

Key Skills
VCE[®]
ENGLISH

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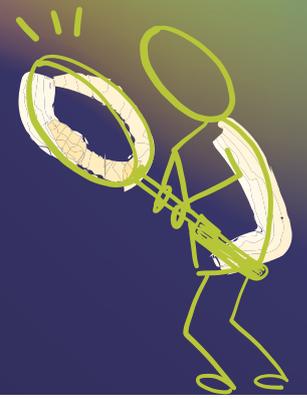
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Assessment summary

The table below outlines the assessment tasks and mark allocations for VCE English across Units 1 to 4. Note that the VCAA does not mandate assessment tasks for Units 1 and 2; those listed below are suggested tasks typically done in each area of study.

	Area of Study 1 Reading and exploring texts / Reading and responding to texts	Area of Study 2 Crafting texts / Creating texts	Area of Study 2 Exploring argument / Analysing argument
Unit 1	Assessment task: A personal response to a set text	Assessment task: Two written texts and a description of writing processes	
Unit 2	Assessment task: An analytical response to a set text		Assessment task: An analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language and techniques in text(s), and an oral presentation of a point of view
Unit 3	SAC task: An analytical response to a text in written form Mark allocation: 40 marks	SAC task: Two written texts and a commentary reflecting on writing processes Mark allocation: 20 marks for each written piece, and 20 marks for the reflection	
Unit 4	SAC task: An analytical response to a text in written form Mark allocation: 40 marks		SAC task: An analysis of argument in persuasive texts, including one written text and one text in another mode (audio and/or audiovisual); and an oral presentation of a point of view Mark allocation: 40 marks for the analysis of argument and language, and 20 marks for the oral presentation

SECTION 1

READING, EXPLORING AND RESPONDING TO TEXTS

In Area of Study 1 of VCE English you will read texts selected by your school and develop responses to them. In Unit 1 you will write a personal response to a text; your teacher might also ask you to write an analytical response. In Units 2, 3 and 4, your text responses will be analytical essays.

In this first section of *Key Skills: VCE English*, Chapters 1 and 2 explain the basics that you will need to know and discuss in your text responses. These chapters show you how to study a text closely, from annotating the text and summarising key information through to understanding and responding to the text's ideas and concerns. The activities will help you to deepen your knowledge of a text and improve your writing skills, progressing from short answers to structured paragraphs on a particular feature or idea.

Chapters 3 and 4 explain how to plan and write a response to a set text. Personal responses are covered in Chapter 3, while Chapter 4 explains how to produce an analytical essay in response to a topic.

STUDYING A TEXT

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Knowing your text
- › Contexts and settings
- › Characters
- › Plot and structure
- › Narrative point of view
- › Ideas, concerns and values

This chapter covers the essential elements of texts that you will need to understand and write about. These include the characters, plot and setting, as well as the ideas and concerns that the text's creator is exploring.



Knowing your text

To really know your text well, read or watch it at least three times.

Firstly, **read or watch your text** to get an overall idea of the storyline and characters.

Then, **read or watch your text for a second time**, pausing occasionally to write notes. You can write notes in the margin of a print text, in a physical notebook or on a device. See page 4 for more guidelines on note taking.

After you've done this, complete the text information sheet in Activity 1.1 to summarise key information about your text. You can set up a similar sheet in a computer file so that you can expand on and add to your answers. When you start to study the text in class, **re-read or re-watch your text** at least once more. Add more detail to your information sheet and continue to take notes.

1.1 Complete an information sheet

Complete the following information sheet to capture key details about your text.

Title and author/filmmaker(s) of your text:

What is the form or genre of your text? (Tick one)

Novel

Short-story collection

Film

Play

Poetry

Graphic novel

Biography

Autobiography/memoir

What is the text about, in general terms?

Name five main characters and briefly indicate how they are related to one another.

When and where is the text set?

List five key events in the text.

Describe two or three conflicts in the text.

What are five main ideas and concerns that the text explores?

Describe the most important language and visual features, such as word choices and images.

What do you think the text creator's purpose might be?

Annotate and take notes

As well as gathering key information in your text information sheet, make notes and annotate your text from the time you start studying it.

If you are using a print text, annotating it is an excellent way to get to know it and to help you be an active reader. Try some or all of the following strategies.

- **Highlight quotes that seem significant.** Write margin notes about the ideas expressed in these quotes. Later, write these quotes in your workbook under appropriate headings for characters and/or ideas. Include page references so you can easily locate them later.
- **Tag key passages and pages with sticky notes.** Note the main characters, events and ideas that are developed in each passage. What makes the passage interesting or significant?
- **Use a colour scheme for your highlighting and tagging.** For example, use one colour for material related to main characters, and another colour for ideas and concerns.
- **Write down questions that occur to you as you read.** Often these will be answered later in the text, which will help you to make connections between different parts of the text.

If your text is a film, copy key quotes and make notes on the above aspects in a notebook or a computer document.

1.2 Practise note taking

Select a key scene in your text and annotate the scene in the following ways.

- Highlight two key quotes in the scene. Note the main idea in each quote.
- Underline a significant statement made by or about a character. Make a note about what this statement reveals about the character.
- Highlight two words or phrases that have a significant impact. Make a note about why these words stand out (e.g. they create a striking image or evoke a strong emotion).
- Make a note about why the scene is significant.

Contexts and settings

Context refers to the events and circumstances in the world in which a text was created. There are two main kinds of context to be aware of.

- The **context of culture** refers to the society as a whole. Historical, social and cultural aspects of the society in which a text is created all help to shape the

author's experiences, attitudes and beliefs. As a result, they influence the events and ideas in the world of the text. For example, Miles Franklin's novel *My Brilliant Career* was published around the time the Australian colonies were joining together to form the Australian nation, and the issue of national identity was being widely discussed.

- The **context of situation** refers to specific circumstances affecting the text's creation and publication. It can include things that happen in the author's life that might have an impact on their work. For example, Miles Franklin grew up on grazing properties and saw economic times become more difficult, and these experiences influenced her writing in *My Brilliant Career*. Another aspect of the novel's situational context was the support for it in London from well-known Australian author Henry Lawson, which helped to bring about its publication.

1.3 Write about context

- 1 When was your text created?

- 2 Do some research about the creator of your text. What is their birth date and (if relevant) their death date? Where did or do they live? What are other some of their other works?

- 3 Briefly describe the society the writer of your text was living in at the time it was created. What were the main issues and events at this time?

Setting refers to the places and times in which the action of a narrative takes place. A setting may be a natural or a built environment; it could be urban or rural. The contrast between interior (inside) and exterior (outside) settings is particularly noticeable in films. Many long narratives, such as novels and films, have more than one location where the action occurs.

Settings can be real places or completely fictitious ones. In *The Memory Police*, for example, Yōko Ogawa describes an imagined, unnamed island where things disappear for no apparent reason.

The **temporal setting** is the time in which the text is set. It can be in the past, the present (i.e. the same time as the author is writing in) or the future. In many cases, the setting closely matches the author's context: the society represented is the one the author lives in.

1.4 Write about setting

- 1 What is the main location where your text is set? (If there is more than one important setting, list them.)

- 2 Give three words of your own to describe the main setting.

- 3 Is the setting depicted as mostly positive or mostly negative? Give reasons for your answer.

- 4 How do the characters feel about the setting? Do they like being there or would they rather be somewhere else? Is the setting a place of conflict? Give two or three quotes from the text to support your answer.

- 5 Does the setting change in any significant ways during the course of the text? Y N
If so, what impact do these changes have on the characters and their relationships?

- 6 What is the temporal setting of the text? Describe the time period as precisely as you can. Note any major shifts in time.





7 Are any actual historical events or people referred to? If so, why are they important?

8 Do social conventions and expectations restrict or enhance the characters' lives? If so, how?

9 Complete the following short paragraph to describe the impact of setting on a main character in your text.

_____ [title of text] is set in _____
 [time and/or place]. _____ [name of main character] finds
 their environment to be _____. This is because

 As a result, they decide to / realise that [choose one] _____

Characters

Characters drive the narrative. Usually the characters' actions or experiences engage our attention from the beginning. Then, as we read or watch, we build up a relationship with the characters that keeps us reading (or watching) to find out what happens to them.

When we analyse a text, we go beyond what happens to the characters and try to understand how the writer explores ideas and concerns through the characters' actions and reactions. We learn about a character in four main ways:

- what the character says
- what the character does
- what other characters say about this character
- what the narrator says about the character.

Main characters and minor characters

The actions of the **main characters** drive the plot of a text. The main character who is the focus of the text is sometimes called the **protagonist**. The protagonist usually develops or learns from their experiences over the course of the text.

Minor characters are less complex than main characters. In addition to helping to move the plot forward, minor characters can serve several functions, including:

- helping the main character
- opposing or hindering the main character
- acting as a contrast or foil to one of the main characters
- giving background information on a main character
- delivering a message
- representing qualities or values that the text is exploring and commenting on.

1.5 Summarise information about characters

Complete the table below with key information about three characters from your own text. Create a similar table as a computer document to add more details, such as quotes, and extra characters.

	Main character 1	Main character 2	Main character 3
Personal details – the character’s full name, their age (or the age span covered by the narrative) and where they live			
Personality – five words or phrases summing up the character			
Closest relationship(s) – who are they close to and what is the nature of the relationship (family, friend etc.)?			
Antagonist(s) – who creates conflict or obstacles for the character?			
Choices – three key choices or decisions they make			
Events – three key things that happen to the character			
Key quote – one quote that sums up who the character is			

Vocabulary for describing characters

The left column of the table below lists some common words used to describe characters. To add interest and precision to your writing on texts, try describing characters by using some of the words in the columns on the right instead of the more common words.

Common word	More specific words with similar meanings		
strong	dominant	powerful	resilient
weak	feeble	submissive	subservient
good	honourable	noble	virtuous
bad	corrupt	immoral	malevolent
kind	compassionate	humane	sympathetic
cruel	callous	malicious	vindictive
quiet	introverted	reserved	reticent
loud	belligerent	boisterous	extroverted
honest	frank	genuine	trustworthy
dishonest	deceptive	duplicitous	manipulative
loyal	committed	devoted	steadfast
disloyal	faithless	treacherous	unreliable
greedy	avaricious	insatiable	self-indulgent
generous	benevolent	magnanimous	selfless
smart	ingenious	intelligent	perceptive
foolish	naive	unintelligent	unwise
rash	impetuous	impulsive	reckless
careful	circumspect	guarded	prudent
brave	courageous	fearless	intrepid
cowardly	fainthearted	spineless	timorous
thoughtful	contemplative	reflective	meditative
practical	pragmatic	sensible	realistic

1.6 Write about characters

- 1 For each of the common character descriptors below, find two interesting synonyms of your own.
 - a angry _____
 - b shy _____
 - c funny _____
 - d sad _____
 - e friendly _____
 - f sweet _____

- 2 Work in pairs. Take turns to play the role of the interviewer and of a character in your text. (If you are studying a nonfiction text, you could choose the author or subject; for poetry, you could use the speaker of one of the poems.) The interviewer should ask the interviewee between five and ten interesting open questions. (An open question is one that requires more than a short, factual answer.) The interviewee's responses should be as detailed and thoughtful as possible.

- 3 Complete the following table for the protagonist of your own text.
 - a Choose three words from the list of precise and specific character descriptors in the word bank on page 9 that apply to the protagonist and write them in the left-hand column.
 - b In the middle column, write an action or a thought of the character that fits each descriptor.
 - c In the right-hand column, write an appropriate quotation to illustrate each thought or action.
 Repeat the process for other key characters in the text. An example has been done for you.

Text title and author: <i>Jane Eyre</i> by Charlotte Brontë		
Protagonist's name: Jane Eyre		
Descriptors	Character's thoughts and actions	Quotations
passionate	She shows her emotions easily and forms strong attachments to others.	Helen Burns says to Jane, 'Hush, Jane! you think too much of the love of human beings; you are too impulsive, too vehement ...'
independent	Jane declares that she will live and act according to her principles and morals; she will not marry Rochester while he is still legally married to Bertha.	'The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself.'
determined	She refuses St John's offer of marriage and returns to Rochester despite the challenges this presents.	'I scorn your idea of love ... yes, St John, and I scorn you when you offer it.'



Text title and author:		
Protagonist's name:		
Descriptors	Character's thoughts and actions	Quotations

4 Complete the following table for a character in your text.

- a Identify three important things the character does, and write them in the left-hand column below. An example has been done for you.

Action/Behaviour	Attributes
Viola disguises herself as a young man and joins the court of Duke Orsino. (<i>Twelfth Night</i> by William Shakespeare)	resourceful, witty, perceptive

- b What qualities are revealed by each of these actions? Look back at the word bank of useful adjectives on page 9 for vocabulary options, and write these attributes next to the actions, in the right-hand column above.

5 Now present this information in complete sentences. Organise them as follows.

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

Or you can change the order of ideas, offering an example of the behaviour first and then stating the character's qualities, as in Example 2 on the next page.

Example 1

The narrator in *The Memory Police* is devoted to her editor, R, and the old man, and willingly puts their safety ahead of her own. **1** She creates a hidden room for R, who is in danger from the Memory Police, **2** as this is a 'way to save not just [himself], but [his] wife and baby too'. **3** (*The Memory Police* by Yōko Ogawa)

- 1** Quality
- 2** Action
- 3** Supporting quotation





Example 2

Norma deludes herself into thinking she will star in another film, and embarks on a series of beauty treatments and massages. **1** This demonstrates her desire to recover her lost youth and her refusal to admit her days as a famous actress are over. **2** As she insists right up to the end: 'They still want me!' **3** (*Sunset Boulevard*, directed by Billy Wilder)

- 1** Action
- 2** Quality
- 3** Supporting quotation

Now write an example of your own, following one of the models above.

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 scenes where the tension increases, and other scenes where the tension decreases. They can also present events out of chronological order. These techniques are used to create a pattern of rising and falling tension that is referred to as the **narrative structure**.

The table below explains the main elements of narrative structure. Make sure you know the terms (metalinguage) and can apply them to your set texts.

Term	Definition
Exposition	This is the opening section of a narrative. It introduces the main characters and situation, and establishes a central conflict or tension.
Crisis point	A character is presented with a problem or challenge that tests their values and beliefs. There can be several crisis points in a narrative.
Turning point	A decisive change occurs; a character realises it is impossible to return to past circumstances.
Climax	The climax occurs near the end of a narrative. The tension rises to a peak; the main conflict between characters and/or ideas comes to a head and must be resolved.
Denouement	After the climax, the narrative threads are disentangled and the narrative tension begins to decrease. (Denouement is a French word meaning 'unknotting'.)
Resolution	The narrative reaches its conclusion; conflicts and tensions are partly or fully resolved.

Chronical and nonchronological structures

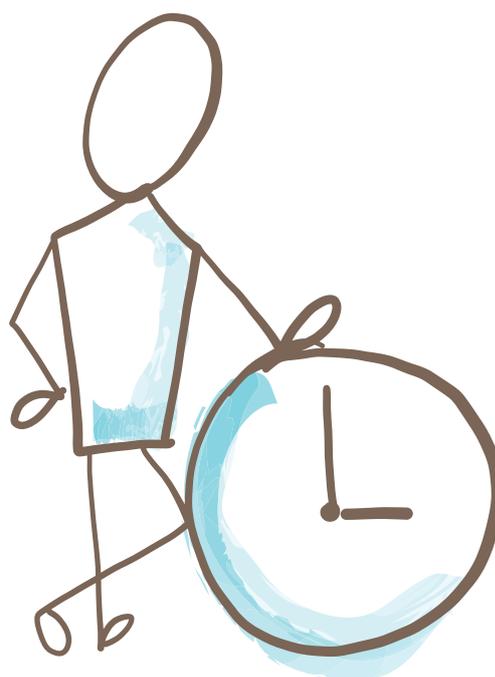
Mostly, narratives describe events in chronological order – the order in which they happen. This is also known as a **linear narrative**.

However, many narratives vary this order to shape the narrative and influence the audience's responses to characters and situations. This results in a **nonlinear narrative**. Here are some of the main ways nonlinear narratives can be constructed.

- The narrative can begin with a key event from somewhere in the middle of the time frame, drawing in the reader from the start. This is known as beginning **in medias res**. For example, Chapter 1 of Trevor Noah's memoir *Born a Crime* relates an event that took place when Trevor was nine years old, then in Chapter 2 the narrative moves back in time to when his parents met and Trevor was born.
- Earlier incidents in a person's life might be described through a **flashback** or a memory, to provide some backstory and add to the significance of a present situation. In Robbie Arnott's novel *Flames*, the chapter titled 'Salt' begins with Karl angling on a beach, then a flashback describes an earlier time in which he and his seal hunted Oneblood tuna.
- Future events can be described in a **flashforward** (also known as prolepsis). For example, at the beginning of David Malouf's short story 'The Valley of Lagoons', the narrator, Angus, describes himself listening to other boys talk about hunting trips, and he imagines 'a kid no older than I was [standing] with an old Lee Enfield .303 jammed into the soft of his shoulder'. Later in the story, his friend Braden does exactly this, when Angus sees Braden 'lift the .303 very slowly to his shoulder' to shoot a boar.
- A **circular narrative** begins at a certain point in time, then moves back in time and tells the story of events up to the point at which the narrative opens.

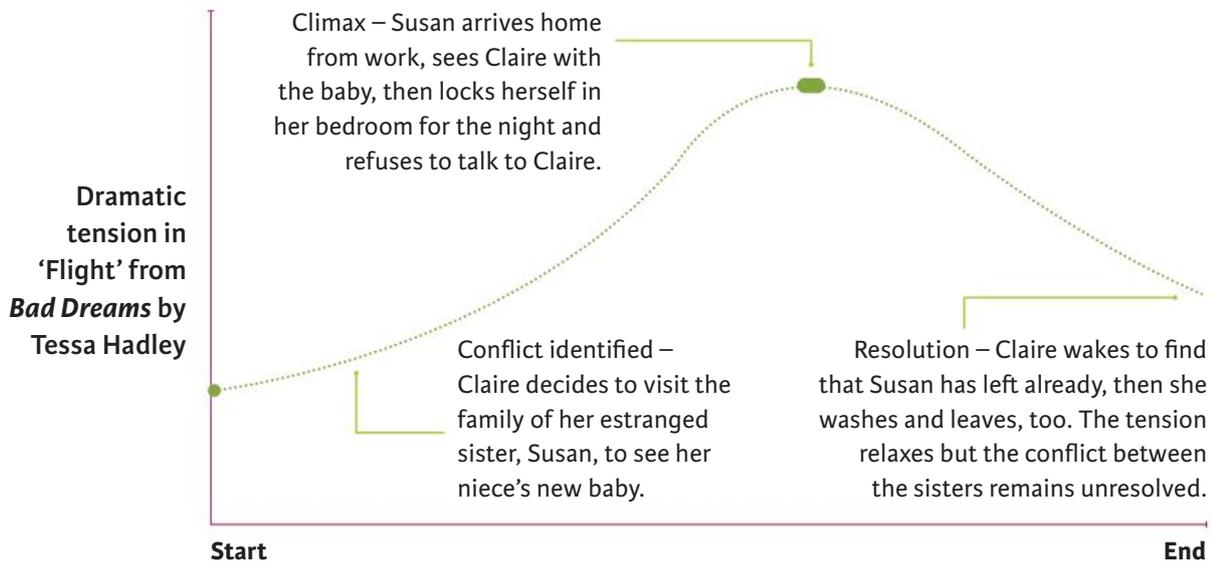
There is often a short resolution that describes later events. Billy Wilder's film *Sunset Boulevard* begins with a dead man's body floating in a pool, then goes back in time to portray the events leading up to the murder.

If your set text uses a nonlinear narrative, it is often useful to discuss how the narrative is constructed (especially the 'out of order' elements) in your essays.



Narrative structure in a short story

A short story produces a powerful effect within a few pages, and it is likely to have a structure like that shown in the graph below.



1.7 Write about structure

Answer the following questions to analyse how your text is structured. Note that the terms in bold are elements or features of structure that the creator of a text can use.

- 1 Are the main events described in **chronological order**? Y N
- 2 Does the text begin in the **middle of the action**? Y N
- 3 Does the narrative include **flashbacks**? Y N
- 4 Are there any **flashforwards**? Y N
- 5 Is the plot **circular**, beginning and ending at the same point? Y N
- 6 Is there a **subplot** in addition to the main plot? Y N
- 7 Is the plot built around a **journey** or **quest**? Y N
- 8 You may have answered 'yes' to more than one of the above. Where the answer is 'yes', consider the *effect* of the author's choices about structure. For example, does the structure:
 - create narrative tension or suspense?
 - make the opening more exciting, grabbing the reader's attention?
 - highlight connections between different characters or events?
 - ensure that the reader considers several different points of view on the action?



- end by resolving the conflicts and tensions?
 - leave some things unresolved?
- a Underline any of the above options that apply to your text.
- b Identify another effect of the structure of your text on the reader.

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

One feature of the structure of _____ [title of text] is the use of _____ [structural feature, e.g. a circular structure, flashbacks].

This structure helps to create an effect of _____

[describe the impact this structural element has on the text].

Narrative point of view

The narrator of a text can be a character – usually the main character – who tells the story in the **first person** (using ‘I’). Or the narrator can be a ‘voice’ that narrates in the **third person** (using ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘they’ and generally *not* using ‘I’).

First-person narration

A first-person narrator means that everything in the text is presented from the point of view of one character. This encourages the reader to empathise with the character – to ‘get inside their head’ and understand *why* this character thinks and acts in a certain way.

1.8 Write about first-person narration

If your text is written in the first person, answer the following questions.

- 1 Give a quote showing the use of the first person. For example:

‘I generally begin writing at about two o’clock in the afternoon and keep at it until nearly midnight, yet I rarely finish more than five pages.’ (*The Memory Police* by Yoko Ogawa)





- 2 Give two important qualities of the narrator and one or two pieces of textual evidence that show these qualities (e.g. something the narrator thinks, says or does, or something another character says about them).

- 3 How reliable is the narrator? Do we believe everything this character tells us about themselves and the world around them? Why or why not?

- 4 Complete the following paragraph with details about the narrator of your text.

_____ [title of text] is narrated by
 _____ [name of narrator]. He/she/they [choose one] is/are
 [choose one] _____ and _____
 [two qualities shown by narrator], as shown by _____

 [evidence from text]. He/she/they [choose one] is/are [choose one] a reliable / an unreliable
 [choose one] narrator, demonstrated by _____

 _____ [evidence from text].

Third-person narration

A text written in the third person tells the story from an outside, detached point of view. In some texts this narrator knows everything about the characters and the world of the text; we use the term **omniscient narrator** to describe this ‘all-knowing’ perspective.

However, other texts use a third-person voice to show just a single character’s perspective; we use the term **third-person limited** for this narrative point of view.

1.9 Write about third-person narration

If your text is written in the third person, answer the following questions.

- 1 Give a quote showing the use of the third person. For example:

‘Carrie was alone in the house. It was a Saturday in the mid-1960s, and her parents were out shopping; she was ten years old, and doing her piano practice.’ (‘One Saturday Morning’ from *Bad Dreams* by Tessa Hadley)

- 2 Choose a chapter or short section from your text. Is the chapter written from a completely objective perspective (third-person omniscient)? Or does the writer present events from the viewpoint of a particular character (third-person limited)? Explain your answer using one or two examples from the text.

- 3 How does the narrative viewpoint influence your response to one of the main characters in the passage you have selected? Complete the following sentences by circling or highlighting the best options and filling in the gaps with details from your text.

The narrative point of view in this passage is third-person omniscient / third-person limited [choose one]. This narrative perspective influences the reader to feel sympathetic / admiring / understanding / critical / judgemental / your term _____ [choose one] towards _____ [character’s name]. It does so by showing _____ [character’s name] to be _____.

Ideas, concerns and values

Most texts explore a number of ideas about human experiences. Two main ways of describing an idea explored in a text are:

- **in one or two words** (usually a noun or a noun phrase), such as ‘jealousy’ or ‘growing up’
- **as a statement**, such as ‘jealousy is destructive’ or ‘our experiences when we are growing up shape our adult identities’.

Some common ideas in texts – expressed as a single word and then as a possible contention – are shown in the table below.

Common idea	Contention
growing up	Growing up is painful but necessary.
identity	People's identities can evolve over time.
love	Love can help people to resolve conflicts.
family	Family is the basis of an individual's happiness.
injustice	Injustice can be challenged by collective action.
prejudice	Prejudice can be reduced when people take the time to understand one another.
war	War always harms the innocent.
power	Power can liberate individuals to follow their dreams.
survival	Survival depends on luck as well as inner strength.

1.10 Create a mind map for a key idea

The mind map below shows some of the ways in which the idea of gender roles is presented in *My Brilliant Career*. Fill in the gaps with evidence from your text.

EVIDENCE FROM CHARACTERS

The women are wives and mothers whose work is around the house and rearing children. The men earn money in paid employment, or from managing farms.

Evidence from characters in your text:

EVIDENCE FROM PLOT

Sybylla's desire to be a writer is unfulfilled; she remains at home helping on the farm, performing duties typically associated with women at this time.

Evidence from the plot of your text:

IDEA IN *MY BRILLIANT CAREER*

GENDER ROLES

Idea in your text:

OTHER EVIDENCE

The setting (country NSW) means the characters are remote from city opportunities and more diverse roles (especially in the arts).

Other evidence in your text:

QUOTATIONS

'Career! That is all girls think of now, instead of being good wives and mothers and attending to their homes and doing what God intended.' (Mrs Bossier, p.111)

Quotations in your text:

1.11 Write about an idea explored in your text

- 1 In Activity 1.10 you gathered some evidence of how your text is presenting a central idea. Now fill in the gaps to complete two sentences about this idea.

A major idea explored in _____ [title of text] is
 _____ [major idea]. _____ [name of
 author or director] suggests that _____

 [author or filmmaker's point of view on the idea].

- 2 Next, provide some evidence to support your contention. Fill in the gaps in the sentences below to create a paragraph about the idea in your text.

He/she/they [choose one] suggest(s) this by _____

 [one piece of evidence from the Characters box in your mind map]. It is also suggested by

 _____ [one piece of evidence from the Plot box in your mind map] and by
 _____ [character's name]'s words,
 ' _____ ,

 [key quote about the idea].

Values

Characters embody values through their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, relationships, beliefs, statements and actions. These values are often part of the characters' cultural and social context; different cultures and societies can place more or less emphasis on different values. It is also possible for a character to question or even reject some of the values of the culture or society they belong to.

Some common general values are listed below.

- honesty
- loyalty
- integrity
- justice
- equality
- obedience
- a fair go
- patriotism
- freedom of speech
- freedom of religion
- work ethic
- tolerance
- accountability
- compassion for others
- respect for others
- respect for the law
- faithfulness
- independence

1.12 Identify key values through characters

- 1 Use the table below to identify key values in your text.

Key value (e.g. loyalty)	Definition	Characters who demonstrate this value and how
Opposite of key value (e.g. disloyalty)	Definition	Characters who demonstrate the opposite of the key value and how

- 2 Fill in the gaps in the following sentences, using evidence from your text to support your view. Look at how the characters think, the views they express and the decisions they make. Also consider the consequences of the characters' behaviour. Are they 'rewarded' by achieving their goals and finding happiness? Or are they 'punished' by being defeated or unsuccessful?

- a In _____ [title of text], the key qualities associated with the protagonist, _____ [name of character], are _____.
- b She/he [choose one] is committed to the values of _____ and _____ [two key values, e.g. loyalty and honesty].
- c This is shown by _____ [quotes or actions that demonstrate these values].
- d The protagonist's values reflect/challenge [choose one] the society's values because _____.
- e In contrast, _____ [name of character who rejects the protagonist's values] shows the qualities of _____ and _____ [two qualities opposed to the values in question 2b].
- f At the end of the text, _____ [brief description of what happens to the two characters in the narrative resolution]. This shows the text's endorsement of _____'s values by _____.

Conflicts and tensions

All narratives have conflicts that run throughout. Conflicts can be between individuals, between an individual and a group, and between groups. There can also be conflicts between ideas (e.g. between the idea that identity is innate and the idea that identity is acquired), and between values (e.g. between being loyal to a group and doing what is right). Crisis points, turning points and the climax are moments when one or more conflicts become the focus of the narrative.

Tensions arise from conflicts, and from the reader or viewer's feelings about those conflicts – for example, their hopes that the main characters will survive moments of danger, or that the protagonist will achieve their goals and their antagonist (opponent) will be defeated. Plot twists and revelations of key details at pivotal moments also heighten narrative tensions.

The table below summarises some common tensions and conflicts in texts.

Type of conflict or tension	Examples
Inner conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflicts of conscience • desire to escape / to gain freedom • responsibilities versus personal desires • dreams versus reality
Interpersonal conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tensions between family members / lovers / friends • conflicts within a workplace/community
Conflict between groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • war • political contests • tensions due to prejudice and discrimination
The individual versus the society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resistance to government repression • resistance to social expectations and conventions
Contest of ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • right versus wrong • fate versus free will • ethical and moral challenges
Journeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a physical journey to find someone or something, with obstacles faced along the way • a personal journey to find peace/happiness/understanding

Word bank

This word bank contains useful verbs for writing about ways in which characters engage in conflicts.

argues	debates	rebels
attacks	disputes	rejects
battles	dissents	resists
challenges	fight	struggles
confronts	opposes	tests
contests	protests	undermines

1.13 Write about conflicts and tensions

- Write down three verbs (that do not appear in the table above) that could be used to write about how characters engage in conflicts in your set text.

- Identify three conflicts between characters or groups in your text. They can be conflicts from the table on the previous page or ones that you identify and label yourself.

- Identify one or two inner conflicts in your text.

- Using at least one of the verbs from the word bank above, write a sentence about one of the conflicts you identified in questions 2 and 3. For example:

Tiresius confronts Oedipus with the truth that 'you are the murderer you hunt', a truth that Oedipus angrily rejects.

- Choose another conflict from your answers to questions 2 and 3. How is this conflict developed in the narrative? Who are the main characters and what are the main events relevant to this conflict?

SPECIAL FEATURES OF FILM, DRAMA AND POETRY

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Film
- › Drama
- › Poetry

Films and plays are narrative texts, just as novels and short stories are. Many of their important features are covered in Chapter 1, including:

- characters
- settings
- plot
- narrative structure
- ideas, concerns and values.

There are also features that are *particular* to film and drama texts. In both, actors perform the roles of characters, and a story is told through visual language and sound, in addition to words. Characters can speak directly to the audience to share their thoughts and feelings, or to describe a situation in the present or the past. Visual language is used to establish the setting, contribute to characterisation and convey ideas. In drama, the playwright's stage directions can include specific advice about how the play should be staged and performed.

Sometimes a poem or a song is also a type of narrative. However, many poems and songs do not tell a story, and features such as plot, setting and characters are often absent. Instead, these texts are more concerned with communicating an idea, evoking a mood or creating an image.



Film

The special features of film are generally referred to as elements of **film style** – the ‘language’ of images and sounds that a film uses to tell a story. The four elements of film style are shown in the following table.

Mise en scène (‘putting on stage’)	All the visual elements within the frame at any given point in the film, which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting • lighting • costumes (clothes, make-up, hairstyles, props) • acting style.
Cinematography	The art of capturing images in order to tell the story and create the ‘look’ of the film. Key elements are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • camera distance • camera angle • camera movement.
Editing	The selection, sequencing and joining together of shots using techniques such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cuts • crosscutting • montages.
Sound	All the sounds that can be heard by the audience, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dialogue • sounds of actions (e.g. a doorbell chime, an audience’s applause) • music.

2.1 *Analyse the mise en scène*

- 1 Choose an important scene in the film you are studying, such as the opening shots or a scene at the film’s climax, and examine it closely. Do this with the sound turned off, so that you can just concentrate on the visual elements.
- 2 Complete the following sentences to describe the four elements of mise en scène: setting, lighting, costumes and acting style.
 - The scene is set in _____ [location].



- Important elements of the setting include _____.
- The characters are dressed in _____ [describe their clothes].
- These details suggest that the characters are _____.
- The lighting in the scene suggests that _____.
- This contributes to an atmosphere that is _____.
- The main character(s) in this scene are _____
[describe what one main character or several characters are doing].
- The way in which one main actor portrays their character suggests that _____

[describe what the actor's facial expressions or body language suggest about the character].
- The visual elements in this scene are similar to those in _____
[another scene in the film] in that _____

[identify similarities between the two scenes].
- The visual elements in this scene are different from those in _____

[another scene in the film] in that _____

[identify the contrasts with this other scene].

Film shots

The main types of film shots are created by using different distances between the camera and the subject, and by having the camera looking up, down or straight on at the subject.

The different camera distances can be created by varying the position of the camera and/or by changing the focal length of the camera lens.

Close-up shot

A close-up shows the subject in detail. It is often used to show someone's face or an important object. An extreme close-up focuses on a small object in even more detail.



Medium shot (or mid shot)

A medium shot is the most common shot: it shows the characters as well as some of the background. Characters are typically shown from the waist up. Relationships between characters can be highlighted in a medium shot since their facial expressions and body language are easily seen.



Medium long shot

This shot type shows more of the background than a mid shot, placing a character in a specific setting.



Long shot / wide-angle shot

A long shot shows more of the setting and less detail of the characters' appearances. It could show a crowd scene or a long view of the setting. A wide-angle shot shows a wider view of the setting than normal. If only a few characters are in a long shot or a wide-angle shot they can appear small and insignificant. This can emphasise their sense of isolation or perhaps that they are dominated by their physical environment.



Zoom shot

In a zoom shot the camera can be far from the subject but, by changing the focal length, the camera seems to move close to (zoom in on) the subject. This emphasises the subject's importance at that point in the story.



Camera angles

By varying the angle at which the camera points at the subject, the audience can be put in the position of looking at the subject on the same level (straight on), from below or from above.

A **low-angle shot** looks up at the subject from below, which can emphasise their strength or power.



In contrast, in a **high-angle shot** the camera points down at the subject. If the subject is a character this can make them appear weak or vulnerable. Another use of a high camera angle is an **aerial shot**, which shows a scene from far above. (These shots are taken from a drone, a small plane or the top of a building.) Aerial shots are often used as establishing shots as they establish a location and setting.



Framing

The frame is the outside border of a shot. It results from decisions made by the cinematographer and director about what each image will include and – just as importantly – exclude. Sometimes natural frames, such as doorframes and window frames, are used to provide borders.



2.2 Analyse film shots

- 1 Complete this table with examples of various shot types in a film you are studying. In the middle column, give a brief description of the character and/or setting shown in the shot. In the right-hand column, explain the effect of using each particular shot (e.g. to show a character or setting in a certain way, to develop the plot, to create a mood).

Shot type	Example in your text	Effect of this shot
Close-up shot		
Medium shot		



Shot type	Example in your text	Effect of this shot
Medium long shot		
Long shot / wide-angle shot		
Zoom shot		
Low-angle shot		
High-angle shot		
Framing		

2 Select one of the rows in the table above and complete the following sentences to analyse the film shot.

In _____ [title of film], a _____
 [type of shot] is used to show _____
 [brief description of the shot]. This shot suggests that _____

 [explanation of what the shot tells the audience about a character, setting or situation].

Camera movement

The camera can be moved in three main ways in order to follow the action and/or show more of the physical setting.

- **Panning** occurs when the camera rotates in a horizontal plane (that is, moving from left to right or right to left).
- **Tilting** is when the camera rotates in a vertical plane to point up or down.
- **Tracking** involves the whole camera moving. The camera can be placed on a dolly (a mobile platform) or a crane, which creates a smooth movement. Alternatively, a handheld camera can be moved in an uneven, jerky way.

Editing

Editing is the process of selecting the shots and placing them in a meaningful order to tell the story. Editing also determines the length of each shot and how quickly one shot is followed by another. The film's editor works closely with the director to edit the film.

A **cut** is the most common type of edit; one shot ends and the next begins, usually without the audience noticing. For example, in a scene where two people are talking, a shot showing one person's face as they speak might be followed by a shot of the other person responding.



Other types of edits are a **fade** (the screen fades to black or white) and a **dissolve** (as one shot fades out, it briefly overlaps with the next).

Here are three common editing techniques in which the ordering of shots helps to tell a story.

- **Crosscutting:** the film 'crosses' or cuts between two scenes to show events that are occurring simultaneously in different places.
- **Montage:** a series of very short scenes or shots, usually set to music, can show what happens over a longer period of time.
- **Flashback/flashforward:** the film cuts between different time periods to show events that happened in the past (e.g. to fill in a character's backstory) or events that will occur in the future.

2.3 Analyse a key scene

- 1 Select a key scene from your film and watch it two or three times. In the top row of the table below, briefly describe what happens in the scene. In the middle column, make notes about the elements of film style you can identify in the scene. In the right-hand column, describe how the filmmakers' choices convey the meaning of the film (e.g. creating a sense of time and place; increasing dramatic tension; making a character appear more sympathetic).

Key scene:		
Element of film style	Notes	Effect
Cinematography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many close-ups, medium shots or long shots are used? • Is the camera still or moving? 		
Editing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there many quick cuts or only a few longer cuts? • Are there cuts to other places and/or times? 		
Sound <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is music used? • How much dialogue is there? • Are there any sound effects? 		

- 2 On the lines below, write complete sentences from the notes you made in the table. Write at least one sentence about each feature. Don't forget to draw on your notes about the *effects* of these features, e.g. how they are used to create a mood, tell the story and position the audience to respond.

Drama

A play is a story performed on a stage. The written play – the script – is the basis for the performance, but actors, set designers and the director (among others) all contribute to what the audience actually sees and hears. Productions of a particular play can vary significantly, even though the play scripts are identical. Ideally, you should see the play you are studying performed, or at least watch a filmed performance or a movie version.

This section explains several key features of drama: stage directions, soliloquies, asides and dramatic irony.

Stage directions

Stage directions enhance your understanding of the characters and situations, so pay careful attention to these. They are usually written in italics within the text of the play, and can include instructions for or descriptions of:

- the set, including props, furnishings and lighting
- actors' appearances, including costumes and personal props
- actors' movements, including entries and exits, gestures and facial expressions
- the tone, feeling and/or pace with which an actor should deliver their lines
- sound effects, including music.

Here is an example of dialogue and stage directions from Jane Harrison's play *Rainbow's End*.

GLADYS: Yes? Can I help you, lad?

ERROL: Sorry, er, ma'am. [*Extremely nervous*] My name is Errol Fisher. I am a representative of ... er ... I am in this area today, with quite an amazing offer. Um ... I have a presentation regarding ...

He offers the book. GLADYS looks at it with interest.

Shows the feeling that the actor needs to convey through their delivery.

Indicates the actor's body language and facial expression.

Indicates what the actor does.

Identifies a prop used in the scene.

2.4 Analyse stage directions

Re-read the opening scene of your play and look closely at the accompanying stage directions. This information will be in italics and/or brackets. Fill in as many of the following gaps as you can for your play.

- 1 The scene is set at/in _____.
- 2 This is significant because _____.

1

- 3 The description of the opening setting tells us that _____.
- 4 The characters in this scene are described as _____.
- 5 They are wearing _____.
- 6 The impression we receive of these individuals is _____
_____.
- 7 We also learn that the relationship between _____
[character's name] and _____
[name of another character or a group] is _____

[describe what you learn about the relationship between two of the characters, or between a character and a group].
- 8 Choose two quotations from the stage directions to support the view you presented in question 7.

Soliloquies, asides and dramatic irony

A **soliloquy** is a significant speech in which a character, usually alone onstage, expresses their private thoughts and feelings. If there are other characters onstage, they do not hear what the character delivering the soliloquy is saying.

An **aside** is a short speech. When the speaker delivers the aside, the other characters remain onstage but they do not hear what is being said.

Soliloquies and asides give the audience an insight into a character's real motivations and beliefs, which are not known or fully understood by the other characters.

Both soliloquies and asides can create **dramatic irony**, which occurs when the audience (or reader) knows something that one or more characters onstage do not know. For example, in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, when Viola says 'Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife' in an aside at the end of Act 1 Scene 4, the audience learns that she is in love with Duke Orsino. Adding to this dramatic irony is the fact that Viola is disguised as a young man – Cesario – and only the audience knows her true identity.

2.5 Analyse a soliloquy or long speech

Choose a soliloquy from the play you are studying and answer the following questions to enhance your understanding of it. If your play does not have a soliloquy, answer the questions for one of the longer speeches.

1 Who is speaking?

2 How does the speech add to your understanding of the character?

3 What do you learn about the other characters?

4 What information or ideas about an idea in the play does the soliloquy or speech offer?

Sample answer 1

Viola's soliloquy in Act 2 Scene 2 of *Twelfth Night* ('I left no ring with her: what means this lady?') neatly outlines the love triangle that has arisen and the misunderstandings that have resulted from her disguise. She uses paradoxes ('I am the man') and riddles ('methought her eyes had lost her tongue') to show her bewilderment; her metaphor for this situation, 'it is too hard a knot for me t'untie', captures her frustration.

Sample answer 2

In Jane Harrison's *Rainbow's End*, Gladys makes a significant speech near the end of the play. It sums up the housing and education challenges facing First Nations communities – challenges that have been shown throughout the play. This speech also signals a shift from resignation to activism, as Gladys replaces the word 'request' in the written speech with 'demand' in asserting the need for equal rights and opportunities.

Your answer

Poetry

A poet or lyricist chooses words not just for their meaning but also to create rhyme and rhythm, drawing the reader or listener's attention to the sound of the words. When you analyse poetry or song lyrics, think about the different meanings that the words can have, and remember to discuss sound as a feature that contributes to the meaning and impact of the poem or song.

Poetic features and techniques

The following table defines some common poetic features and techniques and gives an example of each. Note that each example also explains an effect of the technique.

Technique	Example
Alliteration: the use of words beginning with the same consonant sound	In 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', Wilfred Owen uses alliteration in the phrase 'stuttering rifles' rapid rattle' to evoke the sounds of gunfire.
Connotation: an extra meaning suggested or implied by a word	John Kinsella's reference to the 'fog of occupation' in 'Hawes – God's Intruder' alludes to fumes from superphosphate; it also has connotations of war, evoking the violence of colonisation.
Free verse: poetry that doesn't have a regular pattern of rhyme or rhythm	Oodgeroo Noonuccal's 'We Are Going' is written in free verse , helping to create a sense of fragmentation.
Imagery: a 'mental picture'; often visual, but can appeal to the other senses	Mary Oliver's image of a white moth that 'glimmers ... in the forest, just / as the pink moccasin flowers / are rising' creates a striking picture of natural colour and movement.
Metaphor: a description that states that one thing is another, to show the similarities between them	John Donne uses the metaphor of a compass with two points to describe the strength of his relationship in 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'.
Personification: a metaphor that gives human traits to a non-human object	In 'The Journey', Mary Oliver personifies the wind in the lines 'the wind pried / with its stiff fingers / at the very foundations', creating an image of the wind deliberately attacking the house.
Rhyme: when words at the ends of lines sound the same	Charmaine Papertalk Green uses rhyme in the lines 'What are they doing – for goodness sake? / How much land they gonna let them take?' to help create a chant-like style and an outraged tone ('Selfish Warriors').
Rhythm: the pattern of beats or stresses in a line	In Bruce Dawe's 'Homecoming', the regular rhythm at the start of the poem suggests the purposeful movements of trucks and planes.
Simile: a description using the words 'as' or 'like' to compare one thing to another	Mary Oliver uses the simile 'walking like a woman / who is balancing a sword inside of her body' to describe a careful, rigid way of walking that is also an attempt to avoid pain ('August').

2.6 *Identify techniques*

Complete as many rows of this table as possible by finding an example of each feature or technique in the collection of poems you are studying.

Technique	Your example
Alliteration	
Connotation	
Free verse	
Imagery	
Metaphor	
Personification	
Rhyme	
Rhythm	
Simile	

How to analyse poetry

When you are discussing and analysing poetry, draw on the appropriate metalanguage and use the following five steps.

Step 1: Look at the form of the poem.

- Decide whether the poem is in a well-defined form (e.g. a sonnet) or has no particular form.
- Count the number of stanzas, and check whether the number of lines in each stanza is the same or varied.
- Check whether the lines are equal in length or if some are longer and some shorter.

Step 2: Annotate the poem in detail.

- Circle any words, lines or images that stand out to you.
- Look up any unfamiliar words in a dictionary and write down their definitions.
- Underline any poetic techniques you recognise in the poem.

Step 3: Identify the effects of language choices and poetic techniques. Think about their connotations and associations, how they make you feel, the tone they contribute to and any other thoughts they provoke.

Step 4: Identify the rhythm, mood and language style used in the poem. The following table contains useful words for describing rhythm, mood and language.

Describing rhythm	Describing mood	Describing language
bouncy	angry	conversational
irregular	bitter	earthy
jerky	excited	elegant
loose	gloomy	evocative
quick	joyful	formal
regular	regretful	sensuous
slow	serene	simple
steady	sorrowful	striking
strong	thoughtful	unusual

Step 5: Discuss how techniques, rhythm, mood and language all contribute to the poem's overall meaning. The list of verbs below is useful when describing what the poet is doing and the viewpoint they are trying to convey.

affirms	contrasts	emphasises	explores	intensifies	subverts
challenges	conveys	endorses	highlights	questions	suggests
condemns	creates	evokes	illustrates	reflects	surprises
condones	elicits	examines	implies	reinforces	undermines

2.7 Analyse a poem

Use this series of questions to develop a close analysis of any poem you are studying.

- 1 Describe the form of the poem, including the number of stanzas, the number of lines in each stanza and any regular patterns you can see.

- 2 Find three examples of poetic techniques in the poem. Use the table of techniques on page 35 to guide you.

- 3 Choose one of these examples and answer the following questions to identify the likely intended effect of this particular technique.

a How does it make you feel? _____

b What does it remind you of? _____
(Give at least two examples of the first things you think of when you read the particular word, phrase or section of text you are analysing.)

c Which sense or senses does it especially appeal to (sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch)?

d If you were reading this aloud, what tone of voice would you use?

- 4 Identify two of the more striking images in the poem and explain their effects on you.

Image 1: _____

Image 2: _____

- 5 What do these images contribute to the poem's overall meaning and impact?



- 6 Describe the rhythm, the mood and the language of the poem. (Write one sentence on each aspect.)

- 7 Drawing on the notes and sentences you have created above, write a paragraph analysing your poem. Use the following example as a guide.

Sample answer

Mary Oliver's 'Morning Poem' comprises nine four-line stanzas. Although there is no regular rhyme scheme, there is a steady, gentle rhythm that helps to convey a sense of peacefulness. The simile 'ponds appear / like black cloth' suggests the stark appearance of the natural world just as the sun begins to rise, while the later image 'each pond with its blazing lilies' evokes the light brought by the sun and reflected by the flowers. The contrast of light and dark in the visual imagery mirrors the contrast between the emotions of happiness and sadness, and the poem's language also shifts between words with positive connotations ('soft trails', 'alighting') and negative ones ('heavier than lead', 'trudging'). In this way the poem's depiction of a dramatic sunrise accompanies a reflection on the world of emotions. The speaker concludes by connecting these two sets of ideas, suggesting that witnessing such a sunrise might be a source of happiness or 'a prayer heard and answered / lavishly'.

Your answer

WRITING A PERSONAL RESPONSE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Identifying personal connections
- › Writing your response

In writing a personal response to a text, you will combine discussion of the text with reflections on aspects of your own life and the world you live in. There may be many parts of a text that connect with something you know is happening in the world and/or that you have experienced.



Identifying personal connections

To start identifying your connections with the text, think about the main aspects of the text (as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2), and line them up with similar aspects of your experiences and knowledge. The diagram on the next page shows how you can break these down.

3.1 *Draw connections between the text and your life*

- 1 Create a diagram like the one on the next page. In the left box, list features of your text. Include brief notes on these features, such as the qualities of the main characters (brave, loyal, proud etc.) and the types of relationships (friendships, marriages, parent-child etc.).



2 In the right box, list features of your own life and/or that you notice in the world around you. Try to line these up with the notes on the left. They don't need to match exactly, just have some kind of link. Here is an example of what this might look like:

Setting in *Maestro*: Darwin, hot & humid, exotic plants, remote from southern cities

Place I lived in: Newcastle, subtropical, unexciting, a 'poor cousin' to Sydney

3 Can you see some strong connections between the two halves of your diagram? Describe three connections between boxes on the left and boxes on the right.

Your set text

- Settings (places and times)
- Important events in the text
- The main characters
- Relationships between the characters
- Conflicts and tensions in the text
- Ideas and concerns in the text

Your world and experiences

- Places you have lived or visited
- Significant events in your life or in the world
- People you have known or know about
- Relationships you have had or learned about
- Conflicts you have experienced or that are occurring in the world
- Current issues in the world

Once you have created a diagram like the one on the previous page, you can drill down further into the connections between the two columns. You can do this by selecting one of the rows in the diagram and expanding on your notes to draw out the similarities and differences. A good way to organise your notes is in a Venn diagram, with details from your set text on one side and your own experiences on the other. In the centre area is the common feature or idea.

The example below uses the novel *Maestro* by Peter Goldsworthy. In this case, the main character hopes to become a concert pianist, but the connections you make with the novel might relate to success in any field, such as sport or business. You could use your own experiences of trying to be very successful at something, or use real-world examples.



3.2 Create a Venn diagram

- 1 Choose one of the areas from the diagram you created in Activity 3.1. Look for one where there are strong similarities between the text and your world or experience.
- 2 Create a Venn diagram showing the similarities and differences between the text and your own world. Use the example above as a guide.

Personal experience

The personal experiences you draw on don't need to be highly personal or private. For example, if you are describing the place where you grew up because it has some similarity to a setting in your text, you don't need to write about yourself at all. You

can draw a connection with characters or relationships in your text by linking them to people or relationships you know (without necessarily revealing their identities) rather than to your own identity and relationships.

Your beliefs and values are central to the way in which you respond to a text, and these are also good elements to incorporate into your piece. You might reflect on how a text has changed or enriched your thinking about an important idea, or discuss how a writer has communicated a message in ways that particularly resonate with you.

The world around you

Issues in the real world often align with issues explored in texts. They could be international issues such as war or migration; national issues such as political and social changes; or more local issues such as those to do with roads, hospitals and schools. You can draw on your knowledge of and interest in these issues in your personal response to a set text. You might consider how a text has reinforced or challenged your thinking about an issue, or discuss how characters' responses to an issue are similar to or different from your own, or those of people you know.

3.3 *Explore experiences and the world around you*

- 1 Identify a setting, a character and an event in your text. Make brief notes on each below.
 - a Setting: _____
 - b Character: _____
 - c Event: _____
- 2 For each answer in question 1, identify a place, a person and an event in your life that connects or corresponds to the one in your text. Explain the connection.
 - a Place: _____
 - b Person: _____
 - c Event: _____
- 3 Now, find a corresponding place, person and event in the world around you. They can be known to you personally, or discussed in the media. Explain the connection. (Do not re-use any of your answers to question 2.)
 - a Place: _____
 - b Person: _____
 - c Event: _____

Writing your response

When you write a personal response to a text in Unit 1, Outcome 1, you will need to include some analysis of specific textual elements. These could include the following:

- ideas, concerns and tensions in the text
- characters, settings, plot and narrative point of view
- cultural, social and historical values expressed in the text
- the author's use of vocabulary, text structures and language features.

It is possible that you will be asked to respond to a given topic or prompt. If this is the case, make sure you clearly respond to the topic and focus on any key ideas it contains.

Essay structures

It is possible that your personal response will be written as an essay. This essay would likely be more reflective in style than an analytical essay, although it should still include some analysis. Other approaches, such as keeping a journal and writing a reflection at the end of the unit, are also possible. Your teacher will let you know the precise form you need to write in for your assessment.

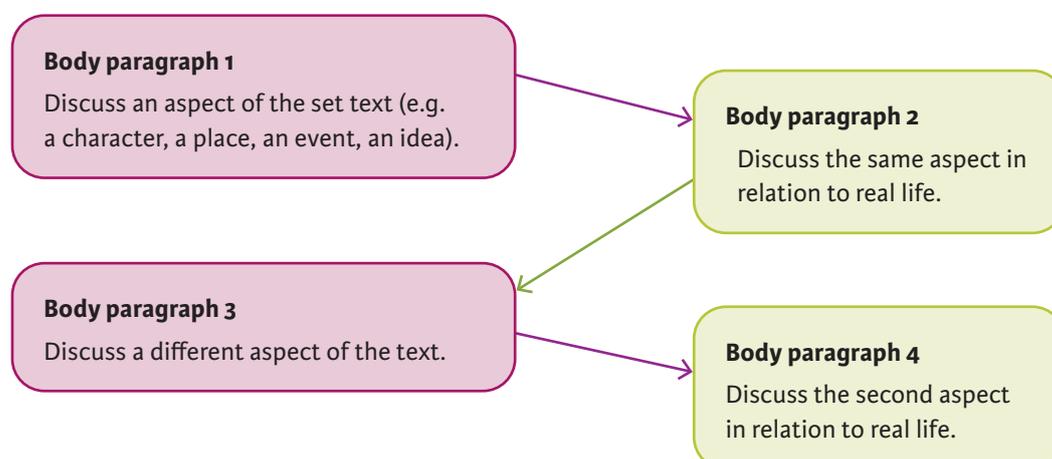
When you write about both a set text and personal experiences, you will include some points of comparison. There will be some differences and some similarities. The way you incorporate this comparison will determine the structure of your piece of writing.

The following notes are most relevant to an essay, but the essential points also apply to other forms of personal text response, such as journal entries.

Block approach

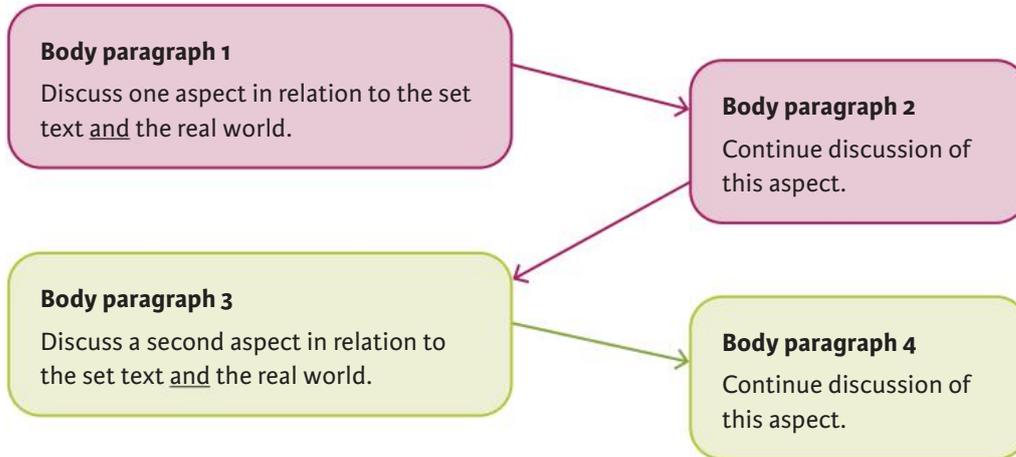
The block approach is the simplest structure for a piece of writing that includes some comparison. In this approach, each body paragraph focuses on either the set text or personal experiences. Only some sentences refer to both. Alternatively, a paragraph near the end of the essay can refer to both in a compare/contrast manner.

The sequence of body paragraphs in a block essay is illustrated in the diagram below.



Integrated approach

In an integrated approach, the comparison is carried throughout the discussion. You would discuss both the set text and real-world experiences (yours and/or others') in each body paragraph. The structure would look like the diagram below.



3.4 Write an integrated body paragraph

- 1 Identify an element of the text (e.g. a character, a place, an event, an idea) and a personal connection you have with it.

Textual element: _____

Personal connection: _____

- 2 Complete the following sentences to create a short, integrated body paragraph.

In _____ [text title], _____
 _____ [element of the text]. I can relate to this
 because _____
 [description of personal experience or knowledge]. An important/interesting [choose one]
 difference between these experiences is that _____.
 However, the connection has made me realise that _____
 _____ [conclusion you can draw from the connection].

Introductions and conclusions

As in an analytical essay, your **introduction** sets up your discussion, signalling the main ideas. Refer to the set text and briefly describe the real-world aspects you will be discussing. If you are responding to a topic, ensure that your comments are relevant to it.

The **conclusion** sums up your discussion. Include sentences that refer to both the set text and the real-world issues you have identified in your body paragraphs. Again, if there is a topic, respond to it directly in your conclusion.

Sentence starters

Try using these sentence starters to write about your own experiences or observations about the world around you.

When I first discovered/experienced/understood/noticed [choose one] ...	.....
A place that left a powerful impression on me is ...	.....
Throughout my life I have found that ...	.....
One of the biggest challenges I have experienced is ...	.....
Someone who really influenced/inspired [choose one] me was ...	.....
I experienced a conflict between ... and ..., which made me realise that ...	.....
The issue of ... is controversial / frequently discussed / common [choose one] in today's society, which is a result of ...	.....
Our lives are increasingly influenced/dominated/shaped [choose one] by ...	.....
A common challenge in relationships is ...	.....
The value of ... can be seen in people who ...	.....

Connecting phrases

Some of the sentences in your personal text response will be about *either* your experiences or the text, but other sentences will refer to *both*. Here are some sentence starters to help you connect the text and your personal reflections.

The ... [situation in the text] reminds me of a time when I ...	.....
I have much in common with ... [character's name], such as ...	.....
I have encountered people like ... [character's name] in my own life; for example, ...	.....
In a similar way to ... [character(s) in the text], I have found that ...	.....
Just as ... [author's name] suggests that ..., I personally think ...	.....
Whereas ... [text title] suggests that ..., my own view is that ...	.....
The setting of ... [place name] reminds me of ... [place name], which I visited / lived in [choose one] when I was ...	.....
Although my experience was different, I learned a similar lesson when ...	.....
The conflict between ... and ... echoes my own experience/observations [choose one] of ...	.....
Unlike ... [character's name]'s experience in ... [text title], my own life has shown me ...	.....

3.5 *Practise using the sentence starters*

In this activity you can refer to your answers to Activity 3.3 or use different textual details and personal connections.

- 1 Using one of the sentence starters in the first table on the previous page, write a sentence that describes an experience you have had or that makes an observation about the world.

- 2 Using two of the sentence starters in the second table on the previous page, write two sentences explaining connections between the text and either your own experience or your knowledge of the world around you.



WRITING AN ANALYTICAL RESPONSE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Breaking down the topic
- › Brainstorming ideas
- › Developing a plan
- › Writing your response
- › Drafting and editing your response
- › Sample response

An analytical text response is a formal essay in which you show your knowledge and understanding of a text. It responds to a topic or question about the text, and presents your point of view on the topic.

This chapter leads you through the process of writing an essay on a given topic.



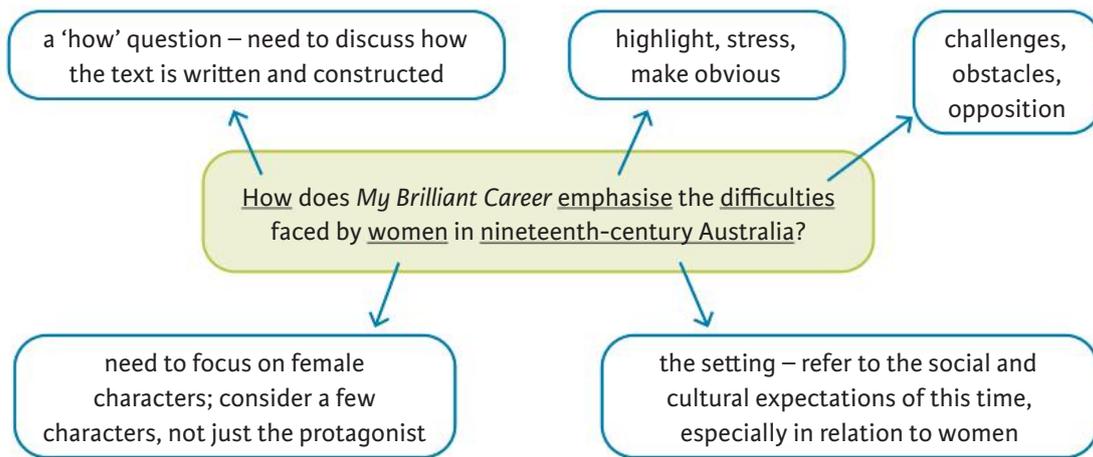
Breaking down the topic

Your first task is to analyse or ‘break down’ the topic so you have a clear understanding of what it requires you to do. Does it ask you to discuss a statement about the text, or ask if you agree with a statement? Does it ask why characters behave in certain ways, or how the author presents an idea? Use the following two-step process to break down your essay topic and begin to work out how you will respond.

Step 1: Underline key terms and annotate the topic

Write down the topic on a blank sheet of paper or in a computer document, with space around it for you to write notes. Look up the meanings of any words you don’t know, and identify any words you need some synonyms for. Underline the important words and phrases in the topic and write brief definitions and synonyms around it. Also jot down anything you will need to do in order to address each term in your response.

For example:



4.1 Practise annotating a topic

Using the example above as a guide, annotate a topic on a text you are studying. (You can find topics in study guides on your text or in previous VCAA exams if your text has been on the text list in previous years. You can also ask your teacher for help.)

- 1 Write down the topic, allowing space to write annotations around it.
- 2 Underline all the key terms.
- 3 Write down three synonyms for each key term.
- 4 Add brief notes on any terms that you will need to discuss in your essay.

Step 2: Analyse the topic

Think carefully about the meaning and implications of each key term. Many topics have two or three parts, and it is important that you consider each one to work out exactly what you are being asked to do. Use the following table as a guide.

What to ask yourself	What to do
Are there adjectives or adverbs? Examples: limited, strong, essential, inevitably, only, never, always.	Use these terms and their synonyms in your response. Question whether you agree – e.g. is something really 'essential' or is it just one of several important factors? Is something 'never' the case or is there an exception?
What verbs are used in the topic? Examples: shows, reveals, explores, emphasises, contrasts.	Think about the meaning of any verbs or verb phrases, including any verbs that describe how a character behaves (e.g. defies, struggles, is motivated by). Use these verbs and their synonyms in your response.





What to ask yourself	What to do
Is there something in the topic that's not always or completely true?	You can partly agree with a topic statement by showing that there are some exceptions to what is generally true. This will help to show strong engagement with the topic and an understanding of the text's complexity.
Are there two or three parts to a topic? Example: The witches' prophecies are the main cause of Macbeth's downfall. Do you agree?	Address all parts of the topic. For instance, this topic requires you to discuss (1) the witches' prophecies, (2) Macbeth's downfall and (3) the causal connection between the prophecies and Macbeth's downfall. You could also add (4) other reasons for Macbeth's downfall, as a response to the adjective 'main'.
Does the topic ask about how a story is told? Example: The first-person narrative limits our understanding of the other characters. Discuss.	Consider the text's construction – essential in answering a 'how' question – and the effects of this. For instance, for this topic, as well as discussing the reader's lack of knowledge of characters other than the narrator, a response should relate this to the fact that it is a first-person narrative. The verb 'limits' is also important here.

4.2 Practise breaking down a topic

Complete this table for a topic and text of your choosing. Use the notes and examples in the table above to guide you.

What to ask	Examples from your topic
Are there adjectives or adverbs? If so, write down two synonyms for each.	
What verbs are used in the topic? What are some synonyms for these verbs?	
Is there something in the topic that's not always or <i>completely</i> true?	





What to ask	Examples from your topic
Are there two or three parts to the topic? If so, use numbers to identify the parts.	
Does the topic ask about <i>how</i> a story is told? Note some relevant elements, such as structure, narrative voice and imagery, that you could analyse in your response.	

Next, you need to find some evidence and generate a few supporting ideas. The end result of this process will be your main contention or argument, as the next section describes.

Brainstorming ideas

A good way to brainstorm ideas for a text response is to write the topic in the centre of a page and make notes around it. If it is a long topic, you could shorten it to the central idea or question, as shown at the centre of the brainstorm diagram on the following page.

Your notes should include:

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

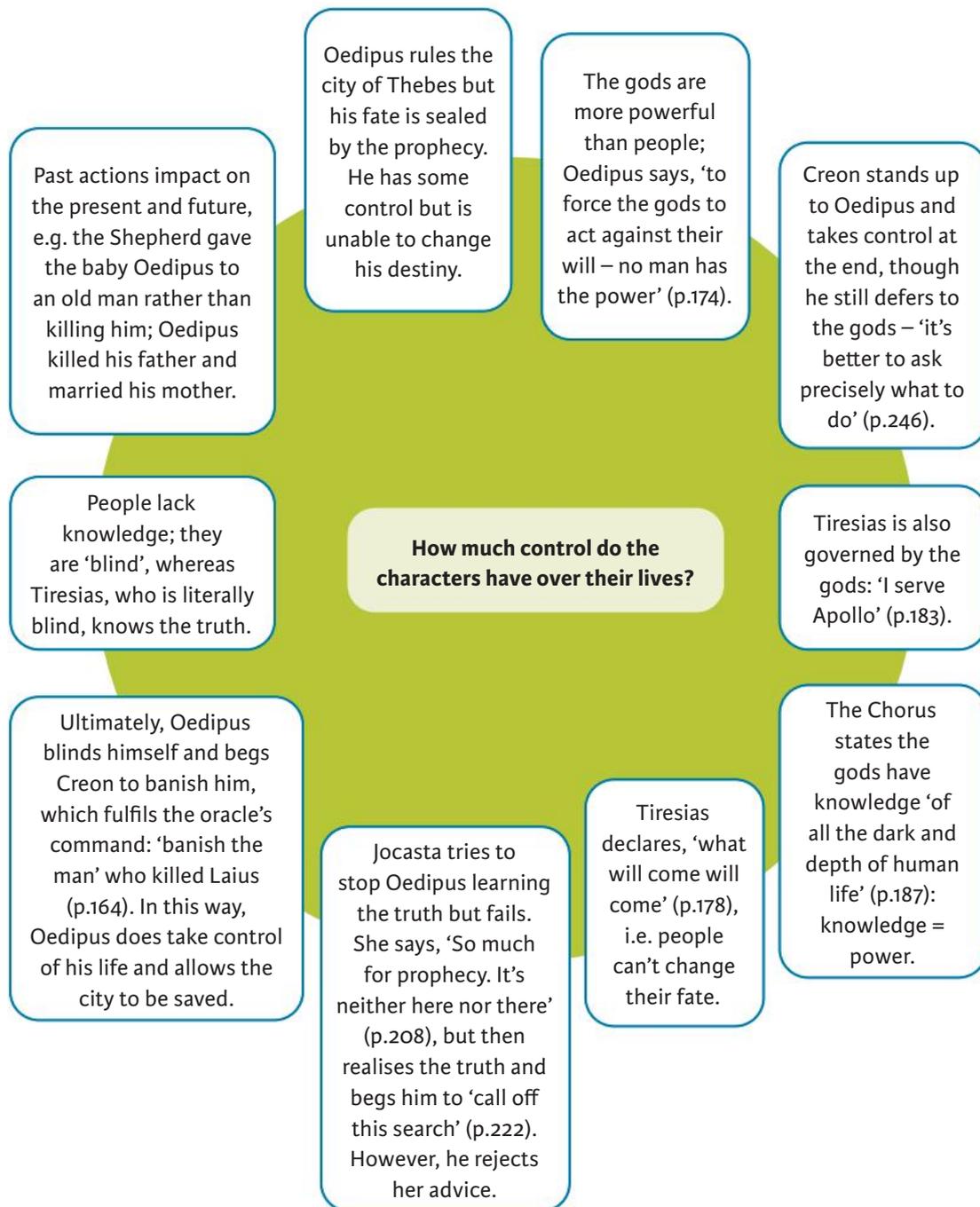
Ask yourself as many questions as you can about the ideas and the characters: in particular, ask *why* and *how* questions. When discussing film, refer to visual and sound elements in addition to characters and plot.

Example

The example of brainstorming on the next page uses a topic on Sophocles' play *Oedipus the King*.

In Oedipus the King, the characters have little control over their lives. Discuss.

This is a straightforward topic about characters. It asks you to consider the characters' actions and to what extent they can control their lives by making independent choices. The brainstorm might look something like the diagram on the next page. (Quotes and page numbers are obtained from the translation by Robert Fagles published in *The Three Theban Plays*, Penguin Classics, 1984.)



4.3 *Brainstorm a topic*

- 1 Select a topic for the text you are studying. You can use a topic from Activity 4.1 or 4.2, or a different topic.
- 2 Using the example above as a guide, brainstorm the topic. You can do this on a piece of paper (A4 or larger) or in a computer file. Place the topic, or a shortened/simpler version, at the centre, and create a diagram of notes, including quotes from the text.

Organise your material

So far, your ideas are probably quite random. Your notes now need to be organised so that you can turn them into an essay plan. Try these strategies.

- Colour-code your material. Which ideas and evidence seem to go together? For instance, in the example on the previous page, the material on Oedipus could be highlighted in green, while notes on Creon could be highlighted in yellow.
- Circle or underline the main ideas in your brainstorm. Key ideas can become topic sentences for your body paragraphs. In the example, the point about the gods being powerful is a key idea; another key idea is that Oedipus does show limited control over his life when he blinds himself and seeks exile.

Write your contention

Ask yourself, what is your opinion on the topic? Your main contention is a single sentence that summarises your point of view, and gives the reader a sense of *why* you hold this view. Look at the notes from your brainstorm. What viewpoint does the evidence mostly support?

- If the topic is in the form of a question, e.g. ‘Do you agree?’ or ‘How do ...?’, your main contention will answer the question.
- If the topic asks you to ‘discuss’ a statement, your main contention will show that you agree, disagree, or partly agree and partly disagree.

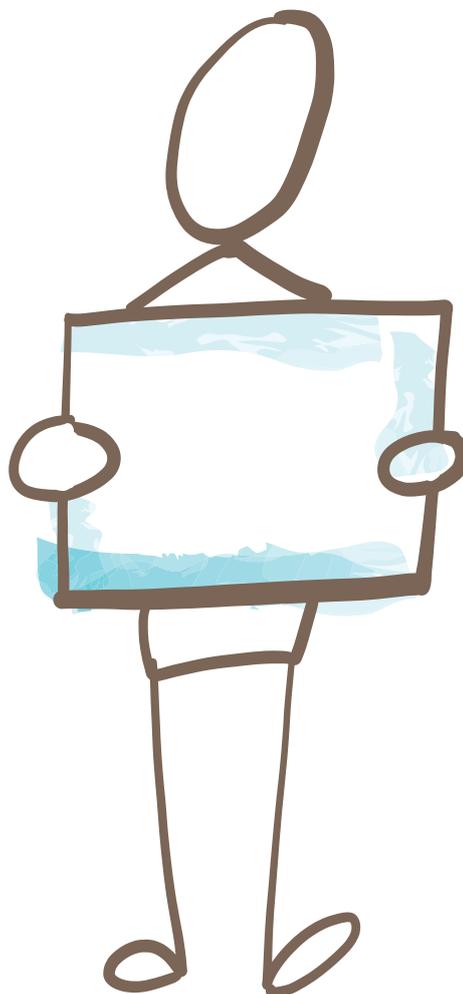
Remember, there is no right or wrong answer. You may challenge all or part of a topic statement.

For example, here are two contrasting ways you could argue in response to the topic on *Oedipus the King*.

The power of fate and the gods means that the characters in *Oedipus the King* have almost no control over their lives.

Or

Although a strong sense of fate and destiny informs the play, the characters take action to save the city of Thebes and to end their suffering.



4.4 Practise writing contentions

1 Choose a topic on your text and write a one-sentence response (a main contention).

a Topic: _____

b Main contention: _____

2 Now think of a different response to the topic and write another main contention.

3 Which response do you prefer and why? Refer to textual evidence in your answer.

Select evidence from the text

Once you have decided on your contention, spend some more time thinking about **why**. *Why do you hold this view and how can you prove it?* Look at the main ideas you identified in your brainstorm. These will be your **supporting reasons**. Each supporting reason will be the basis of one body paragraph in your essay.

Next, find textual evidence to support each main idea.

- Your brainstorm will include textual evidence related to the main ideas. For example, in the brainstorm on page 52, the idea that the gods control people's lives is supported by the quote 'to force the gods to act against their will – no man has the power'.
- Go back to your text. Your original highlighting and annotations will help you to locate the information you need. Add evidence to the brainstorm material.
- Go back to your notes – e.g. the text information sheet, character profiles and notes on structure and narrative point of view that you made in Chapter 1. What can you add to the points made in your brainstorm?

4.5 Find evidence

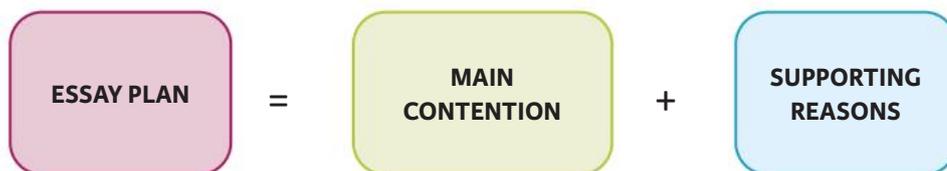
- 1 List three passages from your text (including page numbers) that are directly relevant to your essay topic and would be good sources of supporting evidence. Briefly describe what happens in each passage.

- 2 Explain how each passage would support one of your main ideas.

- 3 Write down one quote from each passage that supports your main ideas.

Developing a plan

A plan is an outline of your essay and summarises your line of argument.



If you are writing under timed conditions (as in an exam), the plan should be brief. However, it is still worth doing as it will keep your writing on track and relevant to the given topic.

Write your main contention as a single sentence. This will be used in your introduction.

Then write each supporting reason as a sentence. Each sentence will be a topic sentence for a body paragraph. Under each reason, give two or three pieces of evidence. These can be quotes or examples of things that happen in the text.

Sample plan

The following sample plan on *Oedipus the King* draws on the brainstorming notes (page 52). A complete essay based on this plan is on pages 71–2.

Topic

In *Oedipus the King*, the characters have little control over their lives. Discuss.

Contention

The power of fate and the gods means that the characters in *Oedipus the King* have almost no control over their lives.

Body paragraph 1

Topic sentence: Oedipus' fate is set, and he cannot change it.

Evidence:

- The prophecy that Oedipus will kill his father and marry his mother has been fulfilled.
- Tiresias knows what will happen to Oedipus, and his predictions come true (e.g. 'darkness shrouding your eyes that now can see the light', p.183).

Body paragraph 2

Topic sentence: Other characters acknowledge how powerless they are compared to the gods.

Evidence:

- Creon says, 'it's better to ask [the gods] precisely what to do' (p.246).
- Tiresias says, 'what will come will come' (p.178) – i.e. destinies can't be changed, and he 'serve[s] Apollo' (p.183).
- The Chorus refers to Zeus and Apollo as 'the great masters of all the dark and depth of human life' and doubts that 'a mere man can know the truth' (p.187).

Body paragraph 3

Topic sentence: Some characters take small steps to control their lives, but these have little effect.

Evidence:

- Jocasta tries to reassure Oedipus that the 'prophecy' is 'neither here nor there' (p.208), and then she begs him to 'call off this search' (p.222). However, he ignores her.
- Oedipus is determined to discover the identity of Laius' murderer; when he learns it was him, he punishes himself to free Thebes from the plague.
- Creon takes control to some extent at the end of the play, telling Oedipus that 'here your power ends' (p.250).

4.6 *Plan your essay*

This activity steps you through the process of creating an essay plan. Use a topic you have been given in class or one that you have found yourself.

1 Write your topic here: _____

2 Write down your contention: _____

3 Identify three main reasons, and list evidence from the text (e.g. character choices and actions, events and situations, quotes) to support each reason.

Reason 1: _____

Evidence:

- _____
- _____

Reason 2: _____

Evidence:

- _____
- _____

Reason 3: _____

Evidence:

- _____
- _____

4 Now write your reasons as topic sentences, in a logical order. Do the sentences flow? If not, think about changing the order.

Writing your response

This section explains how to write each section of your essay – the introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion.

Introductions

The introduction lets your reader know what lies ahead. It includes a clear response to the topic and gives your reader an idea of how you will justify your response. Avoid using detailed evidence; focus on the argument you are making.

Your introduction should include:

- **your main contention** – a clear statement of your position in response to the topic
- **essential information about the text** – e.g. its title, author/creator, form or genre and, if relevant, something about its historical or social context
- **key terms from the topic**, as well as any ideas relevant to your argument
- **signposts** to what you will discuss in the body paragraphs – the main reasons and brief references to the evidence you will use (e.g. characters; events; structural features; stories, poems or scenes to be analysed).

Study the following examples to see a basic approach to an introduction, as well as ways to add more complexity.

Example 1: A simple introduction

Text: *Ghost Wall* by Sarah Moss

Topic: In *Ghost Wall*, the women only find power by working together. Discuss.

Sarah Moss' novel *Ghost Wall* portrays events over several days, as a group of people in modern-day Northumberland attempt to re-create the lives of people living in Iron-Age England. **1** Two men, Professor Jim Slade and amateur historian Bill Hampton, run the activities, while Bill's wife and daughter, Alison and Silvie, live in fear of his temper and have little power to resist his violence. **2** However, one of the students, Molly, resists the men's dominance and with the help of local midwife Trudi she rescues Silvie from the traumatic re-enactment of a sacrifice. **3** By supporting one another, the women in *Ghost Wall* are able to find some power and agency. **4**

- 1** Introduces text details.
- 2** Addresses the topic using the key term 'power' and referring to two of the female characters in the text.
- 3** Addresses the topic through the phrase 'resists the men's dominance' and 'with the help of' (i.e. working together).
- 4** States the main contention.

The topic presents a statement about the text; the introduction must express either (i) complete agreement, (ii) partial agreement or (iii) complete disagreement with this statement. In this case, the contention is in complete agreement with the topic statement.

The introduction in Example 1 allows for a simple but clear response to the topic. The second and third sentences contain signposts for how the argument is going to unfold in the body paragraphs. Four female characters are mentioned: Alison and Silvie (who lack power), then Molly and Trudi (who work together to help Silvie). This signals to the reader that these four characters, and the sacrifice re-enactment near the end of the novel, will be the focus of the discussion.

Example 2: A more complex and detailed introduction

The two figures who wield most power in *Ghost Wall* are Professor Jim Slade, who has power over his three students, and the history enthusiast Bill Hampton, who closely controls the lives of his wife and daughter. **1** The two groups co-exist uneasily as they attempt to re-create the lives of Iron-Age Northumbrians, and as Bill's cruelty and chauvinism become increasingly apparent. **2** Silvie and Alison are powerless to resist his acts of violence, which take place when they are isolated from others. **3** Molly, though, refuses to passively follow instructions, and she escapes the camp from time to time for food and company. **4** In the end, Molly gains the friendship and help of a local midwife, Trudi, and together they rescue Silvie from a traumatic sacrifice re-enactment. **5** While Silvie and her mother are often isolated and meekly submit to Bill's attacks, Molly's strength of character and ethical convictions give her the power to challenge male authority. **6**

- 1** Opening sentence introduces the concept of power and identifies the two main authority figures.
- 2** Provides some textual detail and introduces the ways in which Bill wields power.
- 3** Signpost 1 – identifies Silvie and Alison as characters to be discussed, emphasising their lack of power.
- 4** Signpost 2 – identifies Molly as a focus, indicating that she does have some power and therefore that the argument will not be in complete agreement with the topic statement.
- 5** Signpost 3 – identifies the combined efforts of Molly and Trudi in rescuing Silvie as a focus.
- 6** States the main contention, which partly agrees and partly disagrees with the topic statement.

Here the writer is taking a 'yes, but' response to the topic. This more complex introduction differentiates between Silvie and Alison on the one hand, and Molly on the other. It also argues that while the women find power partly from working together, Molly also has a personal strength that enables her to act independently.

4.7 Write an introduction

- 1 Select a topic on one of your texts, either from this book or one you have been given in class. Write it here.

- 2 Complete the steps outlined in Activities 4.3 (Brainstorm a topic) and 4.6 (Plan your essay).
- 3 Begin to write your introduction by putting each of the elements below into a sentence. The signposts should correspond to main reasons you list in your plan. Use the annotated sample paragraphs in Examples 1 and 2 (pages 58–9) as a guide.

General statement introducing the text: _____

Main contention: _____

Signpost 1: _____

Signpost 2: _____

Signpost 3: _____

- 4 Now organise the above in the order you think is best, including any appropriate evidence *briefly*, and write an introduction.

Body paragraphs

Body paragraphs develop the argument by expanding on the main reasons and using detailed evidence from the text. Remember the following guidelines.

- Your topic sentence is like a mini contention. Start with the argument (the topic sentence), and then prove it using the evidence and analysis in the following sentences.
- Base your topic sentence on an idea, rather than on a character or an example from the text. This helps you to avoid simply describing the action.
- All the discussion in the paragraph should follow from, and be connected to, the topic sentence.
- Include short quotes and other textual evidence, without retelling the story.
- Discuss the evidence, explaining *why* it is significant and *how* it supports your argument.
- Always keep the topic in mind, and link back to it near the end of each paragraph.

A basic structure using TEEL

The acronym TEEL is a simple way to remember the key elements in each body paragraph. You can follow it strictly to ensure you include each element, but avoid a simple four-sentence paragraph with one sentence per TEEL element – this won't flow well or adequately develop your argument. After you become more confident writing body paragraphs, vary your approach and introduce more complexity. The following sections explain ways to do this.

T The **topic sentence** states the main point of the paragraph. It is usually the first sentence in the paragraph, and expands on one of the signposts from your introduction.

E Your **evidence** from the text supports the main point of the paragraph. It can include quotes from the text; descriptions of what characters think, say and do; or details of the text's construction.

E The **explanation** of textual evidence shows why it is significant and how it supports the main point of the paragraph.

L The **link** to the topic is a sentence (or two) that clearly relates the paragraph's discussion to the essay topic and reinforces the main contention. It usually occurs near or at the end of the paragraph.

Example 1: Basic TEEL paragraph

The following example shows how TEEL can be used to create a simple body paragraph. It could be the first body paragraph for an essay on *Ghost Wall*, following the introduction on page 58.

The protagonist of *Ghost Wall*, Silvie is at the centre of the narrative but lacks power to change or prevent the things that happen to her. **T** She obeys her father's instructions and takes care to avoid upsetting him. His brutal behaviour is demonstrated when he hits her with his belt, leaving cuts on her back and legs. **E** She refuses to resist, thinking that it is 'better just to take what's coming to you'. Even when Molly realises the extent of the violence Silvie has been experiencing and tries to help, Silvie insists that 'there's nothing wrong', showing she has lost a clear understanding of right and wrong. **E** She has become meek and submissive, living largely in denial. Only when she forms a friendship with Molly does she find someone who will be on her side and help her to escape her father's control. However, when she is isolated, she is unable to contest the power wielded by her father. **L**

- T** Topic sentence: a statement of the main point of the paragraph; expands on signpost 1 from the introduction through the focus on Silvie.
- E** Evidence: examples from the text, including short quotes, showing how powerless Silvie is in her relationship with her father.
- E** Explanation: sentences that explain how the evidence supports the main point.
- L** Link back to the topic.

Once you feel confident with TEEL, look for ways to introduce complexity and variety into your essay. For example, you can:

- vary the placement of the topic sentence
- expand on the topic sentence
- introduce two or more pieces of evidence that show different perspectives on a character or an idea.

Example 2: Adding complexity – TEEEL+

A TEEEL+ paragraph provides more supporting points and explanation than a basic TEEL paragraph, to develop a more comprehensive, detailed and complex discussion:

- **T**opic sentence
- **E**laboration (an explanation or unpacking of the topic sentence to show its implications)
- **E**vidence and **E**xplanation
- **E**vidence and **E**xplanation + (further evidence and discussion that provides a different perspective or a counterexample)
- **L**ink.

The protagonist of *Ghost Wall*, Silvie is at the centre of the narrative but lacks power to change or prevent the things that happen to her. She is aware of her fear and of the constraints on her freedom, but she cannot see, and does not seek, a means of escape. **1** She almost always obeys her father's instructions and takes great care to avoid upsetting him. Her history of physical abuse gradually becomes clear, and his brutal behaviour is demonstrated when he hits her with his belt, leaving cuts on her back and legs. She refuses to resist, thinking that it is 'better just to take what's coming to you'. Her isolation reinforces her powerlessness: her father beats her when he finds her alone in the stream, and the Prof and her father lead her away from the group when they tell her she will be their ritual sacrifice. **2** Although she protests weakly, asking 'why does it have to be me' and pointing out 'we don't know ... what it was like' in the time when such sacrifices were thought to have occurred, she is too fearful of her father's fury to refuse. However, her friendship with Molly means she now has someone who is on her side and will speak the truth: 'they've completely lost the plot'. **3** Silvie's conversation with Molly leads to Molly seeking help, and the connection Molly has with Trudi means escape becomes possible. Together, the three women subvert the men's authority and power in a way that Silvie alone could never have done.

- 1** A second sentence after the topic sentence elaborates on the main point.
- 2** Introduces a second piece of evidence, which shows Silvie questioning the men's authority and trying to have some power, illustrating the complexity of Silvie's character.
- 3** Shifts to the connection with Molly, providing more detail than the simple body paragraph in Example 1 and developing the point about the impact of relationships between Silvie, Molly and Trudi.

Example 3: Varying the placement of the topic sentence

Another way to structure your body paragraphs is to begin with a sentence or two of textual evidence and then write your topic sentence. This can help you to connect body paragraphs more smoothly. It also creates the possibility of leading up to the 'big idea' in the topic sentence rather than just stating it without much preparation.

The example on the next page is the beginning of a body paragraph that could follow Example 2 above.



Like her daughter Silvie, Alison has been physically abused by Bill for a long time, and is reluctant to resist or challenge his authority within the family. **1** She is often withdrawn and appears to have been worn down by years of suffering; she moves ‘like a much older person’ and rarely interacts with anyone other than Silvie. **2** Isolated and submissive, Alison lacks power and simply follows her husband’s instructions. **3** She is more inclined to blame herself than to blame her husband for his behaviour: ‘it were my fault’ she tells Silvie [...] **4**

- 1** The opening sentence identifies a similarity between Silvie and Alison, connecting with the previous paragraph and developing signpost 1 from the introduction.
- 2** Gives some textual detail to consolidate the description of Alison’s character traits.
- 3** The topic sentence is the third sentence of the paragraph, and draws together the evidence presented in the first two sentences to make a clear statement.
- 4** Continues the discussion with further evidence and explanation.

4.8 Write a body paragraph

- 1** Refer to the introduction you wrote on page 60. Select one of the signposts to use as the basis for a topic sentence. Write it here as a strong, clear statement – this will be your topic sentence.

- 2** Select evidence (such as quotes and detailed references to characters, setting, situations and events) to support the topic sentence. Write one or two sentences presenting this evidence. Remember to use inverted commas (quotation marks) for *exact* quotations.

- 3** Write one or two sentences explaining how your evidence relates to the topic sentence.



Example 1: An average conclusion

This concluding paragraph to an essay on *Ghost Wall* includes the essential features of a conclusion: a concise summary of the argument and supporting points, and a clear link to the topic. (See Example 1 on page 58 for the introductory paragraph of this response.) However, it has too much repetition: phrases from the introduction, and the key terms ‘power’ and ‘working together’, are overused.

In Sarah Moss’ novel *Ghost Wall* the two men, Professor Jim Slade and amateur historian Bill Hampton, have all the power. In comparison, Bill’s wife and daughter, Alison and Silvie, have almost no power and they are unable to prevent his violent behaviour. **1** However, in the end, Molly and Trudi work together to rescue Silvie from a traumatic ritual sacrifice. By working together, the women find the power to resist the men’s power and authority. **2**

- 1** Repeats sentences from the introduction (with minor changes), and the repetition of ‘power’ weakens the writing.
- 2** Ends with a restatement of the main contention and a clear response to the topic, but there is little detail and the final sentence is too similar to the last sentence of the introduction.

Example 2: A strong conclusion

The following conclusion uses more varied and precise language than the example above, and avoids repeating phrases or unnecessary detail from the introduction. It contains statements that extend and follow on from the discussion in the body paragraphs.

In *Ghost Wall* the two men, Professor Jim Slade and amateur historian Bill Hampton, have a great deal of power over the students and the members of Bill’s family, Silvie and Alison. **1** Bill’s physical abuse of his wife and daughter is reprehensible, but they feel unable to prevent it and usually meekly submit, feeling that ‘it’s not as if there was an alternative’. **2** In contrast, Molly demonstrates an independence and perceptiveness that exposes the flaws in the men’s behaviour, particularly when they ask Silvie to become the victim in the re-enactment of a sacrifice. Unlike Silvie and Alison, Molly acts to prevent unacceptable behaviour and asks for help. Although she has her own power as an individual, it is by enlisting Trudi’s help that she is able to rescue Silvie from a traumatic experience. **3**

- 1** Begins like the previous example but adds detail; qualifies the men’s power with the phrase ‘a great deal’, which is more accurate than ‘all’.
- 2** Uses a short quote to reinforce the characters’ feelings of powerlessness; the phrases ‘meekly submit’ and ‘feel unable to prevent’ help to avoid repetition of the word ‘power’ and provide a more precise description of their situation and feelings.
- 3** Ends with a strong restatement of the main contention, addressing the topic without repeating the introduction. The conclusion follows on from discussion of Molly’s independence – she has some power on her own, not just from working with others – and therefore it presents a more complex response than simple agreement with the topic statement.

4.9 Write a conclusion

- 1 Refer to the introduction you wrote on page 60. Write two sentences stating your main contention and responding to the topic. Avoid repeating exactly the same phrases you used in the introduction.

- 2 Write two or three sentences summing up your main reasons, corresponding to the signposts in your introduction. Include some textual details.

- 3 Write a final sentence responding to the topic with your overall view of what the text is saying about the topic idea.

Linking words

Strong essays are **fluent** and **coherent**. This means that the writing flows smoothly and logically, and all the elements work together in a consistent, purposeful way.

Linking words and phrases help to make writing more fluent. They highlight the connections between ideas and show how an argument is developing logically. The following words and phrases will help to show your reasoning and connect your points fluently.

Terms to discuss a similar idea	Terms to present a different idea
additionally / in addition	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 consequence or a logical connection	Terms to indicate an exception or variation
as a result	admittedly
consequently	occasionally
therefore	rarely
this is why / which is why	with the exception of

Although ‘also’ and ‘but’ are effective linking words, they are best used to join phrases together *within* a sentence, *not* to start a sentence.

Incorporating quotes into sentences

Including some direct quotes is an effective way of giving textual evidence, but ensure that quotes are incorporated smoothly into your sentences. Don’t include a quote as a sentence on its own. The following table contains some handy sentence starters and structures for including quotes as supporting evidence.

Sentence starters and model sentences for including quotes
As [character’s name] says, ‘[character’s speech]’, suggesting that ...
[Character’s name] feels/thinks [choose one] that ‘[quote showing feelings or thoughts]’, which reveals ...
The characters’ close/distant [choose one] relationship is shown by ‘[quote showing 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 [choose one] through phrases/ images [choose one] such as ‘[quoted phrase]’ and ‘[quoted phrase]’.
The dramatic/reassuring/disturbing [choose one] conclusion, in which ‘[quote showing what happens]’, leaves the reader/audience [choose one] with a sense of ...

4.10 Practise using linking words

- 1 Drawing on the linking words above, write one or two sentences about your text.

Sentence(s) about similar ideas: _____

Sentence(s) comparing different ideas: _____

→ Sentence(s) showing a consequence or a logical connection: _____

Sentence(s) showing an exception or variation to a rule or pattern: _____

- 2 Use two of the sentence starters and model sentences in the table on the previous page to create sentences that incorporate quotes from your text.

Drafting and editing your response

If you have time, treat the first version of your response as a draft and then carefully review what you have written. This will enable you to strengthen your argument and improve your writing.

When you are editing and rewriting, begin by focusing on the bigger picture, checking for structure and meaning. One way to check how well your essay flows is to read it aloud, since this makes it easier to spot errors and weaknesses. Listen for things such as:

- digressions (sections that move away from the point you're trying to make)
- plot recount (too much 'telling the story' – you should only include enough plot details to give necessary context)
- repetition of words and phrases rather than varied vocabulary
- too many long, complicated sentences.

To edit and rewrite your text response 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 and some complex sentences.
- The conclusion sums up the argument and clearly responds to the topic.

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

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 enclosed in quotation marks.
- The present tense is used throughout (with variations as required, e.g. past tense can be used to refer to events occurring before the narrative present).
- Punctuation is correct – sentences begin with capital letters and end with full stops; quotation marks and possessive apostrophes are used accurately.
- The language style is formal – there are no contractions, colloquial expressions or instances of the first-person ‘I’ (except in quotations from the text).
- Vocabulary is precise and varied.

4.11 *Work with a partner to improve each other's essay*

- 1 Swap the first draft of an essay with a partner. Check each other's work using the checklist for editing and rewriting (page 69). Find at least three ways in which your partner's essay could be improved, and give feedback to your partner. Your feedback should be constructive – give suggestions for improvements rather than simply criticising the work.
- 2 Rewrite your essay according to your partner's feedback, then swap drafts again.
- 3 This time, check your partner's work against the proofreading checklist above. Make a note of any grammatical or punctuation errors, or vocabulary that could be made more varied and/or precise.

Sample response

The essay on the next two pages is a mid-range response on *Oedipus the King*. It uses the plan on page 56 and the main elements of essay structure outlined on pages 58–68, as the annotations explain.

Topic:

In *Oedipus the King*, the characters have little control over their lives. Discuss.

Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus the King* presents a city and a king facing disaster. The play opens with the priest painting a picture of Thebes 'dying' due to plague and famine. King Oedipus commits himself to 'do everything' to save the city, and the other characters also contribute to solving the mystery of Laius' murderer. However, as Tiresias' remarks make clear, there is nothing any of them can do to alter their destinies. The power of fate and the gods means that the characters in *Oedipus the King* have almost no control over their lives. **1**

Oedipus' fate is set, and he cannot change it. **2** The oracle's prophecy that Oedipus would kill his father and 'make love with [his] own mother' has come true; the children that 'no man can bear to see' are Oedipus' and Jocasta's own children. Tiresias also knows that the course of events is not able to be varied by human actions, accurately predicting that there will be 'darkness shrouding [Oedipus'] eyes' and 'soon, soon' he will 'scream aloud' and eventually 'grope his way toward a foreign soil'. **3** Throughout the play there is a sense that human destinies are fixed and that people can only learn, not change, their fates. **4** They seek out oracles and seers, such as Tiresias, and spend their lives 'searching for the truth'. Yet discovering the truth does not enable Oedipus to alter his fate; he gains knowledge, but not control. **5**

Other characters acknowledge how powerless they are compared to the gods. **6** Creon shows leadership, especially near the end, but he defers to the gods: 'it's better to ask precisely what to do'. Even though he is the successor to Oedipus' rule, he does not wish to take any step that might put him in conflict with the gods. Tiresias has the power of foresight, but no power to change things: 'what will come will come'. He, too, is governed by the gods, acknowledging that he 'serve[s] Apollo'. It is the Chorus, though, that gives the most detailed picture of the gods' superiority and power. It calls Zeus and Apollo 'the great masters of all the dark and depth of human life', and uses imagery such as 'Apollo, Archer astride the thunderheads of heaven' and 'lightning-bolts afire!' to create a sense of the gods' otherworldly power. In comparison, **7** human life is full

- 1** The introduction provides basic textual details and ends with the main contention. It refers to the characters Oedipus and Tiresias, but does not clearly signal the reasons that will support the argument.
- 2** The topic sentence identifies fate as the focus for the first body paragraph.
- 3** Short quotes are integrated into the discussion.
- 4** Explanation follows the textual evidence.
- 5** The paragraph ends with a sentence that clearly links back to the topic through the key term 'control'.
- 6** The topic sentence identifies the power of the gods as the focus for the paragraph, picking up on an element of the main contention.
- 7** The linking words 'in comparison' make it clear that the writer is contrasting the power of the gods with the power of humanity.

of 'dark and depth', located beneath the gods and in the dark rather than the light. In *Oedipus the King*, the gods control human life, while humans simply follow the pathways through life that have been assigned to them.

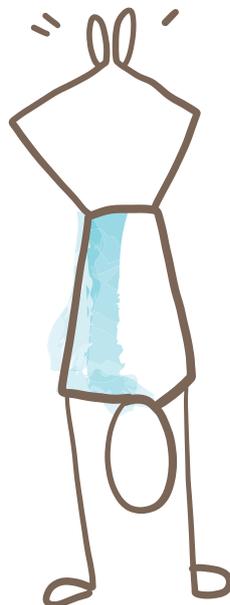
Some characters take small steps to control their lives, but these have little effect. **8** Jocasta initially tries to reassure Oedipus that he should ignore the prophecies, since they are 'neither here nor there', and then, when she realises the truth, begs him to 'call off this search'. Her pleas have no effect, however, as Oedipus is determined to discover, and then exile, Laius' murderer, thus freeing Thebes from the plague. **9** In a way, this is the play's only effective action, although the city's fate remains unknown. Creon takes charge, telling Oedipus 'here your power ends' and insisting on knowing the gods' wishes before taking further steps – attempting to avoid angering them or bringing down further curses. These three characters do take steps to try to shape the courses of their lives, even though fate is a far more powerful force.

There is little scope for the characters to make decisions or take actions that will change their lives. Their destinies have been decided long ago. The gods have knowledge and power, whereas humanity lives in 'dark and depth'. Oedipus, Jocasta and Creon try to have some control over events, but ultimately it is the gods and fate that determine how they live and how they will die. **10**

8 This topic sentence signals a slight shift in the argument, from characters having no control to their trying to have some influence. This addresses the adjective 'little' in the topic.

9 The discussion of Jocasta and (later in this paragraph) Creon shows a wider knowledge of the text, avoiding a narrow focus on Oedipus and ensuring the response addresses several characters (as stated in the topic).

10 The brief conclusion sums up the discussion and restates the main contention, using different words from the introduction.



SECTION 2

CRAFTING AND CREATING TEXTS

In Units 1 and 3, Area of Study 2 is all about creating original pieces of writing. There will be set texts – known as mentor texts – and a central idea or framework, but you will have the freedom to write in a wide range of styles and for different purposes and audiences.

In this section of *Key Skills: VCE English*, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 explain the core knowledge and skills for this area of study. They show you how you can use your mentor texts as inspiration and as examples of effective language choices and structures that you can incorporate into your own pieces. They also explain ways of exploring a framework. Chapter 8 then combines all these elements and shows you how to create a complete text.

In both Unit 1 and Unit 3 you will create two written pieces for assessment. In addition, you will write a reflective commentary on the writing process, explaining the choices you made as you developed a piece or pieces. In the exam you will write a single text for this area of study.

AUDIENCE, CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Audience
- › Context
- › Purpose

Texts are shaped by their creators to achieve a purpose, and they are aimed at a particular audience in a given context. Although it is likely that your written pieces won't refer directly to their audience, context or purpose, these three factors will influence how you use language and how you structure your pieces. The better your writing is suited to its audience, context and purpose, the more effective it will be.

This chapter looks at these three elements in detail, and presents advice about the factors you need to consider in order to shape your writing appropriately for each.



Audience

The audience is the group of people who are reading, listening to or viewing a text. Of course, no writer can know in advance who their real audience will be, but they usually have an idea of the *type* of people in their *intended* audience.

For some kinds of writing, the audience is very broad: it could be all adults living in a country, for example. A cookbook author might aim their book at everyone who can bake a cake – a very wide audience indeed. Other texts have much more specific audiences. Someone who gives a speech at a community meeting in a town hall, for example, will be directing their speech at people who live in the area.

When thinking about the audience for a text, consider qualities such as their:

- age
- gender
- place of residence
- work
- education
- socioeconomic status
- cultural background
- interests
- background knowledge of the topic or focus of the text.

Having a clear picture of your intended or ideal audience will help you to make decisions about content, structure and language in order to best meet their needs. For example, if you are writing a magazine article that aims to explain a recent social media trend among teenagers, the way you would approach the task would depend on the primary readership of the magazine. If the article was to appear in a lifestyle magazine aimed at retirees, you might assume that many of your readers would not be very familiar with certain social media platforms or with some of the popular slang used by young people. You would therefore devote more space to providing background information and context around the topic, and avoid overly casual or contemporary language choices. However, if your piece was to be published on a youth-oriented website, you could assume a high degree of social media literacy on the part of your audience, and a familiarity with contemporary language use among young people.

5.1 *Explore audiences*

1 Identify three likely characteristics of the target audiences for each of the following texts.

- a a pamphlet promoting a new council-run recycling scheme

- b a valedictory speech by a Year 12 student

- c a podcast about immigrating to Australia

- d a blog post about environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic cling wrap





- 2 Use the following dot points about the benefits of adopting a pet rather than buying one as the basis for three different original texts, each catering to the different audience specified below.
- Adopting an animal is easier than buying one, as rescue centres organise and pay for desexing, microchipping and vaccination.
 - Rescue centres are ethical and treat animals well, unlike some breeders.
 - Adoption means saving the life of an animal that might otherwise not find a home.
 - Adoption helps to tackle the problem of pet overpopulation.

a Year 9 environmental studies students

b veterinarians

c readers of a parenting website

- 3 Choose one of your mentor texts. Write a short description of its likely target audience, supporting your answer with evidence of the writer's structural and language choices.

Context

Context refers to the background of a text, as well as the circumstances under which it is written, published and read. There are two main types of context to consider.

- The **context of production** is the setting and circumstances in which a text is created. It includes the writer's personal situation, the circumstances of the text's publication and the situation in the society in which the text is produced.
- The **context of reception** is the setting and circumstances in which a text is read. It includes the reader's personal situation and the situation in the society in which they are reading the text.

In your writing for this area of the course, you will be mainly concerned with the context of reception – that is, with how your intended audience will receive your text and the factors that will affect this.

Another important aspect of context you will need to consider is the likely place of publication for your piece. For example, if you are writing an opinion piece about an environmental issue, your approach and language choices will differ depending on whether it will be published on a personal blog with a small readership interested in protecting the natural environment, or in a national newspaper with a much broader and more diverse readership.

Context is also closely linked to audience. The place your text might be published determines the likely audience, whose knowledge, preferences and characteristics your piece will need to be shaped by.

Consider, too, relevant events or circumstances in the community or society in which your text will be read. For example, if you are publishing an opinion piece about a climate change rally in a school magazine, you might take into account the school's general commitment to environmental protection and its support of students attending a similar rally in previous years. Given this context, it is likely that your piece would need to devote less space to explaining fundamental principles of sustainability, and could include more emotive or impassioned language.

5.2 *Consider contexts*

- 1 For each of the following contexts of production, suggest an appropriate text type and place of publication.
 - a You are attending a conference dedicated to ending world hunger and want to present your ideas on the topic.

Text type: _____

Place of publication: _____





- b Having experienced lockdowns as a result of the Covid pandemic, you want to share how these lockdowns affected your life and, in particular, your education.

Text type: _____

Place of publication: _____

- c You have been asked to imagine a future world in which absolute equality has been achieved in a piece to be published in an anthology of young people's writing.

Text type: _____

Place of publication: _____

- 2 For each of the scenarios in question 1, note down two assumptions you might make regarding readers' knowledge about and attitudes towards the topic.

a _____

b _____

c _____

- 3 Choose one of your mentor texts. Identify one way in which the writer has taken into account the context in which the text will be read or viewed. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Purpose

Your purpose is your reason for writing – that is, what you want your reader to feel, think or do after reading your work. The English/EAL Study Design identifies the following four purposes:

- to express
- to explain
- to reflect
- to argue.

While you might write with one of these as your primary purpose, many successful pieces of writing have more than one purpose. For example, you might write a reflective essay about a lesson you learned from travelling to an unfamiliar place that also aims to explain key aspects of that community or culture. Or you might write to express in the form of a short story that also aims to persuade the reader to support a cause. Hybrid texts aim to achieve multiple purposes and might also include elements of different text types.

In Section B of the end-of-Year-12 exam, your ability to create a text that ‘connects to a clear purpose(s)’ is one of the criteria against which you will be assessed, so it is important to hone your skills in writing for a purpose.

In this section we will look in detail at the four purposes identified in the Study Design, considering the common text types associated with them as well as the structural and language features you might employ to achieve each purpose.

To express

Writing to express involves evoking emotional responses in an audience, as well as communicating ideas, usually through a narrative and its associated features such as plot, characters and themes. Writing to express gives you the opportunity to exercise your imagination by creating complex worlds, memorable characters and original storylines. Writing to express:

- is imaginative
- usually includes dialogue
- develops themes or recurring ideas
- uses figurative language, such as similes and metaphors
- may include symbols and imagery
- may use a variety of tones, depending on the writer’s style and the mood they are aiming to create
- is usually structured around a sequential plot (even if events are related out of order).

Writing to express is generally associated with imaginative text types such as short stories and play or film scripts.

To explain

Writing to explain means imparting information and ideas to your audience in a way that is clear and that takes into account their pre-existing knowledge of or feelings about a topic. The focus of writing to explain might be a person, place, thing, event, experience, process or idea. You might even explain something that isn’t real, combining writing to explain with writing to express.

Writing to explain:

- is factual
- is informative
- is logical
- may sometimes be lyrical or personal in tone, depending on the topic
- may include statistics and evidence
- may be structured around causes and effects, step-by-step processes, or causes and consequences.

Text types often used to explain include essays; newspaper, magazine and journal articles; blog posts; speeches; biographies; and podcasts.

To reflect

Writing to reflect is generally thoughtful and considered. The aim is to explore an idea or a situation, examining it from multiple angles, considering different perspectives and focusing on your own personal responses to it. You might reflect on a significant life lesson you have learned, an important world event, an issue or an idea. Reflective writing examines how your thinking has been shaped or changed by the event or situation you are exploring. Writing to reflect:

- is thoughtful
- often uses the first-person 'I'
- focuses on new understandings of the topic
- draws connections between events and ideas
- uses language associated with personal thoughts and feelings
- may have a considered, measured tone.

Text types often used to reflect include essays, memoirs, letters and diary entries.

To argue

Writing to argue aims to position an audience to accept your point of view on an important idea or issue. This means presenting reasons and evidence to support your view, and using language carefully chosen for its persuasive impact. Writing to argue:

- presents a clear contention, supported by strong reasons
- uses reason and logic
- includes facts and evidence
- focuses on solutions
- uses the language of argument, such as 'so', 'because', 'therefore' and 'if ... then'.

Text types often used to argue include essays, speeches, opinion pieces, blog posts, petitions and letters.

5.3 Understand purposes

1 Identify the likely purpose (to express, to explain, to reflect or to argue) of the following text extracts.

a As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.

Purpose: _____

b Far from empowering them or instilling confidence, the modern fad for overpraising children is destroying their resilience.

Purpose: _____

c As a child I believed that adulthood, when it finally arrived, would hit me like a train, that the transformation would happen overnight. It took me finally reaching it to realise that the most profound changes don't happen like that – suddenly – but are shaped over time, like cliffs carved by the sea.

Purpose: _____

2 For each purpose in the left-hand column of the table, suggest a text type (e.g. memoir, short story) and an intended audience (e.g. your classmates, Australian politicians) you would target to achieve your purpose.

Purpose	Text type	Intended audience
To express		
To explain		
To reflect		
To argue		

3 For each of the following scenarios, identify a decision you would make about structure or language in order to engage the specified audience and achieve the given purpose.

a A novelist writing for a general audience wants to express the ways in which geographical isolation can force a person to discover their strengths.

b A teacher wants to argue in a blog post that there is too much inequity in the Australian school system. The blog is read by teachers.

EXPLORING FRAMEWORKS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Unpacking a framework
- › Frameworks and mentor texts
- › Frameworks and your own writing

In both Unit 1 and Unit 3, you will study a framework or key idea. The texts you read will be connected to this idea, and you will explore aspects of it in your own writing.

In Unit 1, the idea you will focus on will be decided by your teacher or school. In Unit 3, you will study one of the key ideas in the Framework of Ideas prescribed by the VCAA.

It is not permitted to study any of the frameworks prescribed for Unit 3 in Unit 1, so over the course of your two years of VCE English, you will have the opportunity to explore two different ideas in your writing.

This chapter looks at how to unpack a framework, how to learn from the ways in which other writers explore this idea, and how you might derive inspiration from the idea for your own writing.



Unpacking a framework

A framework or key idea is a broad theme or concept intended to stimulate your thinking and inspire your writing. In Unit 3, you will study one of the following four key ideas in the Framework of Ideas:

- Writing about play
- Writing about personal journeys
- Writing about protest
- Writing about country.

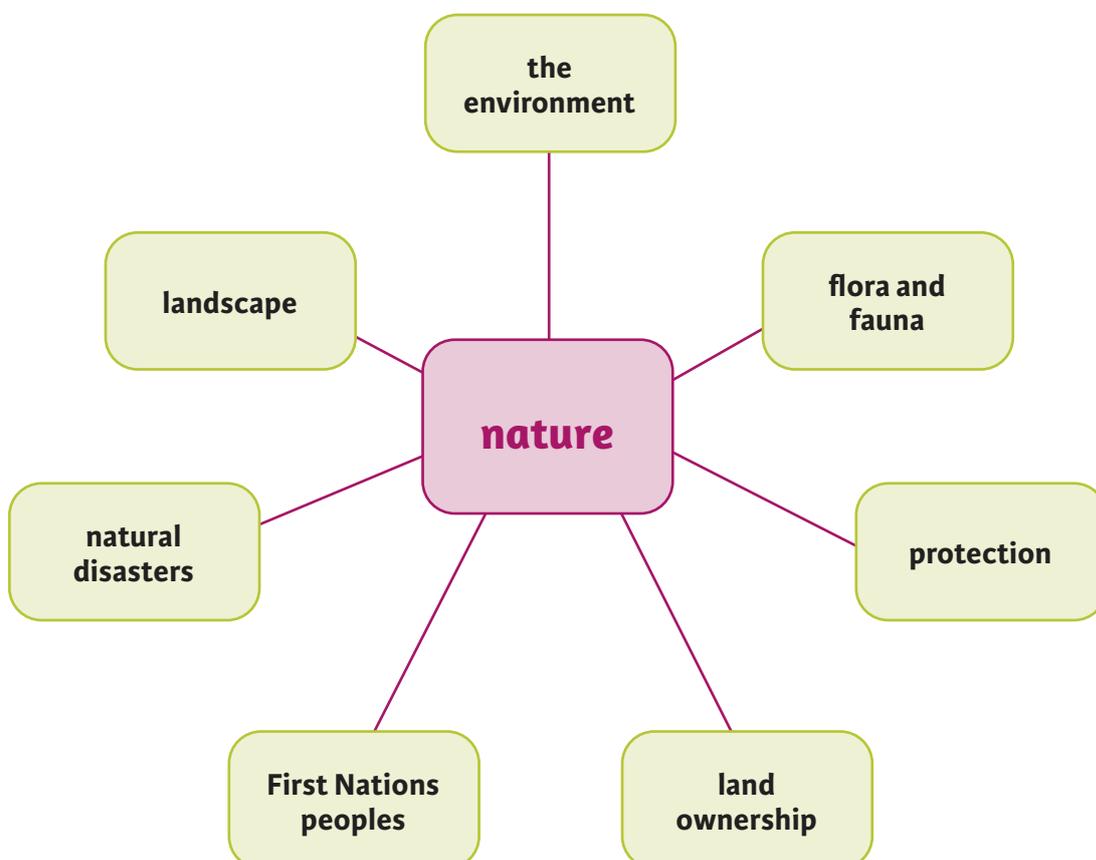
In Unit 1, the framework you explore will be decided by the English teachers at your school. Examples of popular frameworks include:

- Writing about travel
- Writing about futures
- Writing about food
- Writing about family.

Frameworks are intended to be springboards for your own ideas. They are deliberately open to interpretation and encourage you to consider multiple meanings. Unpacking a framework involves thinking about it from a range of perspectives, exploring the thoughts of others, and interrogating your own thinking about the idea and related concepts. Your understanding of the framework should be deepened and extended as a result of your investigations.

Strategies for exploring a framework

A **mind map** is a great way to begin to open up the key idea. Start by writing the key idea in the centre of the page. Next, brainstorm possible meanings or interpretations of the word(s), as well as associated concepts. Write these around the central idea. Your mind map might look something like the one below, which is based on the framework 'Writing about nature'.



Another preliminary strategy for exploring a key idea is to **search for synonyms** for the word or words in the idea. Consult a dictionary to find as many possible definitions for the word(s) as possible, then use a thesaurus to help you find synonyms or connected words for each. This will help you to identify multiple avenues for further consideration.

You can use the words you find in your searches to **develop a glossary of key words** associated with the idea. Using these in your writing will help you to demonstrate your focus on the idea.

Next, try finding connections between these further words or phrases that enable you to organise them into **categories of linked concepts**.

You could also **make a list of questions** that come to mind when you consider the key idea. What lines of inquiry does it suggest?

Delving deeper

Once you have brainstormed ideas and terms connected to the framework, you can begin formulating some statements about it. These could provide useful messages or themes that you explore in your own original texts. Ways to do this include the following.

- **Consider different perspectives.** What would your favourite celebrity/mother/best friend/teacher/notable person in history have to say about the framework or a connected concept?
- **Find quotations.** Search the internet to find quotations relevant to the framework. These quotations can be useful starting points for discussion and/or used as writing prompts.
- **Consider other texts** (besides your mentor texts) that explore the key idea. While your mentor texts will be written (or if they are audiovisual they will usually be based on a script), you could also draw ideas and inspiration from films, music and other multimedia sources. Try distilling the main messages of these texts into statements about the framework.
- **Hold a debate.** A whole-class or small-group debate is a useful strategy for clarifying your thinking about and presenting a point of view on the framework. Develop a proposition connected to the key idea – for example, ‘As individuals, we have little control over what our future world will look like.’ Then divide into teams and present an argument either to support or to contradict the statement.

It is a good idea to keep a folder (either physical or digital) of your explorations of the framework. This will be a valuable resource when it comes to finding inspiration for your own writing.

6.1 *Gather ideas*

- 1 Complete the table below to capture some initial thoughts on the framework you are studying.

Four synonyms for the key word(s)	
Three quotations related to the framework	
Two questions about the framework	
One text (that is not a mentor text) connected to the framework	

- 2 As a class or in a small group, sit in a circle. Take it in turns to ask a question about the framework. The person on the left of the questioner must try to answer their question. The questions should be open-ended, to allow for a range of responses.
- 3 Look at the way different artists have explored aspects of the framework. Make a collection of images that spark your imagination.
- 4 Do an internet search to find news articles connected to the framework.
 - a Choose three or four interesting articles and record their details in a table like the one below.

Article and author	Summary	Connection to the framework

- b Choose one of these articles and write a short follow-up article. What happened after the events recorded in the original text?

Frameworks and mentor texts

In Year 12, the mentor texts you will study are set by the VCAA. You will study at least three of the four texts set for each key idea in the Framework of Ideas. In Year 11, your teacher will select a range of mentor texts for you to study. In both Year 11 and Year 12 you will also be encouraged to read and learn from other texts of your own choosing related to the idea.

Chapter 7 looks in detail at how to work with your mentor texts. This section provides you with some preliminary ideas about how to identify ways in which your mentor texts engage with your framework. You could start with the following strategies.

- **Create summary statements about the key idea in each mentor text.** Make notes on the writer's thinking about the idea, and on your own thoughts in response to their exploration of this idea. For example, for the framework 'Writing about food', the writer of a mentor text might suggest that sharing food is a valuable way of bringing people together, and your thoughts on this might be influenced by your own experiences with family and friends.
- As a class or in small groups, **discuss how a character's or writer's decisions reveal aspects of a key idea.** For example, if your framework is 'Writing about challenges', you might notice in a mentor text that individuals are strengthened by adversity.
- **Consider how a text's events and turning points illuminate an aspect of the key idea.** For example, a mentor text for 'Writing about play' might demonstrate that violating the rules of a game can have destructive consequences.
- **Compare and contrast the exploration of the idea in different mentor texts.** You might draw up a table like the one below to summarise your findings.

Framework: Writing about protest				
Idea	My reflections on the idea	Mentor text 1: 'Freedom or death'	Mentor text 2: 'Harrison Bergeron'	Mentor text 3: Monologue from <i>City of Gold</i>
Protest always comes at a cost to the protester.	Protest means challenging a person or group, so it's likely to be scary and even cause personal harm to the protestor sometimes. But if you feel strongly about something, the rewards of staying true to your beliefs probably outweigh the costs.	As Pankhurst details, responses to protest can be brutal, both physically and emotionally.	It takes some arrogance and selfishness for Harrison to be able to protest against the totalitarian society he lives in.	Protesting means acknowledging one's own anger, which can be painful.

Frameworks and your own writing

Your deep thinking about the framework will provide you with material and inspiration for your own writing. The following are some of the ways you might engage with the framework and draw inspiration from the mentor texts.

Identify connections between the framework and your own experiences

- Write a personal essay reflecting on the significance and impact of the key idea, or a particular aspect of it, in your life.

Tell someone else's story

- Think of a person whose life connects in some way to the framework. This might be a well-known person, a historical figure, a friend or a family member. Write a short biography of this person, or a memoir showing their perspective, exploring the insights their experiences give into the key idea.

Write to explain a real-world situation

- Identify a situation in Australia or overseas in which different understandings of the key idea led to conflict. It could be in the present or in the past.

Write a short story to express an idea about a similar theme to one explored in a mentor text

- For example, you could write about ways in which people are shaped by the place or places in which they grow up, which is a theme of the mentor text 'bidngen', as part of your exploration of 'Writing about personal journeys'.

Draw on the experiences of characters or individuals in a mentor text to reflect on an idea connected to the framework

- For example, the characters' experiences might suggest that we have the ability to create our own 'families', even with people not related to us by blood.

Write to argue your own point of view

- Select an issue connected to your framework and develop an argument in favour of one side of the issue.

6.3 *Work with key ideas and mentor texts*

- 1 Make notes in the table below to identify possible sources of inspiration for your writing from your study of the framework and mentor texts.

What is the most interesting new idea you have encountered in your study of the framework?	
Identify a person (classmate, teacher, writer or someone else) who changed your thinking about an aspect of the key idea.	
What has surprised you most in your study of the key idea?	
Which mentor text did you most enjoy reading? Why?	
Which character, writer or persona from your mentor texts did you most relate to?	
If you could ask one of the writers of your mentor texts one question, who would you ask and what would the question be?	
Identify an aspect of the framework or of one of your mentor texts that you don't quite understand or would like to know more about.	

- 2 In the table above, highlight one response that might be a possible source of inspiration for a written piece.
- 3 Make notes in the table below to capture two possible ways in which you could develop a written piece based on the aspect of a key idea or mentor text that you highlighted in question 2.

	Possible text 1	Possible text 2
Main idea to be explored		
Text type		
Language features (e.g. tone, style, imagery)		

USING MENTOR TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › About mentor texts
- › Engaging structures
- › Sentences with impact
- › Compelling voices
- › Effective vocabulary
- › Figurative language and imagery

In this chapter, we will look more closely at how to work with mentor texts to improve and refine your own writing. We will explore ways of using and adapting the structural and language features of mentor texts to achieve your own purposes and engage your own target audiences.

The examples in this chapter are taken from the mentor texts associated with the four frameworks set for Unit 3, as well as from mentor texts associated with some popular frameworks studied in Unit 1. Remember that in Unit 1, both the framework and the mentor texts you will study will be decided by your school, and cannot be one of the frameworks or any of the mentor texts prescribed for Unit 3.



About mentor texts

Your mentor texts will present a perspective on the framework or key idea you are studying. But their main purpose is to provide you with examples of effective writing in various forms. Mentor texts are short texts, such as stories, essays, articles, opinion pieces, speeches, and chapters or excerpts from longer works.

In Unit 3, the mentor texts are prescribed in the VCE English/EAL Text List. There are four mentor texts associated with each key idea in the Framework of Ideas, and you will study at least three of the four texts connected to your key idea. You might also study some supplementary texts, which could be selected by your teacher or of your own choosing, in consultation with your teacher.

In Unit 1, you will also study a range of mentor texts connected with the key idea you are exploring. Again, you might also read other texts recommended as supplementary texts by your teacher, or chosen by you or the class together with your teacher.

Engaging structures

One of the first decisions you will make about your own original texts is the form they will take. Most text types are associated with particular structural features but, within those parameters, you have room to make your own decisions about how to organise your content. Your mentor texts will provide you with models of how to use and experiment with the structural features, how to effectively build and relieve tension, and how to release information in an order and manner that best achieves your purpose.

Some possible structural choices you could make, and their likely effects on the reader, are outlined below.

Imaginative texts

In imaginative or fictional texts, you have a lot of freedom to experiment with structure and to engage the reader by carefully controlling plot development and narrative tension. Structural choices you could make in imaginative texts include the following.

Start a story in medias res

- ‘In medias res’ is a Latin term meaning ‘in the middle of things’. Rather than opening with scene-setting, background detail or information about your protagonist, begin with a dramatic or pivotal plot event, such as the protagonist running from a pursuer or about to step on stage to perform.
- Opening in this way allows you to immediately capture the reader’s attention, immerse them in the world you have created and position them to care about what is at stake for your characters. You can then fill in details about the setting and situation as your story progresses.
- An example of this approach can be found in Edgar Allan Poe’s famous story ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’, which opens with the narrator dramatically declaring his sanity to an unnamed person.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the story.



Use a circular structure

- Returning at the end to the place that your piece began (e.g. with a character starting and ending a long journey at home) can give your text a satisfying and cohesive shape. It allows you to raise intriguing questions in your opening that will keep your audience reading, then resolve them by the close of the piece.
- Penni Russon's short story 'All That We Know of Dreaming' begins and ends with the narrator asleep in bed, reflecting the narrative's focus on dreams and associative thinking.

Include a plot twist

- Depending on the type of piece you are writing, you could surprise and intrigue the reader with an unexpected plot development. To do this effectively, your plot twist would need to violate the reader's expectations and yet be plausible given the characters and situation you have created.
- Ursula Le Guin's short story 'The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas' describes the Festival of Summer in the idyllic town of Omelas, whose inhabitants are all happy, healthy, intelligent and successful. But a plot twist reveals that they pay a terrible price for this blessed existence.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the story.



Hold back information

- Taking the time to carefully plan your text will help you to release information in a considered way, for maximum impact. Always remember the writing rule 'show, don't tell' – don't spell out everything to the reader but allow them to learn it through, for example, characters' action and dialogue.
- Also leave room for your reader to make inferences or draw their own conclusions about events and characters. Don't tell them how to interpret a character's behaviour; simply depict the behaviour and allow the reader to develop their own interpretation.
- A good example is George Saunders' short story 'Home', in which the narrator carries a dark secret. The narrative gradually reveals a few details of this secret. However, the full story is never revealed, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions about what happened.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the story.



Choose an unreliable narrator

- An unreliable narrator is one who doesn't give an accurate account of events or other characters. This can be because they are deliberately lying, or because they are in some way limited or impaired (such as a child narrator who doesn't quite understand adults' motives), or because they don't possess full knowledge of a situation.
- Using an unreliable narrator can help you to control the release of information and to surprise or intrigue the reader, who is not provided with a complete picture of events but must infer it or piece it together.
- Kathy H, the narrator of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*, is an unreliable narrator because she has been deliberately kept in the dark about the sinister purpose of her life, and the lives of her fellow students at Hailsham, by her teacher-guardians.

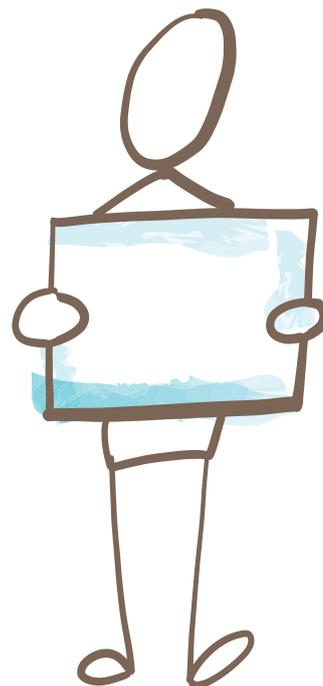
Present events non-chronologically

- The judicious use of flashbacks and/or flashforwards can allow you to control the flow of information, and keep the reader wanting to read more by cutting away from the main action at key points in the narrative.
- In Walter's monologue from *The Inheritance* by Matthew López, Walter in the present recalls how he first met his long-term partner Henry and the breakdown of their relationship.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to view a reading of this monologue.



Nonfiction texts

In a nonfiction text your aim is to present an accurate depiction of reality. But there is still a great deal of scope to make a variety of structural choices in order to shape your audience's responses to the ideas or opinions you are presenting. You might try one or more of the following.



Use a circular structure

- As in an imaginative text, a circular structure can help to give your nonfiction piece cohesion and a sense of resolution. For example, in an opinion piece you might begin by stating a contention, present your reasons for it, then reiterate it in your conclusion.
- Laniyuk's memoir 'Queer Family and Belonging: Saltwater' begins and ends with the writer on the beach, taking comfort in the beauty of shells.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the memoir.



Begin with an anecdote

- If you are writing about an issue or idea, an effective way to get readers interested and on side is to begin with an anecdote that personalises the topic and shows them why it affects their own lives.
- For example, Ranjana Srivastava opens her reflective essay 'What's the best gift I can give my daughter at 16? The same gift my mother gave me' with the story of a teenage carer dealing with her mother's medical emergency. This moving scenario sets the tone for an exploration of relationships between mothers and daughters.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the essay.



Start at the end

- For instance, you could open a memoir with a lesson you learned from a particular experience, before moving on to describe the experience. This strategy allows you to begin with the most important element of your text and show the reader why they should continue to read it.
- The title and opening paragraph of Amy Duong's memoir 'The Red Plastic Chair is a Vietnamese Cultural Institution, and My Anchor' declare the social and emotional weight of these chairs, a significance the writer only truly learned to appreciate after her aunt's death and funeral.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the memoir.



Use subheadings

- In a nonfiction text, particularly if your primary purpose is to explain, subheadings can be a helpful way of organising information so that it is easy for the reader to understand and remember.
- Mark Gillespie uses this strategy to help the reader navigate and easily grasp the main points in his essay 'On the Sydney Mardi Gras March of 1978'.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the essay.



Use a problem-and-solution structure

- This structure works particularly well in texts that aim to argue, allowing you to identify an issue then offer the reader your thoughts on possible solutions.
- Tim Winton's 'About the Boys' speech takes this approach, establishing a problem with modern masculinity then exploring possible ways to address this.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the speech transcript.



Use a compare-and-contrast structure

- This structure can work well in a text aiming to explain, as you examine the similarities and differences between two things in order to illuminate aspects of one or both. It can also be effective in a text to argue, in which you explore possible solutions to an issue.
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie does this in her speech 'The Danger of a Single Story', when she compares situations in which she reduced people, such as her domestic help Fide, to 'a single story', with her own experiences of being misunderstood in the same way.
- Scan the code or click [here](#) to view Adichie's speech.



7.1 *Consider structure in mentor texts*

- 1 In a computer file or on a piece of paper, create a map of narrative tension in one of the mentor texts you are studying. You can use the diagram on page 14 as a model.
- 2 Choose a fictional mentor text you are studying. Identify two structural decisions the writer has made, and make notes about their intended effects.

Structural choice	Effect

- 3 Choose a nonfiction mentor text you are studying. Identify two structural decisions the writer has made, and make notes about their intended effects.

Structural choice	Effect

Sentences with impact

One of the most important aspects of good writing is variation in sentence structures. Using too many short sentences in a row can make your writing sound choppy and limits your ability to explore or express complex ideas. On the other hand, too many long sentences close together can make your writing difficult to follow and even tedious. Achieving a balance between shorter and longer sentences will create a rhythm that is satisfying to the reader and enables your ideas to be communicated effectively. If you examine your mentor texts, you will notice that the writers vary the lengths of their sentences in purposeful ways, to create particular effects.

Consider, for example, this extract from Shivaun Plozza's 'Route 19', part of the *Tramlines* podcast series. (Scan the code or click [here](#) to read a longer extract from this episode.)



'I know,' says her sister. 'You didn't have to come.'

But she did. She wears her sister's dress and inside her textbooks is her sister's name crossed out with her own name scrawled underneath. She is always a step behind, always chasing, always coming second.

Notice how the first two sentences are fairly short, at five words each. They are followed by a very short three-word sentence, then a longer sentence. The concluding sentence contains several phrases, separated by commas. If you read this section aloud, you can hear the rhythm that this variation creates, and you will notice how this variation also helps to shift the reader's perspective from observing the sisters' dialogue to accessing the inner thoughts of the protagonist.

At an individual sentence level, you can also experiment with structure and length. In the short story 'Gooseberries' by Anton Chekhov (a mentor text for Writing about country), the following long sentence is used to establish the setting. Its length reflects the vastness of the landscape in which two men are walking, while the many commas separate the different components of the environment, helping to paint a vivid and complete picture.

Far ahead of them they could just see the windmills of the village of Mironositskoe; on the right stretched a row of hillocks which disappeared in the distance behind the village, and they both knew that this was the bank of the river, that there were meadows, green willows, homesteads there, and that if one stood on one of the hillocks one could see from it the same vast plain, telegraph-wires, and a train which in the distance looked like a crawling caterpillar, and that in clear weather one could even see the town.

By contrast, the extract below, from Meyne Wyatt's performance of the monologue in his play *City of Gold* (a mentor text for Writing about protest), uses a series of short, sharp sentences to generate a firm, commanding tone and a rhythm reminiscent of poetry or rap music. This reflects the speaker's impassioned and angry attitude towards the topic he is addressing: racism.

Be crazy. Take a risk. Be different. Offend your family. Call them out. Silence is violence. Complacency is complicity.

In addition to sentence length, there are many other ways you can experiment with sentence structures and placements to achieve particular effects. The table on the following page gives some strategies you could try, with examples from mentor texts.

Strategy	Effects	Example
Setting a sentence as a standalone paragraph	Can strengthen its impact, which might be helpful in an argumentative text when you want to make a strong point. In an imaginative text it could be used to present a dramatic revelation or plot twist.	'The distress call came at 6:39 am.' (<i>'Storming the Thunder'</i> by Ian Urbina)
Stream-of-consciousness sentences	Can give the reader close access to the thought processes and feelings of a character, narrator or persona.	'But sometimes I just want to be seen for my talent, not my skin colour. Not my race. I hate being a token, a box to tick, part of some diversity angle.' (Monologue from <i>City of Gold</i> by Meyne Wyatt)
Placing the most important element at the start of a sentence	Draws the reader's attention to that element immediately; communicates its importance.	'My mother, Marian, showed me how to think for myself and to use my voice.' (<i>Belonging</i> by Michelle Obama)
Placing the most important element at the end of a sentence	Can build tension and increase dramatic impact.	'Such were the brutal beginnings of Noongar Country.' (<i>'Split'</i> by Cassie Lynch)
Sentence fragments	Can be used to communicate a character or narrator's thoughts or feelings as though in real time, develop a rhythmic or lyrical quality in the writing, or create a dramatic effect.	'Thank You. Happy New Year. Roast Pork. Sugar Cane Juice. These are some of the words I still know. Oh my God. Studying Business. Not yet married.' (<i>'The Red Plastic Chair is a Vietnamese Cultural Institution, and My Anchor'</i> by Amy Duong)
Repetition	Can develop a rhythm, emphasise an important idea or point, or communicate an emotion.	'Let's get very rich and own a log cabin. Let's own several and give them away to friends. And also let's never get rich.' (Monologue from <i>Cyrano</i> by Virginia Gay)
Dialogue	Can develop the plot, provide background information, contribute to characterisation, create verisimilitude (resemblance to reality) or provide evidence.	"Why does she talk like that?" "She's from Australia," I say.' (<i>'Lake Malibu'</i> by Su-May Tan)

7.2 *Experiment with sentences*

1 Experiment with sentence structures by writing and rewriting a short paragraph about the events of your day.

a In your first draft, make every sentence between five and seven words in length.

b Read the paragraph aloud. Write a sentence describing how the text sounds when spoken.

c Rewrite the paragraph so that it is no more than two sentences long. You can do this by joining sentences with conjunctions (such as 'and' and 'but'), or by using punctuation such as commas and semicolons.

d Read the paragraph aloud. Write a sentence describing how the text sounds when spoken.

e Now rewrite the paragraph one more time, this time making each sentence a different length.

f Read the paragraph aloud. Write a sentence describing how the text sounds when spoken.





g Which version of the paragraph do you prefer, and why?

2 Choose a striking sentence from one of your mentor texts. Write it on a piece of paper.

- a Annotate the sentence to identify its length (e.g. short, medium or long) and any internal punctuation (such as commas).
 - b Colour code the parts of speech in the sentence. For example, highlight nouns in green, verbs in yellow, adjectives in pink, and so on.
 - c Describe the impact of the sentence you have chosen, and explain how this impact has been created by the sentence's length and structure.
-
-

Compelling voices

Another vital aspect of effective writing, and one of the criteria against which your work will be assessed, is the creation of an original and authentic voice. Just like your speaking voice, your writing voice should be unmistakably your own. Nevertheless, you can learn from the examples of strong voices in your mentor texts. Consider, for example, the following extract from Chelsea Roffey's 'An Open Letter to Doubting Thomas', a mentor text for Writing about play.

Some airheads, like the respected neuroscientist and writer Cordelia Fine, suggest that gender stereotypes are not biologically hardwired at all, but the result of priming based on social expectations. However, like you, I find detailed 'empirical evidence' hard to swallow, especially when it is so clumsily wrapped up in the guise of 'neuroendocrinological investigation'. In more sensible times, assertions like this would have got you burnt at the stake.

Roffey develops a voice that is sarcastic, humorous and intelligent. Some of the ways she does this include:

- making ironic statements (statements whose intended meaning is the opposite of their literal meaning, such as 'I find detailed "empirical evidence" hard to swallow')
- using inverted commas to convey derision or scepticism about the terms they enclose
- using sophisticated and specialised vocabulary that suggests she is well-read, such as 'neuroendocrinological'
- using some longer sentences with multiple clauses, such as the first sentence above, that display her command of language
- directly addressing her imagined reader, using phrases such as 'like you', revealing that she is targeting an audience of people who, over the years, have expressed doubt about her umpiring abilities due to her gender.

Now consider a very different voice. The following extract is from Jessica Au's novel *Cold Enough for Snow*, in which the narrator describes a trip to Japan with her mother.

Earlier in the year, I had asked her to come with me on a trip to Japan. We did not live in the same city anymore, and had never really been away together as adults, but I was beginning to feel that it was important, for reasons I could not yet name.

Au uses formal language ('did not' rather than 'didn't', for example), grammatically correct sentences and simple vocabulary choices to generate a considered and elegant voice, suggestive of an honest narrator more concerned with precision than with lyricism.

To create your own distinctive writing voice, think about how you sound when you speak. How would others describe your speaking style? Do you have any idiosyncrasies or quirks in terms of the way you use language? How might these translate to the written word? It is also very helpful to read your work aloud, to hear if it sounds the way you want it to.

7.3 Explore voice

- 1 Read the opening paragraph of Yumna Kassab's 'The Conquest of Land and Dream', a mentor text for Writing about country, below. Then answer the questions that follow.

To speak of dispossession is to trace a burial site that is bodies deep. This is a ghost and it knows not how to sleep. You pound the earth to smooth it flat and hope that none will stare too hard where you have hidden these secrets in an ancient land to keep. This string is tangled and unless you unravel it you will turn this way and that and no matter, there it will trap your feet.

- a Make brief notes about each of the following elements of the paragraph.

Sentence length	
Sentence structure	
Vocabulary	
Tone	
Metaphors	





b Drawing on your notes in the table, write a paragraph describing Kassab's voice and the elements that help to create it.

2 Transcribe a short conversation between two people. This might be a dialogue between family members, an interview on the radio or a conversation you overhear on public transport. Aim to capture between 100 and 200 words of dialogue. Then circle or highlight the words or phrases in each person's speech that you think contribute significantly to their distinctive voice.

3 Choose a mentor text that you think presents a compelling and original voice.

a Try to isolate specific aspects of the language that help to create that voice. Think about aspects such as word choices, sentence length and figurative language. Aim to identify three or four elements and give an example or two of each element.

b Write a short paragraph analysing how the writer has used these elements to create a particular voice.

c Using these same elements, write a paragraph of your own that has a similar voice.

Effective vocabulary

Your vocabulary choices can contribute to the creation of a distinctive voice, paint a vivid picture, generate a particular mood and evoke a specific feeling. For any given word in the English language there will be other words with the same or similar meanings; an effective writer knows how to select precisely the right words to achieve a desired effect on their intended audience. In addition to the literal meanings of words, their connotations or associations contribute to the meaning and tone of a writer's language, and in particular to the emotive impact of their text.

Consider the vocabulary choices in the following extract from Maya Hodge's memoir 'bidngen', a mentor text for Writing about personal journeys.

A little Lardil girl and her brother grow up along the winding river on Latje Latje Country and underneath the canopies of dust-coated eucalyptus. They grow up faster than most kids do in a town festering in generational racism and drugs. But on good days, they fish on the soft green slow-moving river, underneath the cool shade of the old gums they sit with aunties and uncles and breathe in the hot dirt smell.

One of the first elements you might notice is the use of a language other than English, for example in the terms 'Latje Latje Country' (also known as Mildura) and 'Lardil'. The use of these words reflects the fact that the writer is a First Nations person and helps to convey a sense of intimacy and honesty, as she is using language that comes naturally to her, even if not every reader will understand it. The paragraph also contains a number of adjectives that help to paint a vivid picture of the narrator's childhood: the eucalypts are 'dust-coated' and 'old'; the river 'winding', 'soft green' and 'slow-moving'; the siblings breathe in a 'hot dirt smell'. This level of detail suggests a deep knowledge of and close connection to nature and the outdoors, and an affection for these features of the narrator's childhood. But the loaded term 'festering', with its connotations of rot and physical injury, indicates the narrator's complex and conflicted feelings about her home town.

7.4 *Experiment with vocabulary*

- 1 Read the extract from Sally Breen's essay 'Love hurts – on a life of sports fandom', then complete the activities that follow. (Scan the code or click [here](#) to read the complete essay.)



This is the 1980s and the passion that flares in the smoke-filled lounge rooms of suburban houses and public bars is addictive. The ribbing and the rivalries funny, even if they do sometimes edge toward the dark side. The passion is the same whether the action is broadcast from big ticket fields or live on scratchy little league ovals. In fact, the passion is actually worse when it's occurring on the two-lane driveway in my front yard – my dad presiding over cricket matches with improvised rules. Six and out, wheelie bin for wickets and when the ball cannot be retrieved even by the dog – definitely out.



a Brainstorm all the associations and connotations you can think of for the word 'addictive'.

b What do these associations convey about Breen's attitude towards sport?

c Breen uses the word 'passion' three times. What is the likely effect of this on the reader?

d Some synonyms for 'passion' include 'love', 'enthusiasm', 'fondness', 'affection' and 'interest'. Which one of these would be the best substitute for 'passion' in this extract? Why?

e What does the word 'presiding' convey about Breen's father?

f Select one other word in the extract and write a sentence about its likely impact on the reader, and why you think it would have this effect.

2 Work with a partner to select a passage from one of your mentor texts (about 100–150 words), then complete the following activities.

a Individually, highlight three words in the passage that you find especially striking or effective.

b Swap highlighted passages with your partner. Did you choose the same words? Discuss the reasons for your choices.

3 Work with a partner to improve vocabulary choices.

a Write a paragraph about an activity you are interested in.



b Swap paragraphs with your partner. Select four or five words or short phrases in your partner's text that you think could be changed to more precise or interesting terms. Write your suggestions below.

c Discuss each other's suggestions. Do you agree with your partner's proposed changes? Explain why or why not, focusing on your intended impact on the target audience.

Figurative language and imagery

Figurative language refers to words, phrases and extended metaphors that compare one thing to another. Figurative language is a vital tool for a writer, as it enable images to be created in words and complex ideas to be conveyed in meaningful, accessible ways. Consider, for example, the following simile from the play *The 7 Stages of Grieving* by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman.

I'm walking across the bridge and if you look from a distance it's like a colourful snake, like a rainbow serpent.

The speaker likens the line of marchers in a reconciliation parade to a rainbow serpent, a powerful symbol in First Nations cultures, conveying both the size of the turnout and the significance of the 'Sorry' march to many First Nations peoples.

Now look at this extended metaphor from Emmeline Pankhurst's speech 'Freedom or Death', a mentor text for Writing about protest.

You have two babies very hungry and wanting to be fed. One baby is a patient baby, and waits indefinitely until its mother is ready to feed it. The other baby is an impatient baby and cries lustily, screams and kicks and makes everybody unpleasant until it is fed. Well, we know perfectly well which baby is attended to first. That is the whole history of politics. You have to make more noise than anybody else ...

In this metaphor, Pankhurst likens women arguing forcefully for equal rights to a screaming baby. Writing in 1913, her aim was to impress upon her mostly male audience how urgent and vital it was for women to fight for the right to vote, as essential as a baby's need to be fed. She wants her audience to view the outspoken suffragettes not as irritating or presumptuous, but as speaking up in order to get a fundamental need met.

Using figurative language in imaginative texts means thinking about the connections between things and, often, surprising your reader with an unexpected but apt comparison. In nonfiction texts, you should consider something your audience is likely to be familiar or comfortable with, and use this as the basis of a comparison that will help them to understand or accept the less familiar notion you want to convey.

Symbols and motifs are also important aspects of figurative language. A symbol is any object that is used to represent something else, such as a rose being used to signify love. A motif is a recurring image or idea in a text, and is used to reinforce the text's themes. Using these purposefully in your text can help to emphasise and enrich the ideas you are presenting.

7.5 *Work with figurative language*

1 Create an original simile or metaphor for each of the following.

a hope _____

b the pain of a stubbed toe _____

c a cat stalking a bird _____

2 Brainstorm associations and connotations for each of the following symbols and motifs.

a a bird _____

b the colour yellow _____

c a child's doll _____

3 Write a paragraph in which you create an extended metaphor for an important idea, as Pankhurst does in the example on page 105.

CHAPTER

08

DEVELOPING AND REFINING WRITTEN PIECES

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Generating ideas
- › Responding to stimulus material
- › Planning a text
- › Drafting a text
- › Writing a reflective commentary
- › Sample responses

Your assessment for this area of study will be based on your ability to craft and create your own original texts. In Unit 1, you will craft two texts in forms such as the following: short stories, speeches (with transcripts), essays (comment, opinion, reflective, personal), podcasts (with transcripts), poetry/songs, feature articles (including a series of blog postings) and memoirs. English students will also write a description of their writing processes, while EAL students will annotate one or both of their crafted texts to identify the qualities of effective writing.

In Unit 3, you will again produce two original texts that respond to a specific context and audience and aim to achieve a particular purpose. English students will produce a commentary reflecting on their writing processes and EAL students will produce a set of annotations commenting on their writing processes.

This chapter takes you through the process of gathering ideas, selecting an idea to develop, and planning, writing and drafting your text to produce a polished final product.



Generating ideas

The two most important sources of ideas for your writing will be the key idea you are studying and the mentor texts associated with it. In Chapters 6 and 7 we looked at how to open up a key idea to find inspiration for your writing and how to draw on your mentor texts for models and techniques. Other ways to find ideas to explore in your writing include the following.

- **Identify your passions.** It is always much easier to write about something you care about and/or know a lot about. Look to your own interests to find a compelling subject to explore in an original text.



- ➔ • **Start with a character.** If you are aiming to write an imaginative text, it can be productive to begin by developing a fully fleshed-out main character, with both virtues and flaws, a complex personality and a well-thought-out backstory. Once you understand this character well, their attributes and situation can lead you naturally towards sources of conflict and, therefore, the plot for a narrative.
- **Start with a message.** Think about what you would most like to say to your target audience. What do you want them to understand or think differently about? Try to summarise this in a sentence, then begin thinking about how you will communicate this message in the best way to appeal to your audience. Of course, your approach will also depend on the form you are writing in. (For more about selecting a form, see pages 112–13.)
- **Look to other texts.** Your mentor texts have been carefully chosen to provide engaging and fruitful models for effective writing. But you can also draw on other texts for ideas. Think about films, television programs, poems, stories, novels and even artworks that you have enjoyed or that have sparked your imagination. What is the essence of the text that compels you? An unexpected plot twist? A surprising opinion? A complex relationship? Can you respond to, extend or rework this inspiring aspect in a fresh way in an original text of your own?

Once you have tried a few different methods for generating ideas, you need to select the one that seems most promising to you. In deciding this, you should consider not only which idea most inspires you, but also any guidelines you have been given regarding audience and purpose. (For more on audience and purpose, see pages 74–81.)

8.1 *Brainstorm ideas*

1 Answer the following questions to identify possible ideas you could explore in a written text.

a What is your favourite novel? Why?

b What is your favourite film? Why?

c What is your favourite visual image? What feelings does it evoke?

d Name a nonfiction text that changed your thinking about a topic.



e Identify a person, living or dead, who has inspired you. What was one of their inspirational qualities?

f If you could change one aspect of the society in which you live, what would it be?

g Describe your favourite place. Refer to all five senses.

h What is the most important lesson you have learned? How did you learn it?

i Describe your ideal day.

2 Choose one of your responses to question 1. In a notebook or computer file, write for 3 minutes on the topic. Do not worry about polishing your work, just aim to write as much as you can within the time limit.

3 Read over your response to question 2.

a Highlight a sentence that would be a strong opening to a short story.

b In a single sentence, summarise the main idea that your paragraph is expressing. This could be the central argument or topic of a piece that reflects, explains or argues.

Responding to stimulus material

In Section B of the end-of-Year-12 exam, you will be provided with stimulus material to help inspire your thinking and writing. This stimulus material could include:

- images
- quotations
- poems
- short texts or extracts.

You might be presented with multiple stimuli, with a requirement to draw on one or more in your writing. (For more on the end-of-year exam, see Chapter 16: The exam.)

In your classwork and SACs, you might also work with various kinds of stimulus material. It is important to engage with this material in your writing, and to make connections between the stimuli and the framework.

8.2 *Work with stimulus material*

- 1 The following table suggests a few possible ways of responding to visual and written stimuli. Complete the final two rows with your own suggestions.

Responding to an image	Responding to text
Use the image as the basis for your text, adopting the setting and characters/elements it presents and filling the backstory or additional details with your own invention. (The writer of the sample response on pages 124–5 takes this approach, crafting a story around the people and activity presented in a photograph.)	Include a quotation or line of poetry in your text. Perhaps it is spoken by a character in a creative text at a crucial point in the narrative.
Identify the main mood or atmosphere of the image and aim to evoke this through words. Try coming up with a list of adjectives that describe the image, then include these in your text.	Respond directly to the idea in the quote or extract in a piece whose primary purpose is to argue. Present your own opinion on the idea, unpacking it in detail and drawing in evidence from your study of the framework and mentor texts.
Think about the message or point of view that is being conveyed by the image, and write a persuasive piece in which you argue for or against this idea.	Reflect on an idea in the poem, possibly exploring its relevance to an experience you have had or an observation you have made.

- 2 In this question you will generate stimulus material as well as respond to it.
- a Create or curate a set of stimuli relevant to the idea you are studying. Aim for three stimulus items, consisting of:
- an image
 - a poem or short extract from a text
 - a quotation.



- b Swap stimuli with a partner. Write an original text of between 300 and 500 words, responding to your partner's set of stimulus material.
- c Take it in turns to explain to each other how you went about responding to the stimuli. In what ways did your partner's use of stimulus material surprise, challenge and/or inspire you?

Working with titles

You might also be presented with a title for your piece, as will occur in the end-of-Year-12 exam. Like the idea you will be working with, the title will be broad and open to multiple interpretations, allowing a range of possibilities for your response.

You should work closely with the idea or ideas encapsulated in the title. While you can present your own interpretation of it and take the idea in any direction you choose, you still need to demonstrate that you have engaged with it. Once you have drafted your text, read it over, keeping the title firmly in mind. Does the text clearly connect with and address the notion in the title? Will the reader be able to identify the connections easily?

Planning a text

The process of creating a plan for your text will depend on the form of the text you are writing and the main purpose you are aiming to achieve. An effective piece of writing will demonstrate the use of **language** appropriate to its **purpose, audience** and **form**.

The term 'language' includes your style and tone, as well as your choice of particular words and sentence structures. In general, your style and tone should be consistent throughout, although occasional shifts in tone, used purposefully, can help you to shape the reader's emotional responses. The appropriate style and tone are determined partly by the form you choose. For example, an essay written to explain will usually have a formal style and a mostly serious tone, whereas the language in a piece written to express can be more varied – from lyrical to blunt, depending on the effect you are aiming to achieve. Imagery is a vital element of language use in narrative texts, but can also be used to good effect in writing to argue, to reflect or to explain.

You may be asked to write for a particular target audience, such as your peers, the readership of a local newspaper or parents of young children. If your audience is not specified, you could assume that you are writing for an educated adult audience, meaning that your language needs to be interesting and accessible to a range of readers. Avoid specialised or technical language (unless you make its meaning clear), as well as slang or offensive language. Think also about the context you are writing for: are there any particular guidelines or boundaries you need to consider? For example, in some contexts, overtly political commentary would not be welcome.

Some colloquial language might be appropriate, depending on the nature of your text. For example, in an imaginative text, the characters' dialogue might include colloquial expressions. However, keep in mind that too great a reliance on informal language can limit your ability to express complex or subtle ideas.

Choosing a form

No one form is 'best' in terms of writing your original texts – every form presents its opportunities and challenges. Choose a form you are comfortable with and know the conventions of. Here are some points to keep in mind.

- **The essay form gives a clear structure to work with** and will be very familiar to you. Aim to present a clear, consistent argument or message throughout. Don't just present a series of random thoughts on the key idea: this might seem to fulfil the purpose of 'explaining' or 'expressing' but your piece will lack coherence.
- **Imaginative forms give you scope for a very individual and creative response**, and the possibility of using more lively and interesting language than in a formal essay. Stay focused on ideas relevant to the framework and any stimulus material. Also make sure that your structure is clear, and that there is a strong beginning and ending.
- **Persuasive forms such as opinion pieces and editorials allow you to present a clear and strong response with the purpose 'to argue'**. These forms will be familiar to you from your study of argument and persuasive language in media texts. Demonstrate your knowledge of the features of these forms, and use a range of persuasive language techniques (showing your understanding of the relationship between form, language and purpose). Don't be too one-sided or strident in presenting your point of view, as this will limit your exploration of ideas and arguments.

Possible forms

The table below shows some popular forms you might like to choose from for your own original texts. It also indicates a possible audience for each form as well as the typical language and main features.

Form	Possible audience	Language	Features
Short story	An educated, well-read audience	Written in prose; descriptive language is used to depict characters and situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters • Plot • Narrative arc • Resolution
Opinion piece	Readers of a national newspaper	Usually formal but may include some personal elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline • Contention • Argument • Reasons and evidence

Form	Possible audience	Language	Features
Play or film script	Various – can be for a niche audience (e.g. arthouse cinema) or a mainstream audience (e.g. Hollywood cinema)	Written as dialogue; includes stage directions (play) or descriptions of action, setting, cinematography (film)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character names to introduce dialogue • Stage directions
Podcast script	Various, depending on the topic of the podcast – may be quite broad or very narrow	Depending on the topic and the presenter's personality, could be formal or informal, though typically somewhere in between	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound effects / music • Segments • Advertisements
Personal essay	An educated literary audience	Reflective, thoughtful, calm, confiding; uses first-person voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional structure of introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion • Use of literary techniques • Often concludes with a message or lesson
Diary entry	The writer; not usually intended for a wider audience	Depending on the writer's personality, usually informal, with a confiding, personal tone; uses first-person voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recounts events of a single day • May include salutation (e.g. 'Dear diary') • Refers to real-life people and places
Memoir	An educated literary audience	Usually formal but with a personal, reflective tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually recounts events chronologically • Refers to real people and places • Can include reflection on lessons learned or insights gained

Hybrid texts

Although the boundaries between different purposes might seem clear-cut, often you will find that a text has more than one purpose. It might also draw on the language and features associated with more than one text type. For example, an opinion piece might present a clear argument but include reflective discussion of personal experiences. An imaginative response such as a short story that aims to express might also deliver a strong message about the environment intended to persuade the reader.

<p>Crisis / turning point</p> <p>How does the situation come to a head? What are the stakes for the protagonist?</p>	
<p>Resolution</p> <p>How is the conflict resolved and how has the protagonist changed?</p>	

Template 2: Nonfiction text

<p>Text type</p> <p>Identify the text type you will write and three main features of this text type.</p>	
<p>Aspect of the framework to be explored</p> <p>Identify the specific idea you want to explore in your text.</p>	
<p>Main message</p> <p>Summarise your message to your audience in a single sentence.</p>	
<p>Purpose</p> <p>Identify your main purpose(s), i.e. to express, to explain, to reflect or to argue.</p>	
<p>Target audience</p> <p>Describe your primary audience.</p>	
<p>Language</p> <p>Describe the main style and tone of the language you will use, and give some examples of word choices to achieve this.</p>	
<p>Text opening</p> <p>Describe how you will begin your text – e.g. with an anecdote, a strong opinion, a joke or a question to the audience.</p>	
<p>Text body paragraphs</p> <p>Summarise the main points you want to make in each of your body paragraphs.</p>	
<p>Text conclusion</p> <p>Describe how you will end your text – e.g. by reiterating the contention, speculating about the future as it relates to your topic or summarising the key points.</p>	

8.3 *Plan a text*

Using one of the templates on pages 114–15 as a basis, plan either a fiction or a nonfiction text.

Drafting a text

An exciting aspect of this area of study is the opportunity it gives you to draft and refine your work. This section presents writing exercises that can help you to get started if you feel stuck, as well as advice for refining and polishing your work. Even in a time-limited situation, such as an exam, it is important to allow time to read over your work and address any obvious flaws or errors.

Writing warm-ups

Writing within certain parameters or limits can be a great way to get your creative juices flowing and warm up your writing muscles. Try some of these exercises, either before you begin drafting your text or to help you find a focus for your text.

Write a story in 100 words or fewer

- Incorporate the titles of two of your mentor texts in your short story.

Choose a word from your glossary of key terms

- Use this word either as the title of an original text, or as the first word of it.
- See page 84 for guidelines on creating your glossary.

Identify a place that is special to you

- It might be as small as the corner of a room or as large as a country. Describe this place to someone who has never been there.
- In your description, include references to all five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell.

Select a text you have enjoyed

- The text can be in any form – novel, short story, poem, song, graphic novel, artwork etc.
- Identify the main message or theme of this work, then present this in a different (written) form. For example, if you chose an artwork as your starting text, you might present its main idea in the form of a story, poem or speech.

Write a review of a product or service that has disappointed you

- Explain to other potential purchasers why they should avoid it.
- Be specific, and include at least four adjectives in your review.

Drafting and editing your work

When writing the first draft of your text, don't spend too much time labouring over every sentence. It is generally better to just let the writing flow as much as possible, so that you can get your ideas on paper, before you start to shape and polish your work. If you have planned your text, you will have a road map to follow, which will help you to complete a first draft. Once you have done so, your refining should encompass the following two steps:

- **editing and rewriting** to improve content, structure and language choices
- **proofreading** to correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Editing for content, structure and language choices

During this stage, you will read over your work, thinking carefully about how effectively you have conveyed your ideas. Try the following strategies to identify areas for improvement.

Read your work aloud to check for voice and flow

- Reading aloud will alert you to such issues as clunky sentences, abrupt or unintended shifts in tone and awkward vocabulary choices.

Identify the main point, topic sentence or plot development in each paragraph of your piece

- Print out your piece and write brief notes next to each paragraph. When you place these notes together, do they form a coherent narrative, explanation, argument or outline? If not, identify any information you might need to add (or, possibly, exclude) in order to create a clear and logical structure.

Label your sentences

- Make a note next to each sentence, identifying whether it is a short, medium or long sentence. Note also what part of speech each sentence begins with: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition and so on. If you don't have a balance of different sentence lengths and structures, amend some to avoid repetition.

Circle any repeated words or phrases

- Sometimes you might use repetition for deliberate effect, but if you notice that you have repeated particular words or phrases unintentionally, try replacing some of these with more interesting and varied alternatives.

Swap work with a partner

- Ask them to identify the main message, target audience and purpose of your piece. Also ask them to identify any aspect of your piece that is unclear or that they think could be improved.

Proofreading for grammar, punctuation and spelling

During this stage, you will examine your piece more closely, homing in on the smaller details such as spelling and punctuation. Use the following checklist.

- Each sentence is complete and has a subject and verb (unless you are using sentence fragments purposefully, to create a particular effect).
- Each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark, exclamation mark or ellipsis (unless you are consciously experimenting with punctuation for a particular purpose).
- Commas are placed appropriately to avoid ambiguity (e.g. 'Let's eat, Grandma' is clear, but 'Let's eat Grandma' is not).
- Commas are used to indicate slight pauses, which you can check for by reading your work aloud.
- Apostrophes are used correctly to indicate possession (e.g. 'the game's rules') or contractions (e.g. 'they're too complicated').
- Names of real people and places are all spelled correctly.
- You have used a dictionary to check the spelling of any tricky or commonly misspelled words.

A word about AI tools

No doubt you are aware of the availability of AI writing tools, such as ChatGPT. It might be tempting to turn to these to help you with creating your texts, particularly if you feel that writing is not a particular strength of yours. But there are several good reasons not to do this. Firstly, you will be assessed on the quality of your own original writing. Your teachers want to see how you express yourself and your own unique perspective on the world. AI tools can never adequately replicate the complex individual voice of a human being: too often, writing generated with the help of AI sounds flat or generic, which are not qualities that will earn you good marks.

Secondly, with the rise of AI writing tools came a proliferation of AI detection tools. Your teachers can use one of these tools to determine whether a piece of writing has been generated by AI, so you are unlikely to succeed in submitting something as your own work if it isn't.

Finally, in your end-of-Year-12 exam you will not have access to this technology, so you need to develop your skills – including your handwriting skills – throughout the course.

8.4 *Draft and edit*

- 1 Select one or two paragraphs from one of your mentor texts. (If your selected text is a play, select between 100 and 200 words.) Then make the following changes.
 - a Rewrite the extract, moving three or four sentences to new positions.
 - b Rewrite the extract a second time, deleting two sentences and adding two original sentences of your own.
 - c Rewrite the extract a third time, replacing five words with synonyms.
 - d Write a paragraph reflecting on the different versions of the extract that you have created. Which is the most effective? Why? Why do you think the writer of the original text made the choices they did?
- 2 In the following questions you will work with a partner to edit an original piece of writing.
 - a Describe an object in 50 words, without naming the object. Swap descriptions with your partner and see if you can guess each other's object.
 - b Choose three words to replace in your partner's text in order to improve the precision or impact of their writing. Explain why you made these changes. (If you are using computer documents, use the 'comment' function to add your notes to your partner's text.)
 - c Edit each other's work for clarity and originality of expression. Use a table like the one on the next page to record your feedback. Add your own observations to the empty left-hand column cells.





Issue	Example	Suggested change
Words that could be replaced with stronger choices, e.g. because they are dull, clichéd, inaccurate, repetitive or unclear		
Sentences that need reworking, e.g. because they are too short, too long, unclear or superfluous		
Missing, unclear or contradictory information		

Writing a reflective commentary

The reflective commentary is your opportunity to explain the thought processes behind your writing. It is part of the Unit 3, Outcome 2 SAC for English, although you won't be required to produce a reflective commentary in the end-of-Year-12 exam.

Keep in mind the following when preparing your reflective commentary.

- Explain your choices – e.g. say why you have used certain words and images, why you have structured your piece in this way, why you have created certain characters. Don't just give a summary of your response.
- Relate your choices to the stimulus material and/or title, if these are part of the task material given to you.
- Discuss the context in which you are writing, your intended audience and your purpose. Explain how your choices help to shape your text for the audience and purpose.
- Explain your choice of form, and why you believe it is appropriate to your purpose, audience and context.
- You could refer to the ways your response draws on one or more mentor texts for vocabulary, techniques, structure and/or ideas.
- Explain how you have explored an idea connected to the framework you have been studying.

Sentence starters and stems for your commentary

The following sentence starters and stems can be used when reflecting on your writing.

- My use of ... was intended to ...
- To achieve my purpose of ..., I decided to ...
- I chose to employ ... in order to ...
- I was inspired by [writer X]'s use of ... in the mentor text ...
- With the aim of positioning my target audience of ... to feel ..., I adopted a mostly ... tone.
- I imagine my piece being published in ..., so I chose to use ...
- With words and phrases such as ... and ... I intended to evoke a ... mood/ atmosphere.
- The structure of my piece, with its ... and ..., was modelled on ...
- I wanted my readers to feel/think ..., so I ...
- By using ..., I hoped to convey ...
- The stimulus text/image ... made me think/feel ..., and I incorporated this into my response by ...
- I wanted to explore the idea of ..., which is connected to our framework of ...

8.5 Write about writing

1 Scan the code or click [here](#) to access a video clip of Australian author Craig Silvey discussing the process of writing his novel *Jasper Jones*, then answer the following questions.

- a Silvey notes that the name 'Jasper Jones' was a starting point for his novel, because he kept thinking about it until a character and story formed around the name. Identify a similar small spark or flash of inspiration you have experienced when writing or preparing to write.







- b Silvey says that his first attempts at writing the novel that would later become *Jasper Jones* were not successful. Identify a time when you decided to abandon a particular idea or writing project because it wasn't working. How did you know you needed to do this?

- c Silvey notes that there is something of himself in three of the main male characters in *Jasper Jones* – Charlie, Jasper and Jeffrey. Imagine you are creating a character for a fictional text. Describe their personality and appearance, noting which traits they share with you and in what ways they are different from you.

- d What genre of fiction does Silvey say *Jasper Jones* belongs to? Think of a text you have written or are planning to write and identify the genre it belongs to. Why do you think it belongs to this particular genre?

- e Silvey names some texts that influenced his work. Explain how a text you have written or are planning to write is influenced by one mentor text and one other text you have read.





2 Make notes in the table below to gather information for your reflective commentary. Complete the ‘What’ column with another significant feature of your text. In the ‘How’ column, briefly describe your decisions about each feature. In the ‘Why’ column, explain the reasons you made these decisions in terms of their intended effects.

What	How	Why
The aspect of the framework I chose to explore		
The way I responded to stimulus material, a given title or any other task requirements		
The way my piece started		
An important structural decision I made		
The main language style I used		
The main tone I used		
The structure of my sentences		
A particular language choice I made		
A mentor text I drew on		
A challenge I faced or major change I made during the writing process		
How my piece ended		

Sample responses

This section presents four sample texts, each with a different primary purpose and each responding to a different key idea.

Text 1

Key idea: Writing about growing up

Mentor texts: *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist* by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan; the story 'Advanced Beginners' from *The Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing* by Melissa Bank

Stimulus material:



Light Night

I don't know if it still counts as sneaking out when you are all of 18, but you can't deny the thrill of escaping your family home through a low window and sprinting up the road. Helped by the fact that our small town hadn't updated the streetlights since 1985. Isha and Andor had the car idling by the side of the main road, and they kept their headlights off just in case anyone spotted the car. When we were young it made sense to do this, we didn't need anyone in our tiny community passing on that they had seen us riding around late at night. I think at this point we did it more for the nostalgia.

I jumped into the back seat. "You know, keeping the headlights off isn't as effective when you still have the music on full blast."

"That's what I said!" replied Isha, looking to Andor, who simply smiled and made no move to change the volume.

We had to make one stop before we headed into town. Mack was already waiting kerbside when we pulled up, still clutching his backpack and looking over his shoulder worriedly just as he had the first time we had done this years ago, back when we had to get someone's older brother to drive the car.

Light Night was about the only interesting thing that happened all year here. The council set up every laser or projection machine they possessed to fling beams of light around the town centre, and people brought along torches to add their own personal flair. When we were little, our parents took us, heaving us onto their shoulders so we could watch the lasers shoot into the sky. I remember reaching out to grab them, or begging my dad to let me play with the torch, or being shocked when the beams would land on a building and yet it would remain intact. Every year we looked forward to Light Night.

The last few had been different, with my friends and I steadily finding new and shifty ways to ditch our parents so just the four of us could do Light Night together. The meaning of it changed. Now it was less about falling in love with the beams and flashes, and more about getting into just the right amount of trouble. It was fun in a different way.

We pulled into an already busy parking lot. While there would still be room in the town centre, it was part of the tradition to find our own spot. Technically, we aren't allowed on the car-park roof, but everyone turns a blind eye on Light Night. Climbing onto the roof isn't hard, it's like they purposefully made ramps so that access would be easy. We scrambled up and waited for the show to start, putting batteries in our torches and opening bags of chips. There were a few other groups hanging around – this was always a popular spot for teens. Actually, we were probably the oldest ones there.

At 10 on the dot the lights started up. I felt the familiar swoop of excitement in my stomach as each of the surrounding buildings shut off their internal lights so the lasers would be seen to their best effect. Andor, Isha, Mack and I grinned at each other, torches at the ready. A DJ somewhere below us started up and the crowd responded with cheers. The first lights beamed up from below. I felt a familiar smile bloom across my lips.

But the lasers were dim. Where they once bounced and moved with speed, now they seemed to lazily wind their way across the buildings. The neon had faded into some pale pastel, as if the colours were refusing to commit. I looked down at the torch in my hand – was it even on? I slapped it on the side a few times for good measure. It was definitely on, but the beam was landing muted on the ground below. Even the DJ seemed sluggish, as if lagging just behind the beat. The crowd still loved it, but I was confused. Where were the beams from my childhood? Where was the pulse? The vibrancy?

“Did they lose funding? I don't remember it being like this ...” I trailed off, eyes still following the dull lights.

“What do you mean?” replied Mack. “It looks the same as every year.”

I looked at my beautiful friends again. While we had changed so much since the first time we climbed onto the rooftop, it still felt the same. Maybe I didn't want the same anymore. Andor, Isha and Mack would always be there for me, and always be my closest friends. But as I watched those small torches being cast about, I realised that there was probably more for me to experience than Light Night. This town had been a great place to grow up, but there was more growing to do, and other places to do it. With new people and places, different challenges and kinds of excitement. With this safe haven behind me, I'd know that I could always return. But there was more, and I wanted more. There were brighter lights to find somewhere else.

Reflective commentary

The inspiration image has a feeling of youthful excitement, and I used this as the backbone for the piece. I felt it would be interesting to explore this image as a turning point for one of the people in it, with this image existing as a last moment before proper adulthood. I wanted to capture this transitional moment as for many people it can be very powerful, but also very fleeting.

The use of some sentence fragments (for example, ‘The vibrancy?’) and run-on sentences (for example, ‘When we were young it made sense to do this, we didn’t need anyone in our tiny community passing on that they had seen us riding around late at night’) convey the narrator’s thought processes and help to create a distinctive voice.

I used the metaphor of light to represent the position of the protagonist. In *Nick and Norah’s Infinite Playlist* the author relies heavily on music as both a metaphor and an ongoing theme, and I wanted to have a similar concept to anchor the piece. At the beginning my protagonist is in a place that she feels should be filled with light, but towards the end she is disappointed when the lights appear to be dull and flat. I also used the concept of a ‘bright future’ to cement the idea that she will be moving forward from this point, feeling sure that there is greatness to come.

When reading *Nick and Norah’s Infinite Playlist* and *The Girls’ Guide to Hunting and Fishing*, I was struck by the tone used by the authors. Both texts focus on young people in a coming-of-age story, and their tone is hopeful yet uncertain. I tried to mimic this throughout the piece by referencing nostalgia and how routine the protagonist is finding her world. I particularly leaned on *The Girls’ Guide to Hunting and Fishing* when considering my structure, as this text is a collection of short stories all with the same protagonist. Ultimately, I was inspired by Melissa Bank’s structure both within the story ‘Advanced Beginners’ and in the collection as a whole. I like to think that were the project continued, ‘Light Night’ would similarly follow these friends through the next chapter of their lives.

I aimed for an excited tone at the beginning of my piece, reflecting the protagonist’s feelings of anticipation. The use of words such as ‘thrill’, ‘escaping’, ‘sprinting’ and ‘jumped’ were intended to communicate this. At the conclusion of my piece, though, the tone becomes more reflective and thoughtful, reflecting the protagonist’s change in attitude. I also used repetition – for example, in the words and phrases ‘the same’, ‘grow[ing] up’, ‘more’ – to help create a lyrical style appropriate for the profound realisation the narrator experiences, and to draw the reader into the narrator’s emotional world.

Text 2

Key idea: Writing about food

Mentor texts: ‘Michael Pollan: Why the family meal is crucial to civilisation’ by Richard Johnson (published in *The Guardian*); ‘Chapter 21: Goodbye Violet’ in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl

Stimulus material:

‘The fondest memories are made when gathered around the table.’

Welcome to the latest post in our long-running food blog, *All About Eat*. This week we welcome guest blogger Ruth Romano, award-winning chef and host of the popular series *Taste This!* We've invited her to reflect on why she went into the culinary arts, and the beliefs that underlie her food practices.

You might be surprised to learn that, as a chef, I am still a huge fan of trashy convenience foods. When I'm at work I spend hours – days even – on complicated recipes with all seasonings, sauces and various components made from scratch, all conceived and prepared in my own commercial kitchen with the help of my team of dear and trusted staff. I rarely allow shortcuts, and I take great pride and pleasure in the precision of my work. I love to create unique meals where every bite is rich, nutritious and balanced – meals that provoke an emotional response in all those who taste them.

But on my days off? Honestly? There's nothing I love more than a fresh bag of hot chips and sometimes even (shock, horror) a fizzy drink. It's partly to do with childhood naughtiness, maybe, partly to do with convenience, and partly just the dopamine and other chemical reactions in our brains as a basic response to salt and sugar. (I didn't make this stuff up, it's science, I promise!) I'm not proud of these cravings. And that's why I'm turning over a new leaf this year, and choosing home-cooked food and new recipes more often, rather than easy, tempting treats. Let me show you why I think it's important, and why I think it's worthwhile. I'm not here to tell you to stop eating junk food (and I'm not even confident I can do that myself). I'm just here to inspire your love of much more meaningful and powerful food.

Academic and food writer Michael Pollan has said 'the family meal is the nursery of democracy': food and how we eat it really is that important. It shouldn't only be a snack to fill you up, or a treat to satisfy a craving – though of course, let's be realistic, sometimes it's exactly those things, and that's ok. But in a broader sense, food is the heart of what we stand for as a species, and it shapes the way we behave and how we relate to one another.

One of the reasons I became a chef was because all my life, food has been associated with joy. Both my parents loved cooking, and my brothers and sisters and I always adored family meals together. We had lots of mealtime traditions, from taking turns writing up the evening's menu on our kitchen blackboard to setting the table – we never had matching crockery and we had fun choosing our favourite plates and bowls and creating colourful patterns with multicoloured serviettes and placemats. We also had some more quirky rituals, such as reading out passages during dinner from whatever favourite book we were in the middle of. And when we kids were old enough, we took turns helping mum and dad cook. It was never a chore, it was a treat: precious time spent with our otherwise busy parents. We learned how to do tricky things like white sauces and soufflés, and to experiment with spices and flavours. There was always laughter in my family kitchen, and to this day the smell of a spicy tomato goulash or a tangy yoghurt sauce or a yeasty fresh dough still makes me think of my mother's giggle and my father's great wild guffaw.

As an adult, I wanted to re-create those delights for the customers who visit my restaurants. I have kept the mismatched crockery and tableware as a trademark, and to me it represents the joyful emphasis on the food we serve. I also try to re-create some of the

complicated flavour profiles that my parents' meals often had. Combinations such as basil and strawberry or ginger and sesame still bring me excitement as well as comfort, and I can easily call up the mouth-watering taste of each one of my siblings' personal favourite dishes. As children, we developed sophisticated palates quite early, and we never looked back.

Not everyone (particularly not all children) enjoys strong or unusual flavours, and that's perfectly reasonable. But I believe that it's vital to expose our kids to different tastes when they're young, and not only because it opens lifelong doors to enjoying many culinary delights. It also reflects the values I want my own children, and the society around me, to embrace: openness to experience, passion for diversity and a deep sense of curiosity. My old pals, chips and fizzy drinks, just don't represent any of those things.

So the next time I have a salt craving, instead of buying chips, I plan to settle in and cook a favourite old family recipe – a rich macaroni cheese (secret ingredient: splash of fiery mustard), or a briny seafood paella, or maybe an olive tapenade and some sourdough crackers. Next time I need a sugar hit, I'm going to test out a bake I've had in my 'to-make' list for years and have never quite found time to try: an old-fashioned strawberry shortcake. Or a Thai mango sticky rice. Or possibly a batch of my family's favourite pomegranate brownies.

Cooking doesn't have to be fancy to be enriching (although it can be). It doesn't have to be complicated and time-consuming (although that's rewarding, too). It doesn't even always have to be 'healthy' (although usually of course we all want to aim for that). But it should – at least most of the time – be about joy, about process, about sharing and about life.

Happy eating, friends.

Ruth x

Reflective commentary

For this piece I took initial inspiration from reflecting on Michael Pollan's philosophies on what's important about food (which he expresses in the *Guardian* article mentor text, 'Why the family meal is crucial to civilisation'), as well as the stimulus quote. I wanted to write a fictional first-person piece with a hybrid purpose, to explain and to argue: to explain some of the strong emotional connections we often have with food, especially when it is central to family experience, and to argue for celebrating these by de-emphasising the immediate rewards of junk food. To allow for a personal angle, I chose to give the piece the context of a long-running blog, where readers are accustomed to discussions about food and would be receptive to a casual style and more emotive language than might be appropriate in a formal persuasive piece.

In contrast, the mentor text chapter from Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is primarily a fun, playful, childhood fantasia focused on the glories of sweets and treats. However, when read from a more mature perspective, it also serves as a grim warning about the feverish hype of commercial junk food. The chapter about Mr Wonka's chewing-gum-meal invention is peppered with exclamation marks and short hysterical statements of excitement and panic, particularly once Violet begins turning into a blueberry. In my piece, I wanted to create a strong tonal and rhythmic contrast to the Dahl text, writing slower, more poetic and considered sentences. In doing so, I aimed to also reflect Michael Pollan's ideas: the value of taking time to focus on food and to connect it to family and community.

In addition to this more measured and lyrical style, I included sensory language to tie the blog to the key idea of writing about food, using descriptions such as ‘spicy’, ‘briny’ and ‘tangy’ to create strong gustatory imagery for readers and therefore engage them emotionally with the arguments presented. Alongside this, I included reminiscences of happy childhood mealtimes to connect readers with positive ideas around family and food, and to encourage them to want to celebrate cooking and eating.

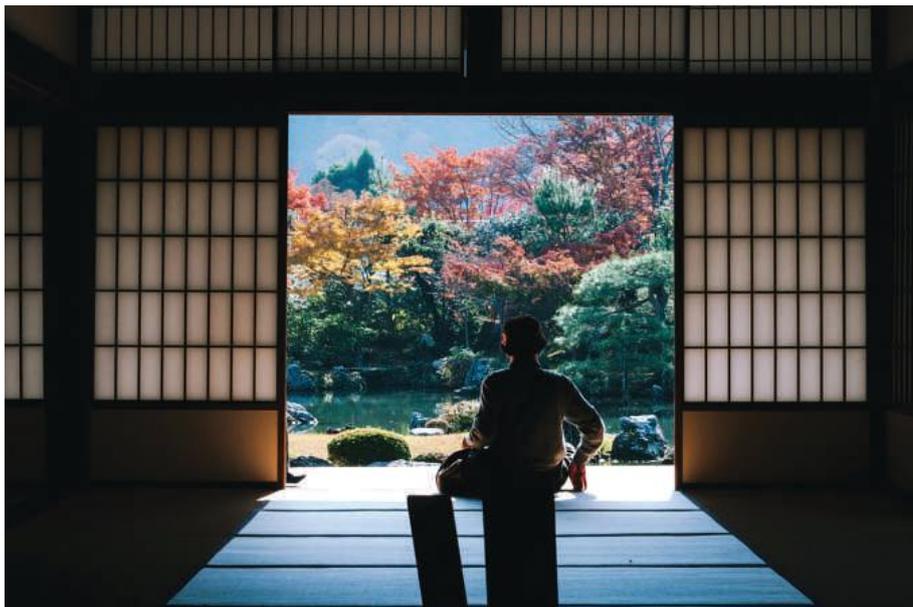
One challenge I faced was including a broad range of food-based imagery without making the blog sound like a list of recipes or ingredients. I tackled this by incorporating brief mentions of favourite foods interspersed with broader statements about the social and cultural values of food and cooking. I resisted the temptation to describe foods in too much detail, as I felt this might become boring, and instead I tried to choose short descriptive phrases that would conjure up images of particular tastes and smells.

Text 3

Key idea: Writing about outsiders

Mentor texts: ‘On Being an Outsider’ by Christina Thompson; ‘The Third and Final Continent’ by Jhumpa Lahiri

Stimulus material:



Outside looking in – until language opened the doors

When I was in Year 9, I remember attending a humanities class in which all students (around 50 of us) were asked to stand up. We were then asked to sit down if a generation of our family was born outside Australia. First it was our parents, then our grandparents, then our great-grandparents, and so on. This continued until there were just a couple of us standing, me among them. As I surveyed the room, I could see a sea of faces looking

up at us, many of them clearly amused that we had no idea when our ancestors had come to Australia. All I knew was that as far as I was aware, it must have been a long time ago. So I just kept standing.

I found this experience notable for two reasons. One was the sense of disconnect I had with my own origins – all around me were people who seemed to have at least some idea of their cultural roots, while I was lost; I had no idea about my family's history. And secondly, because it was a rare moment of feeling like a cultural outsider. Within the four walls of the classroom, just for a brief moment, I was one of the odd ones out.

This experience made me recall my time living in Nihon as a child. My family moved there when I was six, and we stayed there for close to three years, returning to Australia when I was nine. Both of my parents worked as English teachers: my father at a local Japanese high school, and my mother teaching English to young children. Despite this, while there, I exclusively attended a Japanese primary school. Accommodations were made to help me acclimatise and learn the language, but in hindsight they were undeniably inadequate. I was put into a sink-or-swim situation, forced to adapt to my surroundings and learn to cope with what to six-year-old me was tantamount to a hostile jungle of confusing social mores and customs. Here, too, I was an outsider – not just momentarily, but for the entire duration of my stay in the country.

Perhaps it is a result of my parents' occupations, but for as long as I can remember I have been interested in the relationship between language and culture. More specifically, I think a lot about how powerful a uniting force language can be, overcoming the social hurdles that lacking a shared culture can otherwise present. When I first arrived in Japan, and indeed for the first few months of my time there, I was fairly isolated. I had my family, of course, but aside from them I had no meaningful relationship with anyone else. Getting by at school without a proper command of the language was enough of a struggle as it was – I certainly didn't have the emotional capacity to make friends and form connections. My lack of language was like a pane of black glass between me and my new world. What's more, I was ostracised by those around me – not usually maliciously or explicitly, but in small, subtle ways. For example, I was given licence to essentially ignore class; I was obligated to sit in and attend, but no effort was made to involve me in class activities, and when I, a young child, was invariably incapable of sitting still and paying attention to a teacher talking to us in a language I only half understood, no helping hand was extended to aid my understanding or keep me engaged. I would stare at the white-topped uniform rows of desks in front of me, or the sharply polished wooden floor underneath me, finding patterns in the wood while the patternless swirl of words went on around me without my being able to grasp onto any of them.

In hindsight, I was possibly never truly accepted by many people around me as one of them. Reflecting on my time in Japan, there was much about people's treatment of me that was probably othering. I was frequently treated differently from my peers, particularly by the adult figures in my life such as my teachers, who often seemed to view me as a novelty. My appearance would never allow me just to blend in, no matter how much I might have like to, and neither the school I attended nor the area we lived in was accustomed to foreigners. Everywhere I went, curious eyes followed me.

Despite this, it was thanks to my acquisition of the language of those around me that I was ultimately able to thrive. Language bridged the otherwise insurmountable ford between me and those around me in a way that nothing else could have. Language is fundamental to connection; there can be no genuine meeting of minds (even six-year-old minds) without it. It might not have truly integrated me into Japanese society but, word by word, sentence by sentence, my new language allowed me to construct a foundation upon which to build my own happy place in the little corner of the world I lived in. Learning Japanese allowed me to foster relationships with my peers, participate in class and other group activities, express myself and, ultimately, to flourish. I still vividly remember the first time I was able to make my classmates laugh in class with a well-timed joke, their surprised and delighted faces etched forever in my mind; being invited to hang out with other children from my apartment complex after school in the overgrown and poorly maintained park near us, and being able to hold conversations with them about early morning *terebi bangumis* (TV shows) like *Doraemon* or *Pokemon* (which with fluency became something of an after-school ritual); and when I was finally able to stop taking Japanese lessons during class time and join the other students for all classes, because I was fluent enough that I didn't need the extra help anymore. When I walked to school, I used to pass offices for newspapers like *The Mainichi Shimbun* and *The Asahi Shimbun*. These became markers for me, and I aspired to one day be able to read them with a level of fluency. These milestones were truly empowering, and went a long way towards helping me feel like I was part of my community.

I only lived in Japan for three years – a small fraction of my life by any measure. But the impact it had on me belies the relatively short period of time I spent there. I still think of Japan as a second home; part of me can't help but wonder how my life may have looked had I stayed. I can still picture the solid grey apartment block and the flights of stairs I clambered up to reach home every day; the walk past the *Mainichi* office to the gates of the school that had once seemed so imposing but which had become a place I looked forward to attending; the sandswept oval and dilapidated swing-set where I spent so many lunchtimes with friends. And while I'm no longer as fluent as I was, my knowledge of the language has facilitated a continued connection to the country, and has shaped my thinking in ways I'm not always even consciously aware of. My knowledge of Japanese has even dictated my subject selection at school, and I'm currently planning on studying the language at university and working as a translator. It's no exaggeration to say that living in Japan and learning the language – through trial and error, hard work, lifelong friendships and, occasionally, tears of frustration – has radically shaped the course of my life, opening the door to a whole new world and a new understanding of myself I couldn't possibly have had otherwise.

Reflective commentary

In my essay, the primary purpose of which was to reflect on my personal experiences as an outsider, I drew on the essay 'On Being an Outsider' by Christina Thompson and the short story 'The Third and Final Continent' by Jhumpa Lahiri. The former inspired me to reflect on my own relationship with my culture and the languages I speak, and how these have affected me. It also prompted me to consider school as a sort of nexus for the cultural clashes I experienced; Thompson writes about her children's experiences whereas I wrote about my own, but we both share similar feelings. I was also inspired by her frequent use of personal anecdotes, as both her piece and mine are deeply personal accounts of our lives. Lahiri's short story inspired my

references to landmarks and cultural institutions (such as *The Mainichi Shimbun*), helping to ground my piece in the culture I was discussing. Lahiri refers to the YMCA and *The Boston Globe* to similar effect. Her story also inspired my use of Japanese terms to refer to key places and things (such as Nihon for the name of the country) to convey a sense of the alienation and confusion I initially felt living in a foreign country with no knowledge of the language, as well as to express the way that both English and Japanese are formative parts of my identity. This story also encouraged me to use more descriptive, expressive language and to paint pictures of particular scenes that are vivid in my memory, as Lahiri does throughout, such as when she describes her main character's first impression of his new room.

I chose to begin this piece with a small-scale anecdote about a minor event in my life, before expanding the scope of my reflection. This was intended to establish a rapport and develop relatability with my target audience of teenage and adult readers interested in language and cultural issues. I imagined that my piece might be published on a website or in a magazine focused on these issues, such as an expat blog or a parenting magazine aimed at parents of so-called 'third-culture kids'. Everyone has had at least a small moment in their life when they've felt different from those around them, or like an outsider, so I thought it was important to start with something that evoked that feeling before discussing my experience living abroad, which isn't something everyone will have dealt with before. The stimulus image also prompted me to think about universal aspects of feeling different or separate, with the division between inside and outside being so starkly evident. The image also triggered my idea of using an extended metaphor in the title and body of my essay through references to doors, to create a more evocative portrait of my experiences and allow the reader to more easily connect with and understand my experiences. This extended metaphor also helps to make the piece more cohesive.

I did experience a few challenges writing my piece. For example, I found it difficult to achieve a balance between reflecting on my own personal experiences and embracing what made them unique, while also evoking a shared sense of a struggle to fit in that is common for many people. I also found it a challenge to adopt the language features of my mentor texts while still writing in a personal style reflective of my own experiences and perspective.

Text 4

Key idea: Writing about protest

Mentor texts: 'Harrison Bergeron' by Kurt Vonnegut; 'Freedom or Death' by Emmeline Pankhurst; 'Friday Essay: On the Sydney Mardi Gras March of 1978' by Mark Gillespie

Stimulus material:

'History has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.'

I used to believe I could change the world. Then I got scared.

I want to thank you all for coming out to protest today, because I know you're all scared too. Scared of what climate change will mean.

It's a lot to have on our shoulders as young people – we don't just have to worry about school and family and work, we also worry about the state of the world. Eco-anxiety is incredibly common: a study in 2021 found that 59 per cent of young people in ten different

countries were very or extremely worried about climate change. Half of the young people in the study said they felt powerless. Half said they felt anxious. And an Australian study in the same year showed that having eco-anxiety is linked to engaging less in climate action.

Maybe a lot of you in the crowd right now are hearing what I'm saying and starting to feel bad. Maybe it's starting to sound a bit too close to home, and you feel like you want to turn off. That's how I was feeling not too long ago, that I cared so much I just couldn't take the bad news anymore. But I'm asking you to keep listening, because I'm hoping that by the end of this speech you might feel a bit differently.

First, I'm going to ask a favour of you all: could anyone who's ever felt anxious about climate change put up your hand?

Now, look around you. Everyone you can see with their hand up has had the same worries as you, the same fears. And, like you, they showed up to this protest today. Feel proud of yourselves, and feel proud of them. They are your community, and you've all showed up today. You're afraid, but you're here. That's a really hard thing to do. It's incredible.

So, what I'm going to suggest today is that we focus on that feeling. On community. On hope. On the pride and warmth we feel when we come together. Because when we're all gathered here together, doesn't it feel like anything's possible?

Of course, we can't go to huge protests every single day. But we can protest in other ways, in small ways. And I don't mean just through activism – through rallies and banners and what you might think of as protest. Because collective action can be much more everyday, much simpler, and so important. Fossil fuel companies want us to despair so we won't act – so let's protest by having hope. They want us to burn ourselves out with anxiety – so let's protest by looking after ourselves, by resting and doing things that nourish us emotionally. They want us to feel alone and powerless – so let's protest by working together in our communities. Hope, rest, solidarity – these are all powerful things.

Personally, feeling part of a community and helping out in small ways has really helped with my eco-anxiety. I started helping out with a local community garden when I have time around school. Gardening with a community gives me hope for the future, for a world where food is produced sustainably and our cities have enough green spaces for people and animals to thrive. Working with others is part of that hope – I see how beautiful the gardens can be when so many people pitch in together. I feel needed and part of something, connected to nature and supported by others helping me. Things like mulching a garden bed may be small actions, but they give me the strength to keep going and to feel hope instead of despair.

There's proof that being connected to a community protects our mental and physical health, including when we're facing climate crises. In 1995, Chicago went through a heatwave in which hundreds of people died. There were two very similar neighbourhoods right next to each other, but one experienced far fewer deaths than the other. Why? That neighbourhood had a closer-knit community – people participated in community groups and knew the people who lived around them, so when the crisis hit they checked in on each other. That's the power of solidarity.

Connecting with hope and solidarity might mean cycling to school with your friends, joining your local council's environment club or starting one at school, getting together before a protest to paint banners, or joining a book club that reads books with positive messages about the climate. Even getting to know our neighbours can be part of it. We'll not only make connections, but we'll be helping to build a world that's more resilient in the face of climate change, because we're all looking out for each other. Isn't that something to hope for?

Something else that I'm hoping for is that you'll all leave this protest feeling a bit better about the future. Because, look around: you're part of this community right here, where all these other people want climate justice just as much as you. Working together, we can make a difference. So, before we go, let's put our voices together one more time so the whole world can hear:

What do we want?

Hope!

When do we want it?

Now!

Reflective commentary

My piece is a speech that draws on the stimulus quote to argue for a focus on hope and solidarity rather than despair in the climate justice movement. I attempted to make the speech itself a moment of solidarity through encouraging audience participation. My speech had the secondary purpose of reflecting on my experience of eco-anxiety and what has helped alleviate it. I was inspired by the literary genre of 'solarpunk' (particularly the work of Becky Chambers), which imagines hopeful futures in which humanity engages with nature and technology in a sustainable, community-focused way. This hopeful vision of the future contrasts with the more common image of dystopian futures in works like Kurt Vonnegut's 'Harrison Bergeron'.

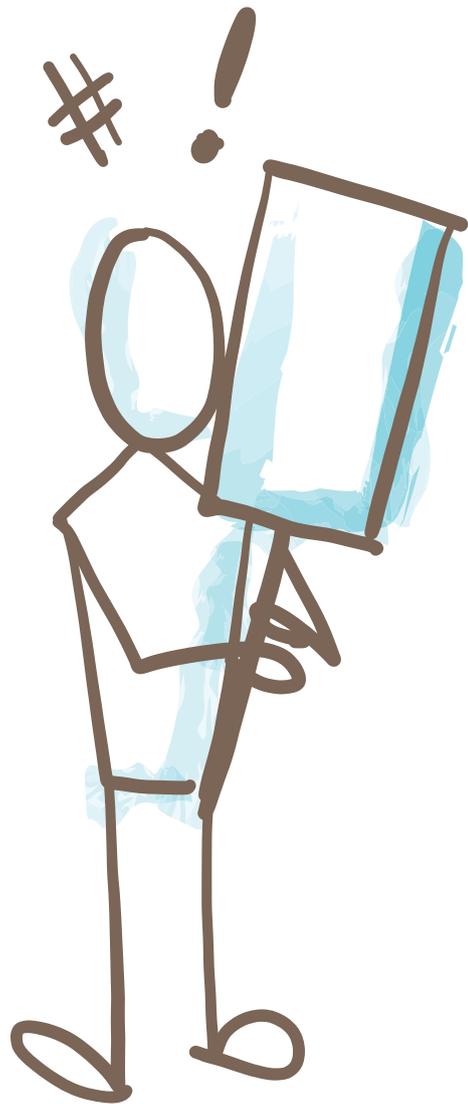
My audience comprises attendees at a climate protest, and the speech is targeted at those who have felt eco-anxiety, particularly young people. I aimed to help listeners feel less alone in their eco-anxiety, and to inspire them to reframe their thinking about climate change to focus on hope and courage, the two important qualities referred to in the stimulus quote. I also tried to encourage listeners to become involved with their communities to make both themselves and their communities more resilient.

The mentor text I drew from most is Emmeline Pankhurst's speech 'Freedom or Death'. Like Pankhurst, I used the persuasive technique of appealing to ethos, pathos and logos. I established my credibility (ethos) by drawing a link between my own experiences of eco-anxiety and those of the audience, assuring them that I understand their fears because I have felt those same fears. I further supported my credibility using examples of how I incorporate hope into my life, showing that I practise what I preach. I appealed to emotions (pathos) such as a feeling of solidarity by emphasising that I and countless other young people also feel anxious about the climate crisis. I then appealed to hope and pride, dwelling on the positive emotions created through group activities like community gardening. I also supported my arguments using evidence (logos) by referring to what happened in the 1995 Chicago heatwave.

I also used some conventions common in speeches. This includes a strong opening line, which connects to two strong emotions: wanting to save the world, but also feeling powerless. I also used repetition of the phrase ‘so let’s protest by ...’ to make my point more memorable. Additionally, I incorporated the call-and-response chanting common at protests, ending my speech with a strong call to action. The chanting would involve the audience in a collective action that leaves them feeling energised and hopeful, reinforcing my argument about the power of solidarity.

Aspects of language that I used to bolster my argument included using the first-person plural pronoun ‘we’ to reinforce how solidarity is a way to feel hopeful about the climate. This is similar to the mentor text ‘Friday Essay: On the Sydney Mardi Gras March of 1978’, where Mark Gillespie uses ‘we’ to group together the participants of the protest he is writing about. At points I also used the second-person pronoun ‘you’; by directly addressing the audience, I aimed to create a stronger connection between speaker and listener.

A challenge I faced writing this piece was striking the right tone for a speech. I had not written many speeches before, and I was worried that mine might be too dry and emotionless. To help create a tone appropriate for spoken communication, I imagined how I would actually speak if I was talking to a friend experiencing eco-anxiety.



SECTION 3

EXPLORING AND ANALYSING ARGUMENT

In Unit 2, this area of study is called ‘Exploring argument’. You will read, listen to and view a variety of persuasive texts and identify the ways that writers and speakers use argument and persuasive language to persuade an audience to agree with their point of view. You will also give an oral presentation of your own point of view on a contemporary issue.

In Unit 4, this area of study is called ‘Analysing argument’. Building on what you have learned in Year 11, you will write analytically about writers’ and speakers’ methods of persuasion. Again, you will also give an oral presentation of your point of view on an issue.

Chapters 9 and 10 of this section of *Key Skills: VCE English* cover the metalanguage and core concepts associated with this area of study. They explain how to identify issues, stakeholders and points of view; how arguments can be constructed; how words and images can be used to present an argument persuasively; and how the decisions made by text creators are shaped by their context, purpose and audience. The activities will help you to improve your analytical skills as well as your ability to write precisely and insightfully about the persuasive effects of argument and language.

Chapters 11, 12 and 13 look closely at the features and main persuasive strategies associated with particular text types.

Chapters 14 and 15 provide detailed guidelines for two extended writing tasks: an analysis of argument, language and visuals in two media texts on an issue, and the presentation of a point of view in oral form. Both chapters include practical processes and models that you can use as the basis for developing your written and spoken pieces.

CHAPTER

09

ISSUES AND THE MEDIA

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Key terms
- › Issues in the news

Persuading and being persuaded is part of our everyday lives. Every advertisement you view aims to persuade you to buy or do something. Your family and friends might try to persuade you to alter your behaviour or to agree with their point of view on a person or situation. You might try to persuade your teacher to give you an extension on an assignment, or your sibling to share an item of clothing.

News media – for example, in the form of newspapers, news websites and social media – is also part of our daily lives and constantly positioning us, whether we are aware of it or not, to view people, events and issues in particular ways. Being able to deconstruct, or take apart, the basic elements of another person's point of view can help you to decide whether or not you agree with it.

This chapter sets out the basic vocabulary and knowledge required to start analysing persuasive language and argument. It will help you to identify issues, recognise how the news is produced and understand the importance of context, purpose and audience.



Key terms

In this part of the Year 11 and Year 12 English/EAL course, much of your focus will be on analysing persuasive media texts. You will be required to use the terminology, or **metalanguage**, associated with analysing argument, language and visuals. This section gives an overview of the some of the key concepts and metalanguage you will need to understand and use.

In the context of the course, a **media text** is any text made available to a significant segment of the public: it is a text intended to be shared. Media texts you might study include advertisements, blog posts, opinion pieces, editorials, magazine and journal articles, posters, emails and petitions, among others.

These media texts could be:

- **written** texts, i.e. consisting of written words, such as an opinion piece
- **audio** texts, i.e. in spoken format, such as a podcast
- **visual** texts, i.e. in the form of an image or images, such as a cartoon
- **audiovisual** texts, i.e. using a combination of spoken and visual material, such as a television advertisement.

An **issue** is a topic that provokes different points of view. It:

- develops around a specific aspect of a topic or event
- is discussed for an extended period – weeks, months or even years
- generates public interest and debate
- appears in a range of print and non-print media.

The opinion expressed by the writer or speaker of a persuasive text is referred to as their **contention**.

People or groups who have a particular connection to an issue are called **stakeholders**. These people have something to gain or lose depending on the outcome of the issue.

Purpose, audience and context

Creators of persuasive texts will make choices about their text's structure, content and presentation according to three main factors: their main **purpose**, their target **audience** and the **context** in which they are expressing their point of view.

Every text is created for a particular purpose. Obviously one of the main aims of the texts you will be studying is to persuade. But the creators of these texts will often have a more specific purpose. For example, they might aim to sell a product, endorse a political candidate or raise awareness of a cause.

When you analyse a text, consider: who is the writer or speaker trying to persuade? Every text is created with a particular target audience in mind. The intended audience might be a clearly defined group, such as parents of school-aged children living in Frankston. Other times, it might be broader and characterised by a single feature or loosely defined collection of attributes that the readers or viewers of the text will likely have in common, such as conservative political views. Many texts are designed to appeal to several different target audiences.

Factors that influence how people respond to an issue include their:

- age
- socioeconomic status
- education
- employment
- family background
- beliefs.

When creators of persuasive texts try to influence how people respond to an issue, this is referred to as **positioning the audience**. This means that the text creator is trying to shape the audience's views to match their own.

Every text is produced and consumed in a particular context. This term refers to the background of an issue and how the persuasive text fits into the general debate about a topic. Understanding the context of a text means considering why it was created, how it was published or shared, relevant details about the creator, and the existing knowledge and feelings of the target audience. Placing a text in its context will help you to understand the writer's main purpose and who their audience might be.

9.1 *Work with metalanguage*

- 1 Complete the table below with appropriate terms, definitions and examples.

Term	Definition	Example
	someone who has a personal investment in an issue	
Issue		
		to persuade listeners to join in a community clean-up day
Context		
	the main point of view expressed about an issue	
		'Acknowledgement of country has lost its value' by Patrick Carlyon, <i>Herald Sun</i>
	a text that uses a combination of spoken words and visuals	
		students at a school assembly



2 View the social media post on the right, then answer the questions.

a What is the writer's main contention?

b Underline or highlight the part of the post where this contention is most clearly expressed.

c What is the primary purpose of the post?

d Who do you think might be the main audience for the post? Describe the audience in terms of their likely ages, interests and concerns.

SURFERSAGAINSTS... **Follow**
Posts
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Liked by **gregoryturner** and others
surfersagainstsewage Beaches. Streets. Rivers. Parks. Shorelines to mountaintops, and all the places in between. Our world is facing a plastic pollution crisis, and it's up to all of us to take action. By taking part in the #MillionMileClean, you can help make a difference. Whether you live near the coast, in a bustling city, or the peaceful countryside, there are outdoor spaces near you that need your help.

Registering a clean via our website is a great way to get involved, but you can also join an existing one that's happening near you. By working together with like-minded individuals, you'll not only be helping to remove plastic waste from our blue and green spaces, but you'll also be building a sense of community and shared purpose.

So, what are you waiting for? Visit the link in our bio for more info @surfersagainstsewage.

@bambooshoots_iow
 9 November 2023

Issues in the news

Many of the texts you study will be from publications that focus on news and current affairs, such as newspapers, whether print or online. Widely read Australian newspapers include *The Age*, the *Herald Sun*, the Australia edition of *The Guardian* and *The Australian*. Large mainstream media organisations are likely to own television and/or radio networks, as well as maintaining comprehensive websites. News and current affairs form a significant part of their programming, especially in prime-time viewing hours. Independent news and current affairs publications include *Crikey* and *The Conversation*. These online-only news providers offer an alternative to mainstream media organisations, and often encourage contributions from academics, independent journalists and experts.

We might think of news sources as factual and unbiased. But the way in which stories are selected, produced and presented is affected by a range of factors that influence how the reader or viewer is positioned to think about them. Below are examples of some of those factors.

- Most news organisations are businesses that need to make a profit. This can mean that stories are selected according to their ability to capture the attention of readers, rather than their actual importance.
- The political biases of news organisations can affect which stories they choose to publish and which they do not, and the ways they position readers to respond to published stories.
- News publications will cater to the dominant interests and attitudes of their main audience.
- The writer's own viewpoint on an issue or a story may influence how they present it.
- Journalists and editors might try to avoid offending or undermining businesses who pay to advertise with them.

9.2 *Explore an issue in the news*

A 2023 Senate report focusing on discipline in schools recommended that students be explicitly taught how to behave in the classroom. This report led to a number of views on the issue being expressed in different media forums, including in newspapers and on radio talkback programs.

- 1 Complete the table on the next page by identifying stakeholders in this issue and some of the factors that might shape their opinion.



Stakeholders	Factor that might shape their opinion
teachers	
	They might feel criticised or patronised by a behaviour curriculum.
parents	
residents who live near a school	
	They might feel that requiring schools to teach students how to behave will be popular with voters.

- 2 Why do you think the Senate report was widely covered in the media? Why do you think the issue generated many responses from media consumers?

- 3 The letter to the editor below, published in *The Age*, presents one individual's response to the issue. Read it, then answer the questions that follow.

Poor behaviour

A behaviour curriculum ("Time to teach students how to behave", 2/12) that focuses on upskilling teachers and rearranging learning spaces is tantamount to placing a Band-Aid on a broken leg. Classrooms are a microcosm of society. Students bring into the classroom the behaviours they see and experience outside the classroom.

Unlike some other countries and cultures, in Australia our culture places little emphasis on respect, courtesy and kindness, and more on individual freedoms and entitlements. It is no wonder that Australia sits at 69 out of 76 on the OECD disciplinary climate index. While we as teachers can foster better listening and more appropriate responses from students in our classrooms, the values that underpin antisocial behaviour need to be acknowledged. If charity begins at home, then so do all the most desirable behaviours, and also those least desirable.

Claire Merry (retired teacher),
Wantirna

- a What is Merry's contention?



b What factors might have shaped Merry's views?

c Merry is responding to an article in *The Age* titled 'Time to teach students how to behave'. What does this headline suggest about the paper's stance on a 'behaviour curriculum'?

d Letters to the editor are given headings by newspaper editors, rather than by the letter writers. What impression of Australian students is given by the heading of Merry's letter?

- 4 Below is a series of headlines from articles written about this issue. Place a tick beside all those that you think convey an opinion about the introduction of a behaviour curriculum in schools. Place a cross beside those you think convey a neutral stance on the issue.

'How to fix Aussie kids' dire classroom behaviour' (*The Australian Financial Review*)

'Calls for behaviour curriculum in schools' (*ABC News*)

'Embrace the behaviour survey' (*Filling the Pail* blog)

'Australian students need an urgent lesson in behaviour' (*The Educator Online*)

'Senate inquiry calls for new "behaviour curriculum" to tackle classroom disruptions' (*The Canberra Times*)

- 5 Write your own letter to the editor expressing your thoughts on the issue. Create a heading for your letter that conveys your opinion to readers.

ARGUMENT AND LANGUAGE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Understanding argument
- › Understanding persuasive language

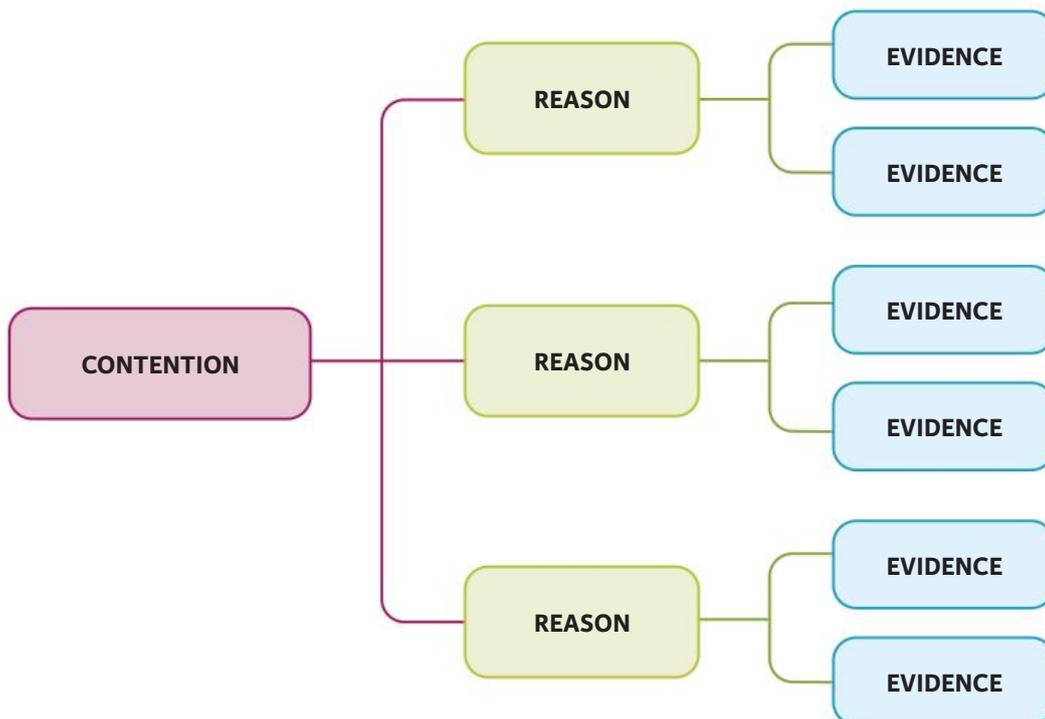
When writers and speakers present a point of view on an issue, they are mounting an argument with the aim of convincing their audience to agree. In this chapter we will look more closely at what an argument is and some of the structural choices creators of persuasive texts might make.

We will also look at how text creators express their arguments using carefully chosen language and persuasive strategies to position their audiences to agree.



Understanding argument

In the context of your senior English studies, the word ‘argument’ refers to a contention supported by reasons and evidence. A good argument is made up of three elements, as shown in the diagram below.



Reasons and structural choices

Remember that a writer's contention is the main opinion they want their audience to agree with. A writer's **reasons** are the *why* behind their point of view. The reasons explain and support the writer's position, making it appear credible and logical.

Often, a writer or speaker will state their contention clearly near the start of their text, then explain their reasons before repeating or rephrasing their contention at the end. An alternative approach is to present the reasons and evidence, then state the contention clearly at the end.

Sometimes the contention in a text is implied or suggested, rather than stated explicitly. In this case, you have to infer (figure out) the underlying contention, based on the reasons and evidence presented. By not stating their contention directly, writers can give the impression that they are considering a range of ideas and options, rather than trying to convince their audience to agree with one opinion. Giving readers the impression that they are making up their own mind, rather than being manipulated or convinced, can be a powerful persuasive tool.

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'. These phrases show the logical connections between the point of view and the reasons.

Evidence

Just as reasons strengthen the persuasive power of an argument, **evidence** increases the impact of reasons by suggesting they have a solid, factual foundation. Evidence used to support a writer's reasons can include:

- facts
- statistics
- expert opinion
- personal experience.

Facts

A fact is a piece of information that can be proven to be true. It is different from an opinion, which is one person's belief about something and cannot be proven to be true or untrue. For example, the statement 'Mushrooms contain Vitamin B' is a fact. It has been scientifically proven. But the statement, 'Mushrooms should be part of every Australian's daily diet' is an opinion. While such a view could be supported with reasons and evidence, it will always be open to being disputed and challenged by those who disagree (for example, people who dislike or are allergic to mushrooms).

Sometimes a writer or speaker might state something as if it is a fact, when really it is closer to an opinion. For example, a writer might state that ‘residents of aged care facilities are much more likely to catch airborne viruses than older people who live with their families’, without saying where this information comes from or providing proof that it is accurate. It might sound like a statement of fact – and it might be true – but it would be more convincing if accompanied by firm evidence and details of its source.

Statistics

Statistics are numerical facts that tell us something meaningful about a group of people or a set of data. They summarise information and help to present an overall picture. Such information can be very persuasive in an argument. But it is also important to consider the source of the statistics and how the data was obtained. For example, if a survey shows that ninety per cent of respondents support a tax on foods that have high levels of sugar and salt, this would be much more persuasive if 1000 people responded, rather than just ten. Similarly, data provided by an independent researcher who is a recognised expert in nutrition is likely to be seen as more trustworthy than if the survey was conducted by a health-food company, which might have a financial interest in encouraging a tax on unhealthy foods.

The demographics (age, occupation etc.) of the people surveyed or studied to produce a statistic should also be considered. For example, if the respondents to the survey about taxing high-sugar and high-salt foods were all personal trainers, the results couldn’t be considered representative of the attitudes of the general population.

Expert opinion

Expert opinion includes statements or information from people or organisations considered to have specialised knowledge of a particular subject. The inclusion of expert opinion can be highly persuasive because it suggests that the writer has researched the issue thoroughly, and that well-informed people agree with the writer’s opinion. Expert opinion is most persuasive when the expert has a strong knowledge of or connection to the issue. For example, a doctor might be considered an expert on immunisation, but would probably not be the best expert to refer to on the issue of whether learning an additional language should be compulsory in secondary school.

Anecdotal evidence

Referring to personal experience or to the experiences of someone known to the writer can be persuasive because it suggests the writer has firsthand knowledge of the issue. However, a close personal connection to an issue can also mean that the writer has a bias towards a particular point of view and might be less open to other ideas and opinions. While personal anecdotes can vividly illustrate a point, the writer might be implying that others’ experiences will be the same, which is not necessarily true. It is not safe to draw general conclusions from one person’s experience, without the support of more evidence (such as statistics). For example, if someone has a bad reaction to a vaccine, that does not mean all vaccines are harmful to everyone.

Argument structure

A common way to structure an argument is to begin with a contention and some contextual information, then move on to a series of reasons. But there are many other ways to build an argument. Common structural features and approaches in persuasive texts include the following.

- The text might **begin with an anecdote or incident** before moving into a discussion of the issue it gives rise to.
- **The main contention can be placed strategically.** Sometimes it is declared at the beginning of the text and followed by an explanation of the reasons for it, which can suggest strong conviction; sometimes it is left to the end, after reasons have been outlined, to suggest a logical conclusion has been reached.
- **Subheadings** can be used to guide readers through the material and draw their attention to key ideas, facts or events.
- **Bullet lists** help to highlight or summarise key information.
- **Breakout quotes** (quotes from the text used as visual elements, sometimes called pull quotes) highlight key points and grab attention.
- **Graphs, charts and tables** present information in a clear and immediately accessible way, and help to break up long sections of text for ease of reading.
- **Images** can be included to illustrate an idea in the written text and/or provide a point of view on the issue, as well as to break up the text.
- **Hyperlinks**, in digital texts, lead the reader to supplementary or contextual information.

Bias

While ‘bias’ can sound like a negative quality, in fact every person has particular beliefs and values that affect the way they feel about certain issues. Sometimes a writer will have a stake in an issue that will affect their attitude towards it. This might be overt and easily recognised – for example, a commercial company will have an obvious bias in favour of their own product as opposed to a competitor’s. At other times, bias can be more subtle and harder to detect. For example, a doctor might be more likely to support a medical approach to drug addiction than a police officer, who might feel it is a problem best dealt with through criminal punishment.

Being aware of a writer’s possible biases or vested interests can help you to better understand their purpose and the context of their persuasive text.

10.1 *Deconstruct an argument*

The text below is from the website of the microlending non-profit organisation Kiva. Kiva allows people to provide no-interest loans to individuals and groups in need. Read the text, then answer the questions that follow.



← → ↻ Search 🔍 ↓ ↗ ⋮

Microfinance 101: What it is and how to get involved

If you aren't familiar with microfinance, the term can seem a little cryptic. In this guide we'll help demystify what microfinance is, where it is used, and how it helps.

What is microfinance?

Microfinance is a term used to describe a suite of financial services made available to individuals, entrepreneurs, and small businesses who don't have access to traditional banking. Often, this lack of access is correlated with poverty and systemic inequality. Over 1.7 billion people around the world—more than 31 percent of adults—are considered “unbanked,” meaning they have few options to manage their finances.

Some of the reasons that people don't have access to finance include:

- Lack of access to a nearby bank branch (where the United States has over 30 bank branches per 100,000 people, many countries have less than 10)
- Lack of access to a mobile phone or internet service
- Minimum balance fees or a minimum opening balance
- Distrust of the banking system, typically due to a lack of transparency regarding fees
- No access to a government-issued ID, which is required to open a bank account
- Socioeconomic factors like gender inequality, wealth inequality or lack of education
- Systemic or structural factors like unstable governments, conflicts, refugee status, or racism
- Lack of assets to serve as collateral

Microfinance services aim to increase access to financial products like loans, savings accounts, insurance, and fund transfers, providing opportunities for growth and stability.

What is the goal of microfinance?

While the eradication of global poverty remains a primary ambition, microfinance also aims to improve financial inclusion—to provide access to services that enable economic agency and financial freedom for all.



Search



What are the benefits of microfinance?

Microfinance expands access to financial services and extends credit to those who would otherwise have limited options. Some of the benefits this can provide include:

- 1. Increase household wealth.** For the more than 97 million people on the planet living on less than USD\$2 a day, having the means to invest in raw materials, better seeds for farming, or a college degree can compound into a more successful future.
- 2. Create opportunities for others.** A loan used to launch a small business can help improve the economic health of a community by providing new job opportunities.
- 3. Promote better health and education.** Families who utilize microfinance are less likely to pull their children from school for economic reasons and have more resources available to pay for healthcare.
- 4. Help close the gender gap.** Over 80 percent of Kiva microloans go to women, funding businesses, enterprises and education in countries where social norms do not support gender equality.
- 5. Provide a sustainable way to help low-income populations.** While charitable giving can be a way to help those with financial difficulties, it requires a constantly replenished pool of financial resources. With a repayment rate of 96.4 percent, microlending through Kiva provides a sustainable flow of cash which can be lent again to additional individuals once it has been repaid.

Through Kiva microloans, approximately USD\$1.8 billion has been deployed to nearly 4.5 million borrowers in 94 countries so far.

What are examples of how microfinance is used?

Microfinance in the form of microloans can take many forms. For example, Peter, a maize farmer in Kenya, borrowed USD\$125 through Kiva, facilitated by Kiva's Field Partner Apollo Agriculture, which helps small farmers maximize their profits. With the loan, Peter was able to purchase and plant higher quality seeds, leading to an increased harvest and higher earnings—which he will then reinvest in his farm for another growing season.

An example of how a larger microloan works to create a positive impact on an entire community can be found in Catherine's story. As the owner of a cereal company in northern Rwanda, she purchases raw grains from 3,500 small farmers across the region and processes them to sell to wholesalers and in her small supermarket. A loan of USD\$35,475 bought a new commercial truck to collect more grains from more farmers, enabling her to expand her business in southern Uganda and hire more employees.



- 1 What is the main message the organisation aims to communicate to readers?

- 2 In your own words, summarise two main reasons the text presents in favour of microlending.

- 3 Why do you think the text includes subheadings? (Hint: think about where the text appears, as well as the likely audience.)

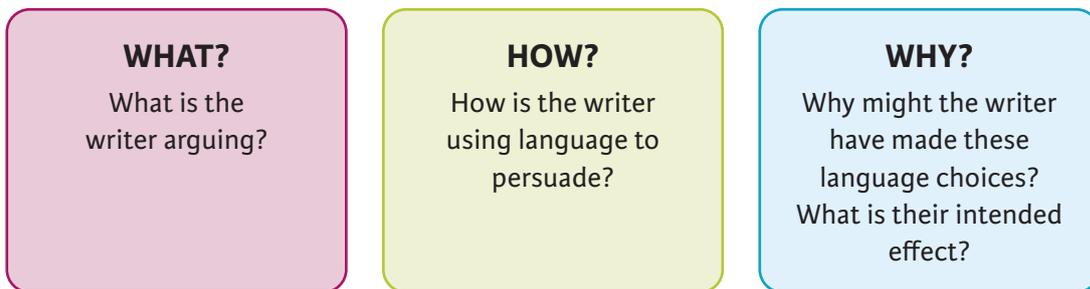
- 4 The text includes bulleted and numbered lists. How might these have a persuasive impact on the reader?

- 5 Highlight an example of anecdotal evidence in the text, then complete this sentence:
The anecdotal evidence _____
[summarise evidence] is intended to arouse the reader's _____
[emotion] by _____
_____ [explain how the anecdote evokes the specific emotion].
- 6 Underline three examples of statistics referenced in the text, then complete this sentence:
The repeated use of statistics such as _____ [example 1] and
_____ [example 2] positions the reader to think/feel
_____.
- 7 Do you think the text presents a balanced view of microlending? Why or why not? Identify one factor that is likely to have shaped the views expressed by Kiva.

Understanding persuasive language

When analysing a persuasive text, 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 in which it is delivered. You also need to consider how a writer's language is intended to appeal to and influence the intended audience, the members of which will have their own interests, biases, experiences and knowledge. Always consider how particular language choices are likely to influence the writer's *specific* audience.

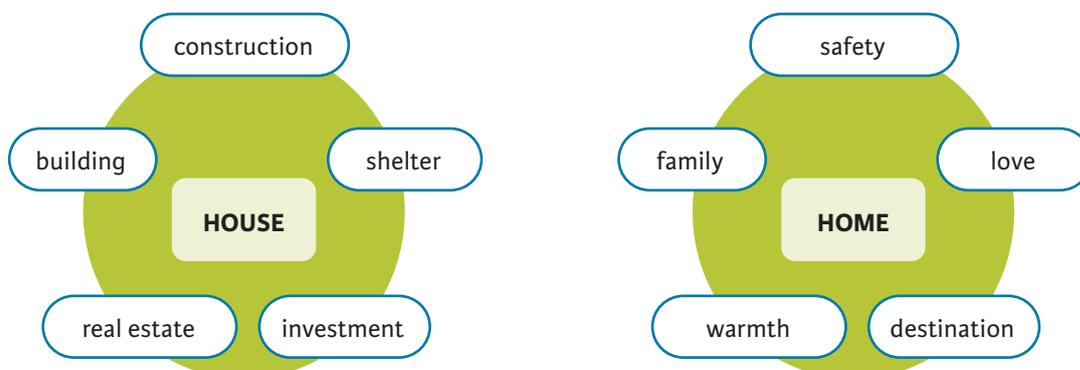
A useful approach to analysing a persuasive text is to ask yourself 'What? How? Why?'



Connotations and associations

An important part of analysing a persuasive text is considering why the writer selected the particular words and phrases they did. What ideas or feelings do specific vocabulary choices evoke in the reader's mind, and how do they support the writer's viewpoint?

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, the words 'house' and 'home' are similar in meaning, yet each carries different connotations, as the diagrams show.



Tone

Tone is the mood or feeling of a text; it reflects a writer's attitude to a topic or an issue. Tone is created by a writer's language choices, and helps to position the audience to feel a particular way about an issue.

Often, a writer will vary their tone within their text. For example, the writer of an opinion piece about climate change might begin with an alarmed tone as they present data about rising sea levels, then switch to a more measured and thoughtful tone as they discuss possible solutions.

To identify tone, analyse the writer's **word choices** by considering the specific emotions they aim to evoke, as well as the words' connotations and associations.

Style and register

The term **style** refers to the type of language used in a text. Writers and speakers tailor their style to appeal to their audience. The style also needs to be appropriate for the context and the writer's specific purpose.

Words that can be used to describe style include:

- academic
- casual
- colloquial
- complex
- conversational
- declarative
- expressive
- fluent
- informative
- lyrical
- official
- polished
- rambling
- succinct
- unsophisticated

An important aspect of style is the **register** in which a text is written. This term refers to the degree of formality of a text. A formal register can make a writer seem knowledgeable and authoritative, while an informal register can make a writer seem approachable and relaxed.

The table below summarises the features of formal and informal registers.

Formal	Informal
few contractions (e.g. 'it is' rather than 'it's')	more frequent use of contractions and casual abbreviations (e.g. 'I'll', 'you're', 'whatevs')
little or no slang or colloquial/casual language	more frequent use of slang and colloquial/casual language
more complex and varied sentence structures	simpler sentences that are less varied in structure
more sophisticated and varied word choices	simpler and more repetitive word choices; more frequent use of common, familiar words
more frequent use of third person ('he', 'she', 'they', 'the school's')	more frequent use of first person ('I', 'we')
more frequent use of the passive voice (e.g. 'The accident was caused by negligence.')	more frequent use of the active voice (e.g. 'Negligence caused the accident.')

In some texts the style moves from formal to informal, or from informal to formal; other texts are written in a standard register, which lies between formal and informal. Choosing the right register, however, always depends on the audience, context and purpose.

10.2 Analyse language

- 1 Add your own positive, negative and neutral words to the tone word bank below. Try to find words that show the range of tone; for example, 'appreciative' is the opposite of 'disparaging', and 'measured' lies somewhere in the middle of the two.

Positive	Neutral	Negative
appreciative	measured	disparaging
assured	matter-of-fact	uncertain
conciliatory	composed	provocative
enthusiastic	considered	apathetic
dynamic	unhurried	sluggish
optimistic	moderate	pessimistic

- 2 For each of the examples below, identify the main tone and circle or highlight one key word or phrase that helps to create that tone.

a It is important that our children know the feel of grass, a running creek, cool and warm breezes, and birdsong, and that their family loved them enough to show up and demand their protection.

(letter to the editor, *The Age*)

b **Live animal export is depraved and brutal. Its end can't come quickly enough**

(headline, *Crikey*)





- c** **Every time you chipped in to support Traditional Owners speaking truth to power.** Every time you shared their powerful messages on social media. Every time you emailed your MP or called Environment Minister Plibersek. Every time you showed up at rallies to protect water – and dug in at election time to win support for First Nations justice.
It all added up to win these vital water protections.

(email from activist group GetUp to subscribers)

- 3 For each of the examples in question 2, identify the register and give one word to describe the style.
- a _____
- b _____
- c _____
- 4 Read the extract from an opinion piece below, published in *National Indigenous Times*, then complete the analytical sentences.

How much time we spend on a date. How little time we spend on the substantive issues that actually have an impact on literally how long someone will be alive in this country, and the quality of life during that time.

What is absurd to me is that 26 January has become a point of national focus and attention, and not the significant issues facing Indigenous people every single day of their lives.

Our country is becoming increasingly divided with the central pillar of what happens about a date, when what we need most is national unity and resolution to do better. To close the Gap. To tell the truth. To face the facts. These are difficult tasks. Instead we spend so much time having the easier conversation about a public holiday.

Zak Kirkup is of Yamatji descent and is the former leader of the WA Liberal Party

- 5 In a mostly _____ tone, Kirkup argues that _____
- _____
- He uses the word 'absurd', with its connotations of _____
- _____
- to describe the debate about the date of Australia Day. This is likely to cause his readers to feel _____.
- He also uses the emotive word/phrase _____, which has associations with _____, thus positioning readers to believe _____.

Persuasive techniques

As we have seen, creators of persuasive texts make careful language choices in order to create particular effects and to position their target audiences in particular ways. The table below gives an overview of some of the specific strategies writers and speakers use to persuade.

It is not necessary to be able to label every example of persuasive language that you see in a text in order to analyse it. However, having a good understanding of the metalanguage associated with the purposeful ways in which writers use language can help you to write precisely about how they are attempting to persuade their audience to agree with them.

Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
Ad hominem attack: personal criticism or insults aimed at an individual or a group rather than at their argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> belittle opponents and their views gain attention and give emphasis to key ideas 	It makes my blood boil to hear celebrities lecturing us ordinary folks about reducing emissions while they get about in chauffeur-driven SUVs and jetset all over the world on their private planes.	This ad hominem attack undermines the credibility of celebrities' messages about climate change by suggesting they are hypocritical and selfish.
Alliteration: repetition of consonant or vowel sounds, especially at the start of words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emphasise and highlight specific words (usually related to the key ideas of the issue) 	The racing industry is corrupt and cruel, and kills its employees.	The repetition of the hard consonant 'c' contributes to a harsh tone that conveys the writer's contempt for horse racing.
Analogy: a comparison between two things or ideas that leads the audience to draw conclusions about the similarities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain a complex idea in a more familiar way link an argument to other ideas that readers know well and believe, to make it seem correct 	The 'never drive through floodwater' message is like preaching alcohol abstinence. Drivers should be taught to deal with flooded roads safely, just as we now promote safe drinking, knowing that simply banning the practice doesn't work.	The comparison between driving through floodwaters and consuming alcohol implies that both require the same educational approach when it comes to public education, and that simply advising the public not to engage in both sorts of behaviour is futile.
Anecdote: a brief personal account or story that provides a human angle and engages the reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evoke a feeling of close personal connection with the speaker make the point of view feel more real or authentic 	My successful marketing executive friend Ben ended up homeless after serious illness caused him to lose both his job and his marriage. Becoming unhoused truly can happen to anyone.	The anecdote about the writer's friend serves as a warning to readers by providing real-life evidence that homelessness is a risk for everyone.



Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
Appeal to family values: suggesting that only traditional family life can provide the essential values for a healthy, stable society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> play on readers' desire to protect and nurture their family, especially young children undermine or criticise other family structures 	The modern family, characterised by divorce, single parenthood and unconventional living arrangements, is contributing to mass instability and confusion on an individual and a societal level. I see the results in my courtroom every day.	The writer's position as a judge leads them to draw a direct link between criminality and modern family structures, positioning the reader to feel that both the traditional family and society in general are under threat.
Appeal to fear and insecurity: playing on readers' existing fears or worries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> imply that readers should heed the writer's advice or terrible things will happen 	Alternative medicine is useless but not harmless – when cancer patients put their faith in tinctures, and chanting causes fatal delays to proper treatment.	The writer aims to evoke a sense of fear through the use of emotive terms such as 'fatal', which position the reader to feel concerned about vulnerable cancer patients and opposed to the use of alternative medicine.
Appeal to group loyalty and patriotism: using people's desire to belong to a group to persuade them to agree with a viewpoint or take action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> suggest that readers are missing out on something good or will be excluded if they do not agree evoke feelings that all people from one place or group have a shared identity or purpose 	Changing the date of Australia Day is the only way forward if we truly want a united country that reflects our cherished belief in a fair go for all.	By appealing to traditional Australian values and using inclusive language, the writer aims to evoke readers' desire to be included in this positive collective identity and thus to support changing the date.
Appeal to financial self-interest: making the audience think about how their personal finances will be affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make readers feel that they are getting good value for their money or, conversely, that they have been cheated (can be positive or negative) 	Low population growth leads to a reduced workforce and lower productivity, which in turn reduces economic growth.	Logical language and a direct tone are used to support this appeal to the reader's financial self-interest, which positions them to agree that increased population growth is economically beneficial.
Appeal to modernity: engaging with people's desire to be progressive and part of the in-crowd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create an impression that people are out of touch if they don't agree, and that they should feel embarrassed about falling behind 	With zero evidence that exams are academically beneficial, it's time to relegate them to the dustbin of history and explore new, more meaningful forms of assessment appropriate to the contemporary educational context.	The words 'relegate' and 'dustbin of history' characterise exams as outdated and ineffective, encouraging the reader to support changes to assessment.

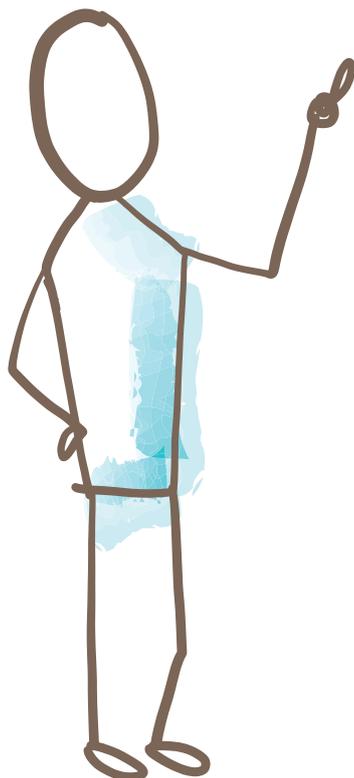
Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
Appeal to justice: playing on people's belief that we all have the right to be treated fairly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> highlight what is unjust and urge people to fight against it, or highlight what is fair and urge people to fight to keep it 	We never refer to someone <i>falling</i> for a burglary or <i>falling</i> for an assault, so why do we do it with fraud? Let's stop blaming the victims.	The writer draws a comparison between victims of scams and victims of burglaries in order to highlight the blamelessness of both.
Appeal to self-interest: encouraging people's feelings that their interests should be placed ahead of others'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generate a fear that others might take advantage of the reader or not care about them, making them want to change the situation, or act to protect what they have 	The overburdened ambulance system should stop responding to drug overdoses. Why should law-abiding citizens be put at risk while criminals reap the benefits of scarce medical resources?	The direct question to readers suggests that drug users are placing readers' health at risk by consuming scarce and valuable health resources.
Appeal to tradition and custom: playing on people's belief that rituals and traditions are valuable and should be preserved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a feeling that too much change to the way we live damages families and undermines social unity 	So now the proud Aussie tradition of the backyard barbie is being attacked because of air pollution, fire danger and even carcinogens in grilled meats. Is nothing sacred?!	The writer implies that concerns about barbecue safety are part of a broader societal trend that involves 'attacking' valued social customs in ways that erode traditional Australian culture.
Cliché: an overused phrase that a wide range of readers can quickly grasp and understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make audiences feel reassured when they recognise a familiar expression create a humorous effect or mocking tone 	The tide is turning, the time has come. We've reached critical mass for change, and a future in which the whole world is vegan is no longer a crazy dream.	The familiarity of the phrases 'tide is turning' and 'time has come' prime the reader to feel more comfortable with the bold vision – of a world in which no one eats meat – that follows.
Emotive language: strong words and phrases deliberately used to arouse specific feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take focus away from the logic or evidence of an argument and place it on strong feelings generate a powerful emotional reaction for or against something 	Keeping cats indoors protects Australia's delicate ecosystem from these lethal hunters, which cause the loss of millions of vulnerable and valuable native Australian animals annually.	The charged adjective 'lethal' is contrasted with the adjectives 'delicate' and 'vulnerable', with their connotations of innocence and fragility, to arouse the reader's protective instincts.
Exaggeration, overstatement and hyperbole: presenting an extreme view of a situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create surprise and a strong dramatic impact provoke a strong emotional reaction add humour 	Nowadays it's only celebrities, royalty and lotto winners who can afford Melbourne house prices.	The exaggerated description of the Melbourne housing market is intended to highlight what the writer views as extreme inequality.





Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
Figurative language: words and phrases used in a non-literal way (e.g. metaphors or similes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make the writer seem witty and clever • create engaging imagery or comparisons that have a strong emotional impact 	Time to shine a light on the dark corners of political corruption.	The term 'dark corners' has connotations of secrecy and illegality, positioning the reader to support the idea of exposing bad behaviour by 'shining a light' on it.
Generalisation: a statement that suggests that what is true for some is true for most or all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play on readers' existing beliefs about specific examples, to make them feel the same way about a much larger group or concept 	Homeschooled kids are poorly socialised, ignorant misfits whose delusional parents are rendering them ultimately unfit to take their place in the adult world.	Delivered in an inflammatory tone, this generalisation attacks homeschooled students in order to position the reader to reject homeschooling as damaging and ineffective.
Inclusive language: terms such as 'we', 'our' and 'us'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a sense that the writer/speaker shares common experiences and beliefs with the audience • make audience members feel that they are being considered 	This holiday season, instead of gifts to people who already have everything, let's give charity donations that will help those with nothing. We can reduce unnecessary consumerism and have a positive impact on the lives of the most needy.	The words 'let's' and 'we' invoke a sense of community. Combined with an appeal to sympathy for those less fortunate, inclusive language invites the reader to share the writer's attitude towards donating to charity.
Irony and sarcasm: saying the opposite of what is true or expected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • point out unexpected or flawed aspects of an opposing argument • mock and belittle an opposing argument or person 	Brilliant idea – let's reduce the cost of public transport so more people use it, when the system is already overcrowded and under immense strain. I can't see any possible issues with that ...	Sarcasm is established through the juxtaposition of the positive term 'brilliant' and the description of an overstretched public transport system coping with increased patronage. The implication is that the suggestion to lower transport fares is misguided and impractical.
Puns and plays on words: words with multiple meanings, used to imply multiple ideas with the one phrase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present the writer as clever and funny • position the audience to want to pay attention 	Biodegradable caskets and 'green' funerals are the only responsible choice. Every wooden casket sold is another nail in the coffin for the planet.	The phrase 'nail in the coffin' presents what could be seen as a sensitive issue in a more comedic light, encouraging audiences to engage with the writer's opinion while also reinforcing the environmental costs of traditional funeral customs.

Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
Reason and logic: drawing conclusions from evidence and known facts to support a clear argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> suggest that the writer reached their view through careful, coherent thought imply an argument is sensible and intelligently developed 	Lack of diversity on spacecraft teams creates risks for a mission. Many studies show that diverse teams outperform homogeneous teams because they focus on and process facts better and are more innovative.	The audience is encouraged to see a direct link between diversity and the success of complex projects such as space missions. The reader is positioned to view diversity as not only ethically valuable but also productive.
Repetition: repeating a word or phrase several times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> place emphasis on the words or phrases that are repeated, to highlight ideas or evoke an emotional response 	Since working from home has become normalised, millions of employees are more able to take better care of their families, take better care of themselves and, to the surprise of some, even take better care of their work responsibilities.	The repetition of the phrase 'take better care' reinforces the writer's opinion about the wide-ranging benefits of working from home, at the same time as it dismisses any concerns that people's work might suffer.
Rhetorical question: a question with an implied answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> guide readers to one self-evident or obvious answer that positions them to see this view as correct 	I don't follow my kids on social media. If you have raised your children to make informed decisions, allow them the space to do so. If you insist on analysing their every interaction, how are they meant to learn?	The writer's rhetorical question invites the reader to reflect on the effectiveness of their parenting and implies that a more 'hands-off' approach is necessary for children's optimal development.



WRITTEN PERSUASIVE TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › How written texts persuade
- › Opinion pieces
- › Editorials
- › Letters to the editor and online comments
- › Petitions
- › Social media texts

As we have seen, persuasive texts come in many different formats. This chapter focuses on texts whose *main* method of persuasion is via the written word. Remember, though, that when you are analysing a written text, you must always consider the impact of any visual elements that are included with it, such as photographs or illustrations.

Different forms of written texts have different features and conventions, each aimed at the typical target audience for that form. There is a wide variety of written text types. In this chapter we will look at several of the most common.



How written texts persuade

The main way in which written texts persuade is, of course, through language: carefully chosen vocabulary and sentence structures that convey key ideas, establish an appropriate tone, and draw on connotations and word associations to position an audience.

There are other aspects of written texts that can also have a persuasive impact and which you should take into account in your analyses. They include the following.

- **Supplementary text.** This refers to any written material that is not part of the main text, such as the writer's credentials or information about their connection to the issue, image captions and pull-out quotes.
- **The physical appearance of the text.** This includes how it is laid out on the page, font choices and variations, headings, paragraphing, bullet lists and numbered lists. All of these affect the way in which the reader locates and processes information. For instance, large or bold fonts, italics and capital letters can all be used to highlight key points the writer wants to emphasise.
- **Accompanying visual material.** This might consist of photographs, cartoons, illustrations or infographics. (For more on these types of visual texts, see Chapter 12.) Webpages often include logos, banners and borders.

Your main focus will always be on a writer's use of argument and language to persuade. But these additional elements of a written text should also be considered as part of their overall persuasive approach.

Opinion pieces

Opinion pieces can be found in print newspapers (e.g. the *Herald Sun*, *The Age* and *The Australian*), in journals and magazines (e.g. *The Big Issue* or *Time*), on news and current affairs sites (e.g. *The Guardian Australia*, news.com.au) and on issues-based academic discussion pages (e.g. *The Conversation*).

Opinion pieces in print publications tend to use a more formal register and sophisticated language than those published online. However, professional writers often have the freedom even in a print publication to use less formal language occasionally, to make a point in a way that will have an impact on their target audience.

Opinion pieces may be written by journalists or columnists for a news organisation, by experts or by public figures with a strong connection to an issue.

You will also find opinion pieces on websites run by companies, charities, special interest groups and political parties. Many personal blogs also include opinion pieces. While these blog posts use many of the same techniques as news media opinion pieces, they vary in quality and may be used to promote products and services as well as to discuss issues.

Example

The annotations on the following opinion piece, published in *The Age*, indicate some of the main features and conventions of this text type.

Have you ever, ever felt like our kids are being swept away by foreign content? ¹

Jenny Buckland
CEO, Australian Children's Television Foundation ²

A few weeks ago, a simple poster on a Brisbane building asking readers whether they had ever, ever felt like this, stirred memories for an entire generation of Australian children. ³

The iconic kids' series *Round the Twist* is so beloved and its theme song so embedded in hearts and minds that an entire musical has been composed around it. When Queensland Theatre announced that the musical would premiere as part of its 2024 season, fans of the series as far away as London began enquiring about tickets.



Australian shows like *Round the Twist* were seminal for a generation of Australians.

Children's television serves a purpose that goes far beyond simple entertainment. The TV we watch as kids has a profound impact, right at the time when we are developing our identity. The stories, characters and worlds that we inhabit as young viewers become a part of who we are, inextricably tied to core memories, as the *Round the Twist* news reminded us. ⁴

It's the memory of running home from school to make sure we didn't miss a moment of our favourite show, of huddling on the couch with our siblings, of fighting over the remote control and cold glasses of Milo. Those memories invoke the feelings of joy, wonder and freedom of being a child.

1 The headline establishes the issue and sets the main tone for the piece.

2 The by-line gives the writer's name and, where appropriate, their credentials and/or any specific association with the issue.

3 An opening hook – in this case an appeal to nostalgia – is often used to draw readers in.

4 A range of persuasive strategies will be used. Here, the writer repeatedly uses the inclusive 'we' to align the reader with her own views and experiences.

A study by researchers at Swinburne University and RMIT Melbourne launched in October, found that the cultural impacts of Australian children's television last for decades. **5** For nine out of 10 survey respondents, a number of their favourite shows growing up were Australian made, and the most memorable local kids' shows were described as "cheeky" or "edgy", with depictions of relatable Australian life.

The research also found that seven out of 10 respondents have revisited their Australian childhood favourites in recent years. Children's television can be the ultimate comfort viewing, transporting us back to that couch after school, where characters feel like friends. In a world full of conflict, division and misinformation, it is vital that children have access to Australian content made specifically for them that makes them feel seen and gives them an anchor in stormy seas. We only need to look at the astronomical success of *Bluey* to see the power of children's television made for Australian kids by Australians.

The screen industry, both in Australia and around the world, is in a state of rapid transition and increased competition. Old models of funding and regulation, as well as audience viewing habits, are being turned on their head. We are consuming content at higher rates than ever thanks to streaming services and online platforms like YouTube, with audiences fragmenting on account of all that choice. **6** No longer do we race home from school to avoid missing the start of an episode or scramble to fix a bowl of cereal before the Saturday morning cartoons start – we now have TV on demand on numerous devices with easy access to content from right around the world. This leaves Australian children's screen content especially vulnerable within the broader environment.

When Australian children see their lives reflected on screen, they experience recognition, affirmation, and gain positive role models; the characters and stories help them to imagine all the possibilities for someone who looks and sounds like them.

But our nation's kids are not a homogenous group. We need an array of Australian stories from different storytellers around our country, reflecting the full diversity of children and their lives, on all the platforms children turn to for entertainment. The stories we watch influence how we think about others, as well as how we think about ourselves. They provide children with an opportunity to try on someone else's shoes and consider what it's like to be them. Australian children's television is building empathy, kindness, social cohesion and shared values.

5 The writer's opinion will be supported by evidence – in this case, a report by respected university researchers.

6 Opinion pieces may include specialised vocabulary associated with a particular issue.





Through development and production funding, the Australian Children's Television Foundation invests in live-action, animated and factual content from storytellers of different backgrounds from all over Australia. Projects that received production funding over the past two years have been filmed right across the country, from Western Australia's Ningaloo Reef to remote communities in the Northern Territory's Arnhem Land, extreme environments deep in the Queensland wilderness, a purpose-built theme park in the suburbs of Melbourne and even our national Parliament House.

The recent research demonstrates how what we watch when we're young has a lifelong impact, shaping our experience of Australian culture and connecting us with our community and peers. **7**

The Commonwealth Government is currently considering Australian content expenditure obligations for streaming services and making free-to-air TV channels more visible on smart TVs via a prominence framework. Ensuring that Australian children's screen content is specifically supported and promoted in these new regulatory measures and continuing to invest in Australian children's content is vital. Those wonderful shows Australians remember from the 1990s and 2000s were all supported by public policies. We need to protect homegrown content in a rapidly changing landscape to make sure children today have the same opportunities to grow up with Australian shows. **8**

7 The style and register of opinion pieces varies depending on the place of publication and target audience. This piece mostly uses a standard register, with some contractions (e.g. 'we're') and a mixture of simple and complex sentences. This language is appropriate for the target audience of educated adult readers of *The Age*.

8 The writer's main contention is often repeated at the end of the piece.

11.1 *Analyse an opinion piece*

- 1** Referring to the above opinion piece, state the writer's main contention in your own words.

- 2** Identify two reasons she gives for this point of view.

Reason 1: _____

Reason 2: _____

- 3** What do you think is the writer's main purpose? Why do you think this?



- 4 How might the writer's position as CEO of the Australian Children's Television Foundation have shaped her view on this issue?

- 5 Highlight four examples of persuasive language (single words or phrases) in the opinion piece.

- 6 Choose one of the examples you highlighted and complete the following sentence.

The word/phrase [choose one] _____,
with its connotations of _____,
is intended to evoke _____ [emotion].

Editorials

Editorials express the official opinion of a newspaper. They are written by senior editors or members of the editorial team. Unlike an opinion piece, an editorial represents the point of view of the organisation, not of an individual, so the writer is never personally named.

Example

The annotations on the following editorial, published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, indicate some of the main features and conventions of this text type. (Note that policies in the UK and in New Zealand may have changed since the publication of this editorial.)

England's smoking ban for children of the future a valid blueprint

The proposal to stop the next generation of English children from being able to buy cigarettes is not only one of the toughest-ever crackdowns on the tobacco industry, but a brave reform that should be adopted worldwide. **1**

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has announced the age at which people can buy cigarettes and tobacco in England will rise from 18 every year, so that a child aged 14 today would never be allowed to legally buy tobacco. The idea was first put forward by a government-commissioned review in

- 1** A clear contention is expressed, often in both the headline and the opening of the editorial.



2022 which it said, if adopted, could see some 1.7 million fewer people smoking by 2075. Sunak also promised to introduce measures to restrict the availability of vapes to children. **2**



Tough new laws aimed at stubbing out smoking and vaping have been unveiled by the government. 3

Such commonsense **4** reforms will result in thousands living longer and save the National Health Service billions of pounds courtesy of not having to treat the illnesses caused by smoking, such as numerous types of cancer, heart attacks, strokes and amputations.

If passed, England would become the first country in Europe to join New Zealand, which announced a similar plan last year to ban people who were born after January 1, 2009, from purchasing cigarettes from 2027, as well as curbing the number of retailers authorised to sell tobacco and cutting nicotine levels in all products. Denmark is already considering a similar move, and a number of nations also have targets to reduce smoking to minimal levels in the relatively near future. **5**

Just as the New Zealand ban caused howls of fury, Sunak's proposals have seen libertarians and tobacco retailers claim they amounted to a "disproportionate attack" on adults' rights, would devastate the industry and fuel the black market trade. Some of these same arguments have been around since the early 1960s when the UK Royal College of Physicians and the US surgeon general linked lung cancer to tobacco and demanded action from government. **6**

Only Bhutan and South Africa have banned smoking in the past, but New Zealand aside, the Sunak government move to protect the children of the future from smoking is truly significant because it is the first time that a major world player has attempted such a generational changing reform. **7** That said, if the British parliament approves the proposal, the legal change would only apply in England – not in Northern

2 Background and contextual information is included.

3 Some editorials are supported by photographs or other visual content.

4 Language may be persuasive but is not usually hyperbolic or overly emotive.

5 Editorials generally rely on reasoned arguments, research and evidence.

6 Arguments on both sides of a debate may be included, with those on the opposing side then rebutted.

7 Many editorials use sophisticated language and complex sentence structures.

Ireland, Scotland and Wales, whose own assemblies have devolved powers to control their own health policies.

Australia had been a world leader in tackling Big Tobacco and the scourge of smoking. **8** It was banned from Commonwealth buildings and then domestic flights in 1987; now plain paper wrapping and graphic health warnings on cigarette packs make cigarette brands less attractive. Australian tobacco taxes – thought to be a financial deterrent – are among the highest in the world, and there are bans on smoking in most public places.

But the Albanese government has no plans to follow the New Zealand and English attempts to phase out smoking for future generations.

Health Minister Mark Butler said the UK and New Zealand had responded to the specific tactics of Big Tobacco marketed to their populations, and Canberra would monitor their implementation success with interest, but the government would stick with its own tobacco legislation introduced in September. **9** If passed, it will take effect from April and includes hiking taxes and standardising cigarette packaging, and will run parallel with vaping reforms.

Protecting future generations from harm is a no-brainer. **10** This kind of reform does not come from activist campaigners or academic advocates but governments in England and New Zealand that have been in the vanguard of nations tackling smoking. It is happening now and the Albanese government should move quickly to be part of it.

8 Persuasive strategies – here, an appeal to national pride – are often used.

9 A mostly formal register and a serious, authoritative tone are generally employed, reflecting the fact that the editorial presents the views of an organisation rather than just an individual.

10 Colloquial language might be used occasionally.

11.2 *Analyse an editorial*

- 1 Highlight all the examples of evidence the writer gives for their point of view.
- 2 What is the main tone of the editorial? _____
- 3 Circle three words or phrases that help to create this tone.
- 4 The writer depicts a smoking ban as a progressive and positive move. Highlight a sentence in which this is evident.
- 5 Complete the following sentences.

The phrase 'howls of fury' conveys an impression of those who oppose a smoking ban as _____.
 _____.
 _____.

Letters to the editor and online comments

Letters to the editor and online comments allow readers, organisations and public figures the opportunity to give their opinion on the issues and events covered in a publication. The most significant difference between the two is the vetting process. Only a limited number of letters are chosen to be printed in a newspaper each day, related to articles recently published in the paper. While online comments might also be subject to screening before being published, the fact that the same space restrictions do not apply online means that many more can be published on a particular issue. Commenters can also engage in further discussion among themselves. Online comments tend to be more casual in style and sometimes more aggressive in tone than letters to the editor.

Example

The annotations on the following comment, which responds to an article published by *The Conversation* titled ‘ChatGPT, DALL-E 2 and the collapse of the creative process’, indicate some of the main features and conventions of this text type.

The Reverend Lord Tofu von Mackintosh 1

As a novelist, artist, and musician, 2 I call hooley 3 on your entire premise. 4 I've been dabbling in AI art 5 and it's been just as easy to get into a flow state tweaking prompts 6 and running variations as it is when creating in traditional or digital media. The creator decides when a work is done, when the intention and imperfection balances in the just-so way that feels right, or when an idea simply needs to be abandoned. I can spend several days running different ideas before coming up with something I like. 7 A well-trained eye is still a differentiator between objectively good art and bad.

Millions of terrible novels and garbage paintings are produced every year. Countless faux photographers ply their trade with no training or qualifications beyond watching a few YouTube videos, buying a DSLR and subscribing to Photoshop. 8 Bad artists cheapen the experience of good art, and irrationally blaming AI for bad art is bad logic.

- 1 Letters to the editor are selected and edited by editorial staff, and writers supply their real names; online comments may be moderated and the commenter can use a fictitious name.
- 2 The writer might state their personal connection to the issue.
- 3 Informal language may be used, particularly in online comments.
- 4 Letters and comments usually respond to a previously published text and sometimes to the ideas of other commenters.
- 5 Some prior knowledge of the issue is assumed, so little background information or context is included.
- 6 Letters and comments may rely more on personal experience than on evidence.
- 7 The first-person voice is used.
- 8 As they are short – usually less than 100 words – letters and comments often include just one or two main ideas.

11.3 *Analyse an online comment*

- 1 Summarise the commenter's contention and main reasons in a single sentence that includes the word 'because'.

- 2 What do the words 'easy', 'flow state' and 'right' suggest about those who work with AI to generate art?

- 3 What do the words 'hoey' and 'irrationally' suggest about those who object to the use of AI to create art?

- 4 Highlight three examples of emotive language in the comment. What emotion(s) are they targeting?

- 5 Do you agree or disagree with the commenter? Write a short response, presenting your own opinion on the issue.

- 6 Swap comments with a partner. Highlight all the emotive language examples you can identify in your partner's comment.

Petitions

A petition is a formal written request, signed by multiple people, directed at a person or an organisation with the power to grant the request. Often, the greater the number of signatures attached to a petition, the more likely it is to be considered and possibly acted on.

Example

The following petition was published on the website change.org, a site that hosts petitions on a wide range of issues. The annotations indicate some of the main features and conventions of this text type.

Outdated laws threaten dog-friendly culture! Support small businesses! ¹



Why this petition matters

Started by Samuel Roundtree

Today, we wish to discuss an issue that touches the hearts of many – our dogs.

For years, pubs and cafés around Australia have (at their own discretion) welcomed well-behaved, local dogs. “Dog friendly” is a part of our culture; it’s a piece of what makes some neighbourhoods unique and, I dare say, something many of us have come to take for granted. It’s a widely loved tradition that boosts the economy, and provides a sense of warmth and wellbeing within the community. ²

It came to my attention ³ that my local council had sent letters to a number of pubs in Melbourne, stating that “Recent inspections and complaint investigations by Council’s Environmental Health Officers has led to a need to clarify the law on whether pet dogs are permitted in food premises.”

1 Petitions often employ a firm and urgent tone.

2 Petitions often include a combination of emotive language and reasoned argument.

3 Formal yet accessible language is mostly used, to convey seriousness and authority while reaching a wide audience.

They continued, stating that “despite the growth in ‘dog friendly’ activities, the law still prohibits live animals, including dogs, from being in any food handling area of any food premises.” This includes any outdoor area that can only be entered through an enclosed space, or areas where people might wait for a takeaway coffee etc. Their reasoning was a fear of contamination: “animals can carry germs that can contaminate food”, they say.

I began this petition to amplify the voices of my community, and provide council with a clear picture of the feelings of residents and business owners. Since it gained movement, and was presented to council, we have gained the backing of health and food safety legal experts, such as Susan McLeod of La Trobe University. Their opinion is this: dogs pose a negligible risk, which is far outweighed by the benefit to the community’s mental health and overall wellbeing. **4**

We all know that polite, healthy dogs aren’t going to make you sick – they live in our homes, sleep in our beds, and accompany us everywhere. Our health is not suffering as a result.

Our position is this – businesses that wish to welcome their patrons’ dogs should be free to do so, at their own discretion. **5**

We initially brought this petition before council at over 11,000 signatures, accompanied by the written sentiments of thousands of individuals, both business owners and residents alike. Due to this overwhelming public response, they’ve elected to support us in an effort to push for a broader change, across the nation!

Join us in the fight for lasting change. **6** We believe that a scientific approach will show that dogs do not pose a significant health risk, and that they can and should be allowed inside businesses that voluntarily choose to welcome them.

Together, we can show that our dog-friendly culture is not just a privilege; it’s who we are, **7** and businesses shouldn’t suffer for it.

Thank you for your support!

4 Evidence, here in the form of expert testimony, is used to support the writer’s claim.

5 The contention is stated clearly and firmly.

6 Petitions usually include a call to action and a direct appeal for support.

7 Inclusive language is a commonly used persuasive technique in petitions, encouraging readers to feel personally invested in the issue.

11.4 *Analyse a petition*

- 1 Who is the target audience for the petition on pages 170–1? What makes you think this?

- 2 What is the context in which this petition has been written?

- 3 Highlight all the examples of inclusive language in the petition.
- 4 What is the intended effect of using inclusive language in this context?

- 5 Circle a place in the text where the writer appeals to reason and logic.
- 6 Highlight a sentence, phrase or paragraph where the writer appeals to the reader's sympathy.
- 7 Write a sentence that identifies the writer's main tone, gives a word or phrase that helps to create this tone, and explains the intended effect of this tone on the target audience.

Social media texts

Social media texts include a wide variety of platforms and text types. Some are primarily text-based, including those on X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook. Others prioritise visual and/or audiovisual content, such as posts on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and BeReal. A modern trend is for younger users to desert a platform as soon as older people start using it, and flock to new platforms.

Key features of social media posts include brevity, heightened emotions, references to internet jokes (memes) and the use of symbolism. Content shared via social media is rarely fact-checked and is usually presented more informally than in other text types. Social media posts usually allow other users to respond with their own comments, which may lead to a broader discussion about an issue.

Most social media platforms allow users to remain anonymous or to use an online persona if they wish. This can make it easier for some people to feel able to express their viewpoints on certain issues, but it also makes it more difficult to assess the credibility and possible biases of users. The term 'influencer' refers to popular users who generate content on social media platforms. These people may be paid to review (and endorse) services and products, meaning that their opinions will be affected by this incentive.

Example

The following posts appeared on a thread on social media site Reddit, in a subgroup titled 'Ask an Australian'. The annotations indicate some of the main features and conventions of social media texts.

Post 1

Would you support changing the names of Australian cities to more traditional First Nations alternatives? **1** This has worked in South Africa, India, Namibia and Ireland. I think in time places like Melbourne and Sydney, amongst other major population centres, could follow as a way to pay homage to the rightful owners of this land.

Post 2

No, not really. **2** Aboriginal place names apply to particular landscape features or certain special meeting places.

The cities that exist now were built by European settlers and don't really have a corresponding Aboriginal name in most cases as a result.

Whether you think the colonisation of Australia was a good thing or a bad thing, it certainly happened ... and the cities were a direct result of that. They might as well just be called what they're called. **3** It feels like changing that is just an awkward and unnecessary attempt to whitewash history that doesn't help anyone with anything and if anything would just annoy a lot of people. I don't see what good could come of it. **4**

Just the mere fact that these cities exist isn't a bad thing in and of itself. In fact, it's a good thing for anyone who lives in them, be they white or Aboriginal or whatever else.

And even regardless of all that, it's not like there aren't plenty of towns that do already have Aboriginal names anyway. There are hundreds.

Just my two cents. **5**

- 1** Users can start a discussion on an issue of interest or relevance to them, and invite the opinions of others.
- 2** The tone of online communications, particularly where users are anonymous, is often direct.
- 3** Comments or posts tend to be brief and to the point.
- 4** Personal pronouns, particularly the use of 'I' to present the user's own opinion, is characteristic of online communications.
- 5** Language is often casual, and may include the use of abbreviations, idioms, contractions and emojis.

11.5 *Analyse a social media text*

- 1 Identify two features of the texts that indicate they are social media posts.

- 2 For each post, write a sentence summarising the main contention.

- 3 Write a sentence comparing the tone of the first post with the tone of the second. Give brief examples to support your statement.

- 4 Suggest an appropriate emoji that might accompany each post. Explain your answer.

- 5 Write a reply to the opening post, presenting your opinion on this issue.

VISUAL PERSUASIVE TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › How visual texts persuade
- › Photographs
- › Cartoons
- › Illustrations
- › Infographics

This chapter focuses on texts whose primary mode of communication is visual. You might be asked to analyse a visual text that is part of a written text (such as a photograph accompanying an opinion piece). Or you might analyse a standalone visual text to hone your skills in the analysis of visual language.

In Section C of the end-of-Year-12 exam you are likely to be presented with a written text that includes a visual element or elements, and you will be required to analyse visuals as well as written and spoken language. Therefore it is important to understand the features and conventions of different visual text types, as well as of visual material more generally.



How visual texts persuade

Each type of visual text will have its own specific features, but there are some common visual features that creators can use to produce persuasive effects. These include:

- composition or layout
- framing
- sizing
- colour
- allusions.

The **composition** or **layout** of a visual text refers to the arrangement of its individual elements. The first thing you notice about an image is often the most important feature or the element that the creator most wants to draw your attention to.



Consider also what has been included within the **frame** of the image, as well as what has been excluded, and why.

You should also consider the **size** of particular elements. Generally, the larger a person or object is depicted, the more the creator wants the viewer to focus on that person or object.

Colour is another important method of evoking associations and targeting specific emotions in the viewer. For example, red can be associated with anger, passion or communism, while green can denote envy, money or the environment. Black-and-white texts, such as those you might see on the end-of-Year-12 exam, can use shading in similar ways.

Some visuals will make **allusions**, or connections, to other images or to pop culture, and some will rely on commonly held prior knowledge or preconceptions. For example, consider the image of the polar bears on the next page. The reader is likely to immediately understand that the photograph is conveying a message about the environment, due to their prior knowledge of the connection between climate change, melting polar ice and declining polar bear populations.

As when you are analysing elements of a written text, the most important question to ask yourself when analysing aspects of a visual text is *why*. Why has the text's creator made this particular decision, and what effect are they hoping to achieve?

Visual aspects of written texts

As we have noted, the written texts you will analyse may include visual components that work with the words to create particular persuasive effects. Visual elements of written texts that you should pay attention to include the following.

- **The arrangement of text on the page.** This can lead the viewer's eye so that they absorb pieces of information in a particular order and pay attention to what the text's creator thinks is most important.
- **Borders and headings.** These features define the boundaries of the text, or parts of it, helping the reader to understand how certain content is linked to or separate from other content. Headings orient the reader to what a section of text will include, and can summarise information or ideas.
- **Pull-out boxes/text.** Sometimes a written text will include pull-out boxes or segments of text, which might repeat content included in the main text or provide extra information. These features draw attention to the content they contain, emphasising key ideas and information.
- **Decorative features.** These might include illustrated borders, headings or boxes, as well as free-standing illustrations in or around the written text. These decorative elements can all work with the written text to evoke particular emotions or thoughts in the viewer.

When analysing visual elements of a primarily written text, always consider how they are working to support or extend the message conveyed by the words.

Photographs

Photographs can act persuasively on their own, or they can add to (or, sometimes, challenge) the persuasive impact of a written text. They can convey information, highlight specific aspects of an argument and evoke emotions.

It is important to remember that everything that appears within the frame of a photograph is the result of a decision by the text's creator. Photographs are not straightforward representations of reality; they are consciously composed, and often edited, for particular purposes.

Example

The annotations on the following photograph, of polar bears on melting ice floes, indicate some of the main features and conventions of this text type.

Framing is used to include or exclude certain elements. Here, much of the image is taken up by the ocean and the melting ice caps, suggesting the scale of the issue.

Attitudes to events and issues are shown through facial expressions and body language. Here, the larger polar bear is shown gazing ahead with what could be read as a forlorn expression as it contemplates the disappearing ice.



Lighting and colour are used to create particular effects and provoke specific emotions. The prominence of the sun in this image alludes to the issue of global warming, while the muted blue, white and grey colour scheme creates a sombre mood.

Taking the photograph from above and from a distance makes the polar bears seem smaller and more vulnerable.

12.1 *Analyse a photograph*

- 1 Add two more annotations to the image on the previous page, identifying persuasive features and their likely effect on the viewer.
- 2 Find a persuasive text that includes at least one photograph. Complete the table below, identifying features of the image and how they position the reader to respond.

Feature	Description	How it persuades
Colour		
Framing (what is included in or excluded from the shot)		
Angle and distance		
Foreground		
Background		

- 3 Drawing on your notes in the table above, write an analytical paragraph about your chosen image. Explain how it supports (or possibly challenges) the argument and language of the written text.

Cartoons

Cartoons aim to make people laugh or to consider an issue from an ironic or mocking point of view. They usually combine an illustration with some brief written text. They often rely on irony, sarcasm and ridicule to make a point, sometimes exaggerating situations and people's appearances for humorous effect. They can express points of view through characters' words, facial expressions and body language.

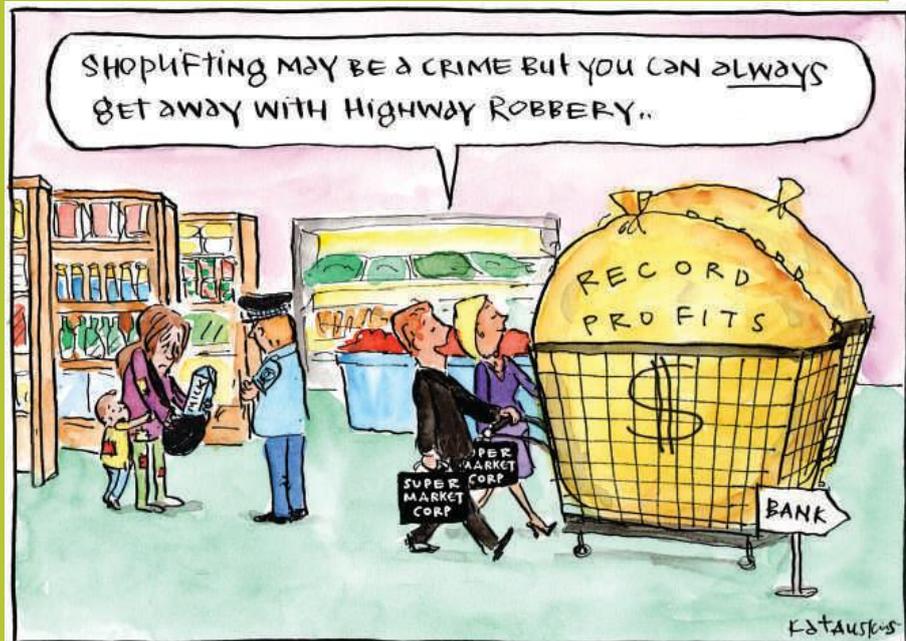
Many cartoons include some text, such as speech bubbles, headings and captions. This text works in combination with the visual material to convey an attitude towards an issue.

Example

The annotations on the following cartoon, which was published in *The Guardian* newspaper, indicate some of the main features and conventions of this text type.

The speech bubble summarises the cartoonist's contention and implies that executives in companies that make large amounts of money at the expense of ordinary people are in fact worse criminals than those who might shoplift due to genuine need.

Exaggeration is a common feature of cartoons, allowing cartoonists to make a clear point in a visually arresting way. Here, the depiction of supermarket profits as giant bags of money vividly conveys the cartoonist's opinion that these profits are excessive.



Contrast is drawn between the shoplifting mother and the supermarket executives. The mother is depicted with her head bowed and a child clinging to her leg, suggesting that her situation is desperate, while the well-dressed supermarket executives walk confidently behind a trolley full of money, oblivious to her hardship.

12.2 *Analyse a cartoon*

- 1 Add two more annotations to the cartoon on the previous page, identifying persuasive features and their likely effect on the viewer.
- 2 Complete the following analytical sentences.

The phrase 'highway robbery' in the caption has associations with _____

_____ and implies that _____

The expression on the face of the shoplifting woman is _____

_____, conveying an impression of her as _____.

This is contrasted with the facial expressions on the faces of the supermarket executives, who are depicted as _____

_____ The effect is to _____

_____ The supermarket's profits are depicted _____

_____ The use of exaggeration generates humour and also _____

Illustrations

Like cartoons, illustrations are usually created by an artist and communicate a point of view through the deliberate depiction of situations, people and events in particular ways. Illustrations may include some text, such as headings or captions, that can work with the visual language to position the viewer.

Illustrations can vary in style, from highly realistic to cartoonish. The artist will make choices regarding colour, framing and sizing with the aim of eliciting particular responses in the viewer.

Example

The annotations on the following poster, which advertises World Blood Donor Day, indicate some of the main features and conventions of illustrations.

The use of a non-realistic style can help illustrators to present challenging or confronting content in an accessible or more palatable way. Here, the childlike, cartoon style enables the illustrator to present a positive view of blood donation that focuses on the benefits rather than any potential discomfort.

Illustrations use colour in purposeful ways, such as to create a mood or convey an emotion. The yellow background here contributes to an uplifting mood, encouraging the viewer to connect blood donation with the happiness and positivity often associated with yellow.

The bag of donated blood is oversized and placed in the foreground of the image; like photographers and cartoonists, illustrators use size and placement (composition) to draw the viewer's attention to the most important elements.



12.3 *Analyse an illustration*

- 1 Give three words to describe the emotions the creator of the poster is aiming to evoke in the viewer.

- 2 Write one or two sentences analysing how a particular aspect of the illustration works to evoke one of the emotions you identified in question 1.





3 Complete the following sentences.

The person in the image has a/an _____ expression, suggesting that _____.

He is depicted reclining on a lounger and giving the thumbs-up gesture, reinforcing the idea that donating blood is _____. The three red hearts beside him have associations with _____, positioning the viewer to think/feel [choose one] _____.

4 Explain how the written text works with the visual material to persuade the viewer to support World Blood Donors Day.

Infographics

Infographics typically blend together information, data and visuals to convey complex information in a simple and easy-to-understand way. As with other visual texts, the use of colour and imagery can have a persuasive effect. Written elements of these texts could include headings, labels, footnotes and annotations, all of which can work with the visual text to shape the viewer's understanding of and attitude towards the issue.

Infographics give a summary rather than an in-depth analysis of the content they present. They can represent information in a way that skews the reader's first impression (e.g. by omitting information or choosing a visual form that helps to downplay certain facts). When reading charts and graphs, always consider the reliability of the source and whether the data set appears to be complete.

Example

The following infographic was published on the website biobagworld.com.au, a site that promotes and sells compostable rubbish bags. The annotations indicate some of the main features and conventions of this text type.

The circular process is depicted visually by arrows connecting to form a complete circle, enabling viewers to understand the concept at a glance.

The bag's branding is incorporated into the infographic.

Infographics use colour in purposeful ways; here, the predominant colour is green, which has associations with nature and environmental protection, encouraging the viewer to connect biobags with these ideas.



12.4 Analyse an infographic

1 What is the main purpose of the infographic? How do you know?

2 Write a sentence that identifies the likely target audience of the infographic, and provide evidence for your answer.

3 Add an annotation that analyses the use of orange text in the infographic.

4 Make notes about the intended effect of each element listed in the table.

Element	Intended effect
Colourful images of food	
The BioBag logo	
Labelled arrows	

AUDIO AND AUDIOVISUAL PERSUASIVE TEXTS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- > How audio and audiovisual texts persuade
- > Advertisements
- > Speeches
- > Filmed texts and other videos



In this chapter the focus is on texts whose primary mode is audio or audiovisual. Audio texts can include radio programs, podcasts, speeches and spoken advertisements. Audiovisual texts can include film, television, streaming content, online videos and social media posts.

In the Unit 4 SAC for Outcome 2, you will be required to analyse at least one text that is audio or audiovisual, in addition to analysing a written text. It is possible that one of your assessment tasks in Unit 2 will also involve analysing an audio or audiovisual text. And, of course, as you study an issue you are likely to come across a number of texts in these forms – news websites often have embedded videos within their written articles, for instance. This chapter explains the main features of some common types of audio and audiovisual texts, and the ways in which they can be used to persuade.

How audio and audiovisual texts persuade

Audio and audiovisual texts can use the same argument and persuasive language strategies as written persuasive texts. Additionally, they can use aural techniques, such as background music and a speaker's manner of delivery, to persuasive effect. A speaker's use of paralinguistic features such as tone, pace, pitch, volume and emphasis helps to position listeners to respond in particular ways.

In addition to persuasive language strategies and aural methods of persuasion, audiovisual texts use visual language to communicate a point of view. Visual elements can include the speakers' appearance, gestures and body language, as well as visual effects associated with film texts, such as moving images, camera angles and sets.

Additionally, filmed texts incorporate some or all of the following features, which can be used to present a point of view and persuade audiences.

- **Still and moving images.** The content of still and moving images in an audiovisual text can be highly persuasive. Consider not only the subject of the images, but how they are lit, the angle from which they are shot, how they are framed, and how any accompanying music, sound effects or voice-over encourages the viewer to feel about the subject.
- **Sets.** Many audiovisual texts, such as news programs and panel discussions, are filmed on sets that have desks, chairs, microphones and other props. Consider what the arrangement of props suggests about the role of the person or people who appear in the text. Lighting is also used to create effects. For example, a spotlight might be used to focus the viewer's attention on a speaker. Bright or colourful lighting might contribute to a joyful mood, while dark lighting or shadows might communicate seriousness or sorrow. A backdrop might be placed behind the presenter or speakers to provide a visual context.
- **Editing.** Various elements of a video segment are deliberately selected, combined and sequenced to present information and perspectives in particular ways. Consider how the text begins and ends. What does this suggest the main focus and purpose of the text is? Consider, too, the information and perspectives the text's creator has chosen to include and what they have chosen to leave out. Why might they have made these choices?

Advertisements

Advertisements use a combination of written and visual language to promote a product, service or idea. Most advertisements are produced on behalf of companies aiming to persuade consumers to make a particular purchase. Governments, charities and issues-based organisations use advertising to provide information and to attempt to change people's behaviour, such as in anti-speeding campaigns or environmental protection videos. Charities and issues-based groups also advertise to seek donations or raise awareness about a cause.

Common features and conventions of advertisements include the following.

- Specific aspects of an image are highlighted or a specific feeling is generated through cropping, distance, colour and lighting.
- Attitudes to situations and issues are shown through the facial expressions and body language of the people in the image or video.
- Visual details may be altered to emphasise particular features.
- Graphics and illustrations can convey and draw attention to key information.
- Memorable slogans or catchphrases may be included.
- Logos and branding are used.
- Background music is often used in video advertisements.

Example

The following advertisement, for cosmetics and skincare business The Body Shop, was posted on the company's Facebook page in the lead-up to Christmas. Although this example is a still image, the annotations indicate some of the main visual features and conventions of advertisements.

The products being promoted are at the centre of the image, drawing the viewer's eye.

The colour green is a key aspect of the company's branding and has associations with nature, reminding the viewer of the business' focus on ethical and environmentally responsible choices.

Humour is used to build rapport and convey an impression of the company as both approachable and self-aware.



13.1 *Analyse an advertisement*

- 1 Write an introduction to an analytical essay on this advertisement. In the introduction you should identify the creator of the text, the context in which it appeared, its primary purpose and message, and an important persuasive strategy used in the text.





- 2 How does the advertisement associate buying The Body Shop products with ethical behaviour? Refer to at least two specific aspects of the ad in your answer.

- 3 The ad was published on the company's social media accounts during November and December. How might this context have shaped the text's creation?

Speeches

A speech is an oral text delivered to an audience. Some speakers will also present visual content such as slides to help them engage and persuade their audience.

To convey their point of view in an accessible and effective way, speakers will tend to use easy-to-understand vocabulary together with specialist language appropriate to the topic and their target audience. They are likely to use short sentences, clear connectives to indicate transitions between ideas, and repetition to highlight key points. They will often use devices such as anecdotes, humour, inclusive language and direct and rhetorical questions to engage the audience and establish rapport.

Speeches often begin with an attention-grabbing opening and conclude with a powerful memorable sentence that sums up the speaker's argument and leaves the audience with a strong lasting impression.

In addition to considering the content of a speech, you should also consider the way in which it is delivered – that is, how the speaker uses their voice, body language and any supplementary visual material to position the audience to agree. Aspects of delivery to consider include:

- variations in pace (e.g. pauses and slowing down for emphasis)
- variations in volume and pitch (e.g. to create tension or a specific tone)
- body language and gestures (e.g. hand movements to reinforce ideas in the speech)
- eye contact to engage and develop rapport with an audience.

Example

The following speech was delivered by the federal Minister for Education Jason Clare at an event hosted by the National Press Club. The National Press Club is an association for journalists, academics and other influential professionals. The annotations indicate some of the main features and conventions of speeches.

Thank you to the National Press Club for the opportunity to speak to here today. The first time I have had this privilege.

The first thing I did when I got this job, a bit over a year ago, was go back to my old primary school and give my teacher Mrs Fry a hug. **1** Cathy started there, at Cabramatta Public School, in 1978. And she is still there.

I did that for a reason. It felt like the right place to start. But I also wanted to send a message.

A message about what I think is important. About who I think are important. About the sort of Minister I want to be.

I will never forget where I come from. I'm the first in my family to finish high school. The first to even finish year 10.

Mum never really went to high school at all. She spent two years in bed with rheumatic fever. When she got better she couldn't catch up and dropped out. Dad left at the end of year nine and became an apprentice. They weren't alone. That was pretty standard for working-class kids in Western Sydney back then. **2**

We are a different country today.

A lot of the kids I went to school with at Cabramatta Public School were migrants and refugees.

They came from places like Vietnam and Cambodia. Chile, Uruguay and what was once called Yugoslavia. Their parents picked them up and plucked them out. Put them on boats and planes. Desperately seeking safety and a better life.

A lot of those kids barely spoke English when they got to school. Guess where they are today? **3**

They are partners in law firms, engineers, multi-millionaire start up business owners.

All of that has left an imprint on me. About the power of education. The most powerful cause for good in this country. And what it can do.

1 Speakers may use anecdotes, often at the beginning of the speech, to build rapport with the audience.

2 Short, simple sentences allow the audience to easily follow the argument.

3 Both direct and rhetorical questions may be used in speeches to engage the audience and encourage them to feel invested in the issue.

But if we are honest, it still hasn't made its way into every corner of our country. The truth is children from poorer families are still less likely to go to pre-school than children from wealthier families. They're also less likely to finish high school, and less likely to go to university. The same is true if you grow up in the bush or the regions. Or if you are an Indigenous Australian. If you are one of those children, you are three times more likely to fall behind at school today.

And not just that. **4**

Fifteen years ago the gap in reading skills of eight year olds from poor families and eight year olds from wealthy families was about a year. Now it's two. Most of those children never catch up. In fact, the reverse happens. The gap gets bigger and bigger with every year at school.

It shouldn't surprise you then if I tell you that in the last six years we've seen a drop in the percentage of young Australians finishing high school, particularly poor kids and particularly in public schools. Six years ago, 83 per cent of students in public schools finished year 12. Last year it was 76 per cent.

And all of this is happening at a time when finishing school is so much more important than it was in my mum and dad's day, or mine.

Today it really is your ticket to the show. We live in a world where almost every single new job that's created will require you to finish school and go to TAFE or uni. That means we need more people to do that. Not less. Rich. Poor. City. Bush. Black. White.

If you want to know what drives me, this is it. **5** Not just because of what it means for the young people who are currently missing out, but for all of us. This is one of the big economic levers we have to pull, that will give us the skills we need to grow and create, compete and win in this century. And make sure we grow together, not apart.

Almost one in two Australians in their thirties have a university degree today. But not everywhere. Not where I grew up. Not in the outer suburbs of our big cities. Not in the regions. Not in poor families. Only 15 per cent of people from poor families have a university degree today. And it's even lower if you are Indigenous. If you're a young Indigenous bloke **6** today, you're more likely to go to jail than university.

We all pay a price for this. The cost of all these kids missing out. That's what I want to change.

4 A short, stand-alone sentence in the speech script reminds the speaker that a pause is needed, which in turn signals to the audience that there is a shift in the argument or new evidence will be introduced.

5 A personal or confiding tone can help a speaker to establish a rapport with their audience.

6 Depending on the audience and context, the language used in a speech might be more colloquial and casual than in a written text.





And that, at its core, is what the three big reviews I have kicked off into our education system are all about. The first into our early education system, led by Professor Deborah Brennan AM and the team at the Productivity Commission. The second focused on school education, led by Dr Lisa O'Brien AM. And the third, which we call the Universities Accord, a big and broad review of our higher education system, led by Professor Mary O'Kane AC. Three extraordinary Australians. They are all here today. And can I thank you in advance for what you are doing.

Each report will be individually important. But it's how they knit together that has the potential to change the lives of people who aren't even born yet. Make our education system so much better and fairer. And our economy stronger and more productive.

...

That's what this is about. It's what everything I have talked about today is about. **7** Opening the door of opportunity. It's education that does this more than anything else. It's what I want for those kids sitting in Mrs Fry's class right now. **8** I don't want us to forever be a country where your chances in life hinge on who your parents are, where you live or the colour of your skin. This is a chance to change that. At least to start to change that. To open that door wider. To make us a fairer country, and a stronger one. And to turn the country that currently lives in our imagination, into something real. **9**

- 7** Repetition is a common rhetorical strategy used in speeches, as it helps to cement key points in the minds of the audience.
- 8** Returning to the anecdote given at the start of the speech can be an effective way of reinforcing a message as well as creating a coherent structure.
- 9** Speakers may use poetic or lyrical language, particularly in their conclusion, leaving their audience with a powerful and emotive final impression.

13.2 Analyse a speech

- 1** Identify two persuasive strategies or techniques used by the speaker.

Strategy 1: _____

Strategy 2: _____

- 2** For each strategy you identified in question 1, write a sentence explaining the intended effect on the listener.

Strategy 1: _____

Strategy 2: _____





- 3 Circle one word or phrase in the speech that aims to evoke compassion in the audience, and write a sentence explaining how it does this.

- 4 Identify three stakeholders in this issue, their possible responses to the speech and the potential reasons for these responses.

Stakeholder	Likely response	Factors affecting their response

- 5 Imagine you were the Minister for Education giving this speech. Annotate it with notes describing how you would deliver it in order to have the greatest persuasive effect on your audience. Consider where you would pause, raise the volume of your voice, alter your pitch, emphasise certain words or use particular gestures or body language.
- 6 Look online to locate two images that could be used in slides to accompany this speech. Describe the images and explain how they would increase the persuasive power of the speech.

Filmed texts and other videos

Persuasive filmed texts that cover topical issues include documentaries and television news and current affairs programs. It can be easy to assume that such texts present credible and impartial perspectives on issues because the visual elements and firsthand accounts make viewers feel that they are witnessing events as they happen. However, stories are subject to careful selection and editing. The creators of these texts might focus on more dramatic or visually appealing aspects of a story, in order to capture and maintain the viewer's attention and evoke emotion. Music, sound effects and on-screen text can be used to shape or intensify these emotions.

Other audiovisual texts that feature moving images include vlogs, advertisements and videos produced by businesses, charities and governmental organisations. Such videos can be a low-cost, accessible way for individuals and companies to communicate ideas or attempt to persuade people to buy a product or service.

Example

The annotations on the following screenshot, taken from a video produced by the Humane Society International Australia and published on YouTube, indicate some of the main features and conventions of video texts.

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



The written text supports the visual material, which depicts both a shark and a dolphin caught in a shark net.



The cartoon-style graphics help to make a potentially disturbing topic more accessible to viewers, thus positioning them to be more receptive to the creator's message.

The use of a dark colour palette contributes to a gloomy atmosphere and reinforces the impression that the issue is serious.

13.3 *Analyse a video text*

1 In a single sentence, state the purpose and main contention of the video produced by the Humane Society International Australia.

2 In a single sentence, identify the context of the text, including the background to the issue and the place where the video was published.

3 Describe the visual style of the video. What associations or connotations does this style have? Why do you think the Humane Society chose to use this style?

4 Write down as many words as you can think of to describe the voice of the speaker, including their main tone.

5 Write an analytical sentence about the voice-over and its intended effect on the audience, using one or more of the words you identified in question 4.

6 Write a short paragraph analysing one of the following elements of the video.

- Written text
- Colour
- Music
- Visuals

WRITING AN ANALYSIS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Analysing the text
- Planning your analysis
- Writing tools and tips
- Editing your work
- Sample analysis



This chapter outlines a range of strategies and processes you can use when you are required to analyse a persuasive text or texts. They take you from your initial reading or viewing of a text through planning and then to writing and editing your analysis.

In Unit 2, your assessment for this area of study will be school-based. This means that your teacher will decide exactly how you will be asked to demonstrate your knowledge and skills in analysing argument and language.

English students might annotate a set of persuasive texts (including visual texts), identifying arguments, vocabulary, text structures and language features, and/or produce an analytical essay on the use of argument and language in a media text or texts.

EAL students might be required to create a note-form summary of the main and supporting arguments in a persuasive text or texts, or to annotate a visual text to identify the key persuasive features, or to write an analysis of the use of argument and language in a text or texts.

In Unit 4, your assessment tasks are prescribed by the VCAA. Both English and EAL students will produce a written analysis of the argument and language in persuasive texts, including one written text and one audio or audiovisual text. The texts must have appeared in the media after 1 September of the previous year.

Section C of the examination at the end of Year 12 will also focus on analysing a persuasive text. For more information on the exam, see Chapter 16.

Analysing the text

Obviously the first step in analysing a text is to read it. (Note that throughout this chapter, for simplicity, we will use ‘read’ in its most general sense, meaning to read, view or listen to a text, depending on its form.) Read it through once, without taking notes, to ensure you understand it well. During this reading, aim to identify:

- the issue
- any important aspects of the context
- the intended audience
- the text type
- the writer and their background or connection to the issue
- the writer’s main purpose
- the writer’s main contention
- the main supporting reasons
- the broad structure of the argument.

You might also notice some of the key persuasive strategies the writer uses and/or the main emotions they are aiming to evoke.

Analysing visual and aural information

While your main focus will be on analysing the words that make up the persuasive text, you also need to consider other forms of persuasion, including visual language and aural features. Chapter 12 explains how to analyse visual texts and features, while Chapter 13 explores how to analyse audio and audiovisual content. When analysing these aspects in an assessment situation, keep in mind the following.

- Your main focus should be on the words, whether written or spoken, so ensure your analysis devotes the most space to this.
- At the same time, you should never ignore visual or aural elements; strong analyses demonstrate an understanding of how the features of a particular text type are used in deliberately persuasive ways.
- You might like to devote a separate paragraph to analysing visual or aural elements, or you could refer regularly to these throughout your analysis. Even if you decide to focus on analysing non-verbal features in a separate paragraph, your analysis will be more sophisticated and coherent if you make occasional brief references to these elements elsewhere.
- Always discuss visual and aural elements in terms of how they support or extend the argument in the written or spoken text.

Annotating the text

On your second reading, you should annotate the text, highlighting, circling and taking notes on any features and language that stand out to you. For an audio or audiovisual text, make notes as you are listening or viewing and, if possible, listen to or view the text several times. You might be given a transcript of this text, which you can annotate with notes on the audio and/or visual elements as well as the argument and language. It can be useful to have a colour-coding system to annotate your text. For example, you might use:

- green to highlight particularly persuasive words and phrases
- pink to highlight aspects of argument structure and argument strategies
- blue to make notes on the intended effects on the reader.

In a tightly timed situation, such as during an exam, you might need to combine your first reading with annotating the text. You will also need to keep your annotations brief and targeted. Keep in mind the following when annotating your text.

- **Look at the text as a whole.** Notice the layout of text and image(s) on the page, and any headings or white space that break the text into sections. These often indicate places where the writer introduces a new reason or presents additional evidence. In an audio text, a pause can have a similar effect.
- Consider how the text **begins and ends** – these places can highlight the writer’s overall persuasive approach to the issue as well as their point of view.
- **Underline or circle the contention** and rewrite it in your own words. The contention is often expressed in the heading and/or the introductory paragraph; sometimes it is not clearly stated until the end. If the contention is implied rather than stated explicitly, write the implied contention as concisely as you can.
- Clearly **identify the main reasons** or points of argument. You could highlight or underline each reason in a different colour, draw a box around each reason, or summarise the reason in a margin note.
- Make a note about the **main tone** of the piece and the writer or speaker’s purpose in using this tone. Circle some words that help to create the main tone. Look for any shifts in tone and make a note on the text where these occur, briefly indicating the effect of this shift.
- Look for **individual words** that are particularly surprising, interesting or effective.
- Highlight any **persuasive techniques**, such as repetition, emotional appeals, metaphors and other figurative language, and the use of facts and statistics. Make a note of the intended effect on the reader.
- For an audio text, listen for **signposting words** such as ‘firstly’, ‘as a result’ and ‘in conclusion’, as these indicate how the speaker has structured their argument.
- Mark any **words you do not understand** (e.g. with a question mark). If you have time later, look up definitions.

The example below shows one way of annotating a persuasive text. This opinion piece, by Kylie Lang, was published in *The Courier-Mail*. (Note that the policy discussed and the relevant government ministers have changed since the publication of this piece.) The student has used the following colour code system:

- notes about argument strategies
- notes about structure
- notes about tone
- notes about visual material.
- notes about language/vocabulary choice

Main contention stated in heading (govt's 4-day school week would disadvantage students / implied argmnt: we should protect kids)

Emotive language; strong imagery: pair of contrasting, dramatic words (soar/abyss), to engage readers emotionally

Word choice ridicules govt plan (intention: to make own argmnt seem sensible in contrast)

Main reason 1: struggling students will have even more trouble learning; will act out instead

Main reason 2: students currently succeeding will be negatively impacted

Main reason 3: teachers would work 4 days but govt would still have to pay them for 5

Sarcastic, critical tone (informal)

Appeal to financial self-interest / fear (targets likely audience: parents/families)

Opinion: Proposed four-day school week will only hurt our kids

Children need more time in school, not less, yet the state government's bizarre policy of a four-day week will only increase youth crime and hurt academic outcomes, writes **Kylie Lang**

Children need to spend more time in school, not less, but in its infinite lack of wisdom, the state government is sanctioning truancy. As Queensland's youth crime rates soar and academic results fall deeper into the abyss, the Palaszczuk government is making one of its most bizarre calls yet – offering kids a day off.

The idiotic idea of a four-day week is being floated in all public schools, proving Education Minister Grace Grace has completely lost the plot.

Reasons for shortening the school week include the "wellbeing and engagement" of students and staff. Oh, please.

Setting aside a day for external "independent learning" will only give wayward kids more time to steal cars and terrorise neighbourhoods.

Even the most academically driven students will be unlikely to have the maturity to self-regulate their studies when no-one is looking.

And there's been no word from the minister on whether or not teachers will be paid for five days while only working a traditional four. I can't see teachers' unions copping wage cuts for their members, can you?

Meanwhile, working parents will be forced to change their own hours to accommodate this ridiculous shake-up – or find money they don't have, particularly in these tough times, to pay for childcare or switch to private schools.

Bold font subheading – draws attention to contention

Expands/restates main argmnt; introduces writer

Sarcastic, critical tone (informal)

Ad hominem attack to discredit the minister and her proposal

Sarcastic, critical tone (informal)

Quote marks used to mock the govt proposal

Appeal to fear: imagery/emotive language (to persuade reader that only bad things can come of govt proposal)

Shift in tone – more formal/respectful (demonstrates students deserve respect and govt doesn't)

Informal phrase (helps writer show sympathy for readers' challenges; she is on their side, against this potential terrible decision)





Would you like more flexible school hours?

Yes

No

Unsure

Inclusion of poll reminds readers of context (the layout looks like school quiz or exam → reminds us of importance of learning); also breaks up text to keep it accessible

States that others share her opinion (= more convincing)

Not surprisingly, parents are furious and so are many teachers who reckon the blueprint communicated to all principals on Monday is a dud.

Informal vocabulary/style (intention: make reader feel writer is down to earth / relatable)

What this woke government cares to overlook is that a good education is the bedrock of opportunity.

Slang term w/ colloquial connotations, usually criticises anyone appearing oversensitive to prejudice (intention: incline reader to agree that gov't plan is ridiculous)

This holds for young people the world over, but here in Queensland, we're dumbing everything down.

Vocab choice – emotive language (contrasting images: 'raising' and 'empowering' / 'condemning' and 'failure')

Instead of raising the bar and empowering teachers, we're lowering it and condemning kids to a life of mediocrity at best, failure at worst.

Appeal to fear – decision will damage children

How can children learn the basics – let alone real-world skills like how to think creatively and solve problems – in less time when they can't do it in the five days they currently have?

Sarcastic humour, making a pun on 'maths' (school subject)

Do the maths, Minister.

Directly addresses one implied audience, the gov't (explicit audience is readers of the paper, many likely to be parents of school-aged children)

Shift in tone for new section of article; more formal language to focus on facts rather than emotions

As part of the policy proposed for next year, schools can also alter their start and finishing times by more than 30 minutes.

Principals must provide supervision for students who are present outside those times, including on the non-attendance day.

Reminds readers of multiple stakeholders in the issue; returns to impact on teachers

There won't be formal classes on this free-learning day, which means teachers will be reduced to babysitters, again to the detriment of their professional satisfaction and kids' educational outcomes.

The undeniable fact is children, regardless of individual abilities and circumstances, thrive on routine.



Students are walking away, apparently leaving the school, with relaxed body language, suggesting disengagement from their learning

Image does not show students' faces; their anonymity hints that problems of 4-day week will be universal, not specific to individuals

The Queensland Government is paving the way for public schools to offer flexible hours.

Reiterates main reason 1

Judgemental language attacking the plan

Central argmnt implied in closing statement (4-day school week = 'compromise' to education)

They do best when boundaries are known and respected.

For those kids – and they're multiplying – who think school is a joke, the government's misguided offering will only encourage wagging and getting up to mischief.

Mrs Grace has defended the plan, saying schools will still be expected to operate "five days a week, Monday to Friday" to "make sure that students are all catered for".

It won't be a case of locking the door on one day and nobody turns up, she says. But being open for business doesn't equal getting results. Where is the evidence that a four-day school week works?

Data in the SEC Newgate Mood of the Nation report released on Friday shows Queensland has the lowest approval rating of any state government. Cost of living, crime and housing affordability polled as the three major concerns.

To these we can add education, with this latest ill-conceived policy that fails, yet again, to address critical flaws in the system.

Money should be spent on attracting and retaining the brightest and best teachers but instead "flexibility" is somehow the answer.

Mrs Grace insists that individual schools that want to change class contact hours must win community support first and will then face "rigorous scrutiny" by the education department's regional directors.

If the level of scrutiny is anything like the bungled responses to school-based bullying, we have every reason to worry. Any reduction in the time kids spend learning is a reduction in their marketability in the real world.

Children should be taught not only how to think and understand but also how to be resilient, learn from their mistakes and move on.

Giving them a day off will only diminish their job prospects and their ability to contribute positively to society. All children deserve a quality education, not a compromised one.

Kylie Lang is associate editor of *The Courier-Mail*

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Providing author's contact details shows they are open/approachable (intention: appear trustworthy and ∴ convince readers of argmnt)

Rhetorical question (makes readers question govt decision and conclude that writer's argmnt is more persuasive)

Appeal to authority / expert opinion

Word choice emphasises seriousness of issue

Introduces final supporting argmnt: there are better alternatives than the plan

Negative language to critique govt (intention: make writer's opinion sound more compelling in comparison)

Appeal to fear

Appeal to sense of community responsibility: must protect our children (implied statement: govt proposal is irresponsible)

Closes w/ strong statement impossible to disagree w/, leaving reader inclined to support writer's view

14.1 *Annotate texts*

- 1 Add three further annotations to the opinion piece, identifying other possible elements for analysis and their intended effect on the reader.
- 2 Summarise the writer's argument, including their contention and supporting reasons.

- 3 Look online to find an alternative image that might accompany the article and support the writer's contention. Explain your choice.

Planning your analysis

You will not have time or space to analyse every persuasive element of a text. This is why it is important to plan your analysis before you start writing; a plan enables you to focus on analysing the most important elements and avoid rambling or going off on a tangent. Even in a time-limited situation, taking 5 minutes to establish what you will focus on in each paragraph of your essay will help you to produce a coherent, targeted analysis.

Begin by looking at your annotations or notes on your text. You now need to select the aspects of the text you will concentrate on. The following tips will help you to make the most effective choices.

- Choose examples you **feel confident analysing**.
- Choose **representative examples**; that is, examples that reflect the text creator's overall approach.
- Choose **examples from across the text** to show that you are analysing it as a whole.
- Select a **range of different structural, argument and language features** rather than using too many examples of a particular technique.
- Focus on **specific language choices** – select words and phrases that have a highly persuasive impact and unpack how they achieve this.

- **Comment on structure**, identifying how the argument has been put together, as well as how particular structural features of the text (such as headings and paragraph breaks) have been used to position the audience.
- Include **analysis of any visual elements**, whether this is in a separate paragraph or in multiple places in your analysis.
- If the text is an audio or audiovisual text, **refer to paralinguistic features** such as the speaker's pace, pitch and use of pauses, as well as any music or sound effects.

Remember that although it is important to use the correct metalanguage to refer to persuasive techniques where possible – e.g. analogies, rhetorical questions, connotations – you don't have to be able to label a strategy in order to analyse it. Sometimes writers will use methods of persuasion that do not have a convenient label but are still intended to shape the audience's responses in particular ways, and these, too, should be discussed.

Structuring your analysis

There is no single correct way to structure your analysis. Possible approaches include the following.

- **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 how language is 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. (This structure can be similar to the 'reason by reason' structure outlined above, as many writers arrange their arguments as a succession of reasons.)
- **Grouping persuasive elements.** Identify several key persuasive elements of the text and devote a paragraph each to analysing them. For example, your first body paragraph might focus on the persuasive effects of the text's structure, your second on the writer's use of emotional appeals, your third on their use of reason and logic, and your fourth on the impact of visual material.

This last option is probably the most commonly used approach, and can be remembered using the acronym **PEE**. PEE stands for:

Persuasive element: Identify the persuasive aspect you will discuss.

Example: Give one or two examples of this element in the text.

Explanation/Effect: Explain how the creator of the text has used this element to position their audience; that is, what is its intended effect?

Planning template

Once you have selected the examples and elements you will analyse, the next step is to plan how you will present your analysis. The following planning template can help you to organise your ideas.

	What to include	Tips
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text title • Text type • Place of publication • Creator's name and credentials/position/associations, if relevant • Background and context details • Writer's main contention • Writer's purpose • Writer's main tone • Writer's main persuasive strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate the writer's contention in your own words. • Include a comment on tone, connecting it to the writer's purpose and/or argument. • You might comment on the writer's overall approach, e.g. do they rely heavily on reason and logic or is their argument based more on emotion? • You can include a brief comment on the text's overall structure. • If the written text is accompanied by an image, briefly comment on how it works with the main text.
Body paragraph 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasive element 1, e.g. language technique, specific word/phrase, aspect of structure, supporting reason, evidence • Example(s) • Effect on the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body of your essay should be around three to five paragraphs. • Concentrate on analysing how three to five reasons or persuasive elements work to persuade.
Body paragraph 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasive element 2, e.g. language technique, specific word/phrase, aspect of structure, supporting reason, evidence • Example(s) • Effect on the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each paragraph deals with one main point – explain what the writer's argument is, how the writer is saying it, and why it is persuasive. • Use brief quotations.
Body paragraph 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasive element 3, e.g. language technique, specific word/phrase, aspect of structure, supporting reason, evidence • Example(s) • Effect on the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the intended effects on the reader/viewer/listener for each strategy or example you discuss. • Use linking words to connect your sentences and paragraphs.
Body paragraph 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasive element 4, e.g. language technique, specific word/phrase, aspect of structure, supporting reason, evidence • Example(s) • Effect on the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember to discuss any visual material.

	What to include	Tips
Conclusion (not essential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of the writer's approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the writer's overall approach. • Link this back to their contention. • You might comment on the writer's concluding persuasive statement/strategy and the intended effect of ending in this way.

14.2 *Plan an analysis*

Create a planning template like the one on the previous page. Complete it with a plan for an analysis of the opinion piece on pages 197–9. You can draw on the annotations on the text and/or your own observations of the writer's use of argument and language.

Writing tools and tips

Having annotated the text and written a plan, you are now ready to write your analysis. This section presents guidelines, tips and tools for writing effective introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions, and for improving the coherency and fluency of your analysis.

Writing fluently and coherently

The first step towards writing a well-structured and fluent analysis is to plan it. So if you have completed that step, you are already well on your way to producing a strong piece of writing. Here are some further suggestions for improving the fluency of your analysis.

- **Avoid repetition.** Showcase your vocabulary by varying your word choices and phrasing throughout your piece. Avoid relying on vague or general phrases such as 'the writer says' or 'the speaker tries to persuade'. Instead, use a range of words and phrases that express your thinking precisely.
- **Vary your sentence structure.** Just as using varied vocabulary will improve your writing, so too will using a variety of sentence structures. Too many short sentences in a row can make your writing sound choppy or clunky. Too many long sentences can be hard to follow or sound verbose. Aim to use a mix of long and short sentences within each paragraph. Reading back over your work is a good way to identify too much repetition of both vocabulary and sentence structures. Replace repeated words with synonyms. If you have too many short sentences, try joining some with appropriate linking words (see the table on the following page). If you have too many long sentences, split some into two separate sentences.





- **Craft strong topic sentences.** Your topic sentences are the road map for your essay, guiding the reader through your analysis. They should clearly express the focus of each of your body paragraphs. Together, they should form a succinct summary of your main points.
- **Use effective linking words.** Linking words show the logical connections between your ideas and help your writing to flow smoothly. The word bank below shows some useful linking words to connect both your sentences and your paragraphs.

Indicating similarity	Indicating difference	Indicating a logical connection
additionally	by contrast	as a result
furthermore	conversely	because
just as ... so too	however	consequently
likewise	nevertheless	in consequence
moreover	on the other hand	therefore
not only ... but also	whereas	thus
similarly	yet	which is why

Creating effective introductory sentences

The following model sentences can be used and adapted for the opening of your analysis.

- In a ... tone, the writer declares ...
- X is a key stakeholder in ... [issue], due to ...
- X responds to the issue of ... [issue], which has been widely debated in the media recently, contending that ...
- Relying heavily on ... [key persuasive strategies], X presents the view that ...
- In her ... [text type] published in ... [place of publication], X argues that ...
- Addressing an audience likely to consist largely of ... [audience demographic], X presents an emotional plea for ...

To avoid repetition of the generic phrase ‘the writer says’, try using the following synonyms for ‘says’.

argues	contends	insists
asserts	declares	maintains
challenges	disputes	presents
claims	emphasises	reasons
concludes	highlights	reveals
considers	indicates	suggests

Analysing tone

The following model sentences can be used and adapted for analysing the writer's tone.

- X adopts a/an ... tone, evident in word choices such as ..., to convey their ... [emotion].
- With the aim of evoking ... [emotion] in their target audience of ... [audience demographic], X employs a/an ... tone.
- X's tone is primarily ..., as conveyed by the words/phrases ... and ..., with their connotations of ...
- Reflecting their ... [emotion] at the situation, X presents their argument in a mostly ... tone.

The following word bank shows some useful words for describing a writer's tone.

Positive	Neutral	Negative
appreciative	calm	apathetic
assured	careful	belligerent
conciliatory	composed	bitter
enthusiastic	even	disparaging
friendly	matter-of-fact	outraged
optimistic	measured	pessimistic
sympathetic	resolute	provocative
thoughtful	restrained	sarcastic

Analysing persuasive strategies

The following model sentences can be used when writing analytically about particular persuasive strategies.

- The word/phrase ..., with its connotations of ... and ..., encourages the reader to view the issue as ...
- The argument that ... is presented using ... [persuasive strategy or strategies], which has the effect of ...
- Aiming to evoke the reader's ... [emotion], the writer employs ... [persuasive strategy] when they state ...
- By appealing to the reader's ..., X hopes to position them to ...
- The writer intends to target ... by ...
- The repeated use of ... [persuasive strategy] enables the writer to develop the idea that ...

To avoid repetition of the generic phrase ‘the writer uses [persuasive strategy]’, try using the following words and phrases to describe what the writer is doing with argument and language.

adopts	develops	mobilises
applies	exploits	solicits
builds upon	leverages	takes advantage of
deploys	manipulates	undermines

Analysing visual material

The following model sentences can be used when writing analytically about visual elements of a text.

- The use of ... [adjective] lighting in the video creates a ... mood/atmosphere.
- Elements such as ... and ... contribute to an overall ... [adjective] visual style that aims to evoke ... in the audience.
- The ... [adjective] colour palette creates a sense of ...
- By placing ... in the foreground of the image, the photographer/cartoonist/illustrator emphasises ...
- The use of a bold/large/decorative font conveys an impression of ...
- ... [adjective] borders and decorative features support the written text by ...
- The speaker’s ... [adjective] clothing conveys ..., inclining the audience to ...
- By ... [body language example], the speaker/actor communicates that ...

The word bank below gives a variety of words to describe features of visual material.

arresting	evocative	sombre
dramatic	graphic	subtle
dynamic	prominent	vibrant

Analysing aural elements

The following model sentences can be used when writing analytically about aural elements of a text.

- The sound effects create a ... mood/emotion/atmosphere that enhances the impact of the message by ...
- The accompanying music creates an emotional response / engages the listener by ...
- The voice-over / sound effects / music in the text emphasise(s) ...

- The presenter's ... [adjective] tone, for example in the word/phrase ..., helps to convey their attitude of ...
- The pacing creates ... [specific effect] such as through ... [specific example], supporting the text's message.
- By pausing at key moments, such as ... and ..., the speaker reinforces ...

The word bank below gives a variety of words to describe aural elements.

bold	dramatic	intrusive
cheerful	friendly	mysterious
dominant	insistent	powerful

14.3 *Practise writing analytically*

- 1 Write the introductory paragraph of an analysis of the opinion piece on pages 197–9, drawing on the plan you created in Activity 14.2.

- 2 Swap introductions with a partner. Check each other's work to make sure all the necessary elements of an opening analytical paragraph are present. Give feedback to your partner on any areas for improvement.
- 3 Rewrite your introductory paragraph according to the feedback provided by your partner.

- 4 Repeat this process for a body paragraph of an analysis.

Editing your work

In a time-limited situation you might not have time to draft and redraft your work. However, you should always allow at least 5 to 10 minutes to read over and refine your analysis. You can use the following editing checklist to polish your work.

- The introduction gives the key details of each text (writer, publication details, text type).
- The impact of context, purpose and audience on the choices made by the text creator(s) with regard to argument and language is discussed.
- The tone of the language is discussed, any shifts in tone are identified and the way in which tone is used to present an argument and position the audience is explained.
- Each body paragraph follows the ‘what, how, why’ structure – that is, it addresses what the writer says, how they are saying it and why they are saying it in this way.
- Each body paragraph includes a variety of short examples or quotes to support the discussion.
- The impact of any visual, audio or audiovisual elements is discussed.
- Every sentence is clear and complete.
- Spelling – including names of people and places in the text – is accurate.

Sample analysis

The following sample response analyses the opinion piece on pages 197–9 and draws on the annotations.

In a concerned, often derisive tone, associate editor Kylie Lang in her opinion piece for *The Courier-Mail* objects strongly to a recent government proposal for more flexible public school timetables. Citing several main reasons for her position, and maintaining that parents and teachers share her views, Lang consistently attacks the government plan with her central argument that four-day school weeks will harm children’s education and resilience. By appealing to readers’ fears about future security, and highlighting repercussions for the broader community, Lang seeks to convince her audience the plan would be disastrous if implemented. Additional techniques such as emotive language and the inclusion of an image of schoolchildren leaving school contribute to the piece’s impact. **1**

Lang’s text is structured around **2** a clear initial statement of her contention (that reducing school hours will hamper student achievement), followed by supporting reasons expressed explicitly (for example, ‘even academically

- 1** The introduction covers key text details (text type, author, source) as well as summarising the author’s main contention and referring to some of the argument strategies used.
- 2** This response is structured by grouping persuasive elements for discussion: body paragraph 1 discusses structure, 2 focuses on argument strategies (especially repetition), 3 explores tone, and 4 discusses visual language.

driven' students will be disadvantaged if they have fewer structured learning hours). These reasons are placed in separate paragraphs for maximum impact. Lang also raises concern regarding financial implications for teachers and parents, appealing to readers' worries about money in order to further emphasise the negative consequences of the government plan. By establishing these central points early in her piece, Lang primes readers to support her views **3** when she critiques the government proposal in more detail in the second half, adding that education funding would be better spent 'attracting and retaining the brightest and best teachers'. Overall, this structure allows Lang to draw in her audience, and then consolidate her assertions, concluding with a strong restatement in the final sentence.

Restatement **4** of ideas is one of the central strategies used by Lang in this piece. She varies her expression to reiterate important points, ensuring her perspective is communicated clearly and compellingly. For example, she states that 'youth crime rates' are high and a four-day school week would allow 'wayward kids more time to steal cars and terrorise neighbourhoods', later restating this by claiming the flexible week will 'encourage wagging and getting up to mischief'. Another form of repetition **5** Lang uses to portray her opinion as more sensible than the proposal she condemns is the frequent belittling of the government's capacity to make good decisions. She refers to previous 'bungled' responses and labels the new proposal 'idiotic', 'misguided' and 'ill-conceived'. Additionally, an ad hominem attack targets the education minister in order to discredit the whole department; Lang alleges that the minister 'has completely lost the plot'. In concert with these attacks, Lang appeals to fear in order to build worries in her readers' minds that the government plan is dangerous and irresponsible. **6** Emotive language strengthens these appeals, as she characterises the government's behaviour with strong negative words such as 'abyss', 'terrorise' and 'condemning' and leads the audience to welcome an alternative view (Lang's).

Another **7** key strategy Lang employs to undermine the government's credibility is to relentlessly pair sarcastic and derogatory vocabulary choices with mentions of the plan, sustaining a disparaging tone from start to finish, such as in the phrases 'infinite lack of wisdom', 'oh, please' and "'flexibility" is somehow the answer'. This last example includes a device Lang relies on: enclosing the government's words in quotation marks to make them appear foolish

3 The second half of the paragraph makes statements about the intended effect of the persuasive strategy (in this case, the effect of structuring decisions).

4 Repetition of a key word from the last sentence of the previous paragraph helps to create cohesion and fluency.

5 Identifies a specific argument technique (a form of repetition), and presents evidence in the form of several short, relevant quotes from throughout the opinion piece to support the point being made.

6 Explains how two persuasive techniques (appeals to fear and emotive vocabulary choices) work together to achieve a persuasive effect.

7 Uses a relevant linking word to transition smoothly from the previous to the current paragraph. (There is also a link created by content, with the last sentence of the previous paragraph and the first sentence of this paragraph both referencing the government's competency.)





and lightweight; **8** by ridiculing the opposing argument Lang strengthens her own. Carefully balanced with this cutting tone is Lang's compassion for students, parents and teachers ('children ... do best when boundaries are known and respected'; 'all children deserve ...'), building an impression she is a caring voice of reason whose views should be taken seriously. While the tone is consistent, there are several subtle shifts, **9** such as above the image. At this point the language becomes slightly more formal and the tone more sincere, in keeping with the argument's transition away from the emotional impacts of the plan towards a more concrete discussion of its details and the wider context.

The image itself (a photograph of students walking along a fence) **10** comprises the primary visual component of this text – though the interactive poll in the first section also contributes a visual element, with the multi-choice formatting a visual reminder of the education context. The photograph appears to show students walking away from school, thus illustrating Lang's worst-case scenario: if the four-day school week is adopted, students will miss out on valuable learning time, ultimately entering the adult world without the resilience and knowledge Lang believes school should provide. The fact that the students in the image are walking away suggests that students across the board are only going to become more disengaged, which bolsters Lang's earlier assertions. **11** The students' anonymity echoes this: they represent not just a few specific individuals but the vast community of students. The image shows students outside the school fence looking relaxed and content, subtly reinforcing Lang's argument that they need boundaries and routine for their learning to prosper.

Together, the visual language, vocabulary, style and specific argument techniques work to create Lang's dominant tone of incredulous sarcasm in her condemnation of the government's four-day school week proposal. She encourages audiences to agree with her that the notion is laughable, and that it can only cause harm to students, teachers, parents and the wider community. By repeatedly mocking the government's credibility and emphasising the need to prepare students effectively for their futures, Lang hopes to persuade her readers that, as her closing sentence firmly asserts, 'all children deserve a quality education, not a compromised one'. **12**

- 8** Identifies a persuasive technique from an example, adds an interpretive statement about the use of the technique and concludes by explaining its effect.
- 9** Shows close attention to tone, noting how a shift in tone corresponds to a transition in the argument.
- 10** Provides a brief overview of the image being discussed. Note that you do not have space to describe an image in detail, although you should refer to relevant aspects, such as composition, focus, distance and colour, where these contribute to the persuasive effect of the image.
- 11** Analyses relevant details of the photograph and relates these to Lang's written argument.
- 12** Ends the analysis by briefly summarising the main argument strategies used and incorporating a quote from the opinion piece's final sentence as a way of smoothly concluding the response.

PRESENTING YOUR POINT OF VIEW

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Choosing and researching an issue
- Planning your point-of-view text
- Writing your point-of-view text
- Editing your point-of-view text
- Delivering your presentation
- Sample response

In both Unit 2 and Unit 4, you will be asked to present a point of view on a topical issue. In Unit 4, this issue must have appeared in the media since 1 September of the previous year. Your point of view will be presented in an oral form, which could be a speech, a discussion or a debate.

This chapter looks at choosing an appropriate issue, forming a point of view, and planning and writing your presentation. It also includes guidelines and advice for delivering an effective presentation in different oral forms.



Choosing and researching an issue

Your teacher might choose an issue for your class to study, or you might be given the opportunity to select your own or to choose from a limited range. Whatever the situation, the same strategies for collecting information will apply.

Start by collecting news articles, opinion pieces and other information about your issue. If the information comes from newspapers or magazines, record the place and date of publication. If you find relevant information and perspectives in television or radio news broadcasts, make sure you note relevant details about the source. Many media outlets, such as the ABC, have extensive material on their websites, including audio and video files as well as summaries of broadcasts and transcripts of radio shows. Keep in mind the following when researching your issue.

- **Collect evidence and ideas from a wide variety of sources.** Explore texts published in different newspapers, journal and magazine articles, online discussion forums and social media posts, as well as audio and audiovisual texts such as radio programs, podcasts and online videos.





- **Use reputable sources.** While you should explore a range of information sources, focus primarily on those that are likely to be credible and trustworthy. These include government websites (with URLs ending in .gov) and well-established, reputable news sites, such as *The Age* and www.abc.net.au/news. Look for sources that support their claims with evidence and references.
- **Investigate all sides of the issue.** Even if you've already decided what your opinion is, explore sources that promote other sides of the debate. They may make some credible points that you will concede in your argument, which will help you to appear reasonable and balanced. Or they may provide you with opportunities to refute their arguments with contradictory evidence or reasoning.
- **Keep a detailed record of your sources.** You can use a table like the one below to record this information.

Text title and text type	Writer (and relevant qualifications and affiliations)	Date and place of publication	Contention	Key points

Once you have collected material on an issue, the next step is to form your contention. A contention is a specific statement about a proposal you will either support or oppose.

Your contention should be:

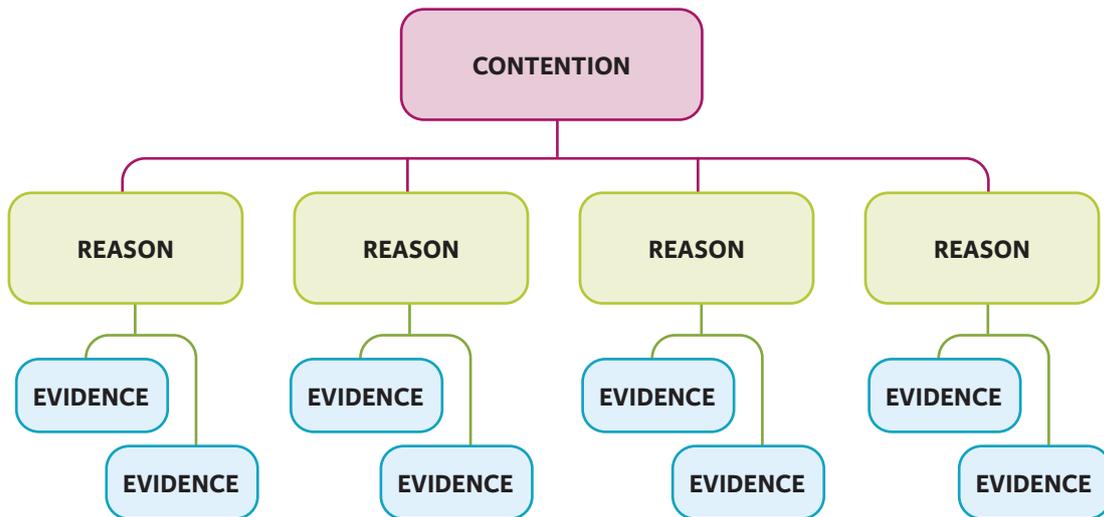
- clear and specific, e.g. 'Public transport should be free for students and health care card holders' (not 'Public transport is too expensive')
- able to be argued against, e.g. 'Soft drink vending machines should not be allowed in schools' (not 'Soft drinks are unhealthy', which few people would disagree with)
- reasonable and practical, e.g. 'The government should increase funding for homelessness support services' (not 'The government should provide free housing for everyone').

15.1 *Research an issue*

- 1 Select one of the issues covered in this book, or an issue of your own choice. Draw up a table like the one above and find at least six texts, from different sources, on your issue. Complete the table with your findings.
- 2 Write a contention that concisely expresses your point of view on the issue.

Planning your point-of-view text

Having researched the issue and formed your contention, you are now ready to plan your point-of-view text. Remember that your aim is to produce a well-reasoned and coherent argument. This means that each of your reasons should clearly support your contention, and be supported by relevant and reliable evidence. The pyramid diagram below shows the basic skeleton structure of a well-reasoned argument.



This diagram also helps to illustrate the balance of content. You should have multiple pieces of evidence for each point you make, and multiple reasons to support your contention.

The first step towards creating your reasoned argument is to identify the main reasons for your opinion.

Next, decide on the order in which you will present your reasons. Write down your reasons with plenty of space between them. What would be the most logical order for them? Will you move from the strongest reason to the weakest one? From the most specific to the most general? Think about what order would be easiest for your audience to follow, too. Place a number next to each reason to show the sequence. Next to or below each reason, note down the evidence you will present to support it.

Finally, consider ‘roadblocks’ – beliefs held by your audience that might prevent them from being convinced by your argument. Might they think that what you are suggesting will be boring, harmful, morally wrong, expensive, unsafe, unfair or frightening? Will it upset their way of life, affect their loved ones or negatively impact on their environment? Your research into the issue should have exposed you to some of the arguments against your point of view, so decide how you will counter or rebut these.

Planning template

You can use a planning template like the one below to plan your piece. You might have more than three main reasons to support your viewpoint, so add rows if you need to. In the second column, make notes about the details you will present to support each reason. In the third column, make notes about the language techniques or word choices you will use to support your argument. In the final column, make notes about how you will deliver each section of the speech, such as places where you might display a graph or photo, or pause or raise your voice for effect, or use particular gestures to emphasise a point.

Section	Information, evidence and examples	Language	Delivery
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use an engaging opening, e.g. an anecdote or direct question to the audience. Introduce the issue. Identify the main points of view. State your contention. 			
Reason 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present your first reason. 			
Reason 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present your second reason. 			
Reason 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present your third reason. 			
Rebuttal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counter your audience's likely roadblocks. Refute the arguments of those on the other side of the debate. 			
Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restate your main points. Give a call to action. 			

15.2 *Plan a point-of-view text*

Based on the research you completed and the contention you crafted for Activity 15.1, complete a planning template like the one opposite to plan a point-of-view text.

Writing your point-of-view text

On average, speeches are delivered clearly and comfortably at a speed of 130–150 words per minute. So for a speech of 5 to 6 minutes, you will need to write between 650 and 900 words. Always keep in mind that you are crafting a text to be delivered orally, so your argument needs to be fluent and clear not only on the page but also when spoken aloud.

Attention-grabbing openings

Your first aim is to engage the audience's attention from the outset. Possible ways (sometimes called 'hooks') to achieve this include:

- telling a joke
- asking the audience a question
- explaining why the issue should matter to the audience
- relating an anecdote
- surprising the audience with an unexpected fact or statistic.

The table below shows some useful opening phrases and sentence starters.

Did you know that ...?	I recall one time when ...	It's a little-known fact that ...
Many people are surprised to hear that ...	Let me tell you the story of ...	I'm sure you're all aware that ...
Have you ever ...?	All of us here would be familiar with ...	A well-known person once said ...
How many of you here have experienced ...?	Let me ask you ...	Have you heard about ...?

15.3 *Craft an effective opening*

- 1 Select an issue covered in this book or one of your own choosing. Write an opening paragraph for a speech on the issue, using at least one of the hooks on page 215.

- 2 Read your opening paragraph aloud to an audience. (The audience doesn't have to be large – try a group of friends or family members.)
- 3 Ask your test audience for feedback on your opening. If you told a joke, was it humorous? Did your unexpected fact really surprise them? Was the topic of your speech clear?
- 4 Revise your opening according to the feedback given to you by your test audience.

- 5 Deliver your opening again and check with your audience that you have effectively addressed any issues they identified.

Keeping the listener engaged

Once you have your audience's attention, it's important to retain it. Try these tips for crafting an engaging presentation.

- **Use examples, comparisons, analogies and anecdotes.** This will make your ideas clear, relevant and interesting to your audience.
- **Use repetition.** Repeat, perhaps using slightly different terms, sentences or phrases that emphasise your key arguments.
- **Use simple, direct sentences** to introduce and conclude each new point or emphasise important points.

- **Ask direct questions of your audience.** This can help keep their focus on you and make them feel involved in the issue you're discussing. But use this method only occasionally – no more than two or three times in your speech – or it will seem intrusive and distracting.
- **Remind the audience of your contention.** Reiterating your contention at more than one point in your presentation will help the audience remember it and strengthen the coherence of your argument.
- **Use sequencing language** – firstly, secondly and so on – to help listeners follow your argument.

The table below shows some useful phrases and sentence starters using sequencing language.

Firstly, ...	It is also vital to recognise ...	Finally, ...
The first point is that ...	Another perspective is that ...	To conclude, ...
Additionally, ...	The second point in support of this is ...	As the evidence shows, ...
Subsequently, ...	This is demonstrated by ...	It is clear that ...
The next significant point is that ...	The evidence also suggests ...	In summary, ...

Creating a strong argument

While it is important to keep your listeners engaged, it is even more important to craft an effective, well-reasoned and well-supported argument. Keep in mind the following when writing your point-of-view piece.

- **Use evidence and reasons** to support all your assertions.
- **Use logic and reasoning** to develop your discussion. Think about causes, effects, consequences and implications.
- **Include rebuttal of opposing viewpoints.** This shows you have considered the issue from all sides, and implies the superiority of your viewpoint over others. You can weave rebuttal into your discussion throughout, or place it near the beginning or near the end.
- **Make use of the persuasive strategies** you studied in the previous chapters. Think about how you might use strategies you've seen used by other writers to create particular effects in your own piece.
- **Acknowledge your sources.** Whenever you present evidence or quote a stakeholder or expert, state where you obtained your information so that you avoid plagiarising (presenting another person's language, thoughts, ideas or expressions as your own original work) and so that your audience can judge for themselves how reliable your sources are.





- **Balance argument with persuasive language.** An audience is persuaded not only by the quality of your arguments but also by the persuasive language you use. However, avoid the trap of attempting to use every persuasive language technique you know; instead, think carefully about which techniques would best support your argument and persuade your particular audience.

The table below shows some useful phrases and sentence starters for showing the logical connections between your ideas.

This is demonstrated by ...	In the same way ...	Due to ...
The evidence clearly supports the idea that ...	Just as ... so too ...	Consequently, ...
Because therefore ...	As we have seen ...	As X [relevant expert] has said, ...
As a result ...	The implication is that ...	Despite this, ...

15.4 Write a strong body paragraph

- 1 Select an issue covered in this book or one of your own choosing. Write a body paragraph for a speech on the issue.

- 2 Using the guidelines on pages 216–18 as a checklist, read over your paragraph and identify any areas for improvement.
- 3 Rewrite your paragraph so that it more closely follows the advice set out on pages 216–18.

Editing your point-of-view text

Whether your point of view is presented as an individual speech, a speech in a debate or a contribution to a discussion, you can use the following checklist to edit your script.

- The piece demonstrates research into and an understanding of the issue.
- The contention is clearly expressed.
- All the reasons and evidence clearly support the contention.
- The argument is logically structured.
- The argument is well supported by appropriate evidence.
- A range of audience-appropriate persuasive strategies is used.
- The choice of persuasive vocabulary is varied and interesting.
- There is variation in sentence lengths and structures.
- The opening and concluding statements are engaging and powerful.
- Sources for key facts, statistics and quotes are cited correctly.
- Signposts and transition phrases are clear and appropriate.

As you will be delivering your point of view orally, check the following.

- You know how to pronounce every word in your transcript.
- There are no overly long sentences that cause you to run out of breath.
- You know where you need to pause, speed up or slow down for effect.
- You have considered where you might use particular gestures and body language.

15.5 *Edit your work*

Return to the paragraphs you created for Activities 15.3 and 15.4. Use the editing checklist to revise these paragraphs once more, ensuring that they are as polished and effective as possible.

Delivering your presentation

This section offers advice for presenting effectively, no matter whether you are delivering your point-of-view presentation as a speech, or as part of a debate or a discussion (see pages 221–3 for more on these forms).

Once you have written and edited your presentation, you should start practising delivering it. The more often you practise, the more polished your presentation will be. It is a good idea to practise in front of a mirror and/or film yourself giving your presentation. This will help you to identify areas for improvement in your delivery.

The other aim of rehearsing your presentation several times is so that you know it well enough to deliver it without reading it word for word. Instead of reading your script, aim to use cue cards on which you write down the most important parts of your speech in note form.

The table below presents guidelines for how to use cue cards effectively, as well as how to use your voice and body language to support your argument.

Cue cards	Voice	Body language
Cue cards should fit into the palm of your hand. Write notes in large, clear letters and colour-code them (e.g. highlight main points in green, quotations in blue).	Vary the pitch and emphasise important points.	Look directly at your listeners as much as possible.
Number the cards; write on one side only.	Use a tone appropriate for the subject matter and the emotions you want your audience to feel.	If maintaining eye contact with individual audience members is difficult, look out directly over the audience's heads. This still gives the appearance that you are focused on them.
Write only one main point on each card; use bullet points to list evidence, examples and quotations.	Check, learn and practise the pronunciation of all the words you use.	Try to make your posture and facial expressions engaging and reflective of your piece's tone.
Use symbols (e.g. arrows) and abbreviations that you can easily recognise.	Ensure sentences are not so long that you run out of breath.	Remember that gestures can support your message, but they should seem natural and should enrich, not detract from, your words.
Write 'PAUSE' to remind yourself to stop at important points.	Slow down. Pauses at key points help the audience to absorb them.	Your conclusion is the most important part – learn it by heart so that you can look at the audience as you deliver it.

15.6 Refine your delivery skills

- 1 Return to the edited opening paragraph and body paragraph of your point-of-view presentation (from Activity 15.5). Create a set of cue cards for these sections of your presentation.
- 2 Working with a partner, take turns to deliver these two paragraphs, using your cue cards.
- 3 Identify three strengths and three areas for improvement in terms of the delivery of your partner's speech.
- 4 Practise delivering your speech again, applying the feedback given to you by your partner.

Debates

One of the ways in which you might be asked to deliver your presentation is as part of a debate. A debate is a structured argument between two teams of three speakers. The affirmative team argues that the statement being debated is true, while the negative team argues that it is false. Your task as a speaker is to show why your side is right and the other side is wrong.

Some points to remember when taking part in a debate include the following.

- **Prepare your argument as a team** to ensure that you don't repeat (or contradict!) any points that your fellow speakers will be making.
- **Stick to the time limit advised by your teacher.** This is the case for all oral presentations of a point of view, of course. But particularly in a debate, it is important to adhere to the time limit you are given so that everyone has an equal opportunity to present their ideas and rebut those of the opposing team.
- **Anticipate the points the opposing team will raise** so that you can prepare counterarguments. Rebuttal is an important element of debating.
- **Listen carefully when members of the opposition are speaking.** Not only will this help you to present appropriate counterarguments, but it is also good debating etiquette.



The table below summarises the order and responsibilities of each speaker in a formal debate.

Affirmative team	Negative team
<p>1st speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the key terms of the statement. • Present your team's contention and outline what each team member will cover. • Open the case by presenting one or two points of argument. 	<p>1st speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept the other team's definition(s) or insist on your own. For example, the statement 'we should reach for the stars' could be about space travel or about having high aspirations. It is important that both teams are arguing about the same thing. • Present your team's contention, outline your team members' points and present one or two points of argument. • Start your team's rebuttal by attacking the opposition's contention or the first affirmative's argument.
<p>2nd speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirm your team's contention. • Rebut the first negative speaker. • Develop your case with evidence, examples, anecdotes and logic. 	<p>2nd speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirm your team's contention. • Rebut the second affirmative speaker. • Develop your case with evidence, examples, anecdotes and logic.
<p>3rd speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirm your team's contention. • Outline your team's case without introducing any new material and rebut the opposition's points thoroughly. 	<p>3rd speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirm your team's contention. • Outline the team's case without introducing any new material and rebut the opposition's points thoroughly.

Discussions

Another way in which you might be asked to present your point of view is as part of a discussion. Much of the advice presented in previous sections will also apply to presenting an effective discussion contribution. However, some specific points to keep in mind include the following.

- **Observe appropriate classroom etiquette.** This means paying attention to others as they speak, and providing support in the form of encouraging facial expressions and/or body language. After all, you would want your classmates to do the same for you.
- **Respond to the ideas of others.** The point of a discussion is to exchange and compare ideas. Having listened to the ideas presented by other class members, respond to them with your own thoughts.

- **Avoid attacking or inflammatory language.** Even if you are disagreeing with an opinion expressed by someone else, do so politely and respectfully. This is an important element of formal discussions.
- **Be sure to present your key points.** The nature of a discussion means that your contribution might be slightly less formal than a conventional speech, and you are likely to have more opportunity to engage in an exchange of ideas with others. But don't let this process distract you from delivering the substance of the argument that you have prepared.

The table below gives some useful phrases and sentence starters for participating in a discussion about an issue.

I hear what you're saying, but have you considered ...?	The findings of X [study/ researcher] suggest that ...	Although I agree that ..., I disagree that ...
Based on ... [evidence], I believe that ...	It's interesting that you should say that because my own research shows that ...	My own thoughts are closer to X's [classmate's/expert's] because ...
Further to X's [classmate's] point, I'd like to add that ...	I think X put it best when they said ...	Unfortunately, the evidence for that point of view just doesn't stack up, because ...
This opinion is supported by X [expert], who states ...	As X [classmate] has argued, ...	Looking at the issue from the perspective of X [stakeholder], we find ...

15.7 *Debate and discuss*

- 1 Select an issue covered in this book or one of your own choosing. Compose a contention that expresses a clear opinion on it.

- 2 In a small group of four to six students, stage a debate on the statement you devised for question 1.
- 3 In a small group, hold a formal discussion about a different issue. One person in the group should take the role of the facilitator, ensuring that the discussion stays on topic and that everyone has the opportunity to express their views.

Sample response

The following sample point-of-view text addresses the issue of public transport costs, and could be delivered as a speech to a class. The annotations indicate the strengths of the piece.

My teacher and fellow classmates, **1** I am here to put forward a suggestion that I feel would have a very positive impact both for us, as students, **2** and for our wider community. I believe that we should change our public transport system to benefit the regular, everyday commuter – people like you and me – by decreasing the cost of a regular ticket. The standard fee would continue to be paid only by tourists and others who use public transport as a last resort, that is, not regular commuters. Under this system, people who catch public transport on most days of the week would have access to a reduced ticketing price, **3** making their rides more cost-effective, encouraging them to continue routine use of public transport and inspiring others to hopefully do the same. I put forward this suggestion for the following reasons.

Firstly, **4** we should be encouraging the members of our community to leave their cars at home and take public transport for environmental reasons. We **5** are consistently hearing that the small changes we make in our daily lives impact our carbon footprint and can reverse the effects of climate change. The Environmental Literacy Council estimates that 1.5 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions are kept out of the atmosphere every year simply by giving people transport options other than cars. **6** While walking and cycling are great options, those with a lengthy commute – like some of us in this room – do not have the option of utilising these methods. This, combined with the steady increase in public transport costs, has made many commuters feel like their best or only option is to drive. By offering a small reduction in price for consistent PT commuters, we will greatly reduce the number of cars on the road, which would go a long way towards addressing our ever-growing environmental concerns.

Secondly, reducing the cost for consistent PT commuters will bolster our sense of community and neighbourliness. **7** According to the American

- 1** Salutation is appropriate to a classroom audience.
- 2** Mention of the benefits to the speaker's audience aims to engage them from the outset.
- 3** A thoughtful and reasonable main contention is stated up front.
- 4** Signposts such as 'Firstly', 'Secondly' and so on help the audience to keep track of the speaker's arguments.
- 5** The speaker uses inclusive language throughout, reinforcing the point that the benefits of reducing public transport costs for regular commuters apply to the whole community, including the students to whom they are speaking.
- 6** Evidence in the form of a statistic provided by a relevant authority bolsters the speaker's argument.
- 7** The speaker's reasons are clearly communicated in their topic sentences. Although the listener won't be aware that these are topic sentences, structuring the script in this way helps the speaker to pause briefly before each new paragraph.

Psychological Association, **8** connecting with your neighbours can provide emotional and informational support, as well as increase people's sense of community and attachment to place. All of these make for a happy and well-connected community, in which individuals feel safe and able to rely on one another. By riding the bus together, we can continue to build a supportive environment for all of our families. Not only will we have the opportunity to get to know each other a little better, but think of the money that we could all save on petrol! Money that would in turn then filter back into the community – it's a win-win-win! **9**

Thirdly, reducing fares for loyal commuters will increase appreciation and support for the public transport industry, **10** and reduce issues like fare evasion. Those who regularly avoid paying fares usually do so because they just can't afford to get themselves to work or school every day at the current prices. **11** Public transport is becoming more expensive, and the risk of a fine quite simply isn't enough to dissuade them. By lowering the costs for regular commuters, we would greatly reduce the number of people who commit fare evasion, which would also reduce the amount of labour needed to police these issues. Improved accessibility helps us all.

Obviously, we have to acknowledge that this decision would have an impact on public transport providers in terms of reduced revenue. **12** However, given that this change would likely result in more people taking public transport overall, it is likely that the financial loss would be minimised and the benefits certainly outweigh this small cost. Rewarding our consistent commuters with a small reduction in their ticket prices would create so many different positives for our community. As I have outlined, **13** this minor change would have great and lasting impact on both the environment and our community, and would boost appreciation for as well as utilisation of public transport. Financially speaking, we as a community would experience the benefits of this in our own wallets and, while the public transport industry would take a small hit, the move would ultimately lead to a stronger and more sustainable community and a far more satisfied commuting populace. **14** Thank you.

- 8** Expert evidence supports the point being made.
- 9** Exclamation marks indicate places where the speaker is likely to raise their pitch and communicate enthusiasm through their tone.
- 10** Previously presented reasons focused on benefits to public transport users; this reason focuses on a benefit to the public transport industry. The speaker thus appeals to multiple stakeholders.
- 11** This appeal to the audience's sympathy plays down the criminality of fare evaders by emphasising their financial need.
- 12** Concedes a point on the opposing side of the debate, with the aim of appearing reasonable and realistic.
- 13** Recapping the main points assists the audience to recall them and reinforces their impact.
- 14** The concluding sentence reiterates the speaker's main contention and summarises their argument, leaving the audience with a strong final impression.

THE EXAM

IN THIS CHAPTER

- › Exam overview
- › Revision and preparation
- › In the exam

This chapter provides an overview of the tasks in the end-of-Year-12 English exam. It also contains strategies and advice for exam preparation and for using time effectively when you sit the exam.



Exam overview

The VCE English exam is a three-hour exam, with an additional 15 minutes of reading time before you can start writing. Each of the three sections is worth the same number of marks, so you should spend around the same amount of time – one hour – on each. These three sections are related to the areas of study in Units 3 and 4 as follows.

Exam section	Area of Study	Unit
Section A: Analytical response to a text	Area of Study 1: Reading and responding to texts	Units 3 and 4
Section B: Creating a text	Area of Study 2: Creating texts	Unit 3
Section C: Analysis of argument and language	Area of Study 2: Analysing argument	Unit 4

The following VCAA resources are worth careful study:

[Examination specifications](#)



[Sample written examination \(Task Book\)](#)



[Assessment criteria and expected qualities](#)



[Sample Answer Book](#)



The Task Book will be sixteen pages in length. The front page will contain the general cover notes and instructions, including what you can and can't take into the exam.

- An English and/or bilingual printed dictionary is permitted, so remember to take one in with you.
- Mobile phones and/or any unauthorised electronic devices are not permitted.

Assessment criteria

Although the exam criteria* are printed on the last page of the Task Book, don't waste time reading these during the exam. They are reproduced below as well as being available online, and you should refer to them throughout Year 12 to ensure that you are familiar with the expectations for each section of the exam.

Section	Criteria
Section A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge and understanding of the text, its structure, and the ideas, concerns and values it explores • development of a coherent analysis in response to the topic • use of evidence from the text to support the analysis • use of fluent expression through appropriate use of vocabulary and conventions of Standard Australian English
Section B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of relevant idea(s) drawn from one Framework of Ideas, the title provided and at least one piece of stimulus material • creation of a cohesive text that connects to a clear purpose(s) and incorporates an appropriate voice • use of suitable text structures and language features to create a text • use of fluent expression, including the appropriate use of vocabulary
Section C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of contention, argument(s) and point of view • analysis of the ways in which written and spoken language and visuals are used to present an argument(s) and to persuade an intended audience • use of evidence from the text to support the analysis • use of fluent expression through appropriate use of vocabulary and conventions of Standard Australian English

* The VCE English (2024–2027) Written Examination: Examination Assessment Criteria are © VCAA, reproduced by permission.

Revision and preparation

The English exam requires you to produce three complete pieces of writing within a three-hour period. Each task has its own particular requirements and complexities, and in combination these tasks require a variety of skills as well as stamina and excellent time management.

The work you have done throughout the year is your best preparation for the exam. If you have completed all your assessment tasks, you will be well set up to demonstrate the knowledge and skills you have honed throughout your VCE English studies. But you will also need to devote some dedicated time to revision. This section gives you some strategies to use as you revise in the lead-up to the exam.

General revision and preparation

The following strategies will help you to get the most out of your revision time.

Make a revision timetable

Plan your revision schedule carefully, allocating sufficient time to revise for English as well as for your other subjects. Use the September–October break for examination preparation. Do have a few days of rest, but make sure you take this opportunity to revise and practise.

Read past exam reports

The exam reports on the VCAA website are written by senior VCAA English assessors. They contain excellent advice on what assessors are looking for when they grade exam scripts, and explain common problems observed in student responses. The exam reports also include excerpts from student responses, with accompanying comments on the responses' strengths and weaknesses.

Note that English exams in 2023 and earlier were for previous Study Designs, when there was a different task for Section B. However, the assessor comments for Section A and Section C, as well as the student samples, will be very relevant.

Proofread your practice pieces

Like writing, proofreading is a skill that you will get better at with practice. Each time you write a practice piece, give yourself 5 minutes to read over it and see how many errors you can pick up.

Practise handwriting

Writing continuously for three hours is a physically demanding task. If you struggle to do this when you begin your exam revision (say, in the October school holidays), practise just completing one task in an hour, then a couple of days later do two tasks in two hours, and then three tasks in three hours.

Although there are no marks awarded for neat handwriting, it is important that your writing is legible. If your assessor can't read your writing, they can't reward you for what you know or how well you express yourself. If you mostly type on a computer, your handwriting may be untidy and/or slow.

Make sure your exam preparation is handwritten as much as possible, so you improve your speed, legibility and stamina.

Preparing for Section A

The following strategies will help you revise your text and prepare for your analytical text response in Section A.

Memorise key spellings and textual details

Ensure that you know how to spell the title of your text, as well as the name of the writer or director. You should also be able to recall and spell accurately the names of characters and places in the text.

- One way to memorise the spelling of key names is to write each one down, by hand, multiple times.
- Place sticky notes around your desk with author, character and place names written on them, so that you see them frequently.

Summarise character information

Your essay should show that you know your characters very well – minor characters as well as main characters. Use the table in Activity 1.5 (page 8) to capture key details about the main characters and important minor characters in your text.

Create a plot summary

Know the essential details of your text: what happens when, where and to whom. Summarise the events in your text in the form of a time line, flowchart or table.

Use the table on page 12 to help you identify the narrative's crisis points, turning points, climax and resolution. Note these in your time line and/or draw a graph of the narrative structure in your text.

Memorise quotations

As part of the textual evidence you present in your Section A response you will probably include some direct quotations. They don't need to be long, but you do need to explain their relevance to the topic and your interpretation of the text.

- Memorise approximately twenty key quotes from the text. Choose a range of quotes that say something significant about a key concept or tension in the text, or reveal important aspects of main characters.
- Write the quotes on sticky notes and place them around your room or even around your house. The more you see them, the better you will remember them.

Write essay topics and plans

Creating your own topics makes you think carefully about the text and about the importance of each word in a topic.

- Develop five topics on your text, using the sample topics in this book or those given to you in class as models.
- Create an essay plan for each topic. The plan should include a main contention, a topic sentence for each of your body paragraphs, and dot-point notes about textual evidence. Use the process outlined in Chapter 4 on pages 55–6.

Preparing for Section B

The task in Section B is very open-ended and does not require you to memorise information. Nevertheless, using ideas drawn from unseen materials is a skill you can improve with practice. Try using the following strategies as you prepare for this section of the exam.

Practise writing to time

In the one hour you allocate to Section B in the exam, it is a good idea to take a few minutes to make a rough outline or plan, and then a few minutes at the end to proofread your work. This means you will have 50–55 minutes for the actual writing.

Practise writing complete pieces within this time limit. Initially you might take longer, so aim to gradually reduce the time you need.

Choose stimulus material and practise planning

The stimulus material in Section B is likely to include a combination of short written texts and an image. Your response will need to draw ideas from at least one piece of stimulus material as well as a given title.

Use the following strategy to improve your ability to respond quickly and effectively to stimulus material.

- Search online for a quote about the Framework you are studying. You don't need to limit your search to just the single word or phrase (e.g. 'country' or 'personal journeys'); you can also use related words (e.g. 'belonging', 'quests'). Write down the quote at the top of a piece of paper.
- Create a short title connected to your Framework and write it under the quote.
- Give yourself 5 minutes to create the outline of a response. Identify the text type; your purpose(s); your intended audience; how you will use the quote; and how you will use the title.

You can repeat these steps each time you write a practice response for Section B. Vary the process by searching for an image rather than a quote.

Swap work and get feedback

If possible, ask your teacher to read your practice exam responses and give you some feedback. Another option is to swap practice pieces with a classmate.

This feedback is particularly valuable for Section B because your piece must have a clear purpose: to explain, to express, to reflect or to argue. It also needs to be cohesive and to have an appropriate voice.

Ask your reader to let you know:

- what they think the purpose(s) of your piece is
- if the piece is cohesive (unified and logically connected)
- if it clearly uses the stimulus material and title
- if the voice is appropriate to the form and purpose.

Revise your piece in response to any weaknesses your reader identifies.

Preparing for Section C

Use the following strategies to help you prepare for writing an analysis of argument and language in Section C.

Read widely

You don't know what type of text you will be analysing in the exam, so read a variety of persuasive texts as part of your preparation. These can include newspaper articles (in print and/or online), blog posts, speech transcripts, websites and social media pages. Look for written pieces accompanied by one or two images.

Practise analysing persuasive elements

In the exam you will need to read the Section C task material and identify key elements quite quickly, so you can spend most of your time writing. For each persuasive text you find, give yourself 10 minutes to read the text and identify:

- the main contention
- two or three supporting reasons
- the main tone and any changes in tone
- three examples of persuasive language and their intended effects
- how the visual material works with the written text to present a point of view.

Practise analysing the structure of persuasive texts

The expected qualities for high-level Section C responses include an understanding of 'the development of argument(s) as constructed in the text'. The word 'development' means the sequencing and arrangement of ideas, reasons and evidence in the text.

To improve your ability to analyse the structure of a persuasive text, practise identifying the following for each persuasive text you read:

- how the writer begins
- the order of the supporting reasons or arguments
- where the writer argues against (rebutts) opposing points of view
- how the writer ends.

Think about the likely effect on the reader of putting the elements of the argument in this particular sequence. Why did the writer present them in this order?

Work with a partner or in small groups

Find and share examples of persuasive texts, and compare what you think are the main contention, tone and supporting reasons in each text. Highlight four or five examples of persuasive strategies used in each text and make notes about their intended effects on the reader. Compare your answers and discuss the similarities and differences.

In the exam

The following strategies will help you perform at your best in the exam.

Time management

Before the exam begins, you should have an idea of when you will start and finish each section, and the order in which you will complete the sections. Write these times down on the paper. For example:

- Reading time: 9:00 am
- Section C: 9:15 am – 10:15 am
- Section A: 10:15 am – 11:15 am
- Section B: 11:15 am – 12:15 pm

Many students choose to begin with Section C while the material is fresh in their mind following reading time. Whatever order you tackle the exam in (e.g. Section C, A, B) stick to your planned times and don't sacrifice the other sections by spending too long on one section.

Use the reading time well

The 15 minutes of reading time should be enough time for you to read the task material for all three sections of the exam.

- In Section A, read the task instructions then go to the page that has the topics for your text. Read the two topics carefully and choose one.
- In Section B, read the task instructions at the start of the section then go to the page your Framework is on. Read the title and the text stimulus material, and carefully examine the image.

- You will probably spend most of your reading time considering the task material for Section C. Read it twice so you can begin to identify some words and argument strategies that you will unpack in your analysis. Pay close attention to the background material, as this is where you will find the context and intended audience for the persuasive text. Make some brief notes once writing time begins.

Spend time brainstorming and planning

Keep planning time to a minimum – around 5 minutes per response.

- For Section A, write a brief plan that includes your contention, three topic sentences and one or two pieces of textual evidence for each topic sentence. Use your dictionary to check the meanings of any words in the topic you're unsure about.
- For Section B, write a brief outline of your response. Make a note of the purpose or purposes of your piece, as this needs to be clear to your assessors. Also think about how you will end your text; this will help you to conclude the piece within the time limit.
- For Section C, summarise the writer's main contention in a single sentence. Annotate the task material by identifying the main reasons or points of argument, as well as any persuasive strategies that the writer uses to present their argument. Look at how the text begins and ends, and the shape of the text as a whole, so you can discuss the effects of the argument's construction.

Complete your responses

The essay for Section A and the text you create for Section B should be complete pieces of writing. An essay should have an introduction and a conclusion; an imaginative text needs a clear beginning and an ending. The analysis for Section C does not need to have a conclusion, but ensure you include at least some analysis of the visual material.

Build in time for proofreading

When writing a first draft it is common to make simple errors such as misspelling words, leaving out words that are needed for a sentence to make sense and using words incorrectly. A proofread will enable you to spot many of these errors and improve the quality of your writing, making it clearer and more fluent.

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