreign country

- × inventing a new social media platform

- × becoming the first person in your family to go to university

Writing informatively

Brainstorming and researching a topic

When writing for informative purposes, your primary intention is to increase the knowledge of your audience about a particular topic.

➔ **STEP 1: Brainstorm a topic.** Begin with a broad category that interests you, such as sustainability, war or technology. Now narrow your focus to a topic you can write about in depth, such as disposable coffee cups, the refugee crisis in Myanmar or the rise of AI chatbots.

Using the categories below, brainstorm additional informative topics.



Education:

- x
- x



Space:

- x
- x



Social media:

- x
- x



Politics:

- x
- x



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a list of additional informative topics you can choose to use for the tasks in this chapter.

➔ **STEP 2: Determine what you already know about the topic.** Use a KWL chart to identify what you already Know, what you Want to know, and then (after your research) what you have Learned about the topic.

Complete the first column of the KWL chart below for a topic of your choosing.

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

➔ **STEP 3: Write research questions.** Your research will be much more efficient if you know exactly what you are looking for. Complete the second column in your KWL chart to identify specific questions you need answered. These could include:

- × What is the history of this topic?
- × Who are the stakeholders associated with the topic?
- × What problems or issues exist in relation to this topic?
- × What solutions or outcomes might be possible?
- × What are the effects or impacts of this topic?
- × Why is this topic important or interesting?

➔ **STEP 4: Research the answers to your questions.** Read, view and listen to information drawn from a variety of credible sources, such as books, journal articles, blogs and reports. Record the answers to your research questions in the third column of your KWL chart on the previous page.



Think of your purpose, audience and context. What is it you are trying to address? Who is your audience? What is happening in the world around you that is relevant to this topic?

Sentence starters for writing about informative topics

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write about informative topics.

- × New research shows that ...
- × The issue is complex in that it ...
- × The decision comes as ...
- × The current policies/rules/regulations mean that ...
- × According to this institution/organisation, ...
- × It's worth remembering that ...
- × In Australia alone, ...
- × Some experts suggest that ...
- × The findings reveal ...
- × An opinion poll last year indicated that ...

Using facts and supporting detail

Don't just tell your audience about the topic, show them by providing a variety of supporting details that explain the who, what, when, where, why and how of your topic.

SAMPLE TEXT

'What's the safest seat on a plane? We asked an aviation expert' by Doug Drury, *The Conversation*

Before we get into it, I should reiterate that air travel is the safest mode of transport. In 2019, there were just under 70 million flights globally, with only 287 fatalities.

According to the US National Safety Council's analysis of census data, the odds of dying in a plane are about 1 in 205,552, compared with 1 in 102 in a car. Even so, we pay little attention to fatal road accidents, but when we hear about an ATR72 crashing in Nepal it's the lead story on every news page.

Complete the table below with evidence that supports your topic.

Type of evidence	Example topic: the Rohingya refugees	Your topic
Quotes from stakeholders	Kofi Annan, former head of the United Nations, described the Rohingya as one of 'the largest groups of stateless people in the world'.	
Statistics	In 2017, due to increasing conflict in Myanmar, 740 000 Rohingya people fled to Bangladesh.	
Documentary evidence	The Rohingya are a Muslim ethnic group from Myanmar (a majority Buddhist country) who were denied citizenship by a 1982 law.	
Anecdotal evidence	Yasmine, a Rohingya woman, was forced to flee Myanmar with her young children ... the family endured 16 days of seasickness and overcrowding before they were taken to Thailand.	

Word bank for introducing facts and supporting details

To give an example	To emphasise	To show effects
according to	another key point	as a result
as shown	especially	consequently
clearly	markedly	furthermore
evidently	significantly	therefore
for example	with this in mind	thus

Support a topic with evidence

- 1 Identify two stakeholders associated with your topic and a quote from each that would support your topic.

- 2 Identify three questions you would need to research before writing on your topic. What sort of evidence would provide answers to these questions?

- 3 Write a short anecdote about a personal experience related to your topic.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities.

Crafting a credible voice

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

SAMPLE TEXT

'Is 'Toadzilla' a sign of enormous cane toads to come?' by Lin Schwarzkopf, *The Conversation*

Last week, the world met 'Toadzilla', a cane toad the size of a football and six times larger than average. The rangers who found her – female toads are bigger than male – were stunned. Weighing in at 2.7 kilograms, Toadzilla may be the largest cane toad ever recorded.

Is this a sign Australia's cane toads are getting bigger? Not necessarily. Like all other 'cold-blooded' or ectothermic animals, cane toads don't have a limit to their body size like mammals and birds do. They can keep growing their entire lives. Researchers have found toads at the front of the invasion wave get bigger quicker due to more prey.



Photograph: Department of Environment and Science QLD

When writing informatively, you should generally avoid too much emotion, use formal English, and keep topic sentences short and succinct. Rewrite the following paragraph to make it more formal, factual and objective.

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



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on crafting a credible voice.

Writing information reports

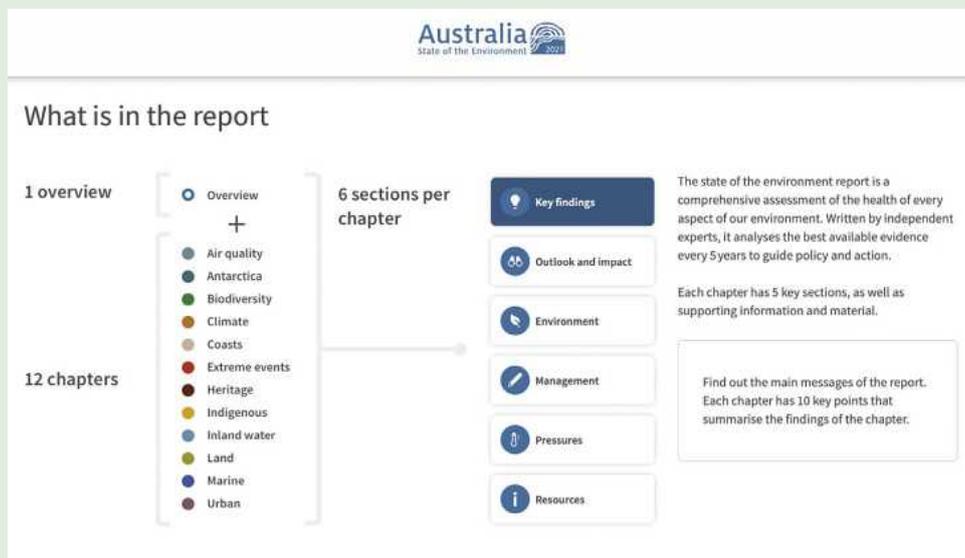
An information report provides structured knowledge about a topic. It is often organised into sections under simple subheadings. An overall conclusion is used to draw the information together, providing a clear and succinct overview of your research findings.

Developing a logical structure

Information reports should be very clearly structured and ordered, with subheadings that help to organise information and help readers to locate specific details easily.

SAMPLE TEXT

Australia State of the Environment Report 2021



As one of Earth's most stable land masses, Australia has a rich geoheritage with many sites and types of heritage found nowhere else. There is a lack of statutory protection for geoheritage at all levels of government, except through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, which provides protection for geoheritage as part of natural heritage. A nationally cohesive legislative framework for geoheritage protection, based on geoconservation principles, is required.

– Heritage, Key Findings



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view the complete report.

Complete the template below for a topic of your choice, to help you structure your report.

	Your topic
<p>Introduction – Explain to your reader both the topic and scope of your research, and define key terms.</p>	<p>Write a short introduction to your topic.</p>
<p>Body – Each paragraph should start with a clear topic sentence, followed by further sentences that provide supporting evidence.</p>	<p>Outline three sections you would include in your report. Provide a subheading and write a topic sentence for each section.</p>
<p>Conclusion – Reflect on your research findings and explain the significance of your topic.</p>	<p>Write a short conclusion summing up the main points in your topic.</p>



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional structuring options and a corresponding activity.

Using subject-specific terminology

You will sound more knowledgeable about your topic if you use the appropriate subject-specific language.

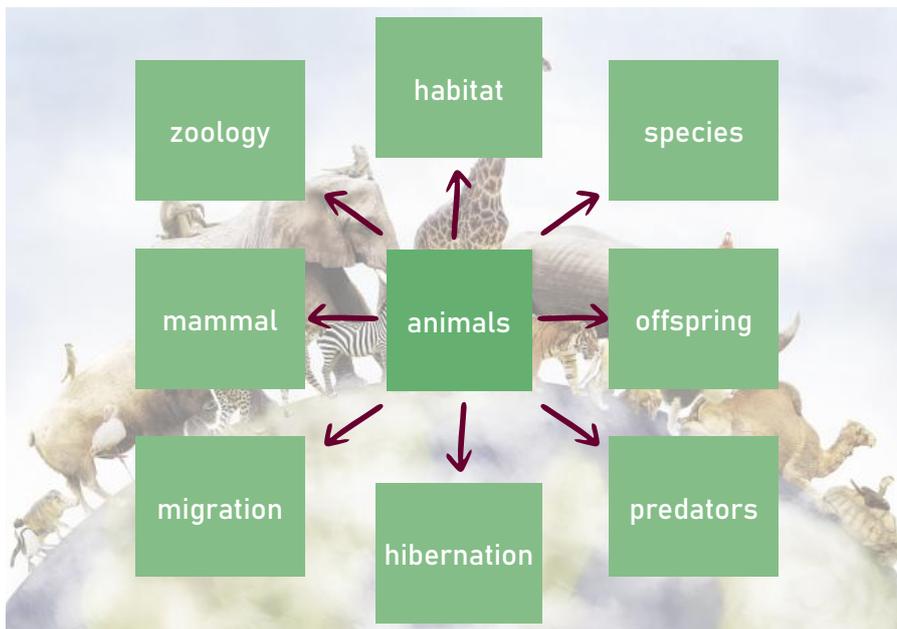
SAMPLE TEXT

Australia State of the Environment Report 2021

The Southern Ocean continues to absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere and is becoming more acidic (less alkaline) as a direct result. Ocean acidification, changes in wind strength, variability in sea ice and changes in the circulation of the Southern Ocean are affecting Antarctic ecosystems. Ocean acidification, in particular, is likely to have a profound effect on the Antarctic environment because it affects organisms at the base of the food web. Effects are likely to cascade through the entire ecosystem.

– Antarctica, Key Findings

The diagram below shows a range of vocabulary specific to the topic of animals. Use one of the subject-specific words below in an informative sentence. An example sentence has been provided for you.

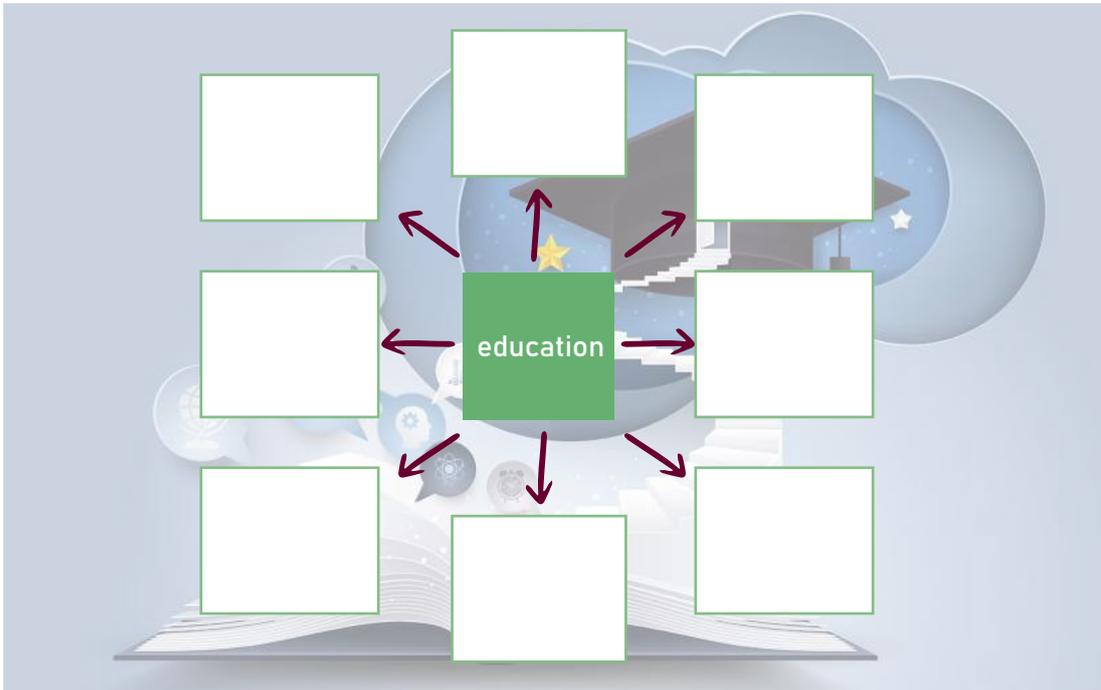


*Echidnas **hibernate** during bushfires, often living in underground burrows or hollowed-out logs until it is safe to emerge and forage for food.*



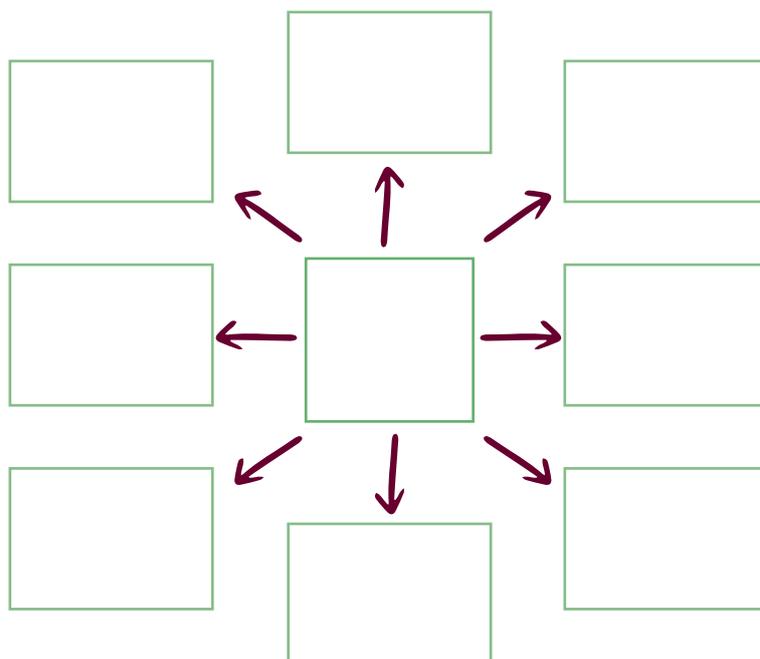
Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an additional activity on subject-specific language.

Brainstorm vocabulary specific to the topic of education to complete the diagram below.



Choose two of the subject-specific words you have brainstormed and use one each in informative sentences.

Below, brainstorm vocabulary specific to your topic.



Writing news articles

News articles are factual reports that inform the reader about events or issues of concern to the public. They are succinct, written in plain English and are largely objective.

Developing a news story

Once you have an idea in mind, collect information on the topic so that you can accurately report on it to your readers.

SAMPLE TEXT

'Massive new national park to be created in NSW' by Sarah Swain, *9News*

A new national park is being created in New South Wales.

The area is in the isolated north-west corner of the state, around 900 kilometres north-west of Sydney.

While it might be red dirt and scrub, the outback is home to a vibrant community of native birds and mammals.

It will offer protection to 50 threatened species and arid zone wetlands.

They include ... the spiny-cheeked honeyeater and crimson chat, budgies and kangaroos ...

Five people will be tasked with taking care of the national park, with the land measuring six times the size of Singapore.

It's set to open in 2025.

Answer the following questions for your article idea. Examples are provided, relating to the sample text above.

Question	Sample text	Your idea
Is the story or event new or recent?	At the time of writing, this story was recent, published just after the announcement of the new park.	
Does the issue affect your audience on a personal level?	The issue will affect people who are passionate about nature conservation in Australia.	
Does it reveal something significant about the state of the world?	This story focuses on an important environmental issue: to protect the natural flora and fauna.	

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

Select an event that has occurred (or is occurring) at your school or in your local community on which you could write a news report for your school or local newspaper. Explain why this event is newsworthy or important to your readers.



Determine the who, what, where, when, why and how of your story.

Who: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

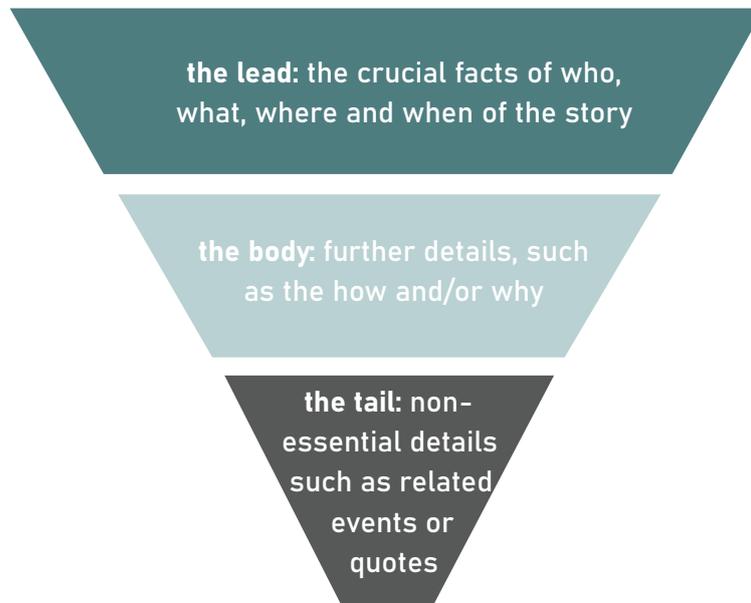
When: _____

Why: _____

How: _____

Using the inverted pyramid structure

The body of a news article almost always follows the 'inverted pyramid' structure. This is designed to provide audiences with the most crucial information at the beginning of the report. The inverted pyramid includes information in the order outlined below.



SAMPLE TEXT

'Huge fire rips through plastics factory in south-east Melbourne' by Natasha May, *The Guardian*

A crime scene has been established after a fire engulfed a plastics factory in Melbourne's south-east, sending a plume of toxic smoke into surrounding suburbs.

A police officer raised the alarm when he noticed smoke coming from the Olive Grove building while patrolling at 5.10am on Wednesday morning.

Fire crews extinguished the blaze but not before "significant damage" was caused to the unoccupied single-storey premises, according to Victoria police.

A crime scene has been established and motorists were being asked to avoid the area.

Police said the cause of the fire was yet to be determined and fire investigators would attend the scene.

Paul Foster, an assistant chief fire officer, said the fire was well developed by the time firefighters arrived.

Write a paragraph on how the sample text on the previous page uses the inverted pyramid structure and what the effect of this structure might be on the reader.

Briefly outline your news article using the inverted pyramid structure.

The lead: _____

The body: _____

The tail: _____



News articles begin with a headline – a catchy and succinct title. For smaller news items, the headline is often quite literal, but bigger stories may use puns, alliteration or other examples of wordplay to intrigue the reader.



Writing persuasively

Developing a point of view on an issue

Before developing an opinion on an issue, you must have a clear understanding of what that issue is. Consider the issues below, then come up with three yourself.

- × the environmental effects of palm oil
- × the ethics of using AI-generated content
- × whether flag burning should be illegal
- ×
- ×
- ×



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

SAMPLE TEXT

Call me old-fashioned. But I believe that Melbourne's footpaths are meant for the use of pedestrians. And not places for e-scooter riders to nonchalantly and irresponsibly speed along.

Dennis Walker, North Melbourne

The Age



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on developing a point of view.

Outline two opposing points of view for each of the issues below. The first one has been done for you as a guide.

Contention: Eating meat is unethical.

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

Contention: Yearly driving tests should be mandatory over the age of sixty-five.

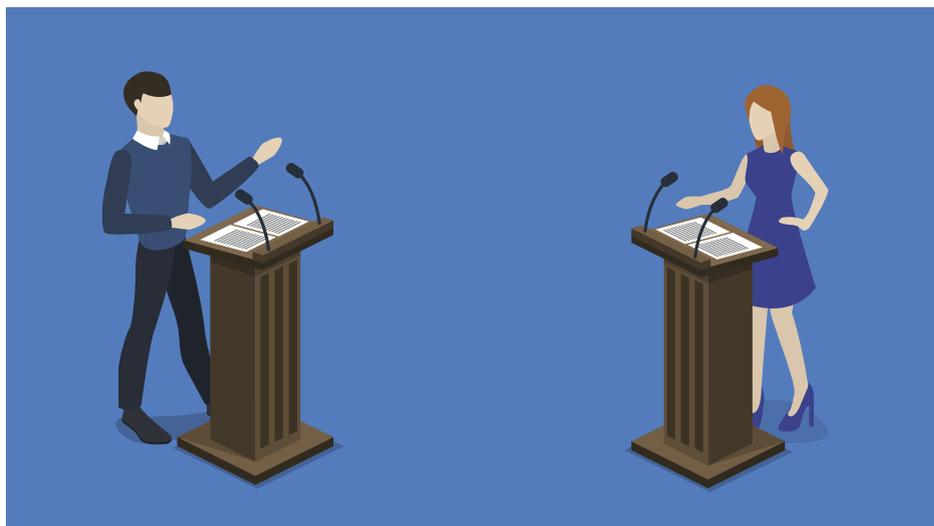
For	Against

Contention: Books should never be banned.

For	Against

Contention: Horseracing should be illegal.

For	Against



Supporting a contention with reasons and evidence

For a point of view or contention to become an argument, it needs to be reinforced by supporting reasons.

An example issue, with reasons in support of the contention, is provided below.

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

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

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

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



Complete the planning sheet below for an issue of your choice.

CONTENTION:

REASON 1:

REASON 2:

REASON 3:

Reasons will be more persuasive if they are backed up by evidence. Complete the table below with different types of evidence in support of an issue of your choice. Examples are provided, relating to the issue of speeding.

Evidence	Sample issue: speeding	Your issue
Facts	Drivers are at the greatest risk of being involved in a crash during their first year of driving unsupervised.	
Statistics	One-third of all drivers and riders in fatal speeding-related accidents are males aged 17 to 25, whereas 6 per cent are females aged 17 to 25.	
Expert opinions	Dr David Harkey, president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) in the United States, explains that 'higher speed limits cancel out the benefits of vehicle safety improvements'.	
Personal examples	I lost my teenage son in a horror crash, and these numbers can't begin to explain the pain and anger I feel over something that was so needless and catastrophic.	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on using evidence to support your point of view.

Using persuasive language

Persuasion works in two main ways: by appealing to our reason and by appealing to our emotions. Appeals to reason rely on logic, as well as facts and statistics, while writers often use emotive or loaded language to appeal to readers' emotions.

Ultimately, the language you use in your persuasive text should aim to position your audience to agree with your point of view.

SAMPLE TEXT

'26 people have drowned in Australia so far this summer. It's a deadly reminder to all of us' by Gemma Bath, *Mamamia*

We are finally getting a summer in Australia.

After three years of above-average rainfall, La Niña has decided to give us a breather.

Aussies are certainly making the most of being able to enjoy the festive season in the rivers, beaches and pools dotted across our great country.

But with glorious bikini weather comes danger. Rips and fast-flowing currents are just a part of life Down Under. That's why we have patrolled beaches and lifeguards up and down the coast who spend all day, every day monitoring the unpredictable.

It's why all pools in Australia must have a pool fence. Because it can take 20 seconds for a child to drown.

It's why there are such vigorous awareness campaigns attached to inland bodies of water, warning people to 'respect the river' and always check the conditions before entering.

Already this summer, we've lost 26 people to drowning according to the Royal Life Saving Summer Drowning toll and the stories are harrowing ...

Swimming and enjoying the water is such an important part of the Australian summer. We're so lucky to live in a country where bodies of water aren't just refreshing, they're beautiful. They often don't *look* dangerous – and that's the catch. They lull you into a false sense of security.

But drowning doesn't discriminate. You can be fit and strong and die in a rip. You can be a great swimmer and be pulled under by a current.

Most children who drown in home pools fall in by accident.

As Victorian general manager of lifesaving services Liam Krige told *The Guardian*: "Any body of water can pose a threat, so please make safe decisions whenever you are in, on or around water, such as never swimming alone, [and] ensuring children are actively supervised."

We don't want to see another record summer of drowning deaths in Australia.

Consider the examples of each type of persuasion below.

- × **Reason:** While racehorse deaths must be avoided, recent reports show a decline (fewer than 1.5 horses per 1000), indicating that the problem can be solved and banning horseracing would be an overreaction.
- × **Emotion:** We should all be appalled at the cruel and inhumane treatment of asylum seekers at the hands of our government.

Complete the table below by adding a statement for each topic that uses reason and one that draws on emotion.

Issue	Reason	Emotion
Online bullying		
Healthy eating		
Ageism or ableism in the workplace		
Free university		

Word bank for writing persuasively

Reason	Emotion
experts agree	ashamed
let's consider	community spirit
logically	produces disastrous results
objectively	take pride in
statistics show	worst imaginable



The language choices you make as a writer will determine the tone of your piece – that is, the mood or feeling that reflects your attitudes towards a topic.

Practise using persuasive language

- 1 Suggest an appropriate tone for presenting each of the contentions below. The first one has been done for you.

Professional athletes are grossly overpaid.

critical

Texting while driving is dangerous.

Bullies should be kicked out of school.

Humans should colonise Mars.

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

There's no question that professional athletes are paid too much. *How is it fair* that someone who tosses a ball or swings a racquet earns exponentially more than _____? Compared to doctors and teachers, who _____, professional athletes are _____. Therefore, it's time that _____.

- 3 Read the sentences below containing positive, neutral and negative statements about professional athletes. Explain the different impacts the words in bold could have on a reader.

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Professional athletes are revered by children who aspire to be like them .	Professional athletes are influential to children.	Professional athletes are often terrible role models for impressionable children.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities.

Writing opinion pieces

Opinion pieces express a specific point of view on a particular issue, with the aim of persuading the audience to agree with this point of view.

Developing an informed opinion

An opinion is much more likely to be accepted by the reader if it is an informed one. This means that it is based on facts, logic and reason rather than emotion.

When expressing your opinion, you should:

- × be clear
- × be confident
- × explain your reasoning.

SAMPLE TEXT

'I applied for 2,000 roles in four years and learned that job-seekers are treated appallingly' by Daniel Reast, *Metro*

When you're searching for a job, fuelled by hope and desperation, there's nothing that beats the excitement when you spot the perfect vacancy.

A dream role, one you know you could really throw your heart and soul into.

In the past, I've spent hours tinkering with application forms, changing lines on my CV and making my cover letter read like poetry.

Then ... nothing. Cue the crushing, slow realisation that, after weeks of silence, it was all for nothing.

All those hours of preparation, totally wasted.

The way we currently apply for jobs is woefully disjointed, frustrating and detrimental to our mental health. The whole system needs overhauling ...

We can't simply walk down the high street handing out our CVs anymore. Those days are long gone. I accept that.

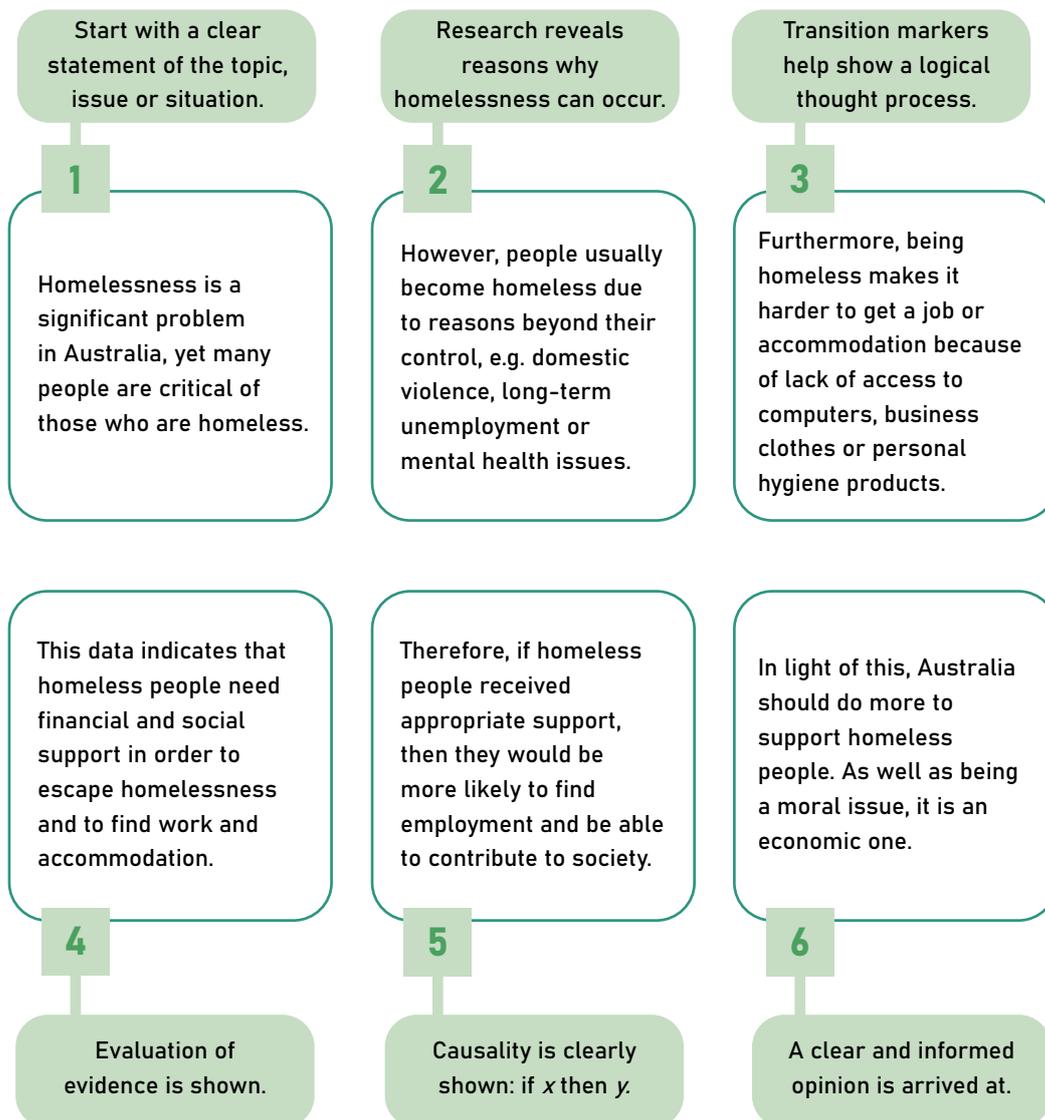
However, new legislation should be brought forward to establish a regulated, simplified and empathy-led approach, which puts the jobseeker before the needs of employers. Reshaping this basic infrastructure of our economy is not a tough ask.

Any government that claims to represent the best interests of working people should also accept that those out of work, desperately trying to find a job, are stuck in a system that treats them like livestock.



Make sure that you are fully informed about your topic. Even if you are writing about a personal experience, show that you have considered the experiences and viewpoints of others who are involved.

Constructing a flow chart, like the one below, can help you to reach an informed opinion on an issue.



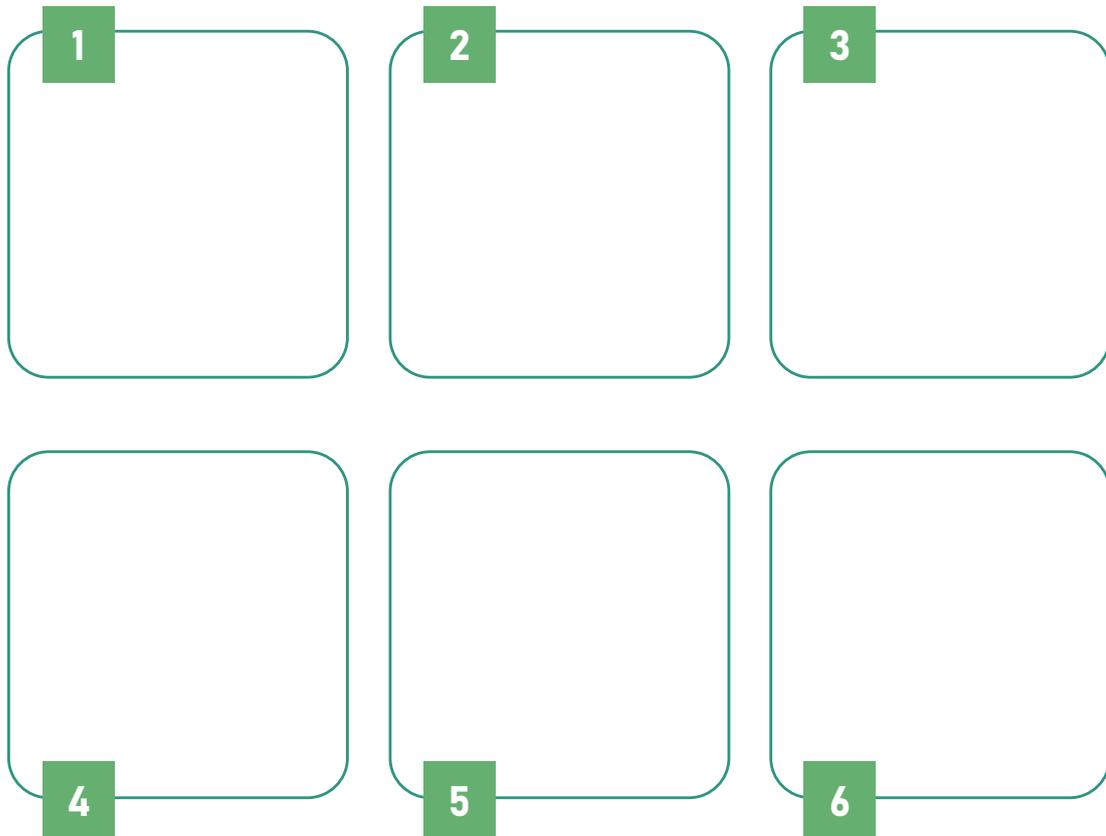
Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on developing an informed opinion.

Describe your initial reaction to one of the following topics.

- × Single-use plastics such as takeaway cutlery should be banned.
- × Energy drinks should be banned for people under the age of sixteen.
- × Computer games should be taught as a text type in English.

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

Complete the flow chart below to reach an informed opinion on the topic you selected above.



Stating your opinion

Your opinion piece is less likely to be taken seriously by readers if it is simply a rant; instead, try to suggest possible solutions or courses of action.

SAMPLE TEXT

'Migrants and refugees must be set up for success' by Dai Le (MP, Federal Member for Fowler), *CEDA*

While it might sound and feel good to bring in more people, we must ensure that they are set up to succeed and provided with housing, education and other opportunities. We cannot simply increase migration and then let people fend for themselves in a foreign country, leaving them feeling marginalised and demonised. It is the responsibility of the government of the day to ensure systems and plans are in place to enable a productive, cohesive and connected society.

I want to see Fowler prosper. I want to see Australia prosper as a culturally inclusive diverse country. To do that, we must empower, educate and provide resources for new arrivals to our country.

I know this from my own experience – we didn't have the chance to access some of the resources available today. And it is these resources, such as language services, education, access to job opportunities, housing, health and mental health that I am fighting for. New arrivals to any country have basic needs, and we cannot deny new arrivals the opportunities available to all Australians.

Rewrite these sentences so that they are more likely to be considered seriously by readers.

- × I'm so sick and tired of seeing cyclists on the road. Can't they just walk places?

- × Everyone agrees that it's time to get rid of these stupid reality TV shows – they're clearly only for people without brains.

Think about the issue you identified on page 122. Write down two different solutions or courses of action that you want to persuade your audience to accept.

Solution 1: _____

Solution 2: _____

Writing speeches

Although speeches are delivered orally and can have a variety of uses, they often share the same purpose as written persuasive texts: to persuade the audience to agree with the point of view being presented.



Remember that speeches are meant to be heard rather than read. Because the audience usually only has one opportunity to listen, your argument must be clear and easy to follow.

Structuring your speech

Beginning a speech with an effective hook will grab the audience's attention and generate interest. The hook could be:

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

SAMPLE TEXT

'The source of all our problems = population growth' by Sir David Attenborough, *The Knowledge Exchange*

I have no doubt that the fundamental source of all our problems, particularly our environmental problems, is population growth. I can't think of a single problem that wouldn't be easier to solve if there were less people. And the projections now are awesome. In the time that I've been making natural history programmes, which, of course, doesn't seem very long to me, the population of the world has tripled. Just in my lifetime, and less than my lifetime ...

The one source of comfort, and it's only a tiny thread, is the knowledge that wherever you empower women, wherever they have the vote, wherever they have the education, wherever they have the free will and are in charge of their own lives and not dictated to by men, the birth rate falls. Which is a very good reason for getting rid of slums, for increasing education and for dealing with all the other social problems that many people and places have.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view the full speech.

Write engaging opening hooks for the issues below.

- ✗ Should school uniforms be mandatory?

- ✗ Should graffiti be considered an art form?

- ✗ Does social media damage self-esteem?

- ✗ Should the creative arts industry receive more government funding?

- ✗ Should people be penalised for littering?



Complete the plan below for one of the topics on the previous page.

Introduction: Briefly explain the issue to your audience. To understand your argument, what background information do they need?

Body paragraph 1: Present a point in support of your main contention, reinforced by evidence and presented using appropriate persuasive strategies.

Body paragraph 2: Present another point in support of your main contention, reinforced by evidence and presented using appropriate persuasive strategies.

Body paragraph 3: Make your final point in support of your contention, reinforced by evidence and presented using appropriate persuasive strategies.

Conclusion: Use new vocabulary to remind the audience of your main contention and emphasise its validity.



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

Crafting an engaging voice

Creating a voice that engages your audience is especially important with a speech. You want to be relatable to your audience, while also sounding knowledgeable and trustworthy.

SAMPLE TEXT

Dylan Alcott's 2022 Australian of the Year speech

I love my disability. It is the best thing that ever happened to me. It really is, and I'm so thankful for the life that I get to live ...

But I know for the 4.5 million people in this country, one in five people that have a physical or non-physical disability, they don't feel the same way that I do and it's not their fault.

But it's up to all of us to do things so they can get out and be proud of their disability as well and be the people that they want to be.

We've got to fund the NDIS [National Disability Insurance Scheme], first and foremost, and listen to people with lived experience and ask them what they need ...

We've got to keep [creating] more employment opportunities for people with a disability as well. Of those 4.5 million people, only 54 per cent of them are involved in the workforce.

The unemployment rate is double that of able-bodied people. Both figures haven't moved in 30 years.

And, guess what? We're not just ready to work, we're ready to take your jobs, alright? We are coming. We are coming. But we've got to get those opportunities.

And lastly, we have to have greater representation of people with a disability absolutely everywhere. In our boardrooms, in our parliaments, in our mainstream schools, on our dating apps, on our sporting fields, in our universities, absolutely everywhere, so we get the opportunity to start living our lives just like everybody else ...

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view the full speech.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for information about using mnemonic devices in your speeches and a corresponding activity.

Using key ideas and mentor texts

Although you can produce complete pieces of writing using your own ideas and imagination, **key ideas** and **mentor texts** can support this process. You will likely explore a key idea and use mentor texts as models for writing during your senior English studies.

Key ideas are broad concepts that can help you to focus your writing. This chapter will consider three key ideas:

- × writing about childhood
- × writing about dreams
- × writing about home.



Mentor texts are texts relating to a key idea that you can use to guide and inspire your own writing. The following elements of mentor text/s can inform your writing:

- × structure
- × language features
- × vocabulary.

Each key idea discussed in this chapter includes a list of examples of mentor texts to inspire your writing. Your teacher might provide more, and you are encouraged to find some of your own.

Writing about childhood

Brainstorm your initial thoughts about the idea of 'childhood' in the space below, then compare your notes with a classmate.



childhood

While many of us have a clear understanding of the concept of 'childhood' – the period of being a child – individual experiences of this stage of life differ greatly. Outline your experiences of childhood by answering the questions below.

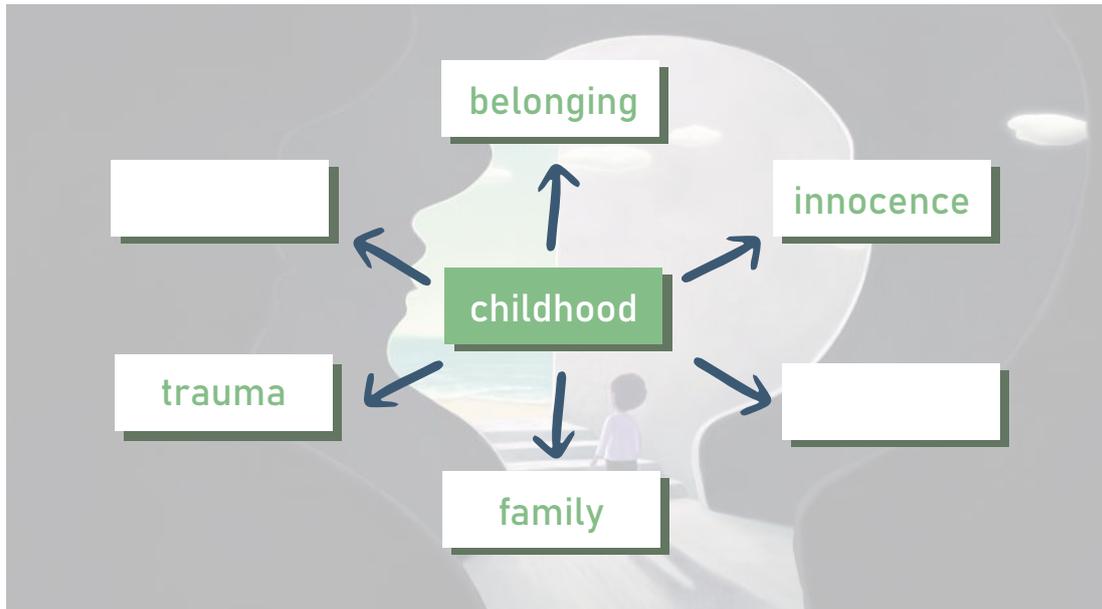
- × When you were growing up, how did you spend your summers?

- × Are there any games or toys you particularly remember playing with?

- × What was the happiest moment of your childhood?

- × What was the saddest moment of your childhood?

The mind map below names some different concepts relating to 'childhood'.
Brainstorm two additional concepts to add to the mind map.



Using your responses in this section as a starting point, generate three story ideas / topics about childhood that you could write on. Two examples have been provided for you as a guide.

- ✘ *An informative piece about how growing up with siblings can affect one's sense of belonging*
- ✘ *An imaginative/reflective piece in which the protagonist reflects on the traumatic childhood experience of being attacked by the neighbour's pit bull*

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on writing about childhood.

Mentor texts for writing about childhood

The following are some examples of mentor texts to inspire your writing about childhood.

- × *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo (novel)
- × 'Feeling Different' chapter in *Reckoning* by Magda Szubanski (memoir)
- × *Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia* edited by Anita Heiss (nonfiction collection)
- × 'What is an Ideal Childhood?' by Lena Corner (interviews)
- × 'Growing Up in Australia, I Just Wanted to Be Like Everyone Else' by Fatima Malik (article)
- × 'Treating the Effects of Childhood Trauma' by Amy Morin (blog post)

Read the extract below from the chapter 'Feeling Different' in *Reckoning* by Magda Szubanski and read the annotations to identify different aspects of the text you could use in your own writing.

Opens with a broad statement about childhood that is expanded on in the remainder of the chapter.

The absence of sibling distraction in my childhood left me time for projects. I wrote little books and plays and drew cartoons. At school I wrote, directed and acted in plays. In grade five I started a school newspaper which I would painstakingly Gestetner [duplicate] during recess. But nothing was ever as good as television. I especially loved *Get Smart* and *Lost in Space* and *Daniel Boone*. I thought *Gilligan's Island* was stupid and improbable, as was *I Dream of Jeannie*. But of course towering above all of them was *The Brady Bunch*. It wasn't just a TV show. It was a survival manual.

Short, humorous comments are used to evoke a unique voice.

Evocative language is used to describe the author's emotional state at the time.

Being the youngest child by a long way was something like being an only child, with all of the attendant freedom but none of the fussing over. There was also the dull ache of perpetually being left out, a feeling that has never quite left me ... My isolation also meant I had no points of comparison; no way of knowing if what I felt was normal or weird. There were only two things that gave me a sense of perspective – *The Brady Bunch* and the moon.

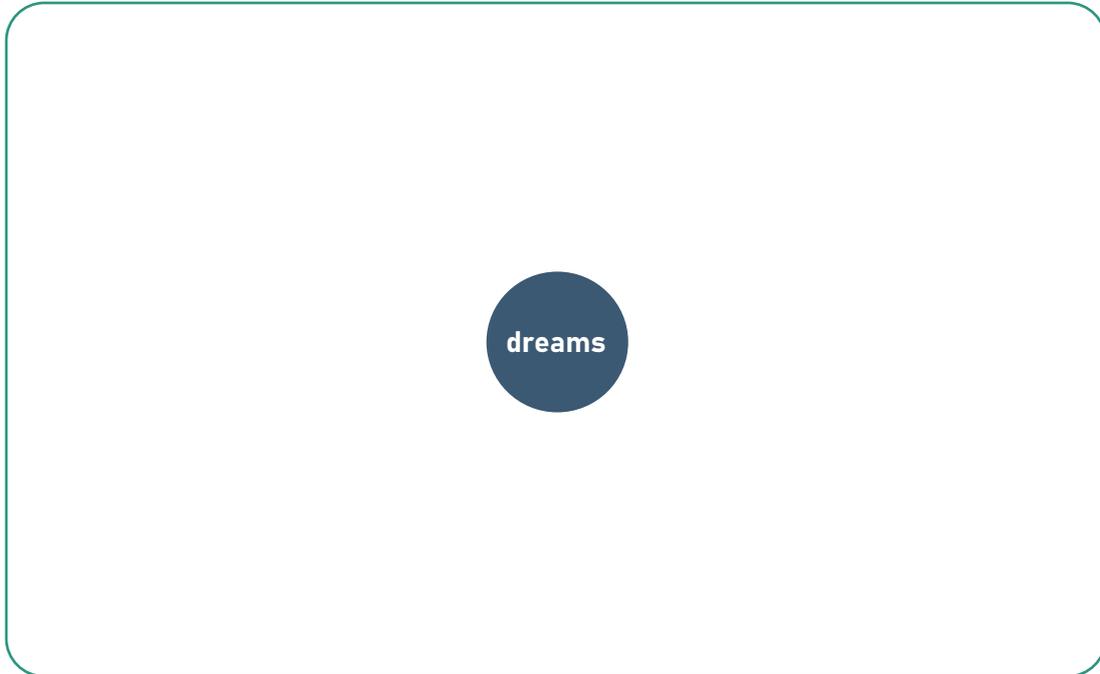
The author highlights the significance of childhood events and emotions by making a link to her adult life.

Nothing ever fazed the Bradys. Every crisis and calamity was met with equanimity and good humour. They managed to sail on through moral challenges such as high-school election vote-rigging and sibling rivalry. Even Jan's braces barely ruffled their feathers. The Bradys were a handrail on the vertiginous slopes of my own family life. They became my ersatz [substitute] family. They were what real families were like: families with ordinary names whose dads didn't have cancer.

Uses a motif (in this case, TV shows) to contrast different types of childhood.

Writing about dreams

Brainstorm your initial thoughts about the idea of 'dreams' in the space below, then compare your notes with a classmate.



dreams

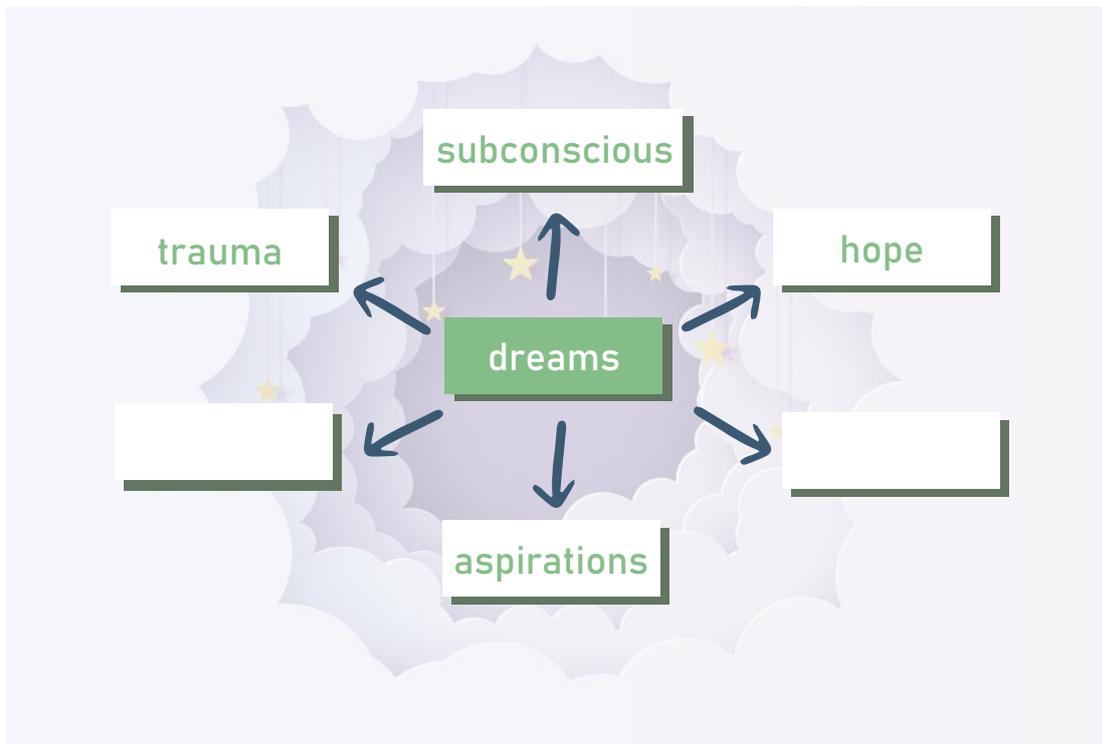
The word 'dream' refers primarily to the stories and images that our minds create while we sleep. It can also refer to our ambitions or ideals. Outline your experiences of dreams by answering the questions below.

- × What is the last significant dream you had?

- × What do you think this dream symbolises or represents?

- × What dreams do you hold for your future?

The mind map below names some different concepts relating to 'dreams'.
Brainstorm two additional concepts to add to the mind map.



Using your responses in this section as a starting point, generate three story ideas / topics about dreams that you could write on. Two examples have been provided for you as a guide.

- ✗ *An informative piece about how dreams help individuals to process trauma*
- ✗ *An imaginative piece about siblings who achieve their dreams of becoming astronauts*

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on writing about dreams.

Mentor texts for writing about dreams

The following are some examples of mentor texts to inspire your writing about dreams.

- × 'Bad Dreams' in *Bad Dreams and Other Stories* by Tessa Hadley (short story)
- × *Only Ever Always* by Penni Russon (novel)
- × *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (novel)
- × 'I Have a Dream' by Martin Luther King Jr (speech)
- × 'The Science Behind Dreaming' by Sander van der Linden (scientific article)
- × 'The Death of the Great Australian Dream' by Michael Safi (news article)

Read the extract below from 'The Death of the Great Australian Dream' by Michael Safi in *The Guardian* and read the annotations to identify different aspects of the text you could use to inspire your own writing.

Opens by discussing big concepts relating to 'national dreams' that are likely to pique the interest of readers.

When people talk about the American Dream they mean the pursuit of happiness, a belief that anyone can make it in the United States. The 'Australian Dream' means buying a house.

Since at least 1910, Australians have been more likely to own their home than Britons or Americans. Freestanding houses on quarter-acre blocks, backyards, BBQs and Hills Hoists: home ownership has its own hazy mythology, etched in the Australian imagination.

Expressive language is used to liven up the piece and give it a distinct voice.

A problem relating to the topic is clearly outlined, supported by a credible source.

There have always been booms. But in the past two decades, housing prices have increased faster, for longer, than at any time since at least 1880, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Facts and statistics are used to highlight the extent of the problem.

Proposes potential solutions to the problem, showing a high level of engagement with the issue.

For Australians under 35, the numbers are ugly. The size of the average loan taken out by a first-time buyer in New South Wales has swelled by more than 43% in the past four years (and 20% in the past year alone) to about A\$424,000 (£218,000). Wages in the same period increased 10% ...

Tinkering with policies is only half the work. Millennials also need to get dreaming, imagining a new Australian ideal in line with economic reality.

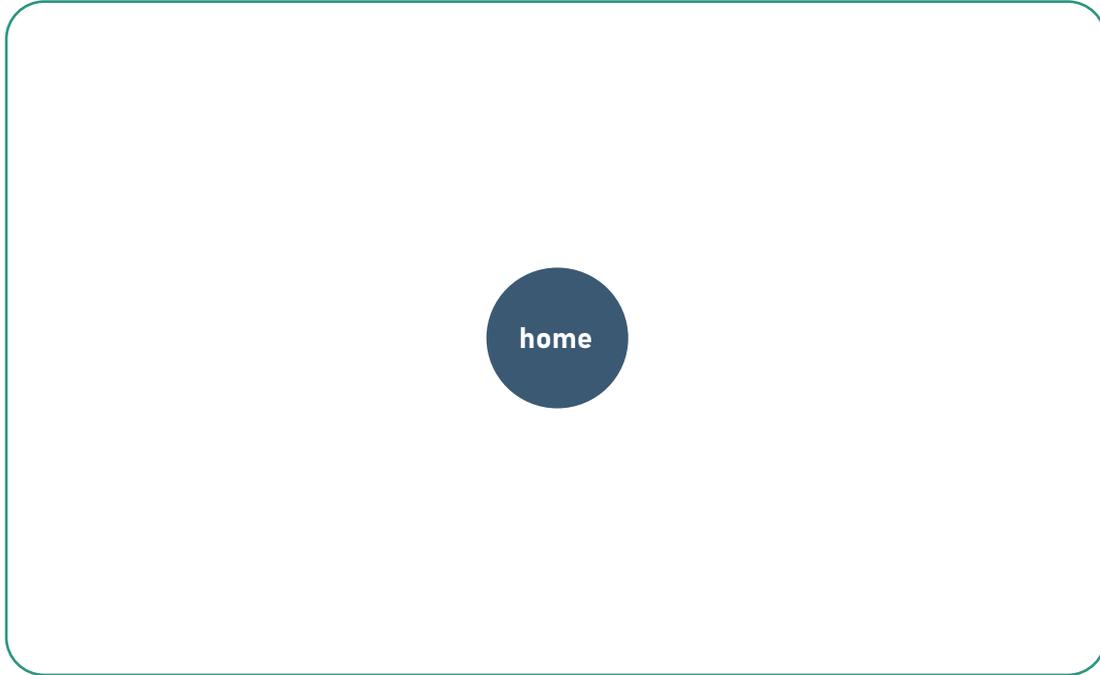
'The idea of house prices being cheap again, we probably need to kill,' Waterford [head of advocacy at the Committee for Sydney] says. So too 'the idea of home-owning as the path to security and stability'.

Quotes from stakeholders are included to add credibility to the piece.

And last, the mother of them all: 'The idea of owning a free-standing home on a quarter-acre block. It's just not feasible. The houses of the future will be about small homes, shared spaces, bigger lifestyles.'

Writing about home

Brainstorm your initial thoughts about the idea of 'home' in the space below, then compare your notes with a classmate.



home

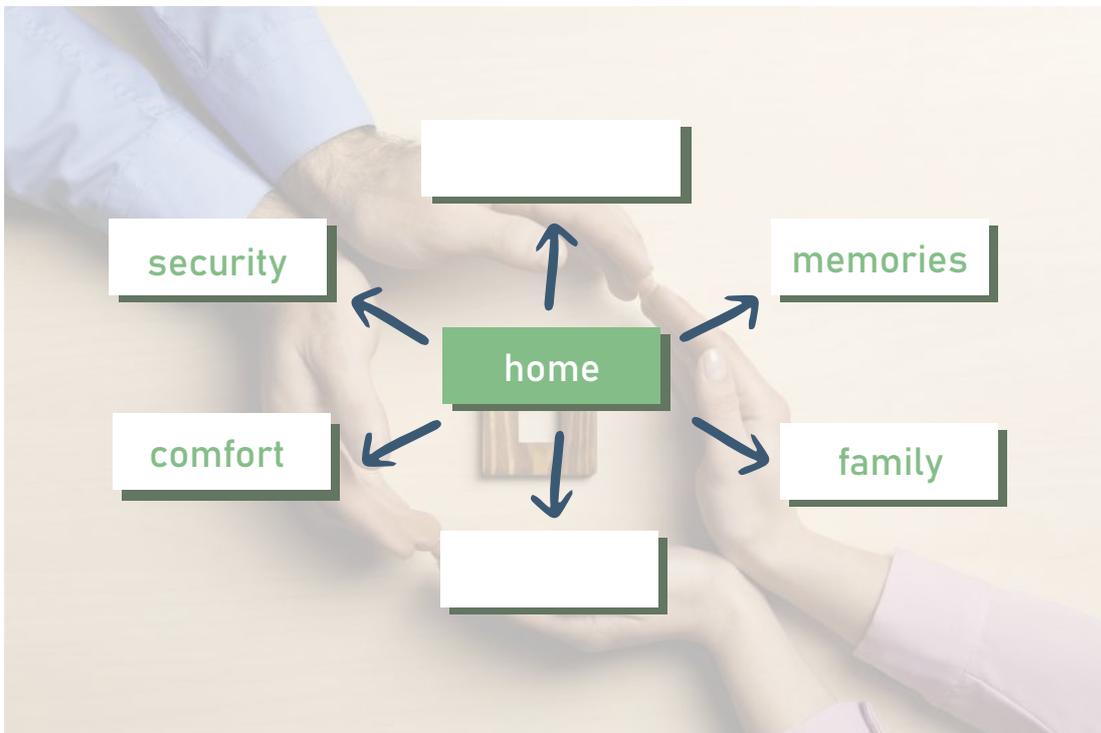
'Home' is a broad idea that means different things to different people. Most commonly, however, it relates to where one lives and the experiences had in this space. Outline your experiences of home by answering the questions below.

- × Where did you grow up? Try to describe it using sensory details.

- × What are some positive or negative memories you have of your childhood home?

- × Describe your dream home.

The mind map below names some different concepts relating to 'home'.
Brainstorm two additional concepts to add to the mind map.



Using your responses in this section as a starting point, generate three story ideas / topics about home that you could write on. Two examples have been provided for you as a guide.

- ✘ *A persuasive piece arguing that homeless children need more than just shelter to develop a sense of home*
- ✘ *A reflective piece about how constantly moving homes as a child led to a nomadic lifestyle*

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities on writing about home.

Mentor texts for writing about home

The following are some examples of mentor texts to inspire your writing about childhood.

- × 'Runaway' in *Runaway* by Alice Munro (short story)
- × *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L Frank Baum (novel)
- × *The Happiest Refugee* by Anh Do (memoir)
- × 'No other road' in *False Claims of Colonial Thieves* by Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella (poem)
- × 'Why is home so important to us?' by Michael Allen Fox (article)
- × 'What's in the Name "Homeless"? How People See Themselves and the Labels We Apply Matter' by Zoe Walter et al. (opinion piece)

Read the extract below from 'Runaway' by Alice Munro and read the annotations to identify different aspects of the text you could use to inspire your own writing.

Evocative opening statement draws the reader in, leading them to wonder about the first time alluded to.

This was her second time to leave everything behind. The first time was just like the old Beatles song – her putting the note on the table and slipping out of the house at five o'clock in the morning, meeting Clark in the church parking lot down the street ...

'You don't know what you're leaving behind,' her mother wrote to her, in that one letter that she received, and never answered. **But in those shivering moments of early-morning flight she certainly did know what she leaving behind, even if she had rather a hazy idea of what she was going to. She despised her parents, their house, their backyard, their photo albums, their vacations, their Cuisinart, their powder room, their walk-in closets, their underground lawn-sprinkling system.** In the brief note she had written she had used the word *authentic*.

Sensory details are used to depict the character's emotional state.

A negative depiction of the idea of home is constructed through a list of hated objects.

I have always felt the need of a more authentic kind of life. I know I cannot expect you to understand this ...

She was crying now, her eyes had filled up without her realizing it. **She set herself to thinking about Toronto, the first steps ahead. The taxi, the house she had never seen, the strange bed she would sleep in alone.** Looking in the phone book tomorrow for the addresses of riding stables, then getting to wherever they were, asking for a job.

Another facet of the idea of home (here, a potential future home) is explored.

Short, punchy statement reinforces the gravitas of the situation.

She could not picture it. Herself riding on the subway or streetcar, caring for new horses, talking to new people, living among hordes of people every day who were not Clark.

Crafting responses

Step 1: Selecting a focus

Whether prompted by a key idea, using a mentor text as inspiration or simply creating something out of nothing, the first step in the writing process is to decide what the focus of your writing will be.

Complete the following sentences to identify some possible topics and ideas for your writing.

A hobby I enjoy is _____

I am very good at _____

My favourite book/film is _____

An issue I have a strong opinion about is _____

My most significant memory is _____

I have always wondered about _____

One aspect of the key idea we have studied that especially intrigues me is _____

The mentor text I most enjoyed reading was _____
because _____

Once you have an idea you would like to write about, use the checklist on pages 58–9. This will help you to consider audience, context and purpose, and the effect of these on your piece.

Step 2: Planning and writing

The plan for your text will depend on the form you have chosen to write in. Fill in the planning template below for one of the ideas you identified on the previous page.

	What to include	Notes about language
Opening/ introduction		
1st paragraph/ section		
2nd paragraph/ section		
3rd paragraph/ section		
4th paragraph/ section		
Conclusion/ resolution		

Step 3: Reflecting on the writing process

As part of your senior English studies, you may be required to write a reflection on the process of crafting your texts.

Essentially, the reflective commentary is an analysis of your own piece of writing – you will be explaining your use of language and structure in terms of the purpose, audience and context of your writing. The how and why of your choices are important. You can also reflect on aspects that you found challenging and on things that you found inspiring and useful – such as specific aspects of the key idea and mentor texts you have explored.



Your reflective commentary is all about you and your writing, so you will be able to write in the first person ('I chose', 'my decision').

The following reflective commentary accompanies the short story on pages 154–6.

For my YA sci-fi short story, I used a diary structure – similar to that in my mentor text – to explore the protagonist's journey to a new home. Each entry reveals not only the plot but also elements of the protagonist's character and emotions. The protagonist is of a similar age and mindset to myself, allowing me to draw a credible character that other young adult readers would find relatable.

The short story addresses the key idea of writing about home, with a family that leaves their old home behind for a new one. Although the piece is set in outer space, I imagine that this theme of having to adapt to a new home is a universal one that many of my readers could relate to. Similarly, the tension between the siblings, which I have experienced firsthand with my siblings, is something that I hope resonates with my readers.

The purpose of my short story is to explore the idea of home, family and growing up, in an entertaining and thought-provoking way. I used a range of literary techniques and language that conforms to the YA genre, such as dialogue that reflects the way young people speak and dramatic impactful sentences. I hope that this helps to immerse my readers in my imagined world and allows them to focus on the key themes of the piece.

Step 4: Editing your text

When you have the opportunity to draft and rewrite, you should take the time to carefully scrutinise your work and look for areas for improvement. First, look at the overall shape and style of the piece, including the features listed below.

For **imaginative or reflective** pieces, ask yourself the following questions.

Plot and pacing	Does the beginning make the reader want to read on? Does the story build to a climax? Does the ending tie everything together?
Character	Are the characters three-dimensional and authentic? Are the goals of the protagonist clear and achievable? Are the relationships between characters well developed?
Setting	Will the reader be able to picture locations clearly? Is the passing of time clearly conveyed?
Dialogue	Does the dialogue sound believable? Is there a balance between dialogue and narration?
Style	Does the style of writing suit the form and genre? Are sensory details and figurative language included?
Voice	Is the voice of the narrator and each character consistent? Does the point of view suit the story being told?

For **informative or persuasive** pieces, ask yourself the following questions.

Content	Does the piece respond fully to the topic/issue? Should more ideas be included, or some be developed further? Is each idea supported by relevant reasons and/or evidence? Are all examples relevant to the ideas expressed?
Structure	Does the introduction outline the approach to the topic/issue? Is each idea expanded upon in separate paragraphs? Is the information in each paragraph presented in a logical order? Does the concluding paragraph sum up the main points?
Style	Does the terminology match the form and purpose of the piece? Are key words and concepts defined?

After you have completed structural changes to your piece, it is time to focus on making improvements at the sentence level.

Use the checklist below to copyedit your work.

- Language choices are appropriate to the purpose, audience and context.
- Sentence structures are varied and effective.
- Each sentence is clear and complete.
- Appropriate linking words have been used to make transitions between sentences and from one paragraph to the next.
- Vocabulary is varied and precise.
- Quotation marks are used to show where speech or a quotation begins and ends.
- Punctuation (e.g. capital letters, commas) is correct throughout.
- Grammar is correct throughout (except dialogue or narrative voice representing everyday speech).
- Spelling is correct throughout.

Edit your work

- 1 Using one of the tables on page 150 as a guide, list four areas of improvement for the piece you wrote for Step 2 of this chapter.

- 2 Swap your original piece of writing with a classmate and list four areas of improvement for their piece.

- 3 Redraft your piece to address any structural issues identified.

- 4 Using the checklist above, copyedit your piece to address any sentence-level errors.

Sample responses

Text 1

Purpose: to reflect

Key idea: writing about dreams

Form: autobiographical writing

Mentor text: 'Bad Dreams' by Tessa Hadley

The opening sets the scene and establishes the theme of dreams and escapism.

Ever since I can remember I've had trouble getting to sleep. I know it's because most nights I can hear Mum and Dad arguing in the lounge room and getting louder as time goes on and they drink more and more beer. Arguing about money and too many kids and how long Mum takes at the shops or how much time Dad spends with his mates. My mum and dad met when they were at high school and have been together for a long time. If you ask me, it's too long. I don't even think they like each other. I hate it all and do my best to shut the sounds out.

This shift in time allows for a longer period to be covered; this extends the narrative beyond the present (of a teenage writer).

Sometimes I think about things from when I was little that help. When I was six, I went to live with my grandmother for a while. She went to church all the time, and up until then I don't think I even knew what a church was. She would always make me pray before I went to sleep. 'If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.' Not that successful in helping me get to sleep.

Reflective language highlights how the author is trying to resolve issues, but is also analysing the reasons for certain actions and behaviours.

There's something else, though, that always helps. It's from an old novel called *The Outsiders* that I found at an op shop. In the opening line the narrator, Ponyboy, says, 'When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house, I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home.' That's about all I need to send me to sleep and be somewhere else. Maybe it's my brain's way of coping. Apparently, we only use 10% of our brain and so there's a lot in reserve to help me get through.

Establishes relatability and credibility with the audience.

I've had dreams of racing cars with Paul Newman and being in movies with him. It doesn't matter that he died in 2008. My dreams don't seem to factor in things like life and death. We watched *The Verdict* last year in my Legal Studies class, but I didn't tell anyone about my thing for Paul Newman. I've dreamt of being a character in *The Outsiders* and saving Johnny. I've dreamt of being in darkness, terrified and alone. Searching for the light and blindly falling over objects and frightened of hurting myself. Then with an overwhelming sense of relief, running through fields of sunflowers or tulips. I dream of finding my way home but it's not the home I actually live in. Sometimes I live in a mansion with a beautiful indoor pool and a music room. Netflix streams from every room and parents are nowhere to be seen. Sometimes I live

Draws on particular features of the mentor text ('Bad Dreams', a girl wakes up from a dream in which she finds a secret epilogue to her favorite book, *Swallows and Amazons*).

Descriptive language adds variety and interest, in contrast to the less colourful language used to relay concrete details of the writer's life.

Although much of the piece is specific to the life of the author, here a general statement is used to discuss the sleep cycle.

A short, impactful statement draws the reader in and indicates the primary tension of the piece.

in a cottage in the forest with a heavy metal band and we all take turns cooking.

Lately, though, I've started to worry about dreaming and what it means. I know there are heaps of books out there on dreaming and analysis of dreams and the like. Apparently in the REM stage of sleep, our breathing speeds up; and, as we begin to dream, we are paralysed. What if I went to sleep one night, felt paralysed, and couldn't wake up from that?

To be honest I am beginning to feel like I'm living in two different worlds. The night-time one and the daytime one. The one at night is nearly always better than the reality of day. Even my darkest dream has a good ending. I feel rested and kind of hopeful each morning when I wake up and then I look around my old room and depression starts to kick in.

Even if I've had a bad dream, sometimes it feels like the thing I've actually got the most control over in my life. Every day, I get up, make a sandwich and grab a banana, then walk to school. All day doing what I'm told, getting moved around from room to room with classmates like a herd of cattle, listening to bored and boring teachers parrot on about things that I can't see getting me out of here any time soon. Sitting on the oval with my friends, eating the stale sandwich that had warmed up in my bag so the margarine melts into the bread, turning the whole thing into a greasy, flat mess. Walking home to find Mum already on her third can, my little brother still plonked in front of the telly, where he was when I left this morning. And then it's just a waiting game till Dad gets home, stinking like the pub and giving Mum a hard time about the overcooked broccoli. Going to sleep is the best part of my day.

I'm starting to wonder if I'm ever going to have a real life that's better than my dream life. Or maybe my dream life is the thing that's real. Is daytime just a bad dream? Maybe that's what the other 90% of my brain is doing – filling in the gaps between sleep. If that's how it has to be, I don't know why it's creating something that's not worth waking up for. Will there be a time when I can't tell which one is actually real? Who knows – it's not like I can talk about this with anyone without being sent to the loony bin anyway.

All I know is, it's 9.30 at night, the house is still stinking hot, and Dad's gone out again. I just want to fade into sleep and see what Ponyboy is doing.

Uses colloquial language appropriate for the audience, signalling that the author can relate to the audience's experiences.

Uses repetition at the end of the piece to leave the audience with a strong impression of the benefits of dreaming for the author.

Text 2

Purpose: to express**Key idea:** writing about home**Form:** diary entries**Mentor text:** *Samantha's Diary* by Diana Wynne Jones**Adithi's Diary, 16 August, Home, Melbourne, Australia, Earth.**

The writer quickly establishes a first-person narrative with a diary structure as seen in *Samantha's Diary* by Diana Wynne Jones. Combining an unusual circumstance with a strong youthful tone establishes this as a conventional YA narrative.

We're getting ready to leave Earth and Mum just took Asha and me aside and said quietly, 'Now, there isn't much room on the craft, so you can only bring one toy'. I snorted, and then quickly covered my nose with my hand at how gross the noise was. But honestly, what did she expect? At the age of fifteen I hardly have toys anymore, as I explained to Mum.

'I don't have toys, I have stuff. Important stuff that I can't possibly be expected to choose between.'

It wasn't my idea to go to the Moon. All my friends got their invites to Mars, like ... months ago. Mum says we are on the waiting list, obvs Mars is the end goal for all current Earth population, but, as Mum says, 'Rome wasn't built in a day.' Rome sure wasn't, but our tech is pretty advanced now. Like, all I'm saying is that if we wanted to build Rome in a day now, we probably could, and everyone would still have time for a lunch break and everything.

Anyway, I grabbed my new U-tech tablet as my one thing ... and then I snuck my bear from when I was a baby into my packing when no one was looking. I'll go to the Moon, but I'm not going without Teddy.

Asha came out with a pillowcase she had filled with Lego. 'This is one!' she said as triumphantly as a ten-year-old can.

Using the diary format shows changes in location, and later also the emotional state of the characters.

Adithi's Diary, 21 August, 3° 12' 43.2" South, 5° 12' 39.6" West, The Moon.

Well, that was just excessive. Four days! I slept for most of it but still, that's a lot of time in a little space tube. I know spacecraft have become super advanced in the last few years, but they still just look like an inside-out Pringles can to me.

Mum showed us to our new place – it was exciting for about half a second. Our home on Earth was beautiful, everything was kind of soft and warm. All the beams were made out of this old dark wood, and we had a huge backyard! Here, everything is smooth and modern. Clean white surfaces and stainless steel. I feel like I'm not allowed to be messy here, but even if I did spill something, one of the various U-tech appliances would have it spick and span in no time.

Combining sci-fi elements with real life references places the characters in the not-too-distant future, establishing their new setting and time.

The view is amazing though, the windows are huge, and we can see the whole Earth from the living room! I haven't had the heart to look too much, though. Makes me miss home almost enough to climb back into the Pringles can.

Oh! I haven't even told you about my room yet. Let me tell you, this room is small! Tiny! AND WE HAVE TO SHARE. The Moon is so much smaller than Earth, we have to be careful with surface space, so room-sharing is encouraged and completely out of my control.

I never would have agreed to this if I had known I had to share with Asha. I never would have come here! She never shuts up. Just as we were going to sleep last night, she's all,

'Did you know, in the olden days, people used to wear windows on their faces?'

'What? Don't be stupid.'

'I'm not! They would get small windows, put them on these little plastic rods and then balance them on their ears to help them see! They were called ... um ... glasses!'

I don't know what they are teaching her at Moon school. Asha loves Moon school.

Adithi's Diary, 22 August, 3° 12' 43.2" South, 5° 12' 39.6" West, The Moon.

Moon school sucks.

I hate this.

I hate it here. I want to go home.

I keep finding Asha going through my things. Like sharing a room isn't bad enough, she keeps stealing my stuff. She even found Teddy!

I snatched him back from her.

'I thought you didn't have toys,' she said tauntingly.

'It's not a toy! It's MY STUFF!'

Next time she came into our room I had used her stupid Lego to build a small wall down the middle.

'Everything on that side of the room is yours. Don't cross the wall, and don't touch my stuff.'

She started protesting that I had used her blocks, but I turned on my U-tech and ignored her.

Fragmented sentences create impact. Here the reader is shown Adithi's emotions and isolation in a way that is punchy and relatable.

The writer repeats earlier phrases to increase tension between the sisters in this scene.

Adithi's Diary, 22 August, night, My side of the wall, The Moon.

We are both still awake. I was fuming when I went to bed but now I just feel bad. I think I forgot she's only ten. I think I forgot she just lost her home too.

'Sorry I messed with your toys,' I said, looking at the wall.

"It's not a toy, it's my stuff," she said back.

I couldn't help but giggle a little bit at that.

'Sorry I messed with your stuff,' I clarified.

"S'fine," she said, snuffling into her pillow. The argument took it out of her: she fell asleep really quickly. I was pretty amazed at that. How had we both only been here a few days? How had she adjusted so quickly?

'Asha?' I woke her up quietly.

'Hm?'

'Why are you OK with being here? Don't you miss home?'

'Nah.'

'Why not?'

"Coz you and Mum are here. I think probably that's what home is.'

Adithi's Diary, 23 August, Home, The Moon.

I took down the little Lego wall.

It's all just stuff anyway.

The story ends with a motif from earlier in the story, giving the story a satisfying circular structure.

Text 3

Purpose: to inform**Key idea:** writing about home**Form:** news article**Mentor text:** 'Turkey begins to rebuild for 1.5 million left homeless by earthquakes' by Ece Toksabay and Orhan Coskun

Informative texts often begin with a headline or title to gain the reader's attention and indicate the topic.

Black Saturday Bushfires

On Saturday 7 February 2009 Victoria experienced one of the worst natural disasters. **Bushfires.**

In the weeks before, the south-east of Australia was in the midst of a heatwave. Victoria has a cooler climate than most of the other states of Australia. Yet, it does occasionally throw in temperatures in the high 30s and mid-40s in summer. The previous two months had been hot and Victoria was in the middle of a drought.

Many people were aware that much of the **state's flora was dry and brittle**, resulting in a heightened fire danger. A bushfire in Victoria on 16 February 1983 (known as Ash Wednesday) was still a haunting memory for many. In that event, over 100 fires burned 210 000 hectares, killing 27 000 livestock and destroying 2 000 houses. Forty-seven people died. Places affected included Beaconsfield Upper, Belgrave Heights, Branxholme, Cockatoo, East Trentham, Framlingham, Monivae, Mount Macedon, Otway Ranges and Warburton.

On 6 February 2009, Premier John Brumby announced that the next day would be the 'worst day in the history of the state'. **As it turned out**, this was not an overstatement.

The following day, north-west winds of more than 100 kilometres per hour brought hot arid air from central Australia. The wind blew down powerlines in Kilmore East, starting the first of the Black Saturday fires. The fire spread and crossed the Hume Freeway in the afternoon. It burnt through Wandong, and had reached Mount Disappointment by 3pm. It then went on to Humevale and Kinglake.

Other fires ignited across the state. This is not a comprehensive list, just an example of how many places were affected: Bunyip, Buxton, Churchill, Eaglehawk, Horsham, Kinglake, Long Gully, Marysville, Mount Disappointment, Murrindindi, Narbethong, Narre Warren, Redesdale, Taggerty, Upper Ferntree Gully and Wandong.

A short, impactful statement/word draws the reader in and indicates the primary tension of the piece.

Descriptive language adds variety and interest.

A text written to inform should have accurate and detailed facts, relevant to the text's purpose and the reader's interests and needs.

A connective phrase is used to indicate the upcoming conclusion.

By late afternoon/evening, almost 400 individual fires were burning. Victoria Police announced the initial death toll. One of the worst catastrophes was on 8 February 2009: the Kinglake Fire Complex (the result of two fires merging) – the Kilmore East and Murrindindi fires. Flames were 30 metres high.

Despite the work of more than 19 000 Country Fire Authority members, the fires were not contained. The final death toll was 173 (120 of those being from the Kinglake area) and 414 people were injured. Over a million animals perished, 2029 houses were destroyed and 450 000 hectares of land burned.

The fires were horrific and the impact was felt for many years. The media scrutiny was intense and news reports went around the country and the world.

The loss of life was a tragedy, people also lost their homes and their livelihoods, and many never recovered. This disaster affected seventy-eight communities. Due to the changes in building regulations, some local residents who wanted to rebuild were unable to. Others didn't have the energy or drive to start again. Many people moved away from the area as they couldn't bear the sight of the burnt landscape. The medical profession reported an increase in suicide and addictive behaviours for many victims.

On 13 February 2009 Premier Brumby announced a royal commission to inquire into the management of the bushfires. The royal commission investigated all aspects of the government's bushfire strategy. This resulted in sixty-seven recommendations. The Victorian Government amended its guidance around preparing for bushfires. It also made changes to bushfire education policies and building codes. A partnership between the Australian Red Cross and the Victorian and Commonwealth governments set up a Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund, which raised more than \$37 million. Most of this money has now been distributed, providing housing assistance and support to affected communities.

Uses repetition at the end of the piece to leave the audience with a strong impression of how this tragedy affected people.

Informative texts may use features from imaginative writing, such as figurative language and clichés. The publishing context will determine how informal and colourful the writing can be.

Practise annotating a text

Imagine you wrote the persuasive piece below. Annotate the piece with comments about form, structure, language use and links to the key idea and mentor text.

Purpose: to argue

Key idea: writing about childhood

Form: speech

Mentor text: 'Is social media ruining childhood?'
by EdTech Endeavours



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to read the mentor text.

Every year I get the same feedback from concerned parents of the children I teach.

'Too much homework!'

'They've just got back from a school camp. How were they expected to have time for this?'

'Between homework and soccer practice, they barely have time to be kids!'

It seems in this day and age that every young child is coming home with more and more homework. Different subjects and activities are taking up their schedule, making it nearly impossible for them to find time for themselves. And parents are becoming exhausted, trying to keep up with a hectic drop-off schedule for extra-curriculars, while trying to remember how to do long division on the way home. However, I do also hear from the other side of this debate. Some argue that this is a good thing: at the end of the day it is great to see children exploring so many new activities. Sports, arts and other hobbies give children every opportunity to find their passion and make new, diverse friends. Further, keeping a young child busy can be a difficult task for parents and schools. It's a fantastic feeling to be able to offer everything to the child you love, but one has to ask, when is it all too much?

I felt it was time for the kids to have their say. I tried this in my own teaching role at my local primary school, setting up a general discussion between the kids, and then styling it into a more formal debate. My goal was to block out the opinions of parents and external influences on the question: should kids have compulsory free time after school?

Many of the kids immediately loved the idea of compulsory free time and claimed that they would use it to engage in hobbies that they wouldn't usually have time for. Video games and TV proved to be a popular choice. While a lot of the kids admitted that they aren't supposed to do too much of this, just having a little bit of time to switch off the brain and switch on a game meant that they felt they could relax into their evenings. It would simply mean giving the children an hour or two to pursue their own interests and hobbies or just

take a break. The children felt that they would be less stressed and anxious about school if they had a bit of time for what they call 'chilling' and what we call self-care.

Studies have shown that students are experiencing anxiety about their schooling at increasingly earlier ages, and that homework encourages students to memorise facts rather than truly understand what they are being taught. Raisingchildren.net states that free time is useful for 'recharging social batteries' and works best with a balance of other entertaining and self-improvement activities. It was interesting to talk to the children about their mental health and the amount of time they felt they had to themselves.

Other popular activities included building Lego, reading books and visiting family members. These also led to further socialising between the kids, as they all really enjoyed watching or playing something and then being able to talk about it the next day at school. Similarly, many of the children wanted to use their free time to play with one another. Continuing their usual lunch and recess games into the afternoon was fun, satisfying and usually resulted in a large amount of exercise. It was almost universally agreed upon by the kids that compulsory free time would be a good thing for primary-school-aged children.

However, some children stated that they enjoyed their busy schedules. This was because they liked the different activities and opportunities that the school afforded them. A Grade 4 girl, Amelia, said she felt very lucky to be able to enjoy so many different activities, and if they hadn't been offered by the school she might not have all of the interests, passions and friends that she has now. The other children understood this point but did also point out to her that if she had free time, she could still use it to do the activities she enjoyed. In fact, many of the children wanted to use the time to improve their skills in some of their usual hobbies, but ultimately liked the idea that they would be practising by choice rather than having to adhere to a strict schedule.

As a teacher I found it an incredibly useful exercise to involve the children in this debate. After all, they are the ones who would be most affected by this decision. Each child took the time to consider the question properly and came to a conclusion that would be beneficial for themselves and their peers. I would love to see it become compulsory to give children free time as I feel it encourages independence and trust from a young age. For the kids, it was clear from their reaction that not only would compulsory free time benefit their mental health, it would also promote the genuine pursuit of their passions, awareness of self-care, and the opportunity to simply enjoy being a kid.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to read a sample text that has multiple purposes, also known as a hybrid text.

Section 3:

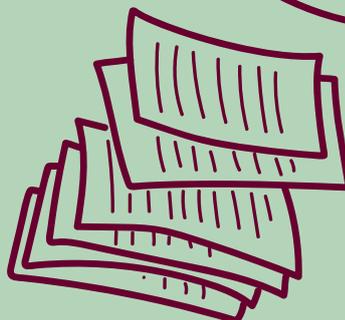
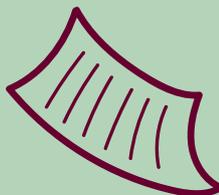
Exploring argument

This section will take you through the steps of analysing media texts. It focuses on writing about:

- ✧ argument
- ✧ persuasive language
- ✧ visual language
- ✧ audio and audiovisual material.

These chapters include a range of activities to help you to develop your skills in analysing the effect of persuasion on an audience, and to plan, write and edit complete analytical responses. With sample texts that explore a range of contemporary issues, this section shows you different ways to approach your own analytical writing.

Chapter 13 focuses on planning and producing your own point-of-view piece for presentation.



Writing about argument and language

Writing about argument

An issue is a topic that generates different opinions from different people or groups. Consider the examples below, then list another four issues.

- × climate change
- × the cost of public transport
- × _____
- × _____
- × _____
- × _____

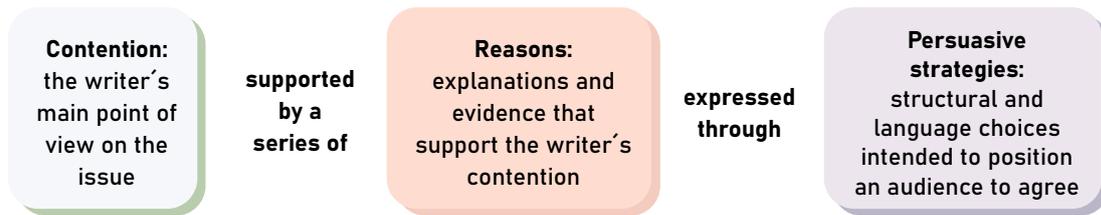
An argument is an opinion on an issue, supported by logical reasons. The writer's opinion is referred to as their **main contention**. Main contentions can be summarised in a single sentence; for example:

- × The government should invest more money in tackling climate change.
- × Public transport should be free for students and low-income earners.

Write a contention for two of the issues you listed above.

- × _____
- × _____

The elements of an argument are summarised in the diagram below.



Without reasons, an argument is just an opinion. One way to identify an argument is to look for connectors that show cause and effect, such as 'because', 'this is shown by' and 'for this reason'.

Structuring strategies

Writers carefully select and construct arguments with the aim of positioning the audience to accept their point of view. Consider the common structuring techniques listed below.

Placement of the main contention

An up-front declaration of a clear contention can make the writer's opinion seem confident and definite. In longer texts, the contention might only be clearly stated towards the end. This can create the impression that the writer has carefully considered both sides of an issue before reaching their opinion.

Order of supporting reasons

A writer might present supporting reasons in order from strongest to weakest, so that they seem highly persuasive from the beginning of their piece. Alternatively, a writer might save their strongest reason until last, to leave the reader with a powerful impression.

Use of subheadings and visual material

Writers sometimes use subheadings to break up their text and make it easier to read, as well as to indicate the main points. Subheadings can make it appear that the writer is approaching the subject in a logical way. The use of bullet points or lists can have a similar effect.

Images also contribute to the overall effect of a piece. A photograph can give a human face to an issue and encourage the audience to react emotionally. Presenting important information in the form of graphs, charts or tables can give the impression that the writer is being objective and that their argument is based on evidence.

Read the sample text below, then answer the questions relating to it on page 166.

SAMPLE TEXT

'How on-demand buses can transform travel and daily life for people with disabilities' by Ainsley Hughes, *The Conversation*

People with disabilities arguably stand to gain the most from good public transport, but are continually excluded by transport systems that still aren't adapted to their needs as the law requires. One in six people aged 15 and over with disability have difficulty using some or all forms of public transport. One in seven are not able to use public transport at all.

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Australia's public transport systems were expected to be fully compliant with the 2002 Transport Standards by December 31 2022. Not only have many of our bus, train and tram systems failed to meet these targets, but the standards themselves are outdated. The standards are under review and public consultation has begun.

For buses, the standards largely focus on the vehicles themselves: low-floor buses, wheelchair ramps, priority seating, handrails and enough room to manoeuvre. But just because a vehicle is accessible doesn't necessarily mean a bus journey is accessible.

There are difficulties getting to and from the bus, limited frequency of accessible services, poor driver training, passenger conflict, travel anxiety and a lack of planning for diversity. In all these ways, bus travel excludes people with disabilities ...

Accessible vehicles are just the start

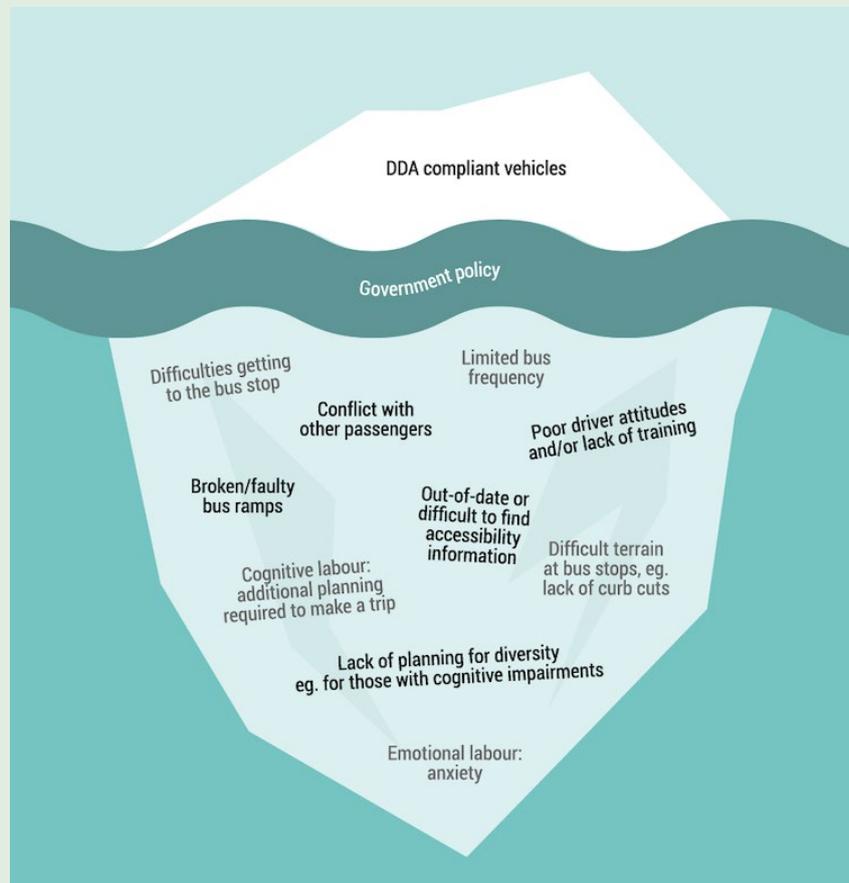
Making vehicles accessible is really only the tip of the iceberg. Focusing only on infrastructure misses two key points:

1. our public transport journeys begin before we board the service and continue after we've left it
2. accessibility means providing people with quality transport experiences, not just access to resources.

Let's imagine a typical suburban bus journey. It is industry accepted that passengers are generally willing to walk about 400 metres to a bus stop. That is based, of course, on the assumption that passengers are able-bodied. Long distances, steep hills, neglected pathways, few kerb cuts and poorly designed bus shelters all hinder individuals with disabilities from getting to the bus in the first place.

This issue resurfaced in the 2020 report 'People with Disability in Australia', by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. More than one in four respondents with disabilities said getting 'to and from stops' was a major obstacle to using public transport.

But other barriers to making services inclusive are even more difficult to see. People with disabilities are forced to plan extensively when to travel, how to travel, who to travel with and what resources they need to complete the journey. Even the best-laid plans involve added emotional energy or ‘travel anxiety’.



Although vehicles are meant to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, government policy still overlooks many social and operational barriers to bus travel. Image courtesy of Liftango Labs

What solutions are there?

On-demand transport offers potential solutions to some of these issues. Its key feature is flexibility: users can travel between any two points within a service zone, whenever they want.

This flexibility can be harnessed to design more inclusive bus services. Without a fixed route or timetable, on-demand services can pick up passengers at their home and drop them directly at their destination. This door-to-door service eliminates the stressful journey to and from a bus stop and their destinations.

And with services available on demand, users can plan their travel to complement their daily activities instead of the availability of transport dictating their daily activities ...

A call to action for Australian governments

Government policy needs to address not only inadequate bus infrastructure, but those invisible barriers that continue to exclude many people from bus travel. We need a cognitive shift to recognise accessibility is about creating quality experiences from door to destination for everyone.

This needs to be paired with a willingness to explore solutions like on-demand transport. Transport authorities worldwide are already embracing these solutions. We cannot continue to rely on the community transport sector to absorb the responsibility of providing transport for people with disabilities, particularly as our populations age.

Explore argument

- 1 Identify the issue and contention of the sample text.

- 2 Where is the contention placed? What is the effect of placing it here?

- 3 Identify three reasons the writer offers in support of the contention.

- 4 What is the effect of including subheadings?

- 5 What information is the image conveying and what is the effect of conveying this information as an image rather than simply as text?

Other argument techniques

Some common methods of persuasion used by writers and speakers are listed in the following table. In the right-hand column, add a second example for each method.

Methods of persuasion	Example 1	Example 2
Appealing to the audience's fears	There are cyber scammers everywhere. All it takes is one slip-up over the phone and you've lost everything.	
Appealing to the audience's sympathy	Sea-level rises are destroying the homes of people in Pacific nations, who also face increasing cyclones due to climate change.	
Appealing to the audience's financial self-interest	And, while the streets are full of homeless folk, our council agrees to pay \$27 000 to illuminate the national flag.	
Appealing to shared values	The government has let us down on emissions reductions. Anyone who's followed the carbon credit debacle would know it's a rort.	
Offering benefits	Medicare-subsidised heart checks have helped 440 000 Australians to understand their heart health and develop prevention plans with their GP.	
Presenting evidence	The Flinders electorate is 'one of the most vulnerable Victorian municipalities to the effects of rising sea levels'.	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an additional activity about argument techniques.

Writing about persuasive language

To analyse persuasive language well, you need to think about how the writer's argument and language *work together* to create persuasive effects. You need to explain how an argument is supported by the language used to deliver it and how this is intended to appeal to the audience.

Remember, too, that a writer will often have a specific target audience of people who have their own interests, biases, experiences and knowledge. Always consider how particular language choices are likely to influence the writer's specific audience.

Appeals to reason and emotion

Persuasion works in two main ways: by appealing to our reason and to our emotions. Appeals to reason rely on logic, as well as facts and statistics. Writers often use emotive or loaded language to appeal to readers' emotions.

Writers will take into account the sort of persuasive approach that their audience is most likely to respond to. They will often try to appeal to both their audience's reason and their emotions.

Tone

Tone is the mood or feeling of a text; it reflects a writer's attitude to a topic or issue. Direct, hostile language is likely to create an aggressive tone. More neutral language is likely to create a calm tone. Often, a writer's tone will change at various points in their text.

Add your own positive, negative and neutral words to the tone word bank below.

Negative	Neutral	Positive
aggressive	calm	appreciative
disparaging	composed	cheerful
hostile	matter-of-fact	dynamic
pessimistic	measured	enthusiastic
sarcastic	restrained	optimistic

Connotations

Connotations are the extra meanings or associations attached to a word or phrase, beyond its literal meaning. They can be positive or negative. For example, consider some of the different words for 'thin', such as svelte, slender, gaunt, scrawny, willowy, lean, skinny, emaciated and skeletal. Each has different associations and creates a different image in the reader's mind, some positive and some negative.

Explore persuasive language

Read the piece below, then answer the questions that follow.

The kangaroo harvest program allows the slaughter of about 236 350 kangaroos across Victoria for the purpose of providing pet meat and leather. Kangaroos being harvested are shot at night, not always killed outright, yet still have their tails cut off. They are hung up in trucks for as long as it takes to get them to processing plants, maybe for several hours. Their meat carries salmonella. Australians would be horrified if they were fully aware of how cruelly kangaroos are treated in the culling and harvest programs. I do believe that, if they knew, they would stop purchasing any kangaroo products.

- 1 Complete the sentences below to describe the connotations of the following words from the passage above.

slaughter

The word has connotations of _____
_____.

This helps to create a/an _____ tone.

harvested

The word has connotations of _____
_____.

This helps to create a/an _____ tone.

horrified

The word has connotations of _____
_____.

This helps to create a/an _____ tone.

- 2 Does the extract on the previous page appeal to reason or emotions, or both? How does it do this?

- 3 Complete the following table by making notes on the connotations of the highlighted words and phrases. Add two examples of your own to the final rows.

Example	Connotations	The reader is positioned to feel/think ...
The country is crying out for more skilled workers.		
Exotic species around the world are in the fight of their lives for survival.		
Outdoor dining has brought life and vibrancy to so many of our cities.		
Please lift your game ; the standards of service have dropped drastically.		

Other persuasive language techniques

Some common methods of persuasive language used by writers and speakers are listed in the following table. In the right-hand column, add a second example for each technique.

Methods of persuasion	Example 1	Example 2
Alliteration	The sordid senate stories have left our democracy in shambles.	
Exaggeration	Teenagers these days only care about playing violent video games, mining for cryptocurrencies and making TikTok dances.	
Inclusive language	We need to work together to make sure the beaches and parks that we use every day are properly looked after.	
Pun	The council is trying to demolish the tallest building in town – we must protect the library and its numerous stories.	
Repetition	It is a crime to kick your pet. It is a crime to let your pet go hungry. It is a crime to keep your pet confined. Or at least it should be.	
Rhetorical question	What is the point of having so much experience if no one will hire you because you are ‘too old’?	



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for additional activities about persuasive language.

Writing about visual language

When studying any visual text or visual element of a text, ask yourself the following questions.

- × Why has the creator of the image decided to present it in this manner?
- × How might this visual text or element persuade the reader to think or feel a certain way about the subject?

Images

How we understand an image is affected by its **content** and its **composition** – that is, what the image shows and how it is presented.

The table on the following page shows some of the elements of an image and some aspects to consider when analysing how it positions the viewer to respond. Complete the right-hand column with notes about the cartoon below, which appeared in *The Age*. It references the Channel 9 quiz show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, hosted by Eddie McGuire.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view additional images for analysis.

Feature	Questions to consider	Notes on example
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the image a literal portrayal of the subject? • Does it carry a deeper, symbolic meaning? 	
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a standalone image or part of another text, such as a news article or website? • What is the broader context of the issue being addressed? 	
Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main colours in the image? • Are these colours associated with particular qualities? 	
Framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been included (or left out) in the image? • Why did the creator choose to create the boundaries of the image in this way? 	
Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From what position or perspective does the viewer see the subject matter? • Is the subject presented from an unusual angle? If so, why? 	
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is included in the background of the image? • How do background details contribute to the viewer's understanding of the image? 	

Sentence starters for writing about visual elements

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write about visual elements.

- ✘ The bright colours of the image project a/an ... atmosphere.
- ✘ The photographer has chosen to include ... within the frame of the image, contributing to an impression of the subject as ...
- ✘ The sarcastic tone of the caption works with the exaggerated elements of the cartoon to encourage the viewer to view the subject as ...
- ✘ Whereas the text argues for this particular point of view, the visual elements ...
- ✘ The wide-angle shot is intended to convey an impression of the large scope of ...
- ✘ Collectively, the image works with the text to ...
- ✘ The cartoonist's use of short, sharp lines and dark shading work together to ...
- ✘ Dim lighting creates a/an ... effect, conveying the idea of ...

Design features

The way in which a text is presented visually can affect the reader's interpretation of it. Layout and font are two of the main design elements that can be changed or manipulated to influence the reader's response.

Layout

The layout of a text affects the reader's expectations and interpretation. Below are some questions to consider.

- ✘ Do headings, pull-out boxes or dot points draw the audience's attention to important information?
- ✘ Are images, graphs and tables used to add extra information, to present information in a way that is quickly understood, or to subtly influence the reader to agree with a point of view?
- ✘ What are the main colours used in the text? Do these colours have any symbolic associations?

MEN'S HEART HEALTH



Key facts everyone should know about men's heart health.



#1
Heart disease is the leading killer of men in Australia



30
men a day are killed by heart disease



4 in 5
heart deaths under 65 are men

Take Action



Stay Strong
Doing 40 push-ups can reduce your risk



Reduce Waist
A healthy weight = a healthy heart



Mind Your Heart
Staying mentally healthy protects against heart disease



Get Checked
Heart health checks are free for men over 45



Be Heart Aware

Check These 4 Numbers



Body Mass Index



Blood Pressure



Cholesterol



Blood Sugar

Signs of Heart Attack in Men



Chest/Arm Pain



Shortness of Breath



Cold Sweat



Shoulder, Neck or Jaw Pain

Cardiac Arrest?

Save a mate's life in 3 steps:

1. CALL 
Triple Zero
000

2. PUSH 
on the chest to the tempo
of Staying Alive

3. SHOCK 
use an AED machine if
available



Writing about audio and audiovisual material

Audio texts

Audio texts communicate with the audience via spoken language, rather than written or visual language. Common audio texts that you may be presented with for analysis include speeches, radio programs and podcasts.

Paralinguistic elements

While persuasive audio texts include arguments and persuasive language just like a written text does, it is important to realise that some meanings are conveyed by paralinguistic elements (the aspects of spoken communication that do not involve words), such as those listed in the table below.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to listen to a radio segment (from 0:33 to 2:42), then complete the right-hand column of the table below with notes about the paralinguistic elements listed.

Feature	Questions to consider	Notes on example
Intonation	How does varying pitch elicit different responses from the audience?	
Pace	Do speakers vary the speed of their speech to emphasise certain points?	
Pauses	What is the effect of pausing immediately after stating an important point?	

Rhythm	How does the speaker's rhythm convey confidence or uncertainty?	
Stress	Which words are emphasised to make them seem more important?	
Tone	What is the speaker's tone, and what response does this elicit from the audience?	
Volume	What is the effect of the speaker/s varying the loudness of their voice?	

Sentence starters for writing about audio elements

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write about audio elements.

- ✘ The speaker uses a slightly higher pitch, which is likely to alert listeners to ...
- ✘ The formal, serious tone of the narrator suggests ...
- ✘ A mostly even speaking pace is used throughout, reflecting ...
- ✘ Sound effects such as ... and ... are used to ...
- ✘ The phrase is delivered in a staccato rhythm that draws attention to ...
- ✘ Frequent pauses allow the audience time to absorb important information and to ...
- ✘ Dramatic music is intended to evoke ... in the listener, reinforcing the idea that ...
- ✘ Supporting the writer's main contention, the audio presents ...

Audiovisual texts

Audiovisual texts include television news programs, current affairs programs, documentaries and videos. They often include written text, visuals and audio elements. When writing about an audiovisual text, your aim is to analyse how its different elements **work together** to create overall persuasive effects. The following table summarises some of the key features of audiovisual texts that are used to persuade.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a video titled '#LetThemPlay: Children Belong on the Playing Field, Not the Battlefield', then complete the right-hand column of the table below with notes about the features listed.



Feature	Questions to consider	Notes on example
Cinematography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the camera's focus draw the audience's attention? • What are the effects of the shots used? 	
Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main colours used? • What are some common associations with these colours? 	
Editing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of edits (e.g. cuts or dissolves) are used? • What is the effect of brief shots and/or frequent cuts? 	

Light and sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the lighting dim or bright; what mood does this create? • Are sound effects used to convey information or contribute to a mood?
Mise en scène	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of props, settings, acting styles and lighting have been used? • What is the effect of costumes/clothing?
Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If people are featured, do they appear as themselves or as actors? • How do they help to present the main message of the text?

Sentence starters for writing about audiovisual elements

Use or adapt these sentence starters to help you write about audiovisual elements.

- ✗ Like the cheerful and positive imagery shown in the video, the lyrics convey a/an ... message.
- ✗ Bright colours and ... music work together to project a/an ... atmosphere.
- ✗ The speaker's sarcastic tone works with the exaggerated elements of the animation to encourage the viewer to ...
- ✗ The extreme close-up shot highlights the subject's ..., positioning the viewer to feel ...
- ✗ By shooting from above, the director makes the subject appear ..., aiming to arouse the viewer's ...
- ✗ By filming the main subject against a backdrop of ..., the director suggests that ...
- ✗ Dim lighting creates a/an ... effect, conveying the idea of ...
- ✗ The visual imagery reinforces the message conveyed by the voice-over by ...



Remember to consider the overall, or cumulative, effects of both audio and visual features in creating a particular impression. While it is useful to identify each feature and its effects separately, you should also explain how they interact to create a coherent, persuasive text.

Analyse an audiovisual text



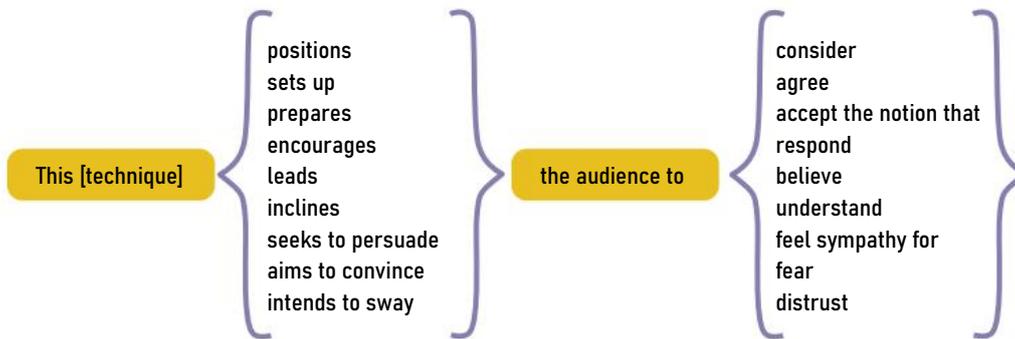
Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a video titled 'Don't Choose Extinction'.

Using the sentence starters on the previous page as a guide, write a short analysis of one or two audiovisual elements in the video and how they might persuade the audience.

Writing about the effect on the audience

When analysing persuasive texts, it is not enough simply to identify a writer's reasons or the persuasive words and phrases they use. Your focus should always be on the intended effects of these on the specific audience the text is aimed at. Consider what the writer wants the reader to *think* and *feel*.

The diagram below shows some ways to construct analytical sentences about how a writer positions the audience.



Practise writing about the effect on the audience

Read the following letter to the editor, then answer the questions.

The government's \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF), designed to build 30 000 social and affordable homes in five years, is both too slow and not enough. There are many 'affordable' solutions: one-bedroom 3D concrete printed houses can be built in as little as 18 hours for approximately \$7000; container homes can cost as little as \$1200 a square metre – roughly a 40 per cent drop in construction costs. We need the government to define what affordable housing is, then put the housing industry's feet to the fire to make it happen.

- 1 This text addresses the issue of _____
 The writer's main contention is _____
 The main reasons they give for their position are _____

- 2 Circle the words and phrases in the text that are especially persuasive.
- 3 Complete the following sentences.
 The writer uses words and phrases such as _____ and _____.
 This language is intended to make the reader feel _____.

 This positions them to agree that _____

Writing an analysis

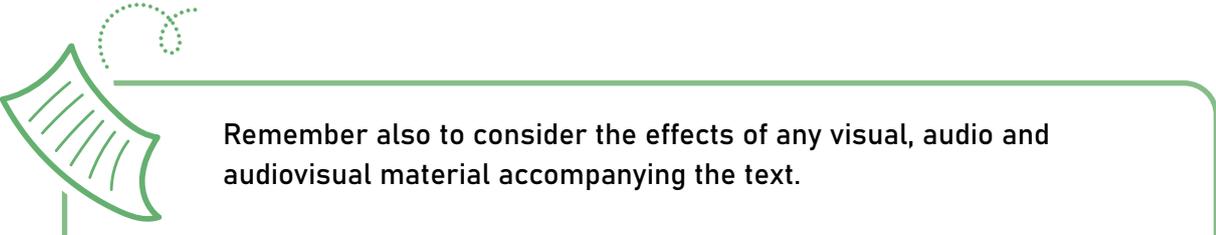
Annotating a text

The first step in any analysis is to carefully read the text you are analysing and make notes identifying which aspects you will discuss in your analysis. You will be looking for:

- × examples of especially emotive or loaded words and phrases
- × persuasive techniques the writer uses more than once
- × the overall structure of the text (i.e. how the writer has put the argument together)
- × the main reasons the writer gives for their point of view.



It can be helpful to use colour-coding when annotating your text. For example, you could use yellow highlighting to identify the writer's main contention, pink to highlight reasons for their point of view, and green and blue to highlight examples of different sorts of persuasive language.



Remember also to consider the effects of any visual, audio and audiovisual material accompanying the text.

The article below was published on *The Guardian* website.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a video from 7News on the same issue.

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Support us →

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News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle More

That Australians are having fewer children isn't just about money – but cutting the cost would help

It's no secret that Australians are having fewer children.

The latest ABS statistics reveal our fertility rate was 1.7 – well below the so-called replacement rate needed to keep the population growing.

The last time our fertility rate was this low we started literally paying people to have babies. All official predictions are that the number of babies will only decrease in the years to come.

It's not that we've suddenly gotten over babies. Three quarters of Australian women and 70% of men aged 20–24 either have or want children.

But women, thankfully, have an increasing ability to choose when, and if, they have them. Four out of five sexually active heterosexual women aged 16–49 in Australia are using contraception. For most women, having a child, whether planned or not, is now an active choice.

But child rearing as an active decision raises its own set of questions, and challenges. Is it feasible? Responsible? If not now, when?

Almost three quarters of people without children say that being able to afford to support a child is an important consideration in their decision. And they're right. Having children is one of the most expensive things one can do.

Let's start with conceiving and giving birth. If necessary, an IVF cycle costs around \$10,000 – and it's not unusual to do more than one. If you want to use a private hospital, your health cover needs to include 'pregnancy and birth-related services' for at least 12 months beforehand. That means roughly an extra \$2,400 on premiums *before* giving birth. That's before the thousands of dollars out of pocket.

Then there's the pram (\$500), the bassinet or cot (\$200), and the car seat (\$300). Some of these you might be able to pick up secondhand. But disposable nappies cost around 30 cents each. That doesn't sound like much until you consider eight nappy changes a day for two years – that's \$1,700 on nappies. Around 140,000 families experience nappy stress. You could switch to cloth – but then you need to grapple with a higher upfront cost, all that laundry, and of course the value of your time.

Starting to sound like a crappy financial proposition? It gets more expensive still.

Uses statistics at the start, indicating that a primary persuasive technique used in this article will be reason and logic.

A list of rhetorical questions leads readers to consider the implications of having children.

The way this is presented suggests that parents face many costs that will accumulate.

Expresses incredulity, highlighting how dire the situation is.

Presents this statement confidently, as if it is a fact, to convince readers of the argument.

Cumulative listing makes the expenses seem large and daunting.

The informal word 'crappy', a pun on the nappy discussion, makes the writer more relatable.

Referring to a common scenario of working parents addresses a target audience who will be familiar with the issues being raised.

Suppose the parent/s go back to work to pay for all these costs.

An hour of childcare costs, on average, \$11.20. That's almost one third of median hourly pay. While childcare subsidies cover some of this, most parents still face out-of-pocket costs. If your child is sent home sick, you'll need to take the day off work and still pay the fees. Talk about adding insult to injury.



A new mother concerned about growing costs

Even once children go to school, the costs continue. Back in 2016, researchers estimated that it would cost a low-income household around \$137 per week to raise a six-year-old girl. In 2021, respondents to a Suncorp survey reported spending over \$100 per week on food alone for one child.

Parenthood brings more than just explicit costs. Being a parent can mean you earn less, both immediately after birth and in the long term. It can also hurt career progression. The parenthood penalty is especially pronounced for women.

There are costs, too, to the budget. In 2021–22, taxpayers spent over \$18 billion on family assistance, and close to \$10 billion on childcare subsidies. That's not to mention the costs of schools and higher education.

So, yes. Having children is expensive – to individuals, households and economies.

Does this mean we should stop making babies? Is a lower fertility rate actually a cause for celebration?

From a purely economic perspective, the answer is no. Population growth is one of three things that drive GDP growth. Given that Australia's fertility rate is below the replacement rate, most econocrats would love to see more people displaying a sense of national duty and asking what they can, ahem, do for their country.

Thankfully in Australia the choice to have children isn't a decision made by governments. Ultimately, deciding whether to have children is, and should be, a choice made by people – individuals and couples who face their own unique costs and benefits, circumstances and preferences.

It's no wonder that our tax and welfare system aims to sweeten the deal, and nudge us in the direction of having kids.

But if policymakers want a bigger Australia, they could and should do more for those who want to have kids. Increased incentives or lower childcare fees might help to boost population and participation. With the cost of living spiralling we can, and should, be helping parents.

Jessica Rozen (formerly Mizrahi) is an economic consultant and commentator. She has taught, researched and applied economics for over a decade.

Sequences into a discussion of larger issues relating to parenting and financial stresses/burdens.

The writer displays a sense of humour, to present themselves as warm and likeable.

The image provides a human element to the issue, encouraging readers to feel that it affects real people in material ways.

Expands the discussion further to explore the effect of the budget, appealing to readers' financially conservative sensibilities.

The contention is placed at the end of the article, leaving readers with a clear sense of the logical development of argument.

Annotate a text

Using the example on the previous pages as a guide, annotate the text below.

Lavish *Carmen* production at WACA raises question, do Perth people understand what culture is?



Perth was brimming with culture this past weekend.

At the WACA on Friday and Saturday night, WA Opera staged a lavish production of *Carmen*, a work that holds a special place in the classical canon.

More familiar, perhaps, are the hits of the Backstreet Boys, who also performed in Perth over the weekend.

Bon Iver played a stunning show at the Red Hill Auditorium on Sunday as part of Perth Festival's contemporary music program, and, earlier that night, Moulin Rouge officially opened at Crown Theatre to not one but TWO standing ovations.

Even more exciting, for art lovers, was the opening of iconic Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara's first Australian solo exhibition on Saturday night at the Art Gallery of WA.

Perthlings were certainly spoiled for choice when it came to cultural enrichment over the weekend, but do we really understand what culture is?

That's the question I found myself asking after hearing an anecdote from someone who attended *Carmen*, as I did, on Friday night.

Before the opera started, the audience was treated to a truly fantastic Welcome to Country, performed in spoken word and song.

Under the same stars the Whadjuk Noongar have walked beneath for more than 50,000 years, as well as the WACA light towers illuminated in

the black, red and yellow of the Aboriginal flag, this traditional welcome to Noongar boodja hit differently.

Not for one elderly couple, however, who apparently were not at all thrilled to have to sit through it, and began loudly complaining to each other about the inconvenience.

“I don’t know why we have to listen to another one of these,” the old (and very Caucasian) bloke was overheard saying to his missus.

The same couple gave *Carmen* considerably more respect, contributing to the rousing applause at the end.

This is obviously the perspective of two people in a crowd of thousands, so we shouldn’t draw any conclusions, but it does illustrate how many of us place little value on the rich First Nations culture our country possesses.

Carmen was written in 1875 and, despite being one of the most widely performed operas on the planet, is starting to show its age.

Viewed through a modern lens, this tale of tragic romance reads more like an extended exercise in slut-shaming, toxic masculinity and domestic violence, in which, spoiler alert, Carmen, who is pigeonholed as a seductress, gets stabbed to death by a rejected lover.

FYI, a production in Italy a few years ago changed the ending (Carmen doesn’t die) to acknowledge rising violence against women in that country.

While the plot of *Carmen* hasn’t aged well, the same can’t be true of the Welcome to Country, which has not only existed far longer than any opera, it is part of the longest surviving culture in the history of our planet.

Let that sink in. And, next time you think of culture, which comes and goes in a relative blink of an eye, take genuine pride in the cultural customs of our First Nations people.

Ben O’Shea, *PerthNow*



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for an additional media text to annotate.

Planning your analysis

Your analytical essay needs to unpack how argument and language work together to position readers. This means ordering your body paragraphs and structuring your discussion to show your understanding of the overall impact of the arguments, language and visual material, as well as of the impact of particular word choices and structural decisions.

Choosing a structure

If you are analysing a single text, you might structure your essay in one of the following ways.

- × **Reason by reason:** Identify three or four key reasons offered by the writer to support their viewpoint; in each of your body paragraphs, analyse how the reason fits into the overall argument and the language used to present it.
- × **Chronological:** Analyse each paragraph or section of the text in order, considering the reasons presented, the order they are presented in, how they develop the writer's argument, and how persuasive language is used to support each point.
- × **Grouping persuasive elements:** Identify several key persuasive elements of the text and devote one paragraph to analysing each element.



Planning sheet

Use the planning sheet below to plan an analysis for the article on pages 186–7.

Write the relevant information about your text here.

Title: _____

Writer: _____

Source and date: _____

Text type: _____

Introduction

Identify the text, author and publication details.

Identify the issue: _____

State the writer's main contention: _____

Identify the main tone: _____

Body paragraph 1

Persuasive element 1: _____

Examples from the text: _____

Explanation of the intended effects: _____

Body paragraph 2

Persuasive element 2: _____

Examples from the text: _____

Explanation of the intended effects: _____

Body paragraph 3

Persuasive element 3: _____

Examples from the text: _____

Explanation of the intended effects: _____

Body paragraph 4

Visual, audio or audiovisual material: _____

Key features of non-written material: _____

Explanation of the intended effects: _____

Conclusion

Restate the writer's main contention: _____

Summarise the main argument and language strategies they use to convey their point of view:

Writing your analysis

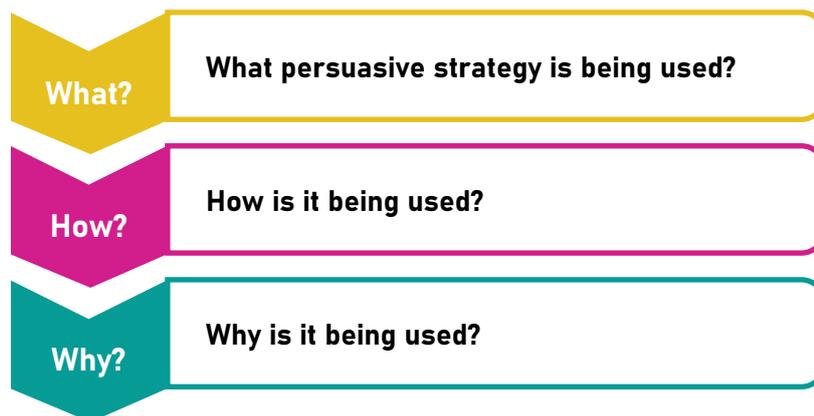
After planning your analysis, it is time to draw all your ideas and evidence together in a cohesive discussion.

Introduction

An introduction should identify the main facts about the text, including its title, writer, text type, place of publication and any relevant background information. It should also identify the writer's main contention, main tone and main persuasive strategies, as well as any visual, audio or audiovisual material accompanying the text.

Body paragraphs

Each body paragraph should cover the three main questions in the diagram below.



A persuasive strategy might be a reason, a language technique, an element of structure or any other aspect of the text intended to have a persuasive effect on the audience.

The opening of each paragraph – the topic sentence – should clearly identify the *what*: that is, the persuasive element that will be the focus of the paragraph.

Conclusion

Your conclusion is a good place to make a statement summarising the overall impact of the content, structure and language of the writer's argument. Do not simply repeat what you have already explained in your body paragraphs – use different vocabulary and focus on the combined effects of argument and language strategies.

Sample analysis

In her opinion piece 'That Australians are having fewer children isn't just about money – but cutting the cost would help', published on the website of *The Guardian*, Jessica Rozen uses a problem–solution structure to explore the growing financial burden on Australians raising children. Using a reasoned and logical tone, Rozen presents statistics that indicate most young adults want to have children but are choosing not to. She then explains, using a detailed list of costs, that the reason for this is the growing monetary stress experienced by families. Finally, she argues for practical steps to be taken by policymakers to address the problem. The accompanying photograph supports Rozen's logical argument, giving a sense of humanity to the issue and appealing to the audience's emotions.

Rather than beginning with the contention of her piece, Rozen chooses to first present a broad picture of the issue. She alerts readers to the fact that Australia's fertility rate is incredibly low, inciting fear and alarm by comparing the current numbers to a time when the country 'started literally paying people to have babies'. Anticipating that some readers may associate this drop with an antipathy towards having children, Rozen is quick to point out that the vast majority of Australians still want to have children, but are reluctant to do so because 'having children is one of the most expensive things one can do'. Later in the article, she poses the question: 'Is a lower fertility rate actually a cause for celebration?', before responding with a resounding 'no'. She bases this on economic reasoning, drawing a parallel between a high fertility rate and growth in GDP. Here and throughout the article, Rozen is making a direct appeal to readers' sense of financial stability.

Homing in on the crux of her argument, Rozen details the various costs associated with having a child in the current economic climate. The intended effect of listing these expenses is to get readers thinking about the impact of having children and to elicit both sympathy for parents and annoyance at the unjustness of the situation. Her list is methodical and organised, beginning with costs associated with childbirth, before moving on to baby needs such as nappies, childcare costs, school costs and food. By including only essential costs, Rozen positions her audience to view her as thoughtful, and her reasoning as indisputable. She breaks up the list with a rhetorical question, 'Starting to sound like a crappy financial proposition?', to underscore the severity of the situation. She evokes feelings of frustration and anger through the negative connotations associated with the word 'crappy', which

also carries wry levity as a pun. She also leads her readers to consider the broader implications of this issue, both in terms of career prospects for parents, especially women, and for the budget. The cumulative effect of the structure of her argument, from focusing on 'individuals' to 'households' to 'economies', primes readers to view this as not just a personal matter but a highly significant issue with national ramifications.

Having laid out the issue using evidence and reason, Rozen concludes her piece with suggestions to address the problem. She calls out policymakers, declaring that 'they could and should do more for those who want to have kids'. The use of active language here is intended to elicit hope and engagement from readers, who are urged to demand action from their elected representatives. Instead of just calling for change, however, Rozen proposes two specific courses of action that she believes should be taken to help parents with increased costs – 'increased incentives or lower childcare fees' – thereby presenting herself as fully engaged with the issue and aware of the difficulty of addressing it.

The accompanying photograph depicts a woman holding a newborn baby and poring over financial documents with a pained, concerned expression. The intended effect of this is to show the real-life implications of the issue, appealing to the emotional sensibilities of readers, who are likely able to sympathise with the woman's situation. Similarly, the video from 7News focuses on footage of real people to highlight the human element in this issue. The video begins with a close-up of a smiling baby, who is shown in warm and bright lighting. The associations viewers make with this encourage them to consider having children as positive, and something that should not be curtailed by financial burdens. In contrast, darker colours and shadows are employed in a dimly lit shot showing a couple anxiously looking at their financial records, highlighting that this issue is harming people's mental states.

Relying primarily on reason, logic and evidence, Rozen outlines the high financial cost of raising a child in Australia, and the ramifications of this for the country's fertility rate and GDP. Supplementing the reasoned approach of the written text, the photograph and video gives a human connection to the issue to further persuade the audience to agree with the point of view being expressed.

Presenting a point of view

Choosing an issue

When selecting an issue for your point-of-view presentation, look for one that has generated a variety of opinions and plenty of accessible information. Create a list of possible issues by collecting articles from newspapers and blogs; watching news and current affairs programs; listening to news-based radio programs; and following news services' social media feeds. This will give you a good idea of topical issues in the media. List your best ideas below.

Possible issues I could present a point of view on:

- x _____

Choose one of the issues you listed above, then complete the table on the next page to capture information about how this issue has been covered in the media. Refer to a range of media sources and text types.

Issue: _____

Context	This issue was in the media recently because _____ _____				
Points of view	The main points of view are _____ _____				
Sources	Text title and text type	Writer (include any known qualifications, affiliations etc.)	Place and date of publication	Contention	Key points
Contention	My opinion on this issue is _____ because _____ _____ _____ _____ (identify at least three strong reasons)				

Planning your point-of-view piece

Now that you have gathered information on your issue and formed an opinion, you can plan how you will present your argument.

Complete the planning sheet below for an issue of your choice.

Introduction	<p>Identify the issue</p> <hr/> <p>Give some brief background on the issue</p> <hr/> <hr/> <p>State your main contention</p> <hr/> <p>Engage your audience with a strong opening: for example, by presenting a surprising fact, relating an anecdote or asking a direct question</p> <hr/> <hr/>
Body paragraph 1	<p>Give your most important reason, supported by evidence</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Body paragraph 2	<p>Give your second most important reason, supported by evidence</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Body paragraph 3	<p>Give your third most important reason, supported by evidence</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Body paragraph 4	<p>Rebut the arguments of the opposing side of the debate</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Conclusion	<p>Summarise your reasons</p> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Restate your main contention</p> <hr/> <p>End memorably, by asking your audience to consider a thought-provoking idea, take a particular action or imagine future developments</p> <hr/> <hr/>

Writing your point-of-view piece

While the introduction needs to give some context for your issue and outline your contention, it is also important to capture your audience's attention from the beginning.

Consider starting by:

- ✗ telling a short story or anecdote
- ✗ asking a question, either one that requires a response or a rhetorical question
- ✗ presenting an interesting and little-known fact, statistic or example
- ✗ stating directly why this issue should matter to your audience
- ✗ using humour to relax your audience and establish a rapport.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to watch the opening of a TED talk (0:12–1:08) about why school should start later for teens, by Wendy Troxel. How does she engage her audience?

When delivering a point of view orally (speech), remember that you are writing for the ear. Write a piece that is easy to deliver and easy for listeners to follow – a live audience cannot rewind what you say, so every statement needs to be immediately comprehensible.

Techniques that will help your audience to follow your argument include:

- ✗ repeating short sentences or phrases that emphasise your key arguments
- ✗ asking rhetorical questions followed by slight pauses
- ✗ using simple, direct sentences to introduce and conclude each new point or emphasise important points
- ✗ repeating your contention at the end.

The use of clear signposting words and phrases when you are starting and ending a point, or are providing evidence, will also help your audience to follow your reasoning.

Sample point-of-view piece

Good afternoon, everyone. So what do you think of ChatGPT? Should we use it in classrooms? As you may know, ChatGPT is a language model developed by OpenAI that can generate detailed human-like text in response to a user prompt. Existing books, websites and other text-based data sources are used to train it.

Maybe there are some potential problems with using ChatGPT in the context of education, but I firmly believe that the benefits mean we should embrace its use in the classroom.

One potential benefit it offers is the ability to personalise learning for each student. Because ChatGPT can generate individualised responses to prompts, it can provide students with tailored feedback and support. This allows students to study at their own pace and in their own style, resulting in better learning outcomes.

I don't know about you, but personally I have always wanted feedback the moment I hand in an assignment, because it is fresh in my head and I want to know how I could have improved my work for next time. ChatGPT can generate responses in real time, so feedback can be instant – unlike the traditional methods, which can take days or even weeks while teachers grade assignments then return work to students. ChatGPT's instant feedback could help students to identify immediately the areas where they need improvement so they can quickly act on that.

Another potential positive use for ChatGPT and similar AI tools is to help students who struggle with homework. The tools could be a springboard that helps the student overcome the hurdle in front of them and continue with the assignment, rather than giving up because a particular segment of the task is 'too difficult'. And since ChatGPT is available outside of school hours, students can access learning materials at any time, anywhere. This is particularly useful for students with other commitments, such as work or family obligations, and who can't attend traditional classes.

Some say that tools such as ChatGPT will make students too reliant on technology and unable to process information or produce academic content on their own. But consider this: in maths class, once students master the basic mathematic functions, they rely on a calculator to increase their speed and accuracy, allowing more time for real learning. ChatGPT is no different. It is a

tool that needs human guidance, both with the input of message prompts and the decoding of responses. An AI can spit out scores of responses. A human must know what to do with them. So students still need to use the traditional skills of analysis and critical thinking when completing their schoolwork and assignments.

A related concern about ChatGPT is that it would make it easy for students to cheat on their assignments, by simply cutting and pasting complete responses generated by the AI program. However, a law and technology expert at the University of Western Australia, Julia Powles, feels the cheating concern is 'overblown'. She says, 'ever since we've had the ability to search the web or access material on Wikipedia, people have been able to draw on digital resources ... And if you're setting assessments that could be addressed simply by drawing on web resources, then you may have a problem.'

Supporting this line of thinking, Scotch College Headmaster Alec O'Connell explains that, while screening for cheating in 2023 is complex, good teachers know their students well enough to know when they submit work that is not their own. He says, 'a while ago we would've been sitting here discussing Wikipedia. We had to work our way through that as well ... We need to teach students the difference between right and wrong, and submitting work that is not your own is morally incorrect.'

Much in the same way that teachers and students in the past had to learn appropriate ways to incorporate technology such as computers, emails, the internet and Microsoft applications into teaching and learning processes, we, the students and teachers of today, must do the same with AI software such as ChatGPT.

Despite several states in Australia already banning ChatGPT in public schools, it's clear that this new technology is here to stay, with over 100 million people around the world having used it since its release in November 2022. I say, let's embrace the future and learn how to harness the power of technology for the advancement of students everywhere.

Senior ENGLISH SKILLS

PREPARING FOR VCE ENGLISH

Senior English Skills: Preparing for VCE English is a comprehensive workbook designed specifically to help prepare Year 10 students for success in their senior English studies.

The title is divided into three sections, each targeting a key element of senior English study: text analysis; writing skills; and argument and language analysis. By encouraging focused practice of these fundamental skills, *Senior English Skills: Preparing for VCE English* gives students the tools to become confident writers heading into their senior years.

THE BOOK FEATURES:

- Well-scaffolded activities to build students' confidence and skills progressively
- Tools, guidelines and examples to guide students' writing
- Contemporary media texts for analysis
- References to a diverse range of literary and popular texts
- Additional exercises and examples to enhance the learning experience, accessible via QR codes and links throughout the book.



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