

VCE[®] Units 1 & 2



STUDY DESIGN 2023

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Melanie Napthine with
Niki Cook & Michael E Daniel

VCE® Units 1 & 2

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STUDY DESIGN 2023

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Melanie Napthine with
Niki Cook & Michael E Daniel

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Studying VCE EAL: key skills

Congratulations on beginning your study of Units 1 and 2 English as an Additional Language (EAL). Through the next two years, your aim should be to improve your English while developing the key knowledge and skills for each area of study. While each area of study has a particular focus, success in VCE EAL is also linked to the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Developing these skills will also help in your study of other subjects. (For an overview of Units 1 and 2 of the VCE EAL and English course, including assessment information, see page 233.)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to access your digital copy of this book, as well as bonus digital-only content. This additional content is indicated by QR codes throughout the book.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Regular reading practice
- » Regular writing practice
- » Regular listening practice
- » Regular speaking practice
- » Group work and discussions
- » Developing vocabulary
- » Taking notes
- » Inferential reading and viewing strategies
- » Drafting and editing

Regular reading practice

Aim to read some material written in English for at least twenty minutes each day. One good time to read is just before you go to sleep. Many people find reading a magazine, newspaper or book just before bedtime helps them sleep better. Looking at a computer, tablet, television or phone screen tends to stimulate the brain, making it harder to fall asleep. In addition to reading your set texts for EAL and your other subjects, choose books or articles that interest you. At least some of your reading should be for personal enjoyment.

As one of the areas of study focuses on analysing persuasive texts, you should also aim to read at least one piece of persuasive writing each day. This does not necessarily have to be long: it could be a letter to the editor or a short online comment on a news article.



If you are having difficulty finding material to read, speak to your teacher or school librarian – they should be able to give you some suggestions.

Strategies for studying/viewing a set text

Aim to read all your set texts (but not necessarily all of this textbook) before your studies start in February. The following reading strategies will be critically important for your Year 12 studies next year.

The purpose of the **first reading** (or viewing, if your text is a film) is to familiarise yourself with the plot or story.

When you read or view your text, be an active reader/viewer, not a passive one. Studies have shown that people who just read or watch a text typically remember no more than ten per cent of the details. However, by writing notes as they read, their recall increases to around thirty-five per cent. After reading through each chapter or section of the text, write a short summary of the events. This will help you recall details about the text.

You will read the text a **second** and **third** time as you study it in more detail, for instance when looking for themes or analysing characters.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about how to get the most out of your first reading/viewing of a text.

Compiling lists of quotes and structural features

When writing a text response essay, you will need to demonstrate knowledge of your text. This involves giving examples from the text, incorporating relevant quotes and referring to structural features, such as crisis and climax points in the plot and the division of the text into chapters or scenes.

Compile lists of these features and examples as you work through the text as a class.

For the texts you study in Area of Study 1, create lists of quotes under the following headings: **characters**, **ideas** and **values**. You can use a template like the one below:

Characters / Ideas / Values		
Key quote	Why the quote is significant	Context (who said it, to whom, at which point in the text, and any other relevant details)

It is best to limit quotes to five words or fewer, as longer quotes are more difficult to remember. However, unless a single word is of particular significance for your text, quotes should consist of at least two consecutive words.

You should also compile lists of structural features of the text and make notes about the effects of each. This will be especially useful for Unit 1 Area of Study 2: Crafting texts, since you might wish to use similar structural features in your own writing. In this area of study you don't need to quote from your mentor texts, but you will need to understand how those texts use vocabulary, structure and language features, so it could be useful to create a summary table for them, like the one below.

Structural/Language feature	Effect



Read/view your text before class

Your teacher will probably set you a passage or pages of your text, or a segment of the film you are studying, to read/view before the next class. As you do this reading/viewing:

- underline or transcribe key quotes
- make notes in your workbook
- write annotations (in pencil) next to key points in the text or, if you are studying a film, make notes in your workbook, identified by time codes
- write a list of questions about anything you are uncertain about as you read/view the section of the text.

Regular writing practice

Being able to write fluently and accurately is a skill that is closely linked to reading. However, it is also linked to listening, because you will need to make notes about what your teachers say in class. For many subjects – particularly EAL – you are required to complete written tasks within time limits.

Therefore, it is important to **practise handwriting**. Aim to do some writing on most days, even if it is just taking down a few notes. Many people find it useful to write a list of things they need to do each day. They then number the tasks (1, 2, 3 etc.) in the order in which they should be completed. This can be a useful way of keeping up with your homework as well as your other commitments.

You should also **develop your typing skills**. Although we live in a digital age, many people still type using only two fingers. Typing quickly and accurately is a skill you will use throughout school and also in tertiary studies and, potentially, your career. There are numerous free online typing courses available, such as typingclub.com, that will help you improve your typing skills. If you work through a set of graded typing exercises like these for as little as ten minutes a day, within a couple of months (or the length of a school term) you should be able to type confidently, using all fingers. You might reach speeds of forty-five words per minute or more, and you will have developed a skill that will benefit you for the rest of your life.

Written expression

As you practise completing writing tasks in each area of study, your written expression should improve. Look carefully at your teacher's corrections to your grammar, punctuation and spelling. If you do not understand an error that your teacher has identified, ask them to explain.

Make sure that you understand the meaning of each word that you include in your writing. Some students use sophisticated words to make their writing seem more impressive, but if you use a word incorrectly, it will detract from the quality of your writing.

When writing a text response essay or an analysis of a persuasive text, it is usual to use the present tense (which is also less likely to result in grammatical errors). On the other hand, if you are writing a short story or a recount, it is more common to use the past tense.

Be aware that agreement between subject and verb is a common area of confusion for non-native English speakers, particularly with the third-person singular form (he/she/it). Look carefully at the following pattern:

I say	We say
You (singular) say	You (plural) say
He/She/It says	They say

'He say' is incorrect.

People learning English also often have difficulty with plural noun forms. Most English nouns add an -s to form the plural; for example, one boy, two boys; one girl, two girls.

However, there are some nouns in English known as 'mass nouns' or 'non-count nouns' that do not have a plural form; for example, 'evidence', 'rice' and 'flour'. To indicate the amount of such items, you use an adjective or adjectival phrase before the noun that indicates quantity rather than number, such as 'ample evidence' or 'a kilo of rice'.

If you are struggling to write complex sentences (sentences that contain a main and a subordinate clause), limit yourself to writing shorter sentences, with one or two clauses, while you develop skills in effectively writing longer sentences.



See Chapter 12 for more information about language use.



Correct a passage

The following excerpt from a student's short story contains several errors. In your workbook, rewrite the passage correctly.

I couldn't beleive it, I thought I must of misheard what Mum was saying. We couldn't really be moving, not when I was in the middle of my VCE and had finally built up a fantastic close circle of friend after spending my first year at shelbourne college feeling like a complete outcast. It was like Mum was talking underwater = her mouth was moving but I could hardly understand what she was saying.

Geraldson?' I checked.

'Geraldton,' she corrected me. 'It's a beautiful city in Western Australia, right near the beech.'

'I don't care about the beach?' I cried 'I care about my friends and my educashon and moving *again* after you and Dad *promised* we'd stay put for a while.'

Mum sigh. Her eyes was pink, like she'd been crying, and new wrinkles were etched into her forehead like pencil markings.

'I'm sorry she said I really hoped we'd be able to keeping that promise this time.'



Regular listening practice

Being able to comprehend spoken texts is a vital skill, as listening is one of the most common ways to acquire information. One challenging aspect of English is that many of the sounds, particularly the vowels (for instance in 'bare' and 'bar'), can seem similar. By regularly practising listening to texts, you should develop the ability to hear the differences.

You probably watch either television channels or programs on a streaming service (such as YouTube, Netflix, SBS On Demand or iView) each day. If you struggle to understand what is being said, use clues such as facial expressions to infer meaning. Many streaming services and some television channels also allow you to display subtitles. These can be used together with the audio to help you understand what is said. The benefit of watching audiovisual texts on streaming services or recordings is that you can pause and rewind. However, do not stop the recording every time you don't understand a word; instead, try to work out the overall meaning from the context. If you pause or stop the audio too often, it will be harder to get an overall sense of what is being said. Also, if you first try to infer or deduce the meaning of what is being said, you will be developing your **inferential skills**.



Look for videos relevant to the subjects you are studying. For example, if you are studying Geography there are many excellent videos on YouTube that explain geographical concepts.

As you become more confident understanding audiovisual English texts, you should also practise listening to sound files, such as radio broadcasts and podcasts. These present a different challenge from audiovisual texts. When watching a video, you are able to deduce meaning not only through what you hear, but also from the visual elements of the text. But when listening to the radio or a podcast, you have to rely on your ability to comprehend the audio alone.

One useful way to practise is to listen to news bulletins. On radio stations such as ABC Radio National (621 AM in Melbourne), these last for four to five minutes and are broadcast every hour. You can also listen to the latest news bulletin at any time on the ABC Listen app, which is updated every hour. One useful strategy is to replay the bulletin a few times, pausing the audio text when necessary and taking notes.

You should also complete regular listening comprehension practice exercises, such as those on esl-lab.com. This website offers short texts (approximately two to three minutes in length) at various levels of difficulty, with multiple-choice questions that give you instant feedback. They test your understanding of literal and inferential meaning in texts.

Regular speaking practice

Linked to listening is the skill of speaking. For many EAL students, getting regular practice speaking English can be a challenge, particularly if their family and friends usually talk in other languages. If you are in this situation, try to find ways to speak English with someone else, even if it is for only fifteen to thirty minutes per day. For example, you might be able to phone or have video calls with English-speaking people you know. Some EAL students have

also found it helpful to have a daily ‘English time’ in their household: at a set time, everyone in the household who can speak some English must communicate only in English for half an hour or so. Remember: none of you need to speak English perfectly. Even native English speakers regularly make mistakes when they speak and write in their own language.

Another useful speaking strategy is to give someone a verbal summary of an article you have read, a radio program you have heard, or a video you have watched. Not only does this give you an opportunity to practise speaking English, it also helps to develop your ability to memorise facts and details.



You are practising key skills every time you turn on a television or radio and listen to what is said, speak to a friend or family member in English, or read a page of a book, a newspaper article, or even the words in a sales catalogue.



Practise listening and speaking

- 1 Scan the code or click [here](#) to listen to ‘The Tale of the Plasticine Rabbit’, an episode of the *Life Matters* ABC Radio National program, in which a listener tells a story about her childhood.
- 2 Retell the story in your own words to a friend or family member.
- 3 Listen to the episode again to check whether you missed any important details or got any information wrong.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about developing listening skills.

Group work and discussions

Your teacher may divide the class into small groups to complete a task. For example, the small groups might be asked to prepare a presentation to the class about a character, idea or value in your text; or you could be asked to analyse an essay question and explain how you would tackle it. Here are two main approaches to completing a task as a group.

The whole group: All members of a group work together throughout the whole process. A benefit is that everyone in the group is focused on the same points of information. A disadvantage is that some members of the group may be silent or not contribute as much as others. This approach works best if there are just two or three group members.

Divide into smaller groups: The group divides the material to be analysed into sections. Working either individually or in pairs, members of the group prepare different sections of the task. They then meet as a group and consolidate the information. If using this approach, each member or pair checks the work of the other group members to make sure that all the necessary details have been included and all the information is correct.

Alternatively, the group could combine these approaches by working together initially, then separating to undertake individual work or research, and coming together again for the final stages of preparation.



Compiling group notes

With share platforms and file synchronisation services such as Google Drive and Dropbox, completing group work preparation has never been easier. Not only can all members of your group work on a shared PowerPoint presentation or Word document individually in class, but you can also continue to edit and add information outside of class. Also, if you make a mistake or accidentally delete any information, you can correct this by retrieving an earlier version of the document. When using an application like this, it is a good idea to choose one member of the group to manage the shared document – for example, to set it up and give other group members access to it.

Participating in class discussions

There is an old saying that you only get out what you put in. In other words, the amount of benefit you get from something depends on how much effort you put into it. Many students complain that their classroom lessons are boring, while being passive themselves and not getting actively involved. Go to class with the intention of taking notes throughout. As a minimum, make sure you write down everything written on the whiteboard. If you photograph the whiteboard, do this *as well as* writing notes, not *instead of*, because writing helps you to memorise information.

You should also note down comments and observations made by your teacher and other students. Make sure that the questions you have written down and anything else you are unsure about are addressed during the lesson. Remember, there is only one stupid question, which is, ‘Why didn’t I ask that question?’ If you are uncertain about an aspect of the text, it is likely that other students in the class are, too. Don’t be afraid to attempt to answer a question your teacher asks. It’s okay to make mistakes: just trying to answer will help to clarify your understanding of the topic.

After class, as part of your homework/study schedule, make sure you re-read the section of the text you analysed and discussed in class, as well as the notes you have made. This will be your third reading of the text. If you are still uncertain about anything in that part of the text, write down your questions and make sure you ask your teacher, preferably at the start of the next lesson.

Developing vocabulary

As you study a text, you will need to develop your vocabulary. This will include learning the relevant **metalanguage**, that is, words and phrases used to analyse texts. For example, to analyse persuasive texts you will need to learn and use the names of persuasive and argumentative devices, and to analyse films you will need to know the terms for various film techniques. It is also important to understand the vocabulary related to the text’s subject matter. For example, if you are studying Reginald Rose’s play *Twelve Angry Men*, you will encounter legal terms such as ‘defendant’, ‘prosecution’, ‘testimony’, ‘eyewitness’ and ‘circumstantial evidence’. If you are presenting a point of view on climate change, you need to be familiar with terms such as ‘global warming’, ‘sustainability’ and ‘biodiversity’.

Using a dictionary

As you read through a text, don't stop to look up every new word. Instead, try to determine the meaning from the context, that is, the other words in the sentence. Only use your dictionary if you cannot deduce the meaning in this way.

While there are many online dictionaries, it is important to practise using a printed (book) dictionary, as this is the only form of dictionary you will be able to use in the examination at the end of Year 12. When consulting a dictionary, remember that many words have more than one meaning. In the context of your text, the meaning may not be the first definition listed. You should practise using both an English and a bilingual (e.g. English to Chinese, English to Russian, English to Thai) dictionary. However, remember that, while a word often has a standard translation, again the meaning can vary depending on context.

When you look up a word whose meaning you do not know, write out that word either at the back of your workbook or in a separate book, together with its definition. You might find it useful to write out the word in dark-coloured ink, such as black or blue, and the definition in a light colour, such as red. Aim to learn five to ten new words each day. Try to consolidate your knowledge of new words by reviewing the word lists you have made and using these new words, particularly when speaking.



Practise developing vocabulary

1 The following terms will be used in an analysis of almost every work of fiction, whether it is a novel, a play or a film. Next to each word, write a definition in your own words.

- Protagonist _____
- Antagonist _____
- Plot _____
- Subplot _____
- Climax _____
- Narrative _____
- Narrator _____

2 Find a synonym (word with a similar meaning) for each of the following words.

- Persuade _____
- Argue _____
- Opinion _____
- Evidence _____
- Reason _____



Taking notes

Being able to take notes – either handwritten in your workbook or typed up on your computer – is a valuable skill for all your studies. The aim of taking notes is to identify the main points of information you read. When taking notes, do not make notes on every item in a textbook or resource. Instead, aim to process the material by looking for main points and subpoints. The following way of laying out notes may be useful.

Topic (heading)

- First main point
 - › Subpoint 1
 - › Subpoint 2
 - › Subpoint 3
- Second main point
- (and so on)

The worked example below gives a summary of the main ideas and events associated with the Holocaust. Note that this is only a skeleton outline. Your notes might include further information under each subpoint.

The Holocaust

- Causes
 - › European anti-Semitism
 - › Hitler's anti-Semitic beliefs
- Nazi rise to power
 - › Boycott of Jewish businesses (1933)
 - › Dismissal of Jews from civil service employment (1933)
 - › Nuremberg Laws (1935)
- Kristallnacht (Nov 1938)
- Invasion of Poland
 - › Creation of ghettos
- Operation Barbarossa
 - › Organised mass killings in former Soviet territories
- Wannsee Conference (Jan 1942)
 - › Operation Reinhard
- Auschwitz
 - › Killing + slave labour
- Allied knowledge and responses
- Resistance to the Holocaust
 - › Jewish
 - › Non-Jewish
- End of the Holocaust



Practise taking notes

- 1 Scan the code or click [here](#) to view the speech from climate change activist Elizabeth Wathuti. In your workbook, summarise the main points Wathuti makes.
- 2 Referring to your notes, summarise the text for a partner, in less than one minute.



Inferential reading and viewing strategies

Two significant levels of meaning in any text are the **literal meaning** and the **inferential meaning**.

The literal meaning is what is explicitly stated by a writer. Consider the following sentence: 'The cat sat on the mat.' If someone asks us, 'Where did the cat sit?' we would respond by saying, 'On the mat'. Often, a writer will imply a meaning. That is, instead of clearly stating something, they just hint at it. For instance, if the creator of a healthy living website devotes a lot of space to promoting herbal supplements, yoga and fasting, we might infer that they support alternative rather than mainstream medicine.

Writers of narrative texts usually do not specifically state the features of a character's personality. Instead, they tend to describe the character's behaviour, and recount some of the character's actions. For example, if a character jumps out of a boat into shark-infested water to save a child, we would infer that the character is brave. In addition, other characters will make observations about the character. These details help the reader to form an understanding of the character. Similarly, writers of persuasive texts might not state their contention directly. Instead, they might present reasons and evidence that imply their point of view.

The paragraph below is taken from the short story 'David' by Maxine Beneba Clarke. The main character is teaching an older neighbour she doesn't know well how to ride a bike. Read the annotations to see how meaning can be inferred from a short section of text.

Use of familiar terms of address, although the two are virtually strangers, suggests close community ties; also that Auntie is senior to the protagonist and deserving of extra respect.

Conveys that Auntie is embarrassed or shy about learning to ride and that the protagonist knows enough about her to realise this.

'It's okay, Auntie, I can handle myself. Bikes are awesome, though. If you want to, we could go up a side street where no-one will see. I'll hold the back while you have a ride. Then you can have a proper turn.' It came out of my mouth before I had time to rethink.

'You are wicked,' Auntie choked, like she was trying to stop herself from laughing. 'You so funny, Sister. You Muslim girl?'

One of the first things Auntie asks the protagonist, indicating the importance of religion in Auntie's life and a possible reason she hasn't ever learned to ride.

Emotive word and choked-back laughter convey Auntie's conflicted feelings about learning to ride.

Indicates protagonist is independent – suggests a contrast between her and Auntie.

Implies that protagonist values the freedom of movement a bike offers.

Suggests protagonist is impulsive and kind-hearted.



Practise inferring meaning

- 1 Using the example on page 10 as a model, choose a paragraph from your own text and annotate it in the same way.
- 2 Read the following comment from a social media site.

So instead of improving roads, the state government installs more speed cameras. Are they concerned about saving lives or making money?

What is the writer's opinion about speed cameras? How do you know?

Drafting and editing

Editing your work involves more than just a quick skim of your writing to make sure that the spellchecker has worked. To create a good-quality piece of writing you will need to produce more than one draft, concentrating on different elements each time you read it through. You won't be able to do this when completing assessments under timed conditions, but you should draft and redraft your practice pieces. Use the following guidelines.

- **Let it sit.** Avoid the temptation to edit immediately to 'get it done'. Once you have finished your draft, let it sit for a few days before your first edit. Your brain will forget some of what you have written and you'll be more likely to notice mistakes.
- **Print out your work to edit it.** It can be tempting to let your device do the thinking for you when it comes to proofreading. Spelling and grammar checks built into apps can pick up many flaws, and some services online can be used to scan your work for mistakes and make suggestions. But nothing replaces a careful, conscientious proofread, and this is best done with a hard copy of your work.
- **Read your work aloud.** Reading aloud is the single best way to identify grammatical issues and awkward phrases. When you read aloud, you will often find that you stammer, stumble or stop at places in your writing that need editing. When reading aloud, have a pencil or highlighter handy to mark anything you need to rewrite.
- **Work with a partner.** Another person will often find errors that you miss. Share your work with a friend, classmate or family member. Even better, combine this with the editing tactic above, by asking your partner to read your work aloud.
- **Use a checklist.** This book contains various editing checklists for different forms of writing. Aim to use each of these multiple times, focusing on a different feature each time you read over your work.
- **Devise a mark-up system.** Come up with a system that works for you – this might mean using symbols for different edits, such as '(sp.)' for spelling, crossing out words or using different colours. Editing isn't an exercise in colouring in, though, and you can do most of it using just a printed copy of your work and a single pen or pencil.



Units 1 and 2 Area of Study 1: Reading and exploring texts

Area of Study 1 in Units 1 and 2 of the EAL course focuses on reading, understanding and writing about texts. You will explore your personal responses to a text set for study and you will write analytically about the ways in which a writer or filmmaker crafts a text in order to convey meaning.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view tables summarising the outcomes for Area of Study 1 in Units 1 and 2 EAL, and the key knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate.

Context, setting and values

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding context
- » Understanding setting
- » Understanding values
- » Writing about context, setting and values

The situation and circumstances in the real world at the time a text was *created* comprise the **context of production**. The situation and circumstances in the real world at the time a text is *read or viewed* by its audience form the **context of reception**. The **values** of both the text's creator and the reader/viewer will also be shaped by their personal contexts. The **setting** of a text includes both the time and the location in which events take place.

Understanding context

The term 'context' includes:

- historical context – the events and circumstances of the time, such as wars, technological developments, political leaders, laws
- social context – what society is like, including aspects such as gender roles, social expectations and social divisions
- cultural context – elements such as language, values and customs.

This set of conditions is referred to as the **context of culture**.

Context also includes the specific features of the immediate environment in which a text is created or received, also known as the **context of situation**. For example, director Roman Polanski's 1971 film *The Tragedy of Macbeth* is renowned for its graphic depiction of violence. Some critics have attributed this to Polanski's situational context, as he made the film shortly after his wife, Sharon Tate, was murdered.



Roman Polanski directing actor Jon Finch in his 1971 film *The Tragedy of Macbeth*

The different contexts we consider when responding to texts are summarised in the table below.

	Context of production	Context of reception
Context of culture	The broad cultural factors, including the general social and historical conditions, of the time and place in which a text is produced	The broad cultural factors, including the general social and historical conditions, of the time and place in which a text is received by the audience
Context of situation	The specific or immediate situation that influences a text's production, including the creator's personal context	The specific or immediate situation that influences the way a text is received by an audience, including audience members' personal contexts



Explore context

- 1 Complete the table to capture information about the historical, social and cultural context/s depicted in your text.

	Three main features	How they affect characters
Historical context		
Social context		
Cultural context		

- 2 Make notes in the following table about your text's contexts of production and reception.

Context of production	
Social – author's context	
Cultural – author's context	
Personal – author's context	
Context of reception	
Cultural – intended audience's context	
Social – intended audience's context	
Personal – your context	



- 3 If possible, find an audio or video interview with the creator of your text. What contextual factors does the creator suggest might have influenced this work? If you cannot locate a recorded interview, look for critical commentary on the work that refers to the influence of context.

- 4 Think about your own context for reading this text. Note down two ways in which your own context is similar to the context depicted in the text and two ways in which it is different.

Similarities: _____

Differences: _____

- 5 Next, note down two ways in which your own context is similar to the author's context and two ways in which it is different.

Similarities: _____

Differences: _____

Understanding setting

To understand a text, particularly its values, it is important to understand its setting. The two main elements of a setting are place (location or locations) and time (the period covered by the text). The setting and context of the world of a text are closely related.

Time

Many writers set their texts in the time that they themselves live in. For example, Alfred Hitchcock's film *Rear Window* is set in the mid-1950s, the same time in which it was filmed. However, authors often choose to set their texts in an era different from their own as they believe that it is a more appropriate way for them to explore ideas. For example, Arthur Miller wrote his play *The Crucible* in the early 1950s, but it is set in 1692, in Puritan New England. Miller uses this time period and location to make a comparison with the actions of conservative US politician Senator McCarthy and his persecution of 'dissenters' at the time Miller was writing the play.



Daniel Day-Lewis in Nicholas Hytner's 1996 film version of *The Crucible*

Place

The choice of physical locations is usually as significant as the period in which a text is set. For example, *Twelve Angry Men* is set in New York, a cosmopolitan city that symbolises the economic prosperity of the United States and the American Dream. It is not set in a city in a southern state, such as Birmingham, Alabama, where the law imposed racial segregation. This is significant as one of playwright Reginald Rose's key messages is that all forms of prejudice undermine the pursuit of justice.



1950s New York



Explore setting

Complete the table below to capture information about the main setting of your text.

Setting: time	
Setting: place	
Description of the setting in your own words (If necessary, research online the main features of the society in which your text is set.)	
Quotation from the text about the setting	
Word or phrase that could describe the setting and a character in the text (e.g. harsh, lonely, dangerous)	
How the main character feels about the setting (Does it limit their choices? Are there aspects of this environment or broader society that the main character criticises or challenges?)	



Understanding values

Values are what a person or society regards as right and important; their values help people to decide what is right and what is wrong. For example, values often endorsed by a text include justice, loyalty and courage. Creators of texts use elements such as plot and characterisation to explore right and wrong, and to convey to the audience their beliefs about the important ingredients of a good or moral life. In many texts, one character in particular acts as a 'moral compass', i.e. their behaviour and attitudes represent the values the author supports. For example, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee critiques racist attitudes through her depiction of the wise and fair Atticus Finch and his defence of the falsely accused black man Tom Robinson.

Often there is a character or characters whose behaviour and attitudes their creator wants to criticise. In *Twelve Angry Men*, Reginald Rose condemns prejudice through his depiction of the Third and Tenth Jurors, and apathy through the behaviour of the Seventh Juror. Rose condemns these negative traits by portraying the Jurors' antisocial behaviour and by showing that the values they express verbally are unacceptable.

In a text, when a good character performs a positive action and is rewarded for it, or a character performs a bad action and is punished for it, the author is suggesting that the society is fair and reasonable, and its values are sound. However, when a decent individual suffers, or people are rewarded for performing evil actions, the author is suggesting that there is something fundamentally wrong with the society's values. For example, in *The Crucible*, the deaths of numerous innocent people – particularly virtuous individuals such as Rebecca Nurse – who are falsely accused of witchcraft suggest that this society is unable to distinguish good from bad.

In analysing the behaviour and attitudes of various characters it is important to note that most characters are neither perfect nor completely evil. For example, Miller is critical of John Proctor's adultery; however, he endorses Proctor's attempts to save his wife, and his heroic stand at the end of the play. Similarly, Miller is critical of Hale's intellectual pride in Act One, and superficial judgement of the Proctors in Act Two; however, he admires Hale's pursuit of justice in Acts Three and Four.

Values and context

A text is always affected by the time and place in which it was written. When thinking about values in a text, it is often helpful to look at what was going on in the author's world at the time the text was created. This can give some insight into values they are likely to see as important, and why.

For example, Anna Funder's *Stasiland* includes details of her real-life friendship with Miriam Webster, a woman she befriended in Leipzig in the late 1990s, and whose experiences living behind the Berlin Wall inspired Funder to research what it was like to live in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) under the influence of the Stasi. The structure of the narrative, which is based on interviews conducted by Funder, promotes the importance of learning about historical events through the personal testimonies of those who experienced them; this shows that Funder endorses the value of respecting others' histories.



Explore values

- 1 Create a table like the one below, listing the actions and attitudes of major characters with a short explanation of how the text suggests they are good or bad.

Character's name	Attitude/Action/ Decision	Good or bad?	How the text conveys this

- 2 In small groups, identify which character is the 'moral compass' in your text. Do you all agree on who this is? Is this character completely moral, or do they exhibit some less desirable attitudes and behaviour? In your workbook, make a list of their positive attributes and actions, and a separate list of their negative ones.
- 3 Now discuss the same questions and draw up similar lists for an antagonist in your text.

Writing about context, setting and values

Be careful not to make definite statements about how the creator of a text is influenced by their context if you cannot be certain about this. For instance, rather than stating that poet John Kinsella's support of First Nations people is a result of his friendship with fellow poet Charmaine Papertalk Green, you could say that his friendship with Green *likely* influenced his writing or *may have* had an impact on his ideas.

When writing about values, you will need to demonstrate your **inferential reading skills**. The creator of a text will rarely directly state the values they support or condemn, but will show this through characters and events in the plot. When you make a statement about values in a text you should also explain the textual evidence that supports your interpretation.

Here are some sentence starters and model sentences that can be used to write about context and values. The final three suggestions could be used in personal responses.

- A significant historical / contemporary event that occurred around the time the text was created is ... The impact of this on the text can be seen in ...
- The text's main setting of ... allows ... (creator) to explore the idea of ...
- A significant way in which ... (protagonist) is affected by their setting is ...
- ... (text title) endorses the values of ... This is evident when ... (event in the text)
- ... (character's name) embodies the values of ... The author / playwright / director promotes / disapproves of these values, as shown by ...
- My response to the text is influenced by ... (feature of reading context)
- The setting of ... is familiar / unfamiliar to me because ...
- I mostly agree / disagree with ...'s (creator of text) endorsement of ... (value) because ...



Vocabulary for writing about values

Writing about values the author/director/playwright/poet approves of	Writing about values the author/director/playwright/poet does not approve of
The author/director/playwright/poet ... advocates, affirms, champions, commends, endorses, promotes, supports, upholds the value of ...	The author/director/playwright/poet ... attacks, challenges, condemns, criticises, denounces, dismisses, disparages, rejects the value of ...



Write about context, setting and values

1 Complete the sentences below.

a A similarity between my context and the text creator's context is _____

An aspect of the text that I relate to because of this similarity is _____

b A significant difference between my context and the text creator's context is _____

An aspect of the text that surprised me because of this difference is _____

2 Identify two characters whose values lead them into conflict and complete the following sentences.

While _____ (character's name) demonstrates _____

(value), _____ (second character's name) demonstrates the opposing

value of _____ (value). The author's / playwright's / director's

endorsement of _____ (value) is shown by _____

3 Write a sentence describing the context in which the text is set.

4 How well does the protagonist fit in with this context? Which aspects of society do they accept or reject? What does this suggest about their values?

Ideas, concerns and tensions

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding ideas, concerns and tensions
- » Writing about ideas, concerns and tensions

Your set texts will explore ‘big ideas’ about human experience. Shorter texts, such as short stories, might focus on a single important idea. Longer texts, such as novels and films, will include several big ideas. These important ideas are also referred to as themes.

Understanding ideas, concerns and tensions

Common concerns explored by text creators include growing up, justice, prejudice, the importance of family, identity and belonging. In exploring ideas, creators of texts will present a particular point of view on them. For example, an author exploring the broad idea of justice might want to convey the particular perspective that it is much easier for powerful people to receive justice than it is for others.

Most texts centre around some form of tension or conflict. Types of tension could include:

- between a protagonist and an antagonist, e.g. a young wizard’s ongoing battle with a powerful dark wizard
- between an individual and society, e.g. a woman in a conservative religious community fighting for greater freedom
- between groups of people, e.g. environmentalists and developers
- within an individual, e.g. a student’s moral dilemma over whether or not to cheat on an exam to achieve their dream of getting into university.

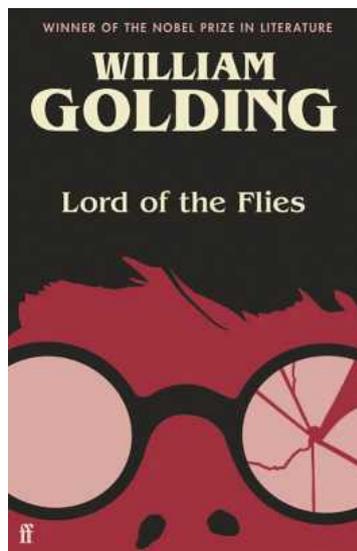


Tensions and conflicts in a text often involve competing ideas and values. The way in which the conflicts are presented and how they are resolved or left unresolved will communicate the writer or director’s particular perspective on these ideas.



A text's important ideas will be conveyed through narrative features such as plot, setting, structure and characters. The following elements can also provide information about a text's themes.

- **Title:** A text's title or a word or phrase within it might suggest a key idea. For example, the title of Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* refers to harming an innocent creature whose song brings joy to the world. This cruel act hints at the text's themes of injustice and of innocence being destroyed.
- **Cover:** Often, the cover of a text will provide clues about its main ideas. For example, the cover of one edition of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* shows a pair of glasses with one intact lens and one cracked lens. This alludes to the breaking of Piggy's glasses in the novel and highlights the contrast between civilisation and chaos depicted in the novel.



- **Endings:** The way in which a text concludes also highlights its main ideas, and enables the author to express a viewpoint on these ideas. The author's perspective on the environment and situations characters find themselves in, and the choices they make, can be conveyed through the text's ending: who is rewarded and who is punished. For example, Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* ends with the protagonist John Proctor choosing to be hanged rather than lie about being involved in witchcraft. Miller presents this as a noble act, conveying the idea that personal integrity is a rare but valuable quality in challenging times.
- **Repeated words and ideas:** In many texts there are groups of words that recur throughout, signalling the ideas being explored. For example, in the collection *Growing Up Asian in Australia*, edited by Alice Pung, words such as 'identity' and 'belong' occur in many of the pieces. This suggests that identity and belonging are central themes that connect many of the memoirs.
- **Crisis points and points of tension:** Crisis points and climaxes within a text often centre around a major conflict or point of tension. For example, in Cate Kennedy's short story 'Ashes', the key conflict concerns Chris and his mother's different expectations of their trip, and the climax is the dispersal of his father's ashes. These suggest that the ideas of family and of accepting the past are important in this story.



Explore ideas, concerns and tensions

- 1 Complete the table below. In the second column, identify a text that explores the broad idea. In the third column, write a sentence about the specific perspective on this idea that the text's creator is conveying. The first example has been done for you.

Idea	Text that explores the idea	Perspective on the idea
Romantic love	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Romantic love taken to extremes can be dangerous and destructive.
Family conflict		
Wealth		
The natural environment		
Home		
Migration		

- 2 Identify three important ideas in your text.

- 3 Choose one of these ideas and write a sentence about a specific opinion that the text's creator is communicating about the idea. _____

- 4 Identify a central conflict in your text. What are the competing ideas or values that this conflict highlights?

A central conflict is between ...	
Side A:	Side B:
Ideas associated with Side A:	Ideas associated with Side B:
Values associated with Side A:	Values associated with Side B:



Writing about ideas, concerns and tensions

When writing about ideas, you need to think about the text as a whole. Big ideas emerge out of the way the plot unfolds and the characters develop. Consider the overall messages the text's creator is communicating. The ending of a text is especially significant. Does it end on a hopeful or a pessimistic note? What does this suggest about the creator's perspective on the big ideas explored in the text?

Here are some sentence starters and model sentences that can be used to write about ideas, concerns and tensions. The final three suggestions could be used in personal responses.

- The author / director / playwright / poet (text's creator) suggests that ... (important idea)
- ... (text title) shows that ... (idea) through the use of techniques such as ...
- The author's / director's / playwright's / poet's interest in the idea of ... is expressed through the experiences of ... (character's name)
- The structure of the text reflects the themes of ... by ...
- At the end of the text, the resolution of the tension between ... and ... suggests that ...
- The text's setting allows ... (creator of text) to explore the central concern of ... because ...
- ... (event in the text) illustrates the author's point of view on ... (idea)
- A recurring symbol in the text is ... which is associated with the idea of ...
- My perspective on ... (idea) is similar to / different from the perspective presented by ... (creator) because ...
- A conflict in the text that I can relate to is ... because ...
- One concern of the text that particularly interests me is ... because ...

Vocabulary for writing about ideas

The text / creator	challenges considers examines explores meditates on reflects on scrutinises	the	concept concern idea issue notion subject theme	of (idea)
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Write about ideas, concerns and tensions

- 1 Complete the paragraph below with details about an idea in your text.

A major idea in _____ (text title) is _____
 (major theme). _____ (creator of text) suggests that

 (creator's point of view on the idea). They suggest this by _____

 _____ (one piece of textual evidence)

- 2 Identify two major ideas in your text and find two key quotes related to each idea.

Idea 1: _____

Quotes: _____

Idea 2: _____

Quotes: _____

- 3 Choose one idea and key quote from question 2 above and write one or two sentences explaining the significance of the quote in relation to the idea.

- 4 Identify a character whose actions convey a major idea. Complete the sentences below.

When _____ (character) _____
 _____ (action), it suggests that
 _____ (idea)

- 5 Identify a significant idea suggested by the ending of the text. Consider which characters achieve happiness and those who do not, and what this suggests about the creator's point of view on a key concern of the text.

- 6 What is *your* view on a key idea? How have your attitudes or beliefs about a concern in the text changed as a result of reading or viewing the text?

- 7 Can you see parallels between a form of conflict in the text and a real-world conflict you have seen or experienced? Explain the similarities to a partner.

Characters

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding characters
- » Writing about characters

Characters are who the story is about. Main characters, also called protagonists, are those at the centre of the story. They are usually shown in a realistic way, with both good and bad qualities. Minor characters are often portrayed in less detail. A key way in which creators of texts convey important ideas and values is through their characters' experiences and choices.

Understanding characters

We learn about characters in a text through:

- how they are described
- what they do
- what they say and think
- what other characters say about them.

We can also use inferential reading skills to draw conclusions about a character. For example, if a character tells a significant lie, you might infer that they are deceitful. If they are described as constantly fidgeting, you might conclude that they are nervous or restless. We develop an in-depth understanding of characters by drawing conclusions about their qualities and values as a result of their behaviour.

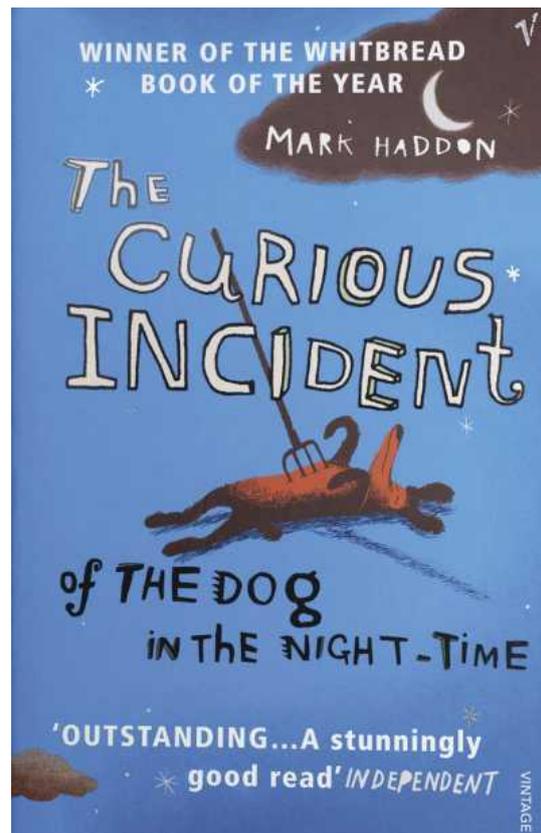
Characters and ideas

One of the main ways in which a text's creator can convey beliefs or perspectives on key ideas is through characters' experiences and choices.

For example, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* explores the concept of survival. Characters such as Ralph and Jack begin the novel as well-behaved schoolboys but become violent and bloodthirsty after being stranded on an uninhabited island, with no adults. Through the transformation of these characters, Golding conveys the idea that every person is capable of behaving in extreme and uncharacteristic ways if their physical security is threatened. This suggests that the good manners and law-abiding behaviour encouraged by civilised society are a thin veneer covering people's essentially savage nature.

Characters and values

Studying the personal qualities of characters is a good way of finding out which values the creator of a text believes are important. For example, in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon, the main character, Christopher, is told by his father that his mother is dead. This turns out to be a lie. While the reader might condemn this particular action, we know from other evidence in the text that Christopher's father loves him and cares for him, so we understand that the lie was partly motivated by a desire to protect him. This suggests that the author feels that love is a more important value than honesty.



Understand characters

- 1 Draw up a table like the one below, with evidence about the main character from your own text.

How they are described	What they do	What they say and think	What other characters say about them

- 2 For each description below, complete a sentence in which you infer something important about the character.
- a Napoleon the pig in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* criticises his rival, Snowball, and ultimately has him expelled from the farm. This suggests that _____
- b The character of Jeffrey Lu in Craig Silvey's *Jasper Jones* perseveres in his attempt to join the school cricket team even though the other boys on the team tease and bully him. This suggests that _____
- c After encouraging her husband to kill King Duncan, Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* becomes obsessed by an imaginary spot of blood on her hand. This suggests that _____



- 3 Think about one key question you would like to ask a character in your text. Working in groups, take it in turns to play the role of one of these characters, to answer a question from another member of your group.
- 4 Make notes about your discussion. Did you gain any new insights into the character? Did any members of the group disagree with another group member's interpretation of the character? If so, why might this be?

- 5 Which character in the text do you most relate to? Why? Identify three things you have in common with this character.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for sample character summary sheets you can use to capture important information about characters in your text.



Explore ideas and values through characters

- 1 Think about the ending of your text. Which characters attain happiness? Is this related to certain qualities they have shown throughout the text, such as courage or resilience?

Characters who achieve happiness or contentment: _____

Qualities or decisions that help them achieve this: _____

- 2 Which characters do not achieve happiness in the end? Is this related to any negative qualities they have shown?

Characters who do not achieve happiness or contentment: _____

Qualities or decisions that affect this: _____





- » 3 Think about a situation in the text when a character makes an important decision or chooses a particular course of action. Does their action or decision reflect a certain quality, such as wisdom or cowardice? Does the character do the right thing or the wrong thing? What evidence from the text supports your view?

Important decision: _____

Quality this reflects: _____

Right or wrong decision: _____

Why: _____

- 4 Choose two significant events in your text and complete the table below to show the links between characters and ideas. Use the example in the first row, from F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, as a guide.

Event/Experience	What the reader learns about characters	What ideas emerge
A party at the home of Myrtle, Tom Buchanan's mistress, becomes increasingly wild and out of control, culminating in Tom breaking her nose.	Tom does not love or respect Myrtle and will never leave his wife Daisy. Myrtle is pretentious and values wealth and success above loyalty and kindness.	Moral corruption Decadence The arrogance of the wealthy The tendency of power to corrupt



Writing about characters

When writing about characters, it is important to show that you understand their complexities. Well-rounded characters are not simply good or bad; they demonstrate a range of emotions and behaviours, just as real people do. They will also usually develop or change over the course of the text.



Remember that every statement you make about a character in your personal or analytical writing needs to be supported by evidence from the text – something they say, do or choose that illustrates your interpretation.

Here are some sentence starters and model sentences that can be used to write about characters. The final three suggestions could be used in personal responses.

- ... (character's name) is depicted as ... This is shown, for example, when they ...
- ... (character's name) undergoes a significant change in the text. This character is ... at the beginning of the text but becomes ... by the end of the text.
- ...'s (protagonist's name) relationship with ... (minor character's name) is depicted as ... (supportive / nurturing / combative / antagonistic / complex / other adjective). This is shown, for example, by ...
- Although ... (character's name) is ... (quality or trait), they are also ... (quality or trait)
- Through their characterisation of ... (character's name), the author / playwright / director promotes the value of ... (value)
- I feel a particular connection to the character of ... because ...
- A significant difference between my experiences and those of ... (character) is ... This means that ... (consequence of this difference)
- The relationship between ... (character) and ... (character) reminds me of ...

Word banks for writing about characters

The word bank on the following page gives you some useful adjectives for describing characters. In the left-hand column are some common adjectives that could be used to describe characters. However, you should avoid using the same words repeatedly in your essay and these common adjectives are very vague.

Instead, try using some of the words in the middle columns. They have a similar meaning to those in the first column but are more interesting and precise. Use your dictionary to check the exact meanings of these words and decide which of them would best fit the characters in your text.

In the last column, write down another synonym for each common adjective. In the last row, write down another overused adjective and try to find four or five synonyms for it. (You might want to use a thesaurus.)

Common adjective	Adjectives with similar meanings				Other adjective
Weak	Powerless	Gullible	Passive	Insecure	
Strong	Powerful	Tough	Muscular	Robust	
Good	Honourable	Compassionate	Noble	Virtuous	
Bad	Malicious	Immoral	Corrupt	Vindictive	
Quiet	Introverted	Placid	Reflective	Humble	
Loud	Boisterous	Exuberant	Extroverted	Obnoxious	
True	Loyal	Dependable	Devoted	Trustworthy	
False	Dishonest	Conniving	Scheming	Manipulative	
Happy	Positive	Content	Joyous	Cheerful	
Sad	Negative	Melancholy	Depressed	Despondent	
Mean	Horrible	Disagreeable	Dishonourable	Selfish	
Nice	Charming	Tender-hearted	Selfless	Amiable	

The following word bank gives you some useful verbs for describing how characters feel about other characters, events or situations in the text. The left-hand column lists some common verbs; in the middle columns are words that mean nearly the same thing but are more interesting and precise. Add your own verbs to the last column.

Common verb	Verbs with similar meanings				Other verb
Like	Admire	Approve	Desire	Appreciate	
Dislike	Despise	Resent	Disapprove	Reject	
Support	Reinforce	Bolster	Consolidate	Endorse	
Oppose	Resist	Contest	Subvert	Transgress	
Annoy	Antagonise	Inflame	Aggravate	Provoke	
Please	Gratify	Delight	Enchant	Appease	





Write about characters

- 1 Complete the following sentences about the main character in your text.
 - a _____ (name of character) in _____ (name of text) is _____ (interesting adjective). This is demonstrated by _____ (behaviour or event in the text that shows the character's nature)
 - b _____ 's (name of character) most important relationship is with _____ (name of another character). Their relationship is _____ (adjective)
 - c The most important thing that happens to this character is _____ (important event or situation). This _____ (effect on character)
 - d One way in which _____ (name of character) changes by the end of the text is _____ (important change). An important reason for this change is _____

- 2 Identify a positive value that the protagonist in your text demonstrates (for example, honesty, loyalty, gratitude, resilience). Write one or two sentences explaining how the character demonstrates this value.

- 3 Identify an important idea in your text. Write two or three sentences explaining how a character's choices demonstrate something about this idea.

- 4 Consider a character who you have a personal connection to. Write two or three sentences explaining why you relate to this character.

Plot and structure

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding plot and structure
- » Writing about plot and structure

This chapter looks at the key elements of plot and structure in narrative texts, and how these shape the audience's understanding of the text. It also examines how plot and structure can communicate ideas and values.

Understanding plot and structure

The **plot** of a narrative is essentially what happens in the story. In addition, authors, playwrights and filmmakers give shape to a story by ordering key points or scenes to create a pattern of rising and falling tension. This is referred to as the **narrative structure**.

Some common structures for narrative texts are shown in the table below.

Traditional narrative structure	<p>A common structure for narrative texts follows this order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposition: Characters are introduced, setting is established and situations are set up; for example, girl meets boy. • Complication / Crisis point: A problem affects the main character/s; for example, girl loses boy. • Climax: The tension reaches a peak, forcing a crucial decision; for example, girl and boy face a problem together. • Resolution: The story ends, with the main problem resolved; for example, girl and boy resume a happy relationship.
Circular/cyclical	The plot may return at the end to the same starting point, perhaps suggesting a sense of repetition.
Framed/embedded	The plot contains a 'story within a story'; often the main narrative is recounted by a character external to the events.
Alternating structure	The plot may unfold using shifting or alternating narrative points of view, perspectives, time frames etc.
Fragmented structure	The plot is presented non-chronologically or even in apparently random order, so that the reader has to put the story together like a jigsaw puzzle.



Some common elements of structure include:

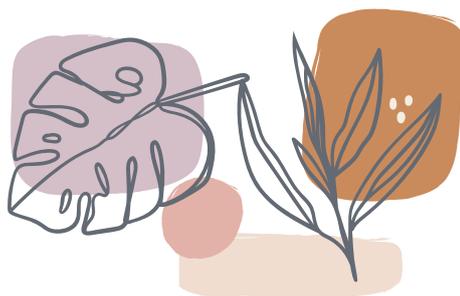
- crisis points – points where conflict or tension are high
- the climax – the point where the tension is greatest
- the resolution – where the conflict is resolved and the story comes to an end
- flashbacks/flashforwards
- division of the story into sections, such as chapters or scenes
- the use of multiple points of view to tell the story
- subplots.



Consider plot and structure

- 1 Create a plot summary by listing five to ten major events in the text in chronological order (even if the text presents them in non-chronological order).
- 2 Which of the structural types listed in the table on page 32 is closest to the structure of your text? _____
- 3 Which of the structural elements listed above appear/s in your text?

- 4 What are the effects of the creator's structural choices? Tick all the options that apply to your text.
 - Control the pace and delivery of the text
 - Drive the plot forward
 - Indicate a change in setting, time, tense or character
 - Foreshadow later events
 - Arouse the audience's curiosity
 - Surprise the audience
 - Allow the audience time to process what is happening
 - Build suspense or tension
 - Develop atmosphere
 - Make the text easier to read or understand
 - Match the conventional layout for a particular text type



Writing about plot and structure

When writing about elements of a text's plot and structure, always link them to the 'big ideas' in the text. Don't simply identify a significant event in the plot; explain what it reveals about a character, idea or value.

Here are some sentence starters and model sentences that can be used to write about plot and structure. The final three suggestions could be used in personal responses.

- When ... (plot event), ... (character) reacts by ... (behaviour). This suggests that ...
- A crisis point occurs when ... This is a significant moment in the plot because ...
- The text's resolution suggests ... (big idea in the text)
- The use of ... (structural element) has the effect of ...
- When ... (plot event), I felt ...
- A decision I would have made differently at a key point in the text is ... because ...
- I can relate to the way ... (character) acted when ... (crisis point) because ...



Write about plot and structure

1 Looking at the plot summary you created for the previous activity (p.33), identify a major crisis point. How does the main character react at this crisis point? For example, are they brave, frightened, decisive, resilient, clever, panicked or depressed? How do they behave after the crisis point is over? _____

2 What messages about important ideas or values might the author be conveying through the character's reaction at a crisis point? _____

3 Look at the structural elements and their effects that you identified in the previous activity. Write two or three sentences linking a particular structural element to a particular effect. _____



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about identifying structural features in a written text.

Novels and short stories

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding novels and short stories
- » Writing about novels and short stories

A novel is an extensive piece of writing that can range widely over time and place, and include many characters along with a variety of ideas and points of conflict. A short story is much more condensed. It may deal with a single incident or particular moment in time, and includes fewer characters and ideas. However, if you examine a collection of short stories as a whole, you will be able to identify common themes and concerns.

Understanding novels and short stories

Writers of novels and short stories use the features and conventions of narrative fiction discussed in previous chapters, such as setting, characters, plot and structure, to convey ideas. They also feature a **narrator** who recounts the story, unlike most films, plays and poetry. There are three main types of narrative voice.

First-person narrators tell the story from inside the world of the text, giving us a sense of what it is like to live in that world as that character. They use 'I' to refer to themselves. The effects of first-person narrators include the following.

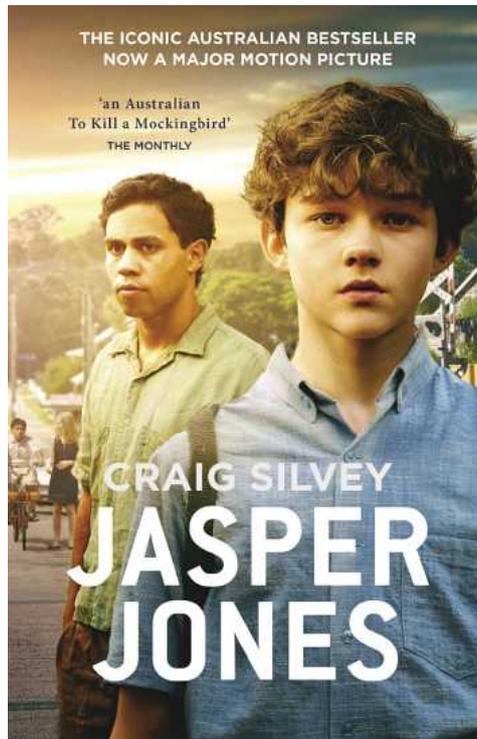
- Everything that happens is seen from the narrator's point of view – this can limit what the author can present to the reader.
- Other characters' points of view can only be conveyed by the narrator's account of what they say and do, or by what the narrator supposes they are thinking and feeling.
- The story can feel more immediate, as if the reader is experiencing events at the same time as the narrator is experiencing them.
- Because readers have firsthand access to the narrator's thoughts and feelings, this intimacy can make them feel sympathetic towards the narrator.

Third-person limited narrators also relate events from the point of view of a single character. However, instead of using 'I', third-person limited narrators use 'she', 'he' or 'they' to refer to the protagonist, telling the story from 'outside' the text.

Third-person omniscient narrators also tell the story from outside the text; however, they are more detached from the characters than a third-person limited narrator. 'Omniscient' means 'all-knowing'. This type of narrator knows everything that happens in the world of the text so can give the reader information about the thoughts and feelings of many characters, instead of just one. They can also make the narrative seem more believable, because readers receive the story from an apparently impartial source.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see an interview with author Craig Silvey discussing his novel *Jasper Jones*, including the way in which his choice of narrator shapes the reader's view of characters.



Explore a novel or short story

1 Identify the narrative voice in your text. (If you are studying a story collection, select the most common type of narrative voice used.)

First person

Third-person limited

Third-person omniscient

2 Describe the narrative voice. Is it matter-of-fact, lyrical, serious, emotional?

3 Identify a crisis point in your novel or story. What do you learn about a major character?

4 Identify three 'big ideas' in your novel or short-story collection.

5 In small groups, discuss your choices. Did you mostly identify the same ideas?



Writing about novels and short stories

The most important thing to remember when writing on any text is that every statement you make about a character, idea or other textual feature must be supported by evidence from the text. Textual evidence can consist of quotations, examples of decisions or actions taken by characters, plot details, and so on. Some specific guidelines for writing about novels are outlined below.

- Show your in-depth knowledge of the text by including textual detail from across the whole of the text and referring to obvious as well as less obvious evidence.
- Include at least one brief quote from the text in every paragraph. But remember that a quote or other form of textual evidence is not enough on its own to support your interpretation. You need to go further by analysing the meaning of the evidence and explaining how it supports your argument.
- Consider the big ideas the writer wants to communicate to readers, and what these show about the writer's view of the world. Discuss the values that are stated explicitly by the narrator or characters. Also discuss the values implied by characters' decisions and what happens to the characters because of these decisions. Explain whether these values are being endorsed (approved of) or condemned by the text.
- Comment on the setting/s and context/s of the text, considering how these affect the attitudes and choices of the characters.
- Think about where and when the author was writing (their context), who they were writing for, and what they might have wanted the audience to think and/or feel.

Discussing a collection of stories presents particular challenges. For instance, the characters in the stories are usually unrelated to one another, and the settings and events in the stories can vary widely. This means your essay has to discuss several different characters and events. Keep the following points in mind when writing a text response on a collection of short stories:

- Refer only to three or four stories – any more than this becomes difficult to manage.
- Give the complete names of the characters the first time you reference them and note which stories they appear in.
- Place quotation marks around the title of each story you refer to, e.g. 'Forest Winter', and either underline the title of the collection (if handwriting) like this – Minimum of Two – or italicise it (if typing) like this – *Minimum of Two*.
- Draw on evidence from the stories in the same way you would draw on evidence from a novel or a play, but clearly state which story the evidence comes from.
- Try not to jump from one story to the next in the same paragraph. Rather, work from a general topic sentence to a particular story in order to highlight an aspect of your argument.

Vocabulary for novels and short stories

Antagonist	The character who sets themselves against the protagonist
Climax	The point of greatest intensity in a narrative
Context	The historical, social and cultural environment in which the narrative is set, such as a particular country during a war
Crisis point	A point of significant conflict or tension
Dialogue	Conversation between two or more characters
Fiction	An imaginative work, not intended to be a factual account of real people or events
Genre	The category to which a text belongs, e.g. horror, romance
Main character/s	The most significant character/s in the narrative
Minor characters	The less important characters who do not play a major role in the story
Narrative	A story or account
Narrator	The person or 'voice' who tells the story
Novel	A long work of fiction, usually 200 pages or more
Orientation	The situation at the start of a novel or story
Plot	The storyline; the sequence of events in the text
Protagonist	The main character
Resolution	The section of the narrative in which conflict is resolved, and matters are settled or explained
Setting	The place and time in which the story takes place
Short story	A short work of fiction, up to around 50 pages
Subplot	A minor storyline within the main story
Symbol	An object that represents a larger, more abstract idea, e.g. a rose can symbolise love; a crown can symbolise power
Turning point	A moment in the story at which decisive change occurs



Write about novels or short stories

- 1 What is the main way in which the protagonist in your novel or short story has changed by the end of the text? What causes them to change in this way?



- 2 Complete the following sentences to compare two characters in your text.

_____ (character 1) first appears to be _____
 and _____ (two qualities shown by character 1 at the beginning
 of the text). Similarly / By contrast (circle one), _____ (character 2)
 is shown to be _____ and _____
 (two qualities of character 2). This is evident in _____
 _____ and
 _____ (two pieces of evidence)

As the text progresses, the characters develop in similar / different directions so that
 by the end of the text, _____ (character 1) has become
 _____ (quality or value shown by character 1 at the end), while
 _____ (character 2) has become _____
 (quality or value of character 2 at the end). This is demonstrated by _____
 _____ and

(at least two pieces of evidence from the text to support your interpretation of the
 characters)

- 3 Write one or two sentences identifying a significant message communicated by the
 text and at least one textual feature (characters, plot, setting etc.) used to convey this
 message.

- » Understanding film
- » Writing about film

The elements of texts discussed in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 – settings, tensions, characters, plot and narrative structure – all apply to film as well as print texts. But multimodal texts such as films have ways of creating meaning that cannot be used in a print text. This chapter considers some of these features.

Understanding film

Some of the specific elements that films use to tell a story are:

- actors
- cinematography and lighting
- sound effects and music
- sets and costumes.

Filmed texts are also carefully edited in order to shape the story, develop characterisation and convey ideas.

Mise en scène is a French term used to refer to everything that is captured by the camera, such as actors, costumes, lighting, set and props, locations and special effects. These aspects are used to convey the plot, contribute to characterisation, develop key ideas and create a mood. They are discussed in more detail in the following pages.



The acronym CAMELS is a useful way to remember key features of a film. CAMELS stands for Camera, Acting, Mise en scène, Editing, Lighting and Sound.

Cinematography and lighting

The cinematographer is in charge of the camera and lighting departments, and controls the quality of the filmed images.

Lighting can draw attention to certain characters or elements of the setting. It can be distributed evenly across the items in a shot, or focused on particular elements of a scene. The colour and brightness of the light helps to create mood and atmosphere. The absence of light, creating shadows and dark spaces within the frame, can be as significant as the presence of light.

The cinematographer also decides how the audience will see the subjects – from above, below, straight on, far away or up close – as well as how the camera will move in the shot.



Film shots

The main types of film shots are defined according to the distance between the camera and the subject, and the camera angle, which could be looking up, down or straight on.

A **medium shot** is the most common shot: it shows the characters as well as some of the background. Relationships between characters can be highlighted in a medium shot.

A **close-up** shows the subject matter 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.

A **long shot** shows as much of the setting as possible, with the characters often placed in the background. They can appear small and insignificant as a result.

A **tracking shot** involves the whole camera moving alongside the subject being filmed. This can help the viewer feel as though they are experiencing events with the subject.

In a **zoom shot** the camera can be far from the subject but, by changing the focus, appears to move close to (zoom in on) it. This emphasises the subject's importance at that point.



A close-up straight-on shot of Max and a medium high-angle shot of Mary from the animated film *Mary and Max*, directed by Adam Elliot

Framing and camera angles

The frame is the outside border of a shot. Framing is an aspect of all shots, and 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 doorways and windows, are used to provide borders.

Varying the angle at which the camera points at the subject has the effect of putting the audience 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 underneath, emphasising their strength or power. In a high-angle shot the camera points down at the subject, which can then appear to be weak or vulnerable.

Sound effects and music

Pay careful attention to the range of sounds in a film. What can you hear, or – sometimes more importantly – what can't you hear? Is there music, a voice-over, background noise, or a lack of sound? How does this create atmosphere and affect the viewer?

Diegetic sound refers to sound that comes from inside the world of a film, such as a door slamming or a television program playing in the background of a scene.

Non-diegetic sounds are those from outside the world of the film, which can only be heard by the audience, not the characters (for example, a voice-over). The soundtrack is usually non-diegetic, but if the music is being listened to by a character in the film it is diegetic.

Sets and costumes

The two main kinds of settings are indoors and outdoors; another important distinction is between on-location (using actual places and buildings) and studio sets (constructed in the film studio). The setting helps to establish the characters' contexts. Set elements such as buildings, furnishings, roads, transport and technology all reflect the historical period as well as elements of the society and culture.

'Costume' refers to what the characters are wearing, personal props (short for 'properties') such as handbags or glasses, their hairstyle and their make-up. These all convey aspects of the character's personality, background, context, social class and so on.

Editing

Editing film is the process of putting the recorded camera shots together, cutting out unwanted footage and arranging material to create the intended effect. Types of transitions between shots include **cut** (an abrupt transition from one shot to another), **dissolve** (one shot is gradually blended and replaced with another), **fade** (the scene fades into black), **split screen** (two or more shots shown at once) and **montage** (a rapid succession of short overlapping shots to tell a story quickly).



Analyse film features in a key scene

- The table below analyses a shot from near the beginning of *Blade Runner* and provides a model for your own scene analysis. The film, directed by Ridley Scott, is set in Los Angeles in 2019 (which was in the future when the film was made in 1982) and explores the issue of what it means to be human.

Key scene: A shot of Tyrell's owl as it prepares to fly to its perch on the other side of the room.

Feature/Technique	Effect / Link to characters and ideas
Wide-angle shot	Establishes the vast size of Tyrell's office, a reflection of his power and wealth
The owl (element of setting)	Important symbol associated with wisdom and knowledge; also symbolises an unseen observer, with its large eyes watching over Deckard as he conducts his test
No music, but a faint tinkling sound can be heard	Creates an atmosphere of mystery and apprehension – all is not as it seems
Dancing reflections of light; the remainder of the mise en scène is relatively dark	A rippling pattern on the wall adds to the feeling of mystery; also symbolic of illusory nature of 'reality': this idea is evident in Rachael's very human appearance although she is then revealed to be a replicant



- 2 Looking at the model analysis on the previous page, complete the table below to create an analysis of a key scene from the film you are studying.

Your film:	
Key scene:	
Feature/Technique	Effect / Link to characters and ideas

Writing about film

When analysing a film, you need to refer to specific film techniques. When you discuss ideas and characters, consider how the visual and sound elements, as well as the dialogue and plot, support your interpretation. Follow these steps to analyse a still (single frame/ photograph) or scene from a film.

- **Step 1:** Ask yourself: What do I see? What do I hear? What does it tell me about character and important ideas?
- **Step 2:** Use film-specific language (metalanguage) to identify the techniques and elements the filmmaker has chosen to use.
- **Step 3:** Comment on the effect of these choices.

Vocabulary for film

Cinematography	The use of the camera to capture images on film; it determines what the audience sees and how – for example, close-up or from a distance, as a static shot (the camera doesn't move) or a tracking shot (the entire camera moves)
Cut	The most common type of edit, in which one shot ends and the next begins immediately, usually with the sound continuing over the cut; for example, shots alternating between the faces of two people having a conversation



» Diegetic sound	Any sound that can be heard within the world of the film, such as the characters' dialogue, or sound effects such as a door shutting or a phone ringing
Director	The person who interprets the script, tells the actors what to do and runs the film shoot
Dissolve	A kind of edit in which two shots overlap briefly as the shot that is ending 'dissolves' into the next
Edit	A way of joining two shots; often the edit is so smooth that the audience does not notice where one shot ends and the next begins
Fade	A kind of edit in which the screen fades to black between shots, often indicating a significant change of pace or time
Filmmaker/s	The people who contribute to the making of the film; the director is the most important, but the cinematographer, screenwriter, actors, composer, editor, costumer designer and producer/s are also filmmakers
Framing	The way in which characters or objects are positioned within the frame of the screen, including how much of the setting is visible, which characters will be included in the shot, and which characters or elements will be outside the frame
Mise en scène	A French term meaning all the visual elements within the frame of the shot, such as setting, costumes and lighting
Montage	A series of very short shots, often overlapping and set to music, to show the passing of time
Non-diegetic sound	Any sound that can only be heard by the audience, not within the world of the film, e.g. the music soundtrack
Screenplay	The script for the film, which contains all the dialogue as well as brief descriptions of the settings and some shots
Screenwriter	The person who writes the screenplay
Set	The scenery and props as arranged for shooting a film
Shot	A continuous, uninterrupted section of the film – most shots do not last for more than ten seconds
Wipe	A type of edit that creates a clear dividing line on the screen between one shot and the next, so that we see the new shot appear in part of the screen to 'wipe away' the shot that it is replacing



See also Chapter 7: Drama for more information about elements such as setting, props and costumes, which are also relevant to film.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see a sample analysis of a still from the film *Rear Window* directed by Alfred Hitchcock.



Write about film

- 1 Look back at the scene analysis table you completed in the previous activity (p.43). Incorporate the information from your table into complete sentences. Use the example below, based on the *Blade Runner* scene analysis table (p.42), as a model.

This shot of an owl is mainly a symbolic reference to Tyrell, with the owl representing the knowledge and wisdom that Tyrell is meant to possess. Tyrell's vast office space, revealed by the wide-angle shot, reflects the extent of his power and control. The tinkling sound in the background creates a feeling of apprehension in the audience, while the rippling pattern of light creates a sense of mystery, also emphasised by the dark mise en scène. These elements of film style combine to prompt audiences to question the nature of reality, conveying one of *Blade Runner's* central ideas: that outward appearances can hide the truth.

- 2 Write one or two sentences explaining how each of the following features helps to communicate an important idea in your film text.

- Cinematography
- Lighting
- Sound effects
- Music
- Sets
- Costumes



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about identifying structural features in a film.

- » Understanding drama
- » Writing about drama

Plays are intended to be performed. If possible, try to see a live performance of the play you are studying. If you cannot, remember to pay attention to all the information the text gives about the elements of a performance, including characters, costumes, sets, props, lighting, music and sound effects.

See also Chapter 6, in which some of these elements are discussed in further detail.

Understanding drama

A play is usually divided into several main sections, called **acts**. The action within one act takes place in more or less the same time period. However, a number of settings can be used. Acts can be broken into **scenes**; in each scene the action takes place within a single setting. The transition from the end of one scene to the start of the next can be shown by several characters leaving the stage, other characters coming onstage, and changes to the set and/or lighting.

Dialogue is a conversation between two or more people. A **monologue** is one person speaking for a significant length of time, to other characters or to the audience. A **soliloquy** is a specific kind of monologue in which a character talks to themselves, giving the impression that no one else can hear them. A soliloquy communicates a character's private thoughts to the audience. Analysing a character's language is important because it reveals what they value and their attitudes to other characters.

The playwright's instructions to the director, actors and set designer are known as **stage directions**. They are usually written in italics. The stage directions can advise actors how to say their lines or how to move. They can also give specific information about some of the features discussed below.

Costumes, sets and props

Physical objects on the stage provide the audience with information. What do the costumes, scenery (backdrops and structures that form the stage set) and props (furniture, decorations, ornaments and objects used on a set) tell you about the characters and concerns of the play? For instance, are the characters expensively dressed and surrounded by beautiful objects because the play is set among people of a high social class? 'Costume' refers not only to what the characters are wearing, but also to personal props (jewellery, canes etc.), hairstyle and make-up. The characters' clothes reflect their context and also, to some degree, their personality and values.



Elaborate costumes and set design in director Indhu Rubasingham's stage production of *Romeo and Juliet*, starring Una Stubbs (Nurse), Victoria Carling (Lady Capulet) and Emily Blunt (Juliet)

Lighting

Even on a bare stage, the use of lighting alone can produce an atmosphere or imply a setting. Consider how lighting contributes to the mood of particular scenes. Is it dim or murky, creating a feeling of mystery or suspense? Is it bright or colourful, creating a feeling of celebration or happiness? Is it harsh or glaring, as in an interrogation or institutional setting? Which character is in the spotlight in which scenes?

Music and sound effects

Be aware of the sounds that accompany the production. How does music affect the atmosphere of particular scenes? What sound effects are used in important scenes and why? For example, does slow, mournful music suggest the sadness of a major character? Does the sound of birds in the trees or gunfire give the audience information about a scene's location?



Explore drama

- 1 Create a summary of the plot and structure of the play you are studying. Identify the number of acts and the number of scenes within each act, as well as where each scene is set. Write a short summary of the action that takes place. You can use a template like the one below, extending it to fit the number of acts and scenes in your play.

Act	Scene	Setting	What happens
Act 1	Scene 1		
	Scene 2		





- 2 Choose a short section of dialogue – ten to twenty lines – that occurs at an important point in your play.
- Which characters are speaking? _____
 - What is the main topic of their conversation? _____
 - What do you learn from this conversation? _____

 - For each character who is speaking, write two words that describe the main tone or emotion in their dialogue. _____

 - If there are any stage directions indicating the way in which lines are to be delivered, explain what they add to our understanding of that character.

- 3 Select an important scene in the play that you are studying. In the table below, make notes about particular elements of the scene and their effects.

Act:		Scene:	
Feature	Description	Effect	
Costumes			
Backdrop			
Props			
Lighting			
Music			
Other sound effects			

- 4 Select an important scene that has no, or few, stage directions. Complete the following table as if you were the director of the play. Make notes in the middle column about how you would choose to dress the characters, and the backdrops, scenery, props, lighting, music and sound effects you would use. Explain your choices in the right-hand column.

Scene:		
Feature	Description	Explanation
Costumes		
Backdrop		
Props		
Lighting		
Music		
Other sound effects		



Writing about drama

When writing about drama, use the specialist vocabulary (metalanguage) associated with plays, such as 'playwright', 'scene' and 'stage directions'. Always keep in mind that a play is intended to be performed, so consider how the playwright intended the text to appear to a live audience. Try to imagine how the characters would appear and move on stage, and how visual and sound effects would contribute to the audience's interpretation of the play.

Vocabulary for drama

Act	The major sections into which plays are divided; each act usually includes several scenes
Aside	A short speech that a character addresses directly to the audience, or as if they are talking to themselves; other characters remain onstage but cannot hear the aside
Chorus	A group of actors in a Greek tragedy who are not characters in the play, and who comment on the characters and events
Dialogue	Anything said by one character to another character or group of characters
Exposition	The opening scene or scenes of a play, in which characters, situations and conflicts are established
Monologue	A long speech delivered by a character, with or without other characters being onstage
Play script	The written text containing all dialogue and stage directions for a play's performance
Playwright	The person who writes the play
Scene	A short section of a play, located in one place and time
Soliloquy	A speech delivered by a character alone onstage, telling the audience exactly what that character is thinking and feeling



Write about drama

1 Complete the following sentences about stage directions in your text.

a An example of a stage direction that describes an actor's delivery or action is

(quote a stage direction). This adds to our knowledge of _____

(character's name) by _____

b One stage direction that describes an aspect of the props or set is _____

This is important for our understanding of the characters / setting (select one) because





c An example of a stage direction that describes an aspect of sound / lighting (select one) is

This adds to the impact of the scene by _____

2 Write one sentence about a main character to sum up how this character helps to present a key theme or demonstrate important social values.

3 Select a character and answer the following questions to identify the playwright's implied view of this character as well as your own view.

Name of character: _____

Playwright's view of the character: _____

Evidence to suggest this: _____

(Give at least three pieces of evidence: quotations, actions, statements by other characters, choices etc.)

Your view of the character: _____

Reasons for your view: _____

(Give at least three reasons drawn from the text.)

Nonfiction

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding nonfiction
- » Writing about nonfiction

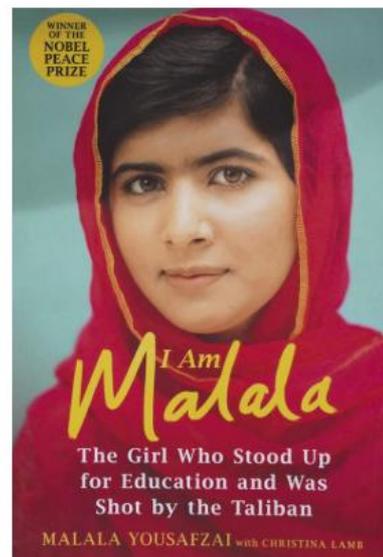
One of the most important features that define nonfiction texts – such as biographies, autobiographies, essays and journalistic nonfiction – is that they are true, or at least are supposed to be. Even so, authors still need to make decisions about how to present themselves (in an autobiography or memoir), their subject (for example, in a biography) or the topic (for example, in a true-crime text). For instance, they can choose whether to give more emphasis to the subject's positive or negative qualities, or to tell events in non-chronological order to create suspense.

Understanding nonfiction

When studying nonfiction texts, you can use the same techniques for analysing characters and ideas outlined in earlier chapters. However, because nonfiction texts are based on facts, it is useful to also do some research into the life of the subject or the main focus of the text.

Context and setting

If the subject or topic of a nonfiction text is contemporary – written and read near to the time that the subject lived or events occurred – writers and readers will usually have some understanding of the context. For example, *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb tells the true story of Pakistani teenager and girls' education activist Malala Yousafzai, who was shot and badly injured by Taliban terrorists in 2012. The book was published in 2013. Both Yousafzai and Lamb have an in-depth understanding of the political situation in Pakistan that led to and followed that event, and contemporary readers are also likely to be aware of that background and to have heard of Yousafzai and her cause, due to widespread media coverage.



Authors writing about events a long time after they happened might have difficulty accessing the necessary information, especially if the people involved have since died. However, the distance of time has the advantage of allowing authors to consider the longer-term impact of the people or events they are writing about.

Point of view and selection of events

Think about why the author wrote the text you are studying. Does the author want readers to look at a topic from a new perspective, be entertained or learn something? Is the subject of the text a person the reader is supposed to sympathise with, admire or dislike? Consider also the author's connection to the subject or topic. Do they know the individual they are writing about? Are they an expert on this particular topic or issue?

From whose perspective are events recounted? Is the narrative voice mostly objective, revealing little emotion or opinion on the subject or topic, or does the author comment freely on events and individuals? Consider also any important perspectives or events that have been left out of the story. For example, if a biography of a politician includes the fact that they were charged with fraud, but fails to say that they were not found guilty, this might suggest that the writer intends to present a negative view of the subject. On the other hand, a true crime story that goes into detail about the perpetrator's difficult childhood but does not include any interviews with victims or their families might be intended to evoke sympathy for the perpetrator.

Consider, too, the involvement of other writers in the text. Sometimes autobiographies and memoirs are written with the aid of a **co-writer**, an experienced author who collaborates with the subject to write the book. Sometimes a similarly qualified but uncredited **ghost writer** (whose name does not appear anywhere on the book) writes the book on the subject's behalf.



Investigate the subject or focus of your text

- 1 Research the subject. Use an internet search engine, listen to podcasts or interviews, find books in the library or read magazine or newspaper articles. Finding out more about the text's subject or focus will help you to understand the context and form an opinion about whether the text is mostly objective (neutral, sticking to the facts) or subjective (having a personal view – positive or negative – of the subject). Make notes in your workbook under the following headings.

Context of production (when the text was created)	Context of the subject/topic (the period and circumstances the text is set in)	Author's connection to the subject/topic	Information, events or perspectives emphasised in the text	Information, events or perspectives left out of the text

- 2 Work in pairs. Take it in turns to play the role of the interviewer and the subject or a significant person in your nonfiction text. The interviewer should ask the subject five to ten interesting, open-ended questions (questions that require more than a short, factual answer). The subject's responses should be as detailed and thoughtful as possible.



- 3 In a small group, find an audio or audiovisual text about the subject or focus of your text. This might be a radio or television interview with the subject, a podcast about the topic of the text, or a recording of a live reading or related event. Listen to or watch the text at least twice, taking notes.

In your group, discuss the audio/audiovisual text. What did you learn about the subject or the text itself that you did not learn through reading the text? How does this affect your view of the text? Do you think the writer is mostly objective, or aiming to present a particular angle or impression?

Writing about nonfiction

Although nonfiction texts are intended to be factual, you will still need to use your analytical and inferential reading skills to explain *how* and *why* the author has presented people and events in particular ways. Keep the following points in mind.

- Refer to subjects or individuals, not characters.
- Consider the impact of social context not only on the author and the reader, but also on the individuals who appear in the text. How does it shape their personalities and values? How does it limit or encourage particular choices or decisions?
- Consider also the personal context of the subject of the text. What is their family, educational, socioeconomic and religious background? What other factors, such as race, ethnicity and gender, might be relevant to the ideas that the text conveys? What are the significant life experiences that helped to shape their attitudes and values?
- What impact does the author's context have on their presentation of individuals and events? Think about the author's personal context as well as the wider social and cultural context.
- Reflect on why the author has chosen to structure the text in the way they do. Which information or ideas does this structure emphasise? What does the writer seem to think is important about the subject?

Vocabulary for nonfiction

Anthology	A collection of short pieces that are linked by shared ideas and concerns, usually compiled by an editor who selects and writes an introduction to them
Autobiography	The story of a person's life written by that person
Biography	The story of a person's life written by someone else
Biopic	A film presenting a biographical account of a well-known person's life
Essay	A short work of nonfiction that explores a topic, idea or issue; it is usually formal and serious, but can be more reflective and personal



» Journalistic nonfiction	An account of an event or series of events that is factual and well researched; it can include the writer's own perspective and details of their experiences while researching the events
Memoir	An account of the author's experiences, which usually covers a particular period or episode, rather than their whole life
Nonfiction	A story about real people and events
Subject	The person or topic about which a nonfiction text is written
Travel writing	A narrative describing the author's travels, perhaps through an unknown or challenging environment
True crime	An account of a well-known crime or series of crimes, which often includes background information about the individuals involved and courtroom scenes from a trial



Write about nonfiction

- 1 a If your text is a single narrative, identify the following key points of narrative structure.
- Turning point: _____
- Climax: _____
- Resolution: _____
- b Write one or two sentences explaining how the writer's decision to present events in this way affects the reader's view of the subject.
- _____
- _____
- 2 a If your text is a collection, identify three topics or issues that are common to many or most of the individual pieces.
- _____
- b Write a sentence summarising an important idea in the collection.
- _____
- 3 Describe the main style of your text. Is it formal and objective, or subjective, conversational and personal? How does this influence your attitude to the subject?
- _____
- _____
- 4 How do you feel about the subject of the text? Did this change between the beginning and the end of the text? Why? _____
- _____
- _____

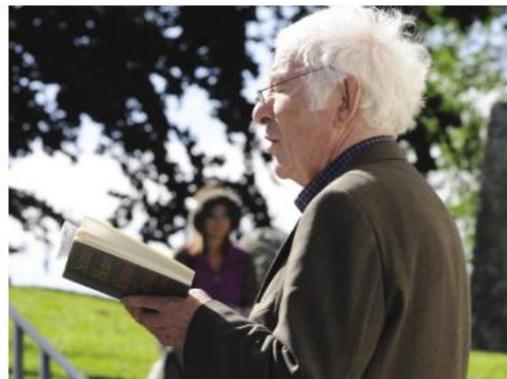
- » Understanding poetry
- » Writing about poetry

Sometimes a poem or a song is also a type of narrative. However, many poems and songs do not tell a story and it is not always possible or appropriate to discuss such texts under the usual headings of plot, setting and characters. Instead, these texts aim to evoke a mood or create an image. Like songs, poems are usually intended to be heard.

Understanding poetry

Poets use particular language techniques to:

- produce a particular tone
- emphasise an idea or image
- contribute to a rhythm and/or rhyme pattern
- convey a key idea or message
- create a feeling of order
- create a feeling of freedom or chaos
- appeal to the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch).



Australian poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Irish poet Seamus Heaney reading their work to an audience

Some common poetic techniques and examples of each are listed below.

Technique	Definition	Example
Alliteration	The use of words beginning with the same consonant or vowel sound	'the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle' (<i>'Anthem for Doomed Youth'</i> , Wilfred Owen)
Connotation	Extra meaning suggested or implied by a word	'For a full week, the blackberries would ripen. / At first, just one, a glossy purple clot ' (<i>'Blackberry-Picking'</i> , Seamus Heaney)
Imagery	A 'mental picture' – often visual, but can appeal to the other senses; can be created through description or through the use of simile and metaphor	'Troy, a white ashpit / by the drizzling sea' (<i>'Map of the New World'</i> , Derek Walcott)
Metaphor	A description that states that one thing is another, to show the similarities between them	'For I have been a caterpillar / Far too long cocooned' (<i>'Growing'</i> , Charmaine Papertalk Green)
Personification	Giving human traits to non-human objects	'The sun gilds the dead suburbs as he rises up' (<i>'Winter Dawn'</i> , Kenneth Slessor)
Rhyme	The same sound at the ends of words or lines	'And then my heart with pleasure fills / And dances with the daffodils' (<i>'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'</i> , William Wordsworth)
Rhythm	The pattern of beats or stresses in a line	'Overnight, very / Whitely, discreetly, / Very quietly / Our toes, our noses / Take hold on the loam, / Acquire the air' (<i>'Mushrooms'</i> , Sylvia Plath)
Simile	A description using the words 'as' or 'like' to compare a thing to something else	'The signal at the platform's end / Turned red and dropped / Like a guillotine- / Cutting us off from the space of eyesight' (<i>'Immigrants at Central Station, 1951'</i> , Peter Skrzynecki)
Symbol	An object used to represent something else; e.g. a dove as a symbol of peace	'and the mulberry tree, that foreigner / so completely at home, growing taller each year' (<i>'Home'</i> , Miriam Wei Wei Lo)



Look for appeals to the five senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see a video of Malaysian–Australian rapper, poet and author Omar Musa reading his poem 'Fireflies'.



Explore poetry

- 1 Search YouTube for recordings of the poems you are studying and listen to as many versions as you can. How does hearing a poem read aloud help you to understand it?
- 2 Compare two poems you are studying by making notes in the table below.

	Poem 1:	Poem 2:
Main topic/ idea		
Word/ phrase with particular connotations	Word/Phrase: Connotation:	Word/Phrase: Connotation:
Word/phrase that evokes an emotion	Word/Phrase: Emotion:	Word/Phrase: Emotion:
Poetic technique and example	Technique: Example:	Technique: Example:

Writing about poetry

When you are analysing and discussing poetry, draw on the appropriate metalanguage (relevant vocabulary) and use the following four steps.

Step 1: Annotate the poem in detail.

- Circle any words, lines or images that stand out to you, whether you understand them or not.
- Look up any unfamiliar words in your dictionary and write down their definitions.
- Underline common poetic techniques that appear in the poem.

Step 2: Identify the effect of these techniques on you, the reader. (Think about how they make you feel, what they make you think about, what they remind you of.)

Step 3: Discuss how these techniques contribute to the poem's overall meaning. The table of verbs below is useful when describing what the poet is doing and the viewpoint they are trying to convey.

Considers	Evokes	Illustrates
Conveys	Examines	Reflects on
Elicits	Explores	Suggests

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

Adjectives to describe rhythm	Adjectives to describe mood	Adjectives to describe 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

Vocabulary for poetry

Free verse	Poetry that doesn't follow any regular pattern of rhyme or rhythm
Line	A single row of words in a poem
Speaker	The voice that narrates the poem
Stanza	A group of lines in a poem, separated from other lines by a blank line



Write about poetry

- 1 Select a poem to analyse and read it aloud.
- 2 Circle any words, lines or images that stand out to you, whether you understand them or not. Write three of these words or phrases below.

- 3 Now write down three words to describe how your chosen words make you feel.



- 4 Note three things that the poem makes you think about. These might be events, people or situations in your own life or in the public world, or something else you have read.

- 5 Look up any unfamiliar words in your dictionary. Write down the meanings below.

- 6 Refer to the techniques table on page 56 to identify any common poetic techniques that appear in the poem you are studying.

- 7 Write a sentence about the poem's use of rhythm, mood or language that includes one of the words in the table on page 58.

- 8 Complete the following sentences about a poem or poems you are studying.

- a The poet's use of _____ (technique) in _____
(example) has the effect of _____
_____ (effect)
- b The poet appeals to the reader's sense of _____ (sight, hearing,
smell, taste, touch) through the description _____
_____ (description)
- c The image of _____ (image) evokes a feeling of _____
(emotion) in the reader.

Personal responses to texts

IN THIS CHAPTER

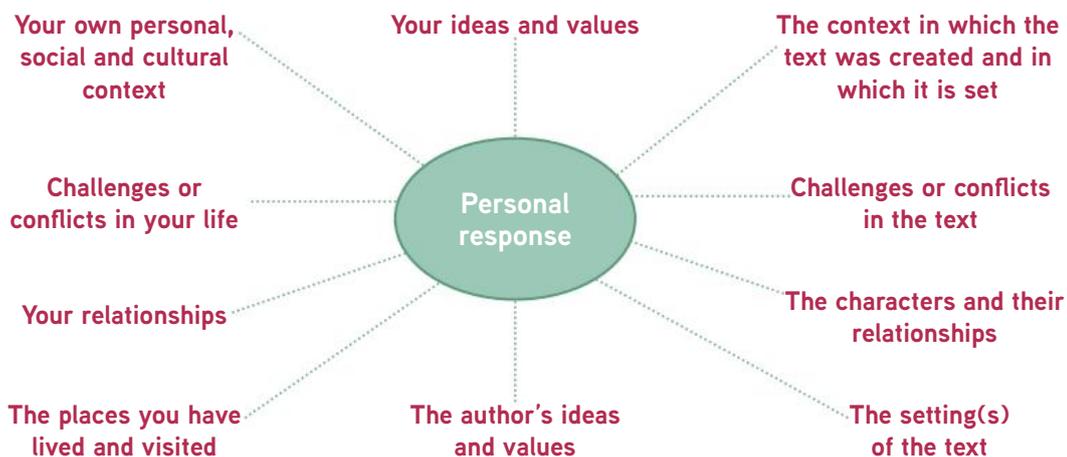
- » Exploring connections
- » Creating note-form summaries
- » Planning your personal response
- » Writing your personal response
- » Editing your personal response
- » Sample personal response

In Unit 1, you are invited to identify points of similarity between yourself and the text you are studying. For instance, you might relate to a particular character, one of the text's 'big ideas', or a setting or situation that is familiar to you. You are also encouraged to consider how a text makes you feel or think, and to explore why and how it does this.

A personal response is your emotional and/or intellectual reaction to a text, which is slightly different from an interpretation of its meaning. You will have to consider how the text relates to your own life, your memories and experiences, and your personal views on the world. Exploring personal connections to a text might also mean expressing your own reaction to issues, ideas, values, conflicts or tensions in the text.

Exploring connections

Sometimes, when we first read a book or watch a film, our immediate reaction is to say something like, 'That was boring', 'I loved the characters', or 'I was offended by its attitudes'. A considered personal response requires you to think more deeply about your reaction to the text and the factors that prompted these feelings. Such factors include those shown in the diagram below.





The best way to identify personal connections to the text is to look for overlaps in the areas shown in the diagram. For example, which aspects of your own personal experiences relate to the experiences of the characters? Do any major events in your life reflect the plot of the text you are studying? What are your ideas about the world, and your values, and how do they compare with those in the text? How are these ideas affected by the context in which the text was produced and the context in which you are reading or viewing it?

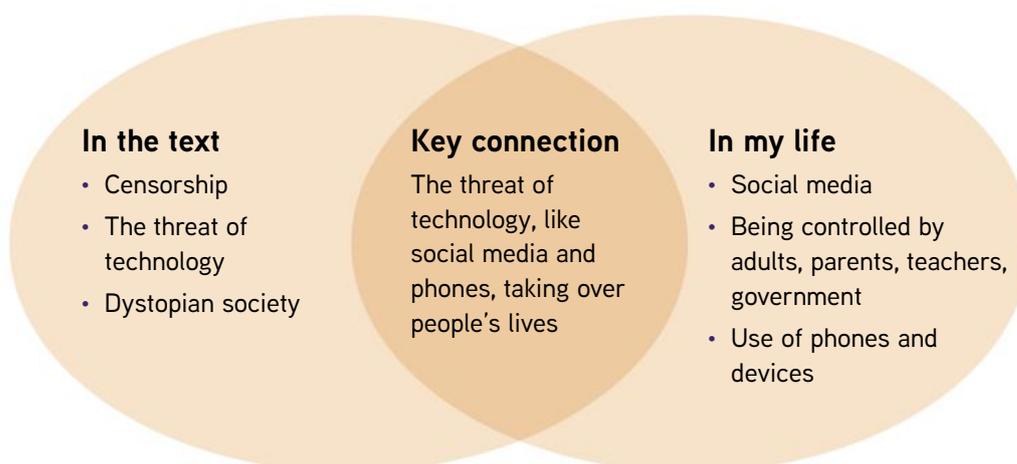


You might be working with extracts from a text, rather than the complete text. If this is the case, look for the key ideas that the extracts highlight. What connections do you see between the extracts, as well as between the text and your own life?

You could use a table like the one below to organise your ideas. This table focuses on a student’s personal connections to F Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*.

Feature	In the text	In my life
Characters, people and relationships	Jay Gatsby – young, rural background, became very wealthy Daisy Buchanan – attractive and charming but fickle and shallow	Me – young, from a rural background in Victoria Daisy reminds me of influencers on social media
Plot and important moments	Nick Carraway moves from Minnesota to New York and has conflicting feelings about the lifestyle	I moved from the country to the city at the start of secondary school, and had to adjust to a very different way of life
Ideas and values	The divide between classes and between rich and poor people	The divide between people from the city and people from the country
Settings and places	East Egg and West Egg, the Valley of Ashes	Rural Australia, different parts of Melbourne (richer and poorer areas)

A Venn diagram is another tool to map out your personal connections with a text. The following Venn diagram explores a student’s connections with the ideas and values in Ray Bradbury’s novel *Fahrenheit 451*.



When exploring personal connections with a text, dig deep. The more you explore your own life and experiences, the more likely you are to find connections with the text. Try exercises such as brainstorming to note down as many ideas as possible. Explore memories of major events in your life, places you have travelled and people you have met.

Consider also the factors that affect your response to the text. These include elements **inside the text**, such as the author's use of language, the narrative structure or characterisation; and factors **outside the text**, such as your own views about the world, your values, your background and your personal context.

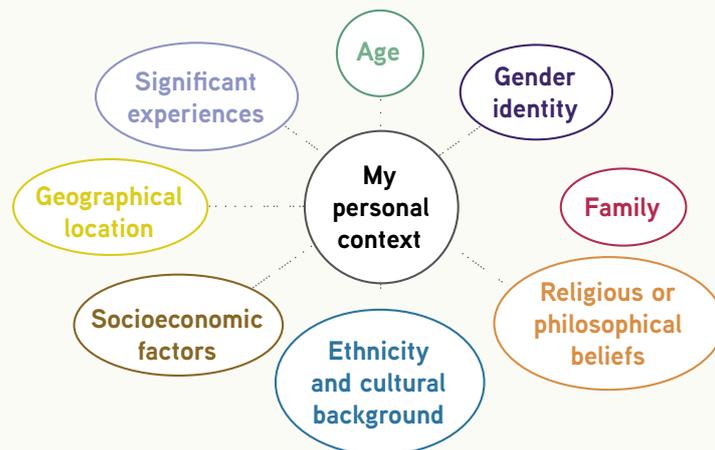


Keep a diary or journal in English to help you to organise your thoughts, reflect on things that matter to you and improve your writing skills.



Find connections

- 1 The following diagram draws attention to some of the key aspects of personal context. Re-create this diagram, adding your personal details.



- 2 Explain how understanding the historical context of a text influences your response to its attitudes.

- 3 Choose a character or characters with whom you identify. What similarities can you see between yourself and this character? Consider factors such as age, family background, educational background, location, attitudes and experiences.



4 Identify any significant ways in which you differ from this character. How do these affect your understanding of the character's behaviour and beliefs?

5 Complete the following sentences.

a When _____ (character) says _____, it makes me feel _____ because _____

b When _____ (character) does _____, it makes me think _____ because _____

c Two factors that influence my response are _____ and _____

6 Complete the following table to make connections between the world of the text and your own.

From the text		From your mind
Quote: _____	→	My reaction to this quote is _____ _____
Character: _____	→	A key connection with this character is _____ _____
Setting: _____	→	Comparing the text's setting with my own reveals _____ _____
Event: _____	→	This important event in the text suggests _____ _____ _____ (key idea)

7 As a class, hold a 'fishbowl discussion' – a discussion that gives people an opportunity to present and discuss their perspective, and highlights the fact that there is no single right answer when it comes to analysing texts and making personal connections.

Your discussion should respond to the following prompt: What is the most important idea or value in the text, and why?

Arrange the classroom in two concentric circles with six to twelve chairs in the inner circle, and the rest in the outer circle.





Students in the inner circle should discuss the prompt, making sure that every student has the opportunity to contribute. When addressing the prompt, you should explain why you think the idea is important, based on your personal connections to the text. For example, you might have a strong sense of justice and therefore believe that the author's values around justice, fairness and equity are important.

Students in the outer circle should take notes on the discussion, recording the inner circle's conversations.

At the end, a representative from the outer circle should present a summary of the entire discussion to the whole group.

Creating note-form summaries

One way to explore connections with a text is to make a note-form summary of key connections and ideas. Your note-form summary might respond to a prompt like the examples given on page 67.

A note-form summary should:

- identify key ideas, concerns and tensions in the text
- explore your personal connections to key ideas and/or characters
- include evidence and quotations from the text to support your discussion.

These notes do not all have to be complete sentences. You may include some note-taking symbols. You also do not need to include an introduction or conclusion as you would in an essay. However, every part of your summary needs to be clear to the reader. The links you draw between the text, your own life and the real world should be well explained.



For a summary of common note-taking symbols, see page 203.

In the following sample note-form summary, a student explores personal connections to the novel *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.

Key ideas

- **Power**
 - › *Animal Farm* shows that people naturally desire power, that power can be taken from people, and that battles for power often end in violence.
 - › Power starts with the humans and moves to the animals. As the animals become more powerful they start to act like the humans.
 - › When Mr Jones is kicked off the farm, his power is taken by the pigs. Someone always needs to be in control: 'Napoleon is always right'.

The student has identified three key ideas their summary will examine.

Each key idea is supported by a quote from the text.



- › **Personal connections:** I have seen what happens when the powerful forces who rule a country change. It often leads to violence. There are many cases around the world even now where the fight for power leads to violence and death, e.g. in Ukraine. ————— Each key idea is linked to a personal connection, which might be a link to the student's own life or the world around them.
- **Education**
 - › In *Animal Farm* George Orwell shows that educating the lower classes can be both beneficial and risky.
 - › Education can be a tool to free people, but it can also be used to trap people.
 - › The animals who are not educated, like Clover, are shown to be gullible and at risk of being misled by those in power. ————— The student presents an interpretation of each of the key ideas they explore.
 - › The pigs are 'brainworkers' – they use this as an excuse to be lazy.
 - › **Personal connections:** I take my education very seriously because I know that it offers me the best chance of doing well in life. I plan to study accounting at university, but I can't do that if I can't get a good education. I also value education because it gives me the skills to evaluate others' ideas and so, hopefully, not be misled.
- **Social class**
 - › Social class is made up of factors such as wealth, education and family status. In *Animal Farm* the animals belong to a lower class than the humans, and certain animals belong to different classes from the others.
 - › The working-class animals, like Boxer and Clover, are treated badly by the pigs: 'All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.'
 - › **Personal connections:** I have seen what it means to be 'working class' in Australia, a hierarchical society like that in *Animal Farm*. Sometimes it is hard to break down barriers that get in the way of getting a good education and career.

Key characters

- **Napoleon** ————— The student has identified three key characters from the text in their notes.
 - › Napoleon is corrupt and manipulative. He pursues power just for the sake of being in power. He doesn't care about the other animals. He only cares about himself.
 - › He says things like 'No animal shall drink alcohol' but then does the exact opposite himself ∴ he is hypocritical.
 - › **Personal connections:** Napoleon reminds me of people I have seen say one thing and do another. These are sometimes people in positions of power, such as politicians, which makes them even more dangerous. ————— A personal connection is identified with each character. »

» *Snowball*

- › Snowball is not as bad as Napoleon, but he is still focused on his own power.
- › Snowball is clever but Napoleon is physically strong.
- › Snowball is chased off the farm by Napoleon because he is a threat.
- › **Personal connections:** I once knew a student who was very clever but was always getting into fights because she wanted to be in charge. It was interesting to watch her try to control things by using her words. She would talk a lot and people would get confused and end up agreeing with her. I don't believe that it is moral or helpful for people to manipulate or dominate others using either their brains or their strength, as Snowball and Napoleon do.

Personal connections can be memories, thoughts and opinions, or links to the student's life and their experiences of the wider world.

Boxer

- › Orwell wants us to sympathise with Boxer → Boxer says things like 'Napoleon is always right' and 'I will work harder', which shows he is gullible and easily led.
- › Boxer is mistreated because of his mild nature and how much he trusts the pigs.
- › **Personal connections:** I think that people in power want us to be like Boxer. It would be easy for them if we all just agreed with what they say without thinking critically about it. But I would rather be educated, informed and brave enough to speak up against the people who use their power for evil, as some people did during World War II, and as people in my own home country did against a corrupt government.

The student uses direct quotes from the text to support their insights into the characters.

The personal connections show whether the student agrees or disagrees with the views and values in the text.

Planning your personal response

Outcome 1 in Unit 1 requires you to write a **personal** and **analytical** response that explores:

- the ideas, concerns and tensions presented in a text
- characters, settings and plot, and point of view and voice
- how vocabulary, text structures and language features create meaning.

You may be required to write a personal essay that reflects on the connections between the text and your own life, and analyses and explores these elements of the text.

You might not be required to respond to a specific topic, but it may be useful to focus on a prompt or key idea. A prompt can be based on any of the elements discussed in the first part of this chapter, such as character, setting, plot, ideas and values. Prompts based around ideas and values are likely to provide the best basis for your essay.



Your teacher will let you know what form your personal response should take, and whether you will respond to a topic or prompt.



Here are a few example prompts based on *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury:

- Discuss the ways in which technology can be used to control people in *Fahrenheit 451* and in your own experiences.
- Does freedom require knowledge? Respond to this question with close reference to *Fahrenheit 451* and your own experiences.
- Are we living in a dystopian society? In your response, explore your own perspective and that of the text.
- Explore your personal connections with *Fahrenheit 451* in your response to the following question: Is censorship ever a good thing?



Practise writing prompts

Write three prompts or focus ideas for the text you are studying, based on the shared ideas and values from the text and your own life.

Deciding on a structure

There are two main ways to structure a personal essay – the block approach and the integrated approach.

In the **block approach**, each body paragraph is self-contained and focuses on either the text or your own life. For example:

- **Introduction:** Identify key ideas and values in the text and your own thoughts about them (responding to the prompt, if you are using one).
- **Body paragraph one:** Analyse a feature of the text, for example, how certain characters or moments from the plot reveal the author's ideas and values.
- **Body paragraph two:** Reflect on aspects of your personal life that relate to the points made in paragraph one.
- **Body paragraph three:** Analyse another feature or aspect of the text.
- **Body paragraph four:** Reflect on aspects of your personal life that relate to the points made in paragraph three.
- **Conclusion:** Draw together the points you have made about both the text and your life and summarise the key insights you have gained about an important idea (referring to the prompt, if there is one).

Advantages of the block approach	Disadvantages of the block approach
+ Simple to plan and write	- Can be disjointed
+ Clear	- More difficult to make distinct connections

In the **integrated approach**, each body paragraph explores both the text and your own life. For example:

- **Introduction:** Identify key ideas and values in the text and your own thoughts about them (responding to the prompt, if you are using one).
- **Body paragraphs one to three:** In each paragraph, analyse an aspect of the text – for example, how specific characters or moments in the plot reveal the author’s ideas and values – and make a comparison with related aspects of your own life. Since each of these paragraphs will discuss both the text and your personal experiences, they are likely to be longer than those in a block approach.
- **Conclusion:** Draw together the points you have made about both the text and your life, and summarise the key insights you have gained about an important idea (referring to the prompt, if there is one).

Advantages of the integrated approach	Disadvantages of the integrated approach
+ Can make strong connections	- Can be confusing or overly complex
+ May be more sophisticated	- More difficult to plan and write

Creating a plan

Follow the steps below to create a plan for your personal response.

Step 1: Collect your notes on the text, including the personal connections you have identified and any relevant quotes on characters, settings, plot, ideas and values. (Your responses to the questions in the activity on pages 62–4 will be a good starting point.)

Step 2: Decide on your focus. This will be the prompt, if you are using one. If not, identify a key idea that you will explore in your response.

Step 3: Choose a structure – block or integrated.

Step 4: Identify the main idea you will explore in each body paragraph. Remember that each of these ideas needs to contribute to the overall focus of your response. Make note of the quotes and other evidence from the text you will use in each paragraph.

Writing your personal response

Begin with a clear introduction that mentions shared ideas from both the text and your personal life. For example, you may choose to focus your essay on similar characters and events from the text and the real world, or similar settings, or similar ideas and values.

Next, write your body paragraphs. Each paragraph should introduce a new angle or perspective on the key idea you are exploring. You might also describe how the personal connections you found have improved your understanding of the text.



A personal response should not be just a list of similarities or differences between the text and your life. It should also be an *analytical* response that shows how reflecting on your personal connections with the text has enriched your interpretation of it.



Finally, write the conclusion, ensuring that you have addressed the prompt (if there is one), and ending with a clear point that makes an important connection between your life and the text, or demonstrates a new insight that you have gained by exploring a particular idea.

The following is a side-by-side comparison of the block and integrated approaches using the example of *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald and responding to the prompt, 'Is the American Dream a lie?'

Block response	Integrated response	
Introduction		<p>The introduction refers to the prompt, the text, and the writer's personal life and context. The link between the 'American Dream' of the text and the 'Australian Dream' of the student is made clear. The paragraph ideas are signposted in the last few sentences of the introduction.</p>
<p>The 'American Dream', a phrase first used in the 1930s, reflects the idea that anyone of any background can achieve greatness through hard work and perseverance. F Scott Fitzgerald's novel <i>The Great Gatsby</i> was written in 1925 and explores ideas related to the American Dream, suggesting that the Dream may in fact be a lie. Parallels could be drawn with the 'Australian Dream' that everyone will get a 'fair go' at success and owning their own home. This value of fairness is linked to another important Australian value – mateship. But, like Fitzgerald's criticism of the American Dream, I feel that some aspects of the Australian Dream are problematic. In <i>The Great Gatsby</i>, Nick Carraway moves to New York and finds himself confronted with the uncomfortable truth of the American Dream. Similarly, when I moved from rural China to Melbourne, I experienced firsthand the revelation that the Australian Dream can sometimes be just a myth. However, unlike Fitzgerald, I ultimately believe that, if we hold onto values like equality and mateship, we can make the Australian Dream a reality.</p>		<p>The integrated paragraph opens with a sentence that references both the writer's life and the world of the text. If you are responding to a prompt, this should also be addressed in the opening sentence.</p>
Body paragraph 1		<p>Quotes from the text can be used in the integrated approach to relate directly to personal connections.</p>
<p>In <i>The Great Gatsby</i>, the American Dream is destroyed by greed and excess. When Nick Carraway first moves from Minnesota to New York, he is already somewhat cynical as a result of his time in World War I. Like many Americans in the 1920s, Carraway is searching for meaning in his new life. However, in New York he does not find the spirit of individualism and the pursuit of happiness that is the key to the American Dream. Instead, at 'gleaming, dazzling parties' thrown by Gatsby, Carraway experiences the greed and excess that marks the downfall of American society.</p>	<p>Both the American Dream and the Australian Dream can be threatened by greed and excess. When I first moved from a small town in rural China to Melbourne, one of the first things I noticed was the frantic pace of life. Like Gatsby's invitations to his 'gleaming, dazzling parties', my new friends constantly wanted to whisk me away to attend the many events held every weekend. All of these events – Gatsby's parties and my hectic Melbourne social calendar – were just a distraction from the important things in life. Back in the regional town where I grew up, I was always engaged in fundraisers and events for issues like farmers' health, drought relief and community. I expected to find something similar when I moved to the city, but at first it seemed as though everyone was preoccupied with their own image and status. Like Gatsby and the 'foul dust [that] floated in the wake of his dreams', something seemed to be blocking people's interest in helping others.</p>	<p>The block paragraph refers to either the text or the personal life of the writer, but not both. The block paragraph begins with a topic sentence. The topic sentence should address an element of the prompt, if there is one.</p>

**Conclusion**

While Fitzgerald's opinion of the American Dream is cynical and harsh, my own opinion of the Australian Dream is much more mixed. There are some aspects of city life, such as the frantic pace and the constant focus on appearances, that I believe distract us from dreams of reconciliation, equality and community. Like in *The Great Gatsby*, people can be misled by the race to riches and shallow success. But through engaging in local community groups, working with people with shared interests and getting involved in volunteering, I have also seen opportunities to make my Australian Dream come true.

The conclusion brings together both texts, whether the block or integrated approach is used in the body paragraphs. Sentences use comparative language that may compare or contrast the ideas and values from the text and the writer's personal life. The conclusion should end with a comment that addresses the prompt, if one is being used.

Vocabulary for personal responses

When linking your personal experience to the text, you could use the following sentence starters.

- When I first discovered / experienced / understood / noticed ...
- The ... (event in the text) reminds me of a time when I ...
- Like ... (character/s), in my own life I have ...
- In a similar way to ... (character/s), I have found that ...
- Reflecting on the values endorsed in the text, I personally think that ...
- Unlike ... (character/s), my own life has taught me ...
- ... (aspect of the text) gave me new insight into ... (idea)
- A factor that influences my attitude towards ... (idea or aspect of the text) is ...
- Although my experience was different, I learned a similar lesson when ...
- I have had conflicts and challenges in my life, similar to ...
- I share several values with ... (the author), such as ...
- I have encountered characters like ... (character/s) in my own life; for example, ...

Because you will be making connections between your experience and the text, it is also a good idea to use words and phrases that compare and contrast, such as those in the following table.

Comparing	Contrasting
Also	However
In the same way	In contrast
Likewise	On the other hand
Similarly	Unlike



Structure your response around the main focus established in your introduction. Each paragraph should add a new layer to the discussion so that, by the time you reach the conclusion, the reader is positioned to share your perspective, or at least to understand it.



Write an introduction and body paragraph

- 1 Complete the table to develop notes for an introduction and first body paragraph of a personal response to your set text. Use the example as a guide.

	Example	Your response
Text and creator	<i>Extinction</i> by Hannie Rayson	
Focus of your essay (main connection between you and the text that you will explore)	The cost of sticking to your principles	
Idea related to this connection	Strong beliefs and emotions about an issue can make it hard to compromise, but lack of compromise can prevent positive changes happening.	
Textual and personal evidence	<p>Harry and Andy's antagonism towards each other's ideas limits their ability to work together. As a vegan, I sometimes find it difficult to relate to vegetarians, even though we share certain values, because I feel that if vegetarians really cared about animals, they'd be vegan.</p> <p>Key quote: 'I know his type: the kind of greenie who's always saying no. No dams. No mines. No roads.'</p>	

- 2 Drawing on your notes, write an introduction and first body paragraph that explore a key idea about a personal connection with a text. Include one of the sentence starters and one comparing or contrasting word from page 70.



Editing your personal response

Use the following checklist to edit your personal response.

Structure

- The response has a clear introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion.
- The introduction outlines a clear focus or contention.
- The body paragraphs have engaging opening sentences.
- The response uses a block or an integrated structure.
- Each paragraph focuses on a single idea.
- The discussion develops over the course of the response, building to the conclusion.
- The response includes a conclusion that addresses the prompt (if necessary) and summarises your thoughts.

Language

- Each sentence is clear and grammatically correct.
- Punctuation is correct.
- Sentences vary in structure for pace and impact.
- You have used analytical metalanguage when discussing the text.
- You have used connective and comparative language to link ideas.

Ideas and techniques

- You have explored the author's ideas and values.
- You have commented on language features and text structures.
- You have referred to characters, settings and plot.
- You have made personal connections to the ideas and techniques listed above.

Sample personal response

The following personal response is based on Cate Kennedy's short-story collection *Like a House on Fire* and responds to the following prompt: How do your own experiences and ideas connect with the stories in *Like a House on Fire*?

For every reader of a text, some things will seem more significant than others because we are drawn to them for different reasons. The most meaningful element of this text for me is how the stories are told through small moments and intense events. This echoes the way I go through my life – I tend to focus on minor events and details and how they clarify or symbolise situations I am in; I'm better at close-up ideas than big-picture planning. In a novel the storyline might be a complex arc exploring in depth one character's journey, but in a short-story collection we get to see many different people's realities, and find things that we all share as humans. In this collection, Kennedy asks us

Shows awareness that readings of a text are always subjective: this is the underlying premise of the task.

Immediately identifies the central focus of the response.



to investigate shared human experience by looking at characters who are at turning points in their lives, and glimpsing how this impacts on them.

Often in these stories, the specifics are concrete and while there may be something intensely emotional going on for characters, their attention and focus is on mundane things. Kennedy encourages us to zoom in on their lives by revealing the small details they are observing around them, even while their worlds may be falling apart. For example, in 'Waiting', the woman waits for a scan she knows will probably tell her she has had a miscarriage, but when we first meet her, she is not explicitly thinking about this at all, rather she describes with great specificity the relatively meaningless magazine photo beside her: 'you can see ... the light and shade on her leg, the distant shifting shadows as she steps into the waves'. This is probably a way of displacing her serious anxiety and emotional distress, and it may or may not be intentional. Sometimes it is easier to pay attention to an object in front of you than to think about what is in your own mind, especially when something upsetting is happening. I remember an incident like this from when I was little: it was the day my big brother told me he was moving away to go to university, and it was a kind of crisis or turning point for me, as letting go of him was hard – he was pretty much my best friend. And although it was such a huge moment for me, I remember that instead of looking at him I couldn't stop staring at a poster on my wall. I vaguely knew I was on the cusp of a new reality, but had no idea what that would actually mean. It was easier just to look at something physical than to try to process what was going on.

The idea of being on the cusp of something is one that is explored repeatedly in this collection. Many characters are at turning points in their lives – a common structuring device in short stories, since it allows us to see people under pressure and emotionally vulnerable. Kennedy's protagonists are often about to enter entirely new realities and have no idea yet what this might be like. For example, Michelle in 'Five-Dollar Family' has just given birth and is about to become a single mother; the Slovaks are cautiously reconnecting in 'Flexion' so that they might move forward together after the accident; the scholar in 'Laminex and Mirrors' is 'saving money to go to London'. Maybe one of the most dramatic crises in the collection is the climax of 'Seventy-Two Derwents' when Tyler, having survived her trauma, is poised to move to her new school and start a new existence in a hopefully safer world.

One of the significant things that has protected Tyler and allowed her to get through the terrible experiences with Shane is Ellie, her big sister. This storyline really resonated with me because I've always had a very close relationship with my little sister as well as my brother.

While I was reading, I tried to imagine how my sister and I might respond to a situation like theirs, and even though sometimes we fight

Expands on the idea from the first paragraph, offering more detail.

Offers a direct personal interpretation of an event in the text, supporting it by reflecting on a parallel event from the student's own life.

Links to the previous paragraph by repeating the phrase 'cusp of', contributing to a smooth flow of argument.

If your text is a collection of stories, it is important to refer to more than just one, but don't try to discuss too many. Including three examples here is a good balance: it shows that ideas relate to the whole text, but does not waste space simply listing stories.

By considering a relevant hypothetical real-world situation, the student goes beyond simply identifying personal parallels with the text, demonstrating a more sophisticated understanding of its ideas by applying them to the student's own life. »



a lot, I think we would face a crisis together the way Tyler and Ellie do: uniting against the world to survive. Even in 'Whirlpool', Anna and Louise, who really do not get on well, share a moment of resilient, defiant resistance against their mother, when they meet eyes 'at the exact same moment' just before the photo is taken. A strong sibling connection is something I'm lucky to have, and seeing a version of it reflected in some of these stories made me feel more emotionally engaged with the book.

One of my favourite things about this collection is the way that so many of the stories leave their endings up in the air, so that readers have to interpret the events and relationships for themselves and imagine what the outcomes might be (such as in 'Tender', for example). This reminds me of many television series I watch, with episodes ending on cliff-hangers. But where those usually resolve in the next episode, these stories instead leave us wondering. In that way I find the characters and their situations linger with me, as I keep thinking about them later and coming up with possible conclusions. By leaving it up to us to continue those stories in our heads, Kennedy emphasises ideas of uncertainty, imagination, possibility, and also the individual power to see the world in whatever way we choose.

This sentence links together ideas from the rest of the essay: sibling relationships and small details or moments.

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

Identifies a specific textual element that is particularly powerful for the student.

Note that an explanation of this connection is provided: simply describing a favourite feature is not enough.

Identifies not just situations and characters from the student's own life, but also elements of the world around them that contribute to their understanding and interpretation of the text.

Identifies a feature of the text (the fact that stories are often open-ended) and focuses on the personal response this provokes (making the student continue to think about the text).

Analytical responses to texts

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Creating mind maps
- » Writing your analytical text response
- » Writing strategies
- » Editing your analytical text response
- » Sample analytical text response

This chapter provides a step-by-step process for creating an analytical response to a text, as well as guidelines and tips for drafting and editing your work. It also outlines how to create mind maps that demonstrate your in-depth understanding of a text.

Creating mind maps

Part of your assessment for Unit 2 might include producing a detailed mind map of vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas from the set text. You might create your mind map as a poster or in a Word document, and you might use various programs or software – for example, Miro or Canva – to help you.

It is useful to begin by developing maps that focus on one key feature of the text before synthesising your knowledge in detailed mind maps that cover multiple features.

Character maps

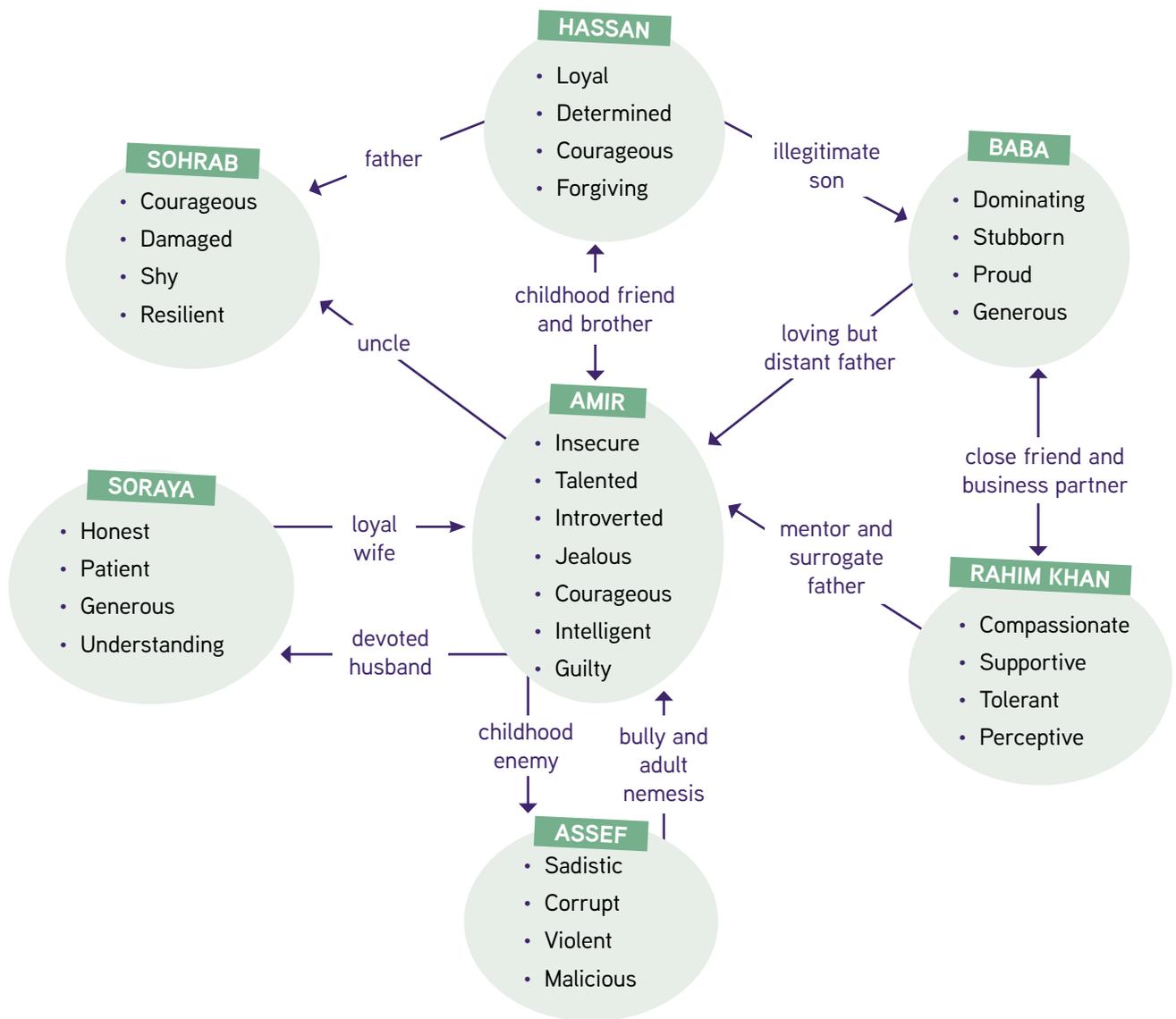
A character map gives a visual summary of the key qualities or attributes of the characters in a text. It also identifies the relationships between the characters. To create a detailed character mind map use the following steps.

Step 1: Place the name of the main character in the centre of your page. Underneath, in boxes or circles, list six to eight adjectives describing the character.

Step 2: Surrounding this central box, draw similar smaller boxes for the other significant characters. Include three or four descriptors in each one.

Step 3: Draw arrows connecting the boxes to show the relationships between characters. Give a brief description of each relationship on the relevant arrow.

Your character map should look a little like a spider's web by the time you have completed the exercise. Use the example on the following page as a guide. In this example, for simplicity, arrows have only been drawn between boxes next to each other; you could also draw arrows to link other characters, such as Assef and Hassan.



Character traits and development maps

The main characters (and in some instances, minor characters) in a text usually undergo some form of transformation or development. A mind map that focuses on this development might look something like the one below, based on Arthur Miller’s play *The Crucible*.

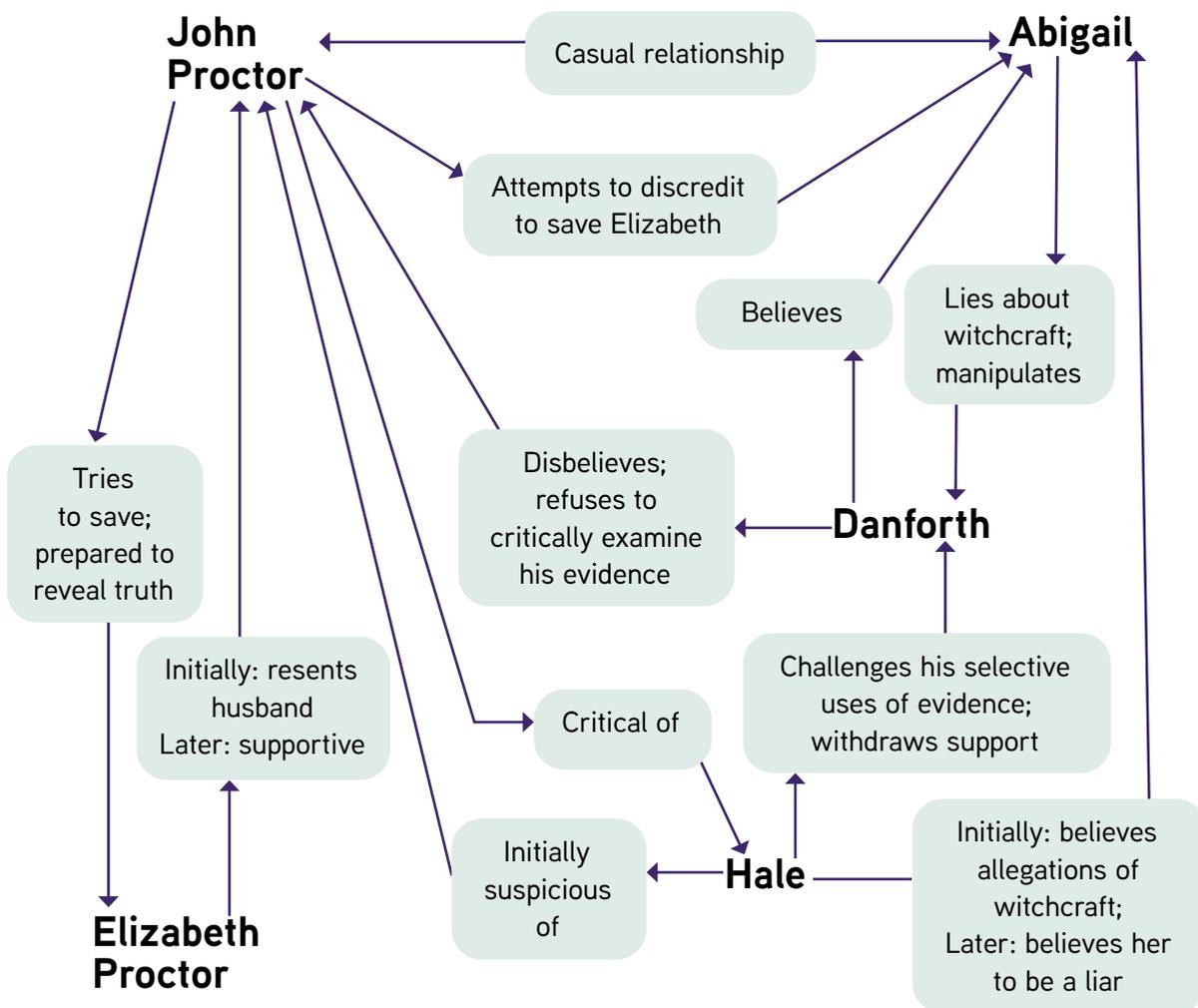
Character	Initial aspects	Character development
John Proctor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong sense of guilt because of adultery Fears loss of reputation if his adultery is exposed Signs false declaration due to low self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcomes fears: admits guilt and confesses adultery to save Elizabeth and his friends Regains his sense of integrity – withdraws signature + faces death
Abigail Williams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lies about witchcraft to protect herself from punishment Wants Elizabeth dead so she can marry Proctor herself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becomes bolder and more assertive in her lying + manipulation of others Turns against Proctor when he accuses her of adultery Flees when public opinion turns against her



Rev. Hale	Intellectually proud; wrongly attributes events to witchcraft Suspicious of John and Elizabeth Proctor due to their lack of religious observance	Critically examines 'evidence' of witchcraft; concludes it is not witchcraft Withdraws his support from the court + refuses to co-sign any more death warrants Suggested that he encourages citizens of Andover to resist the court
Elizabeth Proctor	Resents her husband for his adultery; finds it hard to forgive him Pressures him to reveal Abigail's admission that there was no witchcraft	Lies to Judge Danforth to protect her husband's reputation States that she will support whatever decision John makes about signing the confession – does not pressure him either way

Character relationship maps

A mind map focused on relationships might look like the example below. Note that the connections between characters are identified in the boxes and by arrows.



Ideas and values maps

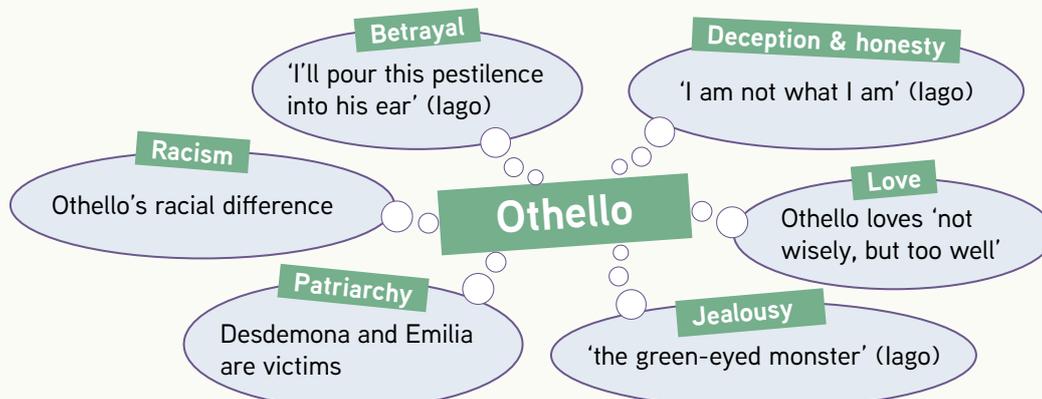
The ideas and values explored in a text can also be represented through charts and diagrams. Consider the example below based on Reginald Rose's play *Twelve Angry Men*. Points are set out in two columns, showing qualities and behaviours that the playwright endorses and those he condemns.

Positive	Negative
<p>Empathy 8th Juror shows concern for other jurors (e.g. 3rd at the end) 5th Juror – from slum background; shows genuine concern for the defendant</p> <p>Collaboration Jurors work together & share insights to examine evidence e.g. 6th, 5th (queries knife wound; queries whether old man could run) e.g. re-enactment of old man running by 8th Juror; 2nd Juror keeps time</p> <p>Civic responsibility Most jurors attempt to participate in deliberation, and take the task seriously; generally remain task-focused 2nd Juror: shifts from being nervous and quiet to being vocal and an active member of the discussion</p>	<p>Prejudice 10th Juror – despises defendant on the basis of his race or social background (text does not reveal precise nature) => unable/unwilling to deliberate rationally 3rd Juror – projects his failed relationship with his son onto the defendant. Alleges he is deliberating, yet his hatred of the defendant clouds his judgement Lack of empathy – 4th Juror highly logical and is task-focused; however, lacks empathy for the boy</p> <p>Bullying, intimidation and obstruction 3rd, 7th and 10th Jurors repeatedly bully and intimidate other jurors. They interrupt and try to obstruct the discussion e.g. 3rd Juror threatens to kill the 8th Juror</p> <p>Apathy 7th Juror uninterested in participating as he wants to attend a baseball game Contempt for the legal process / rule of law – 10th Juror says he doesn't care what the law states</p>



Create an idea mind map

- First, study this example of a basic idea mind map for William Shakespeare's play *Othello*.

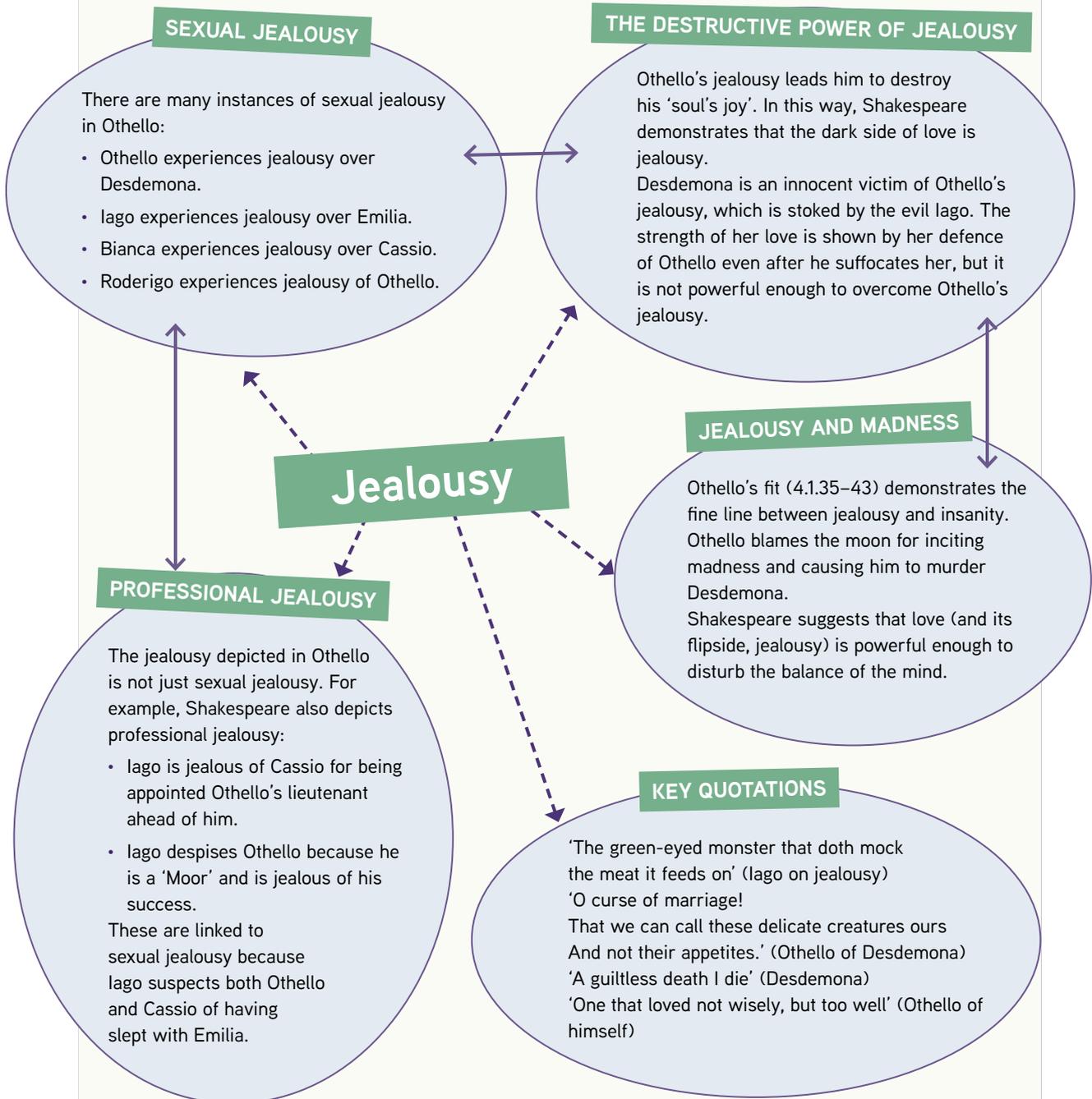




Create a similar mind map (e.g. using an online program like mural.co or bubbl.us) to show an overview of the key ideas explored in the text you are studying.

- Place the title of the text at the centre, then place the themes and ideas around it in boxes or balloons.
- Include a brief quote or note about the main characters.

2 Study the mind map below, which illustrates how one of the most important ideas in *Othello* is developed.



Create a similar mind map showing how one important idea is explored in your text.

Developing detailed mind maps

One assessment option in Unit 2 is to create ‘a detailed mind map of vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas from the set text’. This involves demonstrating your understanding of the way that multiple features of a text work together to create meaning. A detailed mind map:

- should include reference to multiple elements of the text, not just one
- does not have to refer to every feature of the text
- might respond to a topic or have a particular focus.

The following sample detailed mind map for Reginald Rose’s play *Twelve Angry Men* focuses on the central idea of whether trial by jury is an effective means of achieving justice.

Twelve Angry Men by Reginald Rose, play

Central question of text: Does trial by jury work to achieve justice?

PLOT/STRUCTURE

Audience as jury – makes judgement about the trial and the performance of the jury; action occurs in real time; jury deliberation is unedited, e.g. jurors eat cough drops, go to toilet ∴ audience can make judgements based on whole deliberation

Charge: 1st-degree murder – most serious offence, mandatory death sentence + no mercy plea from jury → high stakes; jury must get verdict correct

Explored largely through the characterisation of the 12 jurors, unnamed = focus is on their personalities; represent a range of types

Task of jury (judge’s opening speech): separate facts from ‘fancy’; to deliberate ‘honestly and thoughtfully’; to decide guilty (no reasonable doubt) / not guilty (reasonable doubt)

NB: unanimous verdict required

SETTING

Time

1950s; era of prosperity but superficial (e.g. 12th Juror)

Patriarchal society (e.g. no female jurors) – Rose accepts this status quo

Afternoon – jury is tired

Place

New York; skyline seen through windows = symbolic of American values of democracy and freedom (compare 11th Juror – Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany?)

Jury room + washroom → enables audience to witness private conversations between jurors that other jurors can’t see; jury locked inside; hot (no air con + not shown how to use fan) → jury might rush, make wrong decision b/c uncomfortable

Weather: also symbolic of mood/atmosphere in jury room:

- heat = anger
- storm = fighting
- calm @ end = resolution (correct verdict)

KEY IDEAS

- Danger of prejudice
- Value of calm logic
- Importance of good leadership
- Truth not always obvious
- Value of empathy



Threats to deliberation	Overcome by
<p><u>Prejudice</u> – ‘Prejudice obscures the truth’ (8th Juror)</p> <p>10th Juror – hates defendant’s socioeconomic group ∴ assumes defendant guilty, e.g. hysterical rant (Act II) → accuses them of alcoholism, liars, don’t value life (‘There’s not one of them any good’); lacks logical consistency – says group are liars but believes female eyewitness</p> <p>3rd Juror – hates defendant as he projects his failed relationship with his son onto defendant (16, same age as Juror’s son when they quarrelled); prejudice clouds his judgement</p> <p><u>Unconscious bias</u> – 4th Juror – negative opinion of slum-dwellers (‘slums are breeding grounds for criminals’)</p> <p><u>Apathy</u>, e.g. making jokes, playing tic tac toe – 7th Juror wants quick verdict so can go to baseball game</p> <p><u>Failure of leadership</u> – foreman ineffective leader (assistant coach not head coach); personalises disagreements; bullying & intimidating other jurors + hindering deliberation – 3rd, 7th and 10th Jurors</p> <p><u>Ineffective defence lawyer</u> – failed to create doubt: ‘the defence counsel wasn’t doing his job. He let too many things go’ (8th Juror)</p> <p><u>Contempt for rule of law</u> – (10th Juror) viewing deliberation as competition, esp 3rd Juror</p> <p><u>Superficial reasoning</u> – 12th Juror, changes vote, refers to slogans, reflecting shallow logic</p> <p><u>Reliability of witnesses and jurors</u> – ‘Facts may be coloured by the personalities of those who present them’; ‘Eight o’clock. Not seven’</p>	<p><u>Meticulous examination of the evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defendant appears guilty: knife is unique (alleges shopkeeper); alibi is flimsy (fell through hole in pocket); old man alleges boy yelled ‘I’m gonna kill you’ Guilt challenged by doubt: 8th Juror produces identical knife (NB breaks law by conducting own investigation + buying weapon) → knife on table symbolises doubt; no prints on knife; defendant shows knife to friends = illogical if guilty; screams common in neighbourhood; noise of train would make it impossible for old man to hear alleged threat <p>However, logic alone insufficient, e.g. 4th Juror (stockbroker = pure logic); <u>empathy</u> also needed, e.g. 8th Juror (architect = logic + empathy); 9th Juror (watchmaker = logic; immigrant = empathy with victims of bias)</p> <p><u>Refusing to allow prejudices to guide deliberation</u> – e.g. jury members distance themselves during 10th’s rant</p> <p><u>Focus on facts + detail</u> – e.g. old man alleges saw boy run down stairs in 15 secs but re-enactment shows he couldn’t have; downward thrust of knife inconsistent with height of defendant; tendency to kill ≠ killer</p> <p><u>Active participation in the process</u> – e.g. 6th changes from ‘My boss does the supposing’ → offering observations</p> <p><u>De facto leader emerges</u> – 8th Juror directs much of deliberation</p> <p><u>Being task-focused, working collaboratively</u> – e.g. re-enactment at end of Act I and stabbing in Act II; being respectful of other jurors; not about winning or losing, e.g. 4th Juror happy to vote not guilty @ end</p>
<p>Outcome = Jurors gradually change votes to not guilty, though some initially hesitant + some give up, do what’s easiest</p>	

CONCLUSION

Jury system can work, provided jurors are prepared to set aside biases + prejudices and work collaboratively to examine evidence carefully.



Like writing an essay about a text, when creating a mind map you need to be selective. Choose only the ideas and evidence that are most relevant to your topic or focus. You won’t have room to include everything you know about a text.

Writing your analytical text response

Your analytical text responses will be judged on the following criteria:

- knowledge of the text and selection of textual evidence to support your analysis, including quotes and references to structural features
- the quality of your analysis
- relevance – have you answered the question, the whole question, and nothing but the question?
- the structure of your essay and the argument you present
- your written expression.

One key to a successful text response is to make sure you answer the question and explore all aspects of it adequately. A common mistake students make, particularly when writing under timed conditions, is rushing into writing the essay instead of planning their response carefully. As a popular saying goes, ‘Proper planning and preparation prevent poor performance’. The following five-step essay process emphasises thinking and planning to give you the greatest chance of success.

These are the five steps, discussed in detail on the following pages.

Step 1: Select the topic and determine what you need to do.

Step 2: Brainstorm.

Step 3: Formulate your contention.

Step 4: Organise points into paragraphs and create topic sentences.

Step 5: Write the essay.

Step 1: Select the topic and determine what you need to do

Often you will be given a choice of topics. Before you select which one you will attempt, look carefully at the choices and work out exactly what each topic is asking you. To ensure you don’t misinterpret this, use a dictionary to check the meaning of all the key words.

Every word in an essay question has been carefully chosen: changing even one word in a topic can alter what you are being asked, so it is important that you do not ignore any words. Once you have decided which topic to respond to, try to restate the topic in your own words, to confirm that you clearly understand it.



You will not be asked to write everything you know about your chosen text. One aspect of this task is choosing the most appropriate elements of the text to consider in your response.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about breaking down an essay topic.



There are, broadly speaking, two main types of text response questions:

- a proposition that needs to be resolved
- a direct question that needs to be answered.

Most are the first type: propositions followed by questions such as ‘Discuss’, ‘Do you agree?’ and ‘To what extent’, like the one below.

‘In *Rear Window*, Hitchcock condemns all acts of voyeurism.’ To what extent do you agree?

While, in theory, you may agree entirely or disagree entirely with the proposition, the question usually invites you to *partially agree* with the proposition. For instance, your essay might mostly agree with the proposition (for example, in two out of three body paragraphs), or you might mostly disagree (for example, agreeing with the proposition in only one of three body paragraphs). Exploring both sides of a statement allows you to show your knowledge of the text’s complexities.

‘To what extent’ questions also ask you to judge the degree to which you agree or disagree with the proposition. When attempting this type of question, you may want to consider the following five-point scale:

Entirely (rarely the most appropriate response)	Mainly	Partially	Slightly	Not at all (rarely the most appropriate response)
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‘Discuss’ topics need to be read very carefully. In many instances, you need to consider reasons for and against a proposition, and could challenge the proposition itself. For example, consider the following topic.

‘The characters in *The Crucible* are motivated only by fear.’ Discuss.

Here, the word ‘only’ invites you to challenge the statement. You might respond, for instance, by arguing that the characters are motivated by many different emotions, only one of which is fear.

However, some ‘Discuss’ topics require you to focus closely on the idea in the proposition, and do not include words that invite you to consider other ideas. For example:

‘The characters in *The Crucible* are motivated by fear.’ Discuss.

This topic asks you to explore how and why fear affects characters. You would be going off topic if you went into detail about other factors that motivate the characters.

Look carefully at modifying words, particularly those that have an absolute quality, such as: ‘all’, ‘none’, ‘always’, ‘never’, ‘no/none’. With words such as these, it takes only one example of an exception to the ‘rule’ to challenge the concept, while words such as ‘mainly’, ‘most’, ‘few’ and ‘usually’ do allow for exceptions.

Topics in the form of a **direct question** usually begin with the words ‘Why’, ‘What’ or ‘How’ and end with a question mark. When responding to this type of question you should *not* challenge the proposition contained within the topic. For example, consider the following topic on *Twelve Angry Men*:

Why is it not easy for the jury to reach a verdict?

With this topic, if you discuss why it is easy for the jury to reach a verdict, you have gone off topic. You should accept that the play depicts the process as difficult, then explain why it is.

‘How’ questions should be read very carefully, as ‘how’ can have a couple of meanings. For example, in the question, ‘How critical of voyeurism is Hitchcock?’, a synonym for ‘how’ is ‘to what extent’. So, here, ‘how’ is asking you to judge the degree to which Hitchcock is critical of voyeurism. By contrast, ‘How does Hitchcock endorse and criticise voyeurism?’ asks you to explore the methods (that is, the structural elements or features) Hitchcock uses to explore the concept of voyeurism.

Step 2: Brainstorm

Having worked out what the question is asking you, and whether it contains a concept to be challenged or a question to be resolved, you should brainstorm ideas for your response. A brainstorm involves writing down as many points as you can think of that relate to the topic.



You may find it helpful to brainstorm using a pencil, so you can erase any points that you decide will not be included in your final response.

If the essay question contains a concept that you are challenging, divide your page into two columns. At the top of one column, write ‘Agree’ or ‘Yes’; at the top of the other column, write ‘Disagree’ or ‘No’.

If the topic is one that you will essentially agree with, the headings ‘How’ and ‘Why’ may be useful. However, if the topic is a ‘Why’ topic, you probably only need one column.

If the topic requires you to consider whether you agree/disagree, list points (and examples) that support the proposition under ‘Yes’ and those that challenge the proposition under ‘No’. Try to place related points near to each other.



Check your knowledge of the text

- 1 In groups or as a class, hold a question-and-answer session focused on checking your understanding of the main elements of your text. One student should begin by asking a question about the text, which a second student should answer. The first student should repeat back the second student’s answer, to check that they have understood it correctly. Then the second student should pose a question to a third student, repeating their answer, and so on.
- 2 Devise a topic for your set text. Swap topics with a partner and brainstorm possible responses to the topic created by your partner.



Step 3: Formulate your contention

Once you have finished your brainstorm, look carefully at the points you have written down. You should now be able to make a judgement about the extent to which you agree or disagree with the proposition, and the main points you will explore in your essay. You may want to cross out or erase any irrelevant points. You should now draft your contention. Make sure that it specifically addresses the essay topic – in your own words where possible.

Step 4: Organise points into paragraphs and create topic sentences

Have a careful look at the points you wrote during your brainstorm. You can group your ideas by putting circles around the points you will explore in each paragraph, and then numbering the circles. You must write a minimum of three body paragraphs. However, you may choose to write more. Make sure that you have at least one example from the text to support each point you plan to discuss in your essay. At this stage, you don't need to write out the evidence (quotes and structural features) you will cite, but you should know what it is.

Next, draft your topic sentences. A good topic sentence will:

- clearly address the key words of the essay question
- be short – remember, the function of the topic sentence is to state concisely the point that you will explore in the paragraph; this idea will be developed / elaborated upon in the rest of the paragraph
- be clearly linked to your contention.

Once you have drafted your topic sentences, ask yourself whether you have included all the points that should be covered in a response to the topic.



Drafting the contention and the topic sentences can take a bit of time. However, if you write a sound contention and appropriate topic sentences, you have in fact drafted a significant portion of your introductory and concluding paragraphs, and are less likely to write an essay that does not stay relevant to the topic.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a planning sheet template you can use to plan your text response essay.

Step 5: Write the essay

The bulk of the time allocated to complete this task will be spent writing your essay. Make sure that you manage your time carefully while you are writing. The following time management guide may be useful; it is based on having seventy minutes to complete the task. If you have more time, you will need to adjust the suggested timings.

Interpreting topic, brainstorming, drafting contention and topic sentences	8–10 mins
Writing the introduction	5 mins
Writing three body paragraphs	3 x 15 or 16 mins = 45–48 mins
Writing the conclusion	5 mins
Editing and proofreading your work	4 mins

Writing introductions

A good introduction will:

- identify the text title, text type and creator
- show, by rewording the topic, that you understand it
- show your point of view on the topic by clearly stating your contention (for example, with a 'discuss' topic, indicating whether you agree completely, agree partly or disagree completely with the viewpoint expressed in the topic)
- include sentences (signposts) that indicate your main supporting points.

Here are some sentence starters that can be used in introductions.

- The author / director / playwright / poet considers the idea that ...
- ... (title of text) suggests that ...
- ... (title of text) explores the themes of ...
- While ... (title of text) suggests that ..., it also suggests that ...
- The author / director / playwright / poet uses ... (techniques) to convey the point that ...
- ... (title of text) shows ... (name of character) to be ... This is conveyed through ...

Writing body paragraphs

The body of the essay should contain at least three paragraphs. Write one paragraph for each of your main points. A good body paragraph will:

- contain a clear topic sentence
- include supporting evidence, such as quotations
- relate your response to the topic.

One useful way to structure your body paragraphs is the TEEL approach:

Topic sentence: In the first sentence, state a point in support of your position.

Evidence: Include a quotation or a paraphrase (a brief description of a speech or event from the text), or cite a specific example from the text to support the main point.

Explanation/Elaboration: Explain how the evidence supports the statement in your topic sentence.

Link: Clearly link the evidence back to the topic.



The TEEL structure is a useful starting point for writing essay paragraphs. There are other effective approaches and you should feel free to vary your approach, especially if you are a capable writer.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about planning an analytical text response.



Be concise. Often, students are tempted to think that *complicated* means *sophisticated*. This is generally not the case. Try to make the most sophisticated points you can in the simplest way possible, not the simplest points in the most complicated way. Compare these examples:

It is evidently possible that Jane Austen's implementation of ironic statements into her novels is an overt criticism of the functions of the society in which she finds herself. (Overly complex, difficult to follow)

Austen's irony provides a critique of her society. (Concise, accurate and clear)



Write an introduction and a body paragraph

- 1 Refer to the topic you explored in the activity on page 84. Write an introduction that includes the details of your text, your contention in response to the topic, and signposts for the main ideas you will explore in your essay.
- 2 Refer to the introduction you wrote above. Select one of the signposts to use as a body paragraph topic sentence. Write it here as a strong, clear statement:

- 3 Select evidence (such as direct quotations, detailed references to characters, setting, structure, ideas and values, and events from the plot) to support the contention of the topic sentence.

- 4 Write three or four sentences explaining the significance of the evidence, in relation to the topic sentence.

- 5 Next, write a sentence that links the main point of this paragraph to the topic. Do this by explaining how this paragraph supports your main argument.

Writing conclusions

A good conclusion will:

- consist of only one paragraph
- restate your contention and briefly summarise your main points
- not use exactly the same words as your introduction
- not introduce new points
- clearly answer the question.

Here are some sentence starters you can use for conclusions.

- In summary, it is apparent that ...
- The evidence suggests that ...
- In conclusion, it can be seen that ...
- As has been shown, ...
- The text demonstrates ...



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read an analytical text response to Alice Pung's *Unpolished Gem*.

Writing strategies

This section contains advice and tools for improving your essay writing.

Referring to the features of the text type

It is important to refer to the specific features of the text type you are writing about. For example, if you are writing about Clint Eastwood's film *Invictus*, use language such as 'close-up', 'diegetic sound' and 'scene'. If you are writing about Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, refer to stage directions, props and costumes. To ensure you have used appropriate metalanguage, try the following tactics.

- Replace words such as 'book' and 'text' with specific terms for your text type, such as 'novel' or 'play'.
- Replace the word 'writer' with 'playwright' if you are studying a play, or 'poet' if you are studying a collection of poetry.
- Check that each paragraph includes at least one specific term related to your text type.
- Ask yourself *how* the text's creator communicates each specific idea that you discuss in your body paragraphs. Think about the techniques they use and which features of the text help to convey this idea.

Using linking words

Using strong linking words will help your essay flow well. Try some of the examples below.

To express a similar point	To express an opposing point	To expand on a point	To express a logical progression in your argument
Similarly ...	In contrast ...	Furthermore ...	Therefore ...
Likewise ...	On the other hand ...	Moreover ...	As a result ...
In the same way ...	However ...	In addition ...	Consequently ...
Equally ...	Yet ...	For example ...	Thus ...
So, too, ...	While ...	For instance ...	For this reason ...
Besides ...	Despite this ...	What's more ...	In conclusion ...
	In comparison ...	Additionally ...	
	Nevertheless ...		



Incorporating quotations

Quotations from the text are an important form of evidence to support your interpretation. You should include at least one or two short quotes in every paragraph of your response. Remember the following points.

- Generally speaking, **the shorter the quotation, the better**. If you can remember only key words, paraphrase the rest and include the key words in the paraphrase.

In *The Women of Troy*, Hecuba describes the ‘force’ that rules the lives of the characters as ‘a madman dancing’.

- **Use square brackets if you need to modify part of a quotation** so that it fits into your sentence grammatically (for example, if you need to change a pronoun or the tense of a verb).

Cassandra swears vengeance on Agamemnon, vowing to destroy him and his family ‘in return for [her] father and brothers destroyed’. (The original quotation reads ‘in return for my father and brothers destroyed’.)

- **Use an ellipsis (three dots) in place of deleted words** if you want to shorten a quotation.

Talthybius says of Agamemnon that he ‘has let uncontrollable lust ... get the better of him’.

- **Avoid using the word ‘quotation’ or ‘quote’** as this can sound awkward. Instead, incorporate the quote naturally into your sentence.

The Chorus despairs that ‘the gods hate Troy’.

- **Avoid beginning a sentence with a quotation**. It is better to cite evidence after you have developed the point that the evidence supports.

Helen attempts to depict herself as an innocent victim of fate and of others’ actions when she argues that Hecuba created ‘all the trouble’ by giving birth to Paris.

Editing your analytical text response

Use the following checklist to edit your analysis. If there are any items you can’t tick, make the necessary changes before you submit your work.

- The introduction includes a clearly stated, relevant contention.
- The main contention or argument is evident throughout the essay.
- Each body paragraph contains a clear and relevant topic sentence.
- Each paragraph contains a link back to the topic.
- The conclusion reiterates the main argument.
- The conclusion clearly answers the question or addresses the topic.
- There are enough references to the text, including at least five direct quotations.
- Your vocabulary is varied and your word choices are precise.
- Words are spelled correctly throughout.
- The first-person ‘I’ is not used.



- » Linking terms have been used to show a logical development of ideas (e.g. 'in contrast', 'similarly', 'therefore').
- Sentence structures are varied, with some simple and some complex sentences.
- A serious tone and formal style (i.e. no colloquialisms or abbreviations, except in quotations) are used throughout.
- The present tense is used throughout.

Sample analytical text response

The following sample analytical essay responds to Euripides' play *Medea*.

Topic: 'Euripides' *Medea* reveals that excessive emotion can be a destructive force.' Do you agree?

In his play *Medea*, Euripides suggests that the powerful emotions at the core of human nature drive most people's actions. Individuals in the play, such as the protagonist Medea, are forced to live with the consequences of excessive emotion, which often cause conflict with the world and within themselves. Euripides alternates between sympathising with and questioning characters' actions to warn his audience that they should not allow their emotions to dominate over their reason. However, he does not entirely condemn passion, which he suggests may lead to some good. Through the character of Jason he also suggests that pure rationality can lead to equally terrible outcomes.

Medea's distressed reaction to Jason's infidelity demonstrates that extremes of emotion can certainly result in chaos and destruction. Medea's excessive despair is clear at the beginning of the play when the Nurse laments that 'everything has turned to hatred where love was once deepest', and says Medea is so depressed she is 'surrendering herself to anguish' rather than paying 'attention to the counsel of friends'. Through this, Euripides establishes the irrationality of Medea's emotions. When the Nurse follows her expression of pity for Medea with a warning that 'she is no ordinary woman', the audience is positioned to feel concern as this seems to foreshadow extreme actions that might result from Medea's agony. These worries are justified later in the play when, out of determination to make her husband 'pay for this suffering', Medea brutally murders Jason's new wife, his new father-in-law King Creon, and even her own children, to destroy any chance of Jason's future happiness. These deaths are blamed on Medea's 'embittered ... jealousy', highlighting the potential destruction that can be caused by someone blinded by rage. It is clear that Euripides is warning his audience of the dangers of such excess, as the Chorus comments that lost love can result in 'terrible ... anger ... almost beyond cure'. The Chorus also prays to Aphrodite, asking her to never fire her 'arrow poisoned with desire' because when 'passions come ... in

The 'Do you agree?' part of the question invites you to consider: What are the consequences of excessive emotion in *Medea*? Are these consequences always destructive? For whom? Are there other outcomes of excessive emotion? Can emotion sometimes serve a different purpose?

The introduction identifies the text's title, text type and author, and summarises the student's interpretation.

This contention indicates that the essay will partially agree with the statement in the topic. This approach usually leads to a more complex and thoughtful response than complete agreement.

Topic sentences should clearly outline an argument that both supports the contention and explicitly responds to the topic.

Phrases such as this help to indicate where you are interpreting the evidence in relation to the topic and improve the cohesion of your response.



strength beyond measure', this violent love results in 'neither ... glory nor greatness'. Thus, through the loss of innocent lives, Euripides warns that excessive emotions can cause havoc.

However, despite the damage inflicted as a result of Medea's excessive grief and rage, the strength of her emotion enables her to achieve her ultimate goal of retribution. This aim is the driving force that enables her to cope with her betrayal and assert herself, suggesting that excessive emotion can also be a pathway to healing and triumph. Had Medea 'calm[ed] down her savage temper' as the Chorus initially begs her to do, she would have suffered what she perceives as the greatest of wrongs, worse even than murder or infanticide – to become 'a laughing stock among Corinthians'. For Jason to betray her is a wound not only to herself as a woman and wife, but also to her heritage and legacy, which she values above anything else. Medea is a woman who descends from the gods and even her grandfather Helios, 'the sun', rewards her brutality with an escape to a better life. This example of *deus ex machina*, which serves to rescue Medea from her crimes, sends a message about the potential benefits of emotion-driven actions. Euripides suggests that without passion there can be no change. Medea already recognises the injustices faced by women and outsiders – 'the most unfortunate' in Grecian society – and it is her wild emotion that allows her to challenge the status quo with the aim of achieving a new way of living, 'protect[ed] from all hostile hands'. So, while it is true that Medea's extreme rage destroys lives and families, it also paves the way for justice in a world where equality is denied to people like her.

Interestingly, although reason is valued by Athenian society over emotion, Euripides also suggests that cold reason and logic can be just as destructive as irrational passion. Jason is the opposite of Medea's wanton rage, presenting a calm exterior to the audience. He counters Medea's passion with 'good reasons', which only serves to fuel her bitterness and fury. Jason represents the masculine ideals of this context – he is a privileged hero who embodies power and rationality. It is expected that he and the ideals he represents will triumph over Medea, a woman and a foreigner. Jason cannot empathise with his scorned wife because of his cold rationality, a quality that condemns him to an unheroic and ironic death 'as fitting for a coward', crushed by the *Argo*. Here, Euripides conveys the idea that taking an emotionless approach to difficult situations can result in destructive outcomes in a similar way to being driven by excessive emotions.

Hence, through Medea, Euripides explores the human tendency to act on impulse and in defence of one's own interests. These emotion-driven acts can certainly be destructive, but being guided purely by cold logic is also shown to be harmful. Although these reactions are natural, particularly in times of distress, Euripides appears to question the common preference for reason over emotion, and to advocate a balanced approach to life.

The last sentence of each body paragraph should clearly link the ideas explored in the paragraph to the contention stated in the introduction. This will help ensure your essay is cohesive and your argument is logical and relevant.

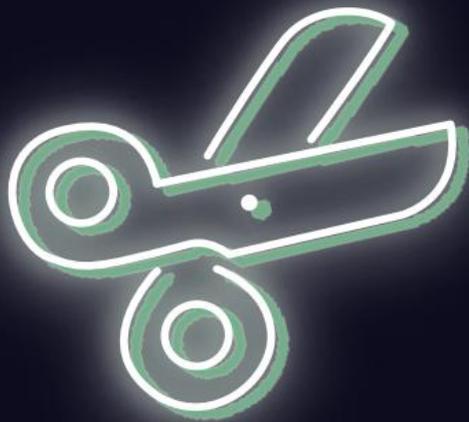
Using metalanguage associated with the text type – a play – demonstrates an understanding of genre and the way that a structural feature conveys meaning.

The explanation of an alternative interpretation of the topic supports both the topic sentence of this paragraph and the overall contention of the essay.

There are some good examples of specific and interesting vocabulary in the essay – for example, 'wanton'.

Here the student broadens the scope of the essay from a focus on interactions between characters to the wider context. This demonstrates an understanding of the text as a representation of a particular historical and social setting.

Finishing with a statement about the broader social message of the text can be an effective way to conclude as it summarises your interpretation in response to the topic.



Unit 1 Area of Study 2: Crafting texts

This area of study focuses on writing skills. You will read various mentor texts and study three of these in depth, to see how writers make choices to achieve particular purposes in different contexts, and to appeal to various audiences. You will then apply what you have learned to your own writing. The texts you study will probably focus on a key idea; in the texts you create, you can choose to explore this or other ideas.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view a table showing the outcome for Area of Study 2 in Unit 1 EAL, and the key knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate.

Audience, purpose, context and language

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Key elements of a written text
- » Writing for an audience
- » Writing for a purpose
- » Considering context
- » Looking at language

In Unit 1 Area of Study 2: Crafting texts, you will read, view and listen to a variety of texts and text extracts focused on a particular key idea. You will study three of these texts in depth. The purpose of studying these ‘mentor texts’ is to improve your understanding of how to write effectively in different forms, for different audiences and purposes.

This chapter focuses on some of the key factors that influence any piece of writing. These are all elements that you’ll need to consider as you examine the selected mentor texts and begin to craft your own pieces of writing. The chapter will explore what the elements are, how they can affect the content and style of a piece of writing, and how they affect each other. By developing an understanding of these elements of writing, you will be able to make informed and appropriate choices about your own writing. This chapter will also help with your analysis of the writing of others.

Key elements of a written text

While written texts can vary significantly in style and content, five broad factors apply no matter what the text is. These are all factors that a writer needs to consider before they begin writing. They are:

- **Form**
- **Language**
- **Audience**
- **Purpose**
- **Context**

A useful acronym to help you remember these elements is **FLAP+C**.



Specific forms – or text types – will be covered in detail in Chapter 13.

The table on the following page gives some more detail about the key elements of a written text.

Element	Definition	Examples
Form	The type of text: all texts have particular conventions	Novels, letters, opinion pieces, blogs, diaries, speeches
Language	The tone and choice of the words that are used	Vocabulary choices, the level of formality, sentence structure, punctuation
Audience	The person or people the text is written for	Young adults, people interested in a particular topic, the recipient of a letter, a school community
Purpose	The reason/s the text is written; what the writer aims to achieve	To express, to reflect, to explain, to argue, or a combination of purposes
Context	Factors, beliefs and values surrounding the writing and reading of the text	Historical context, physical context, cultural context, situational context

These aspects strongly influence each other. If you make changes to one of these features you will usually need to adjust others, too, as shown in the example below.

Element	Initial example	Changes	Impact
Context	A report is written about a football match between the city's two biggest teams – the Blues and the Reds. The report is published in the city's main newspaper.	The context is changed slightly →	A report is written about a football match between the city's two biggest teams – the Blues and the Reds. The report is published on a website for fans of the Blues.
Form	News report	News report	
Purpose	To recount a recent football match	To recount a recent football match	
Audience	Readers of the city's main newspaper	Fans of the Blues	The change in context results in a change in audience – the audience is now biased and favours one particular team.
Language	Relatively formal, some sport-specific terminology, limited use of biased language	Use of biased language, with praise of the Blues and negative language for the Reds Some informal or slang language More sport-specific terminology	The change in context and audience also changes the language, as fans of a team may use players' nicknames and colloquial language to describe the game. They are also likely to be knowledgeable about football.



Writing for an audience

The audience is *who* a text is aimed at. Depending on the particular text, the audience could be just one person, a small specific group, or thousands of people. Regardless of the size of the audience, when you craft a piece it is important to have a clear understanding of who you are writing for. Choices about other elements of the text, particularly the language, will be significantly influenced by the characteristics of the audience and the writer's relationship to them.

Remember that the audience for a text is never 'everyone', even when it is written for widespread publication, such as a novel or newspaper article. While newspapers have broad audiences, they still have aspects that are specific – for example, the *Herald Sun* and *The Age* are aimed at Victorian audiences, while *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph* target readers based in New South Wales.



Identify audience

- 1 Identify the possible audience for each of the below texts. Give as much information about the possible characteristics of the audience as you can. An example has been completed for you.

Text	Audience
A school newsletter	Members of the school community – mostly parents, but also students, staff and alumni (past pupils)
A picture book about numbers	
An opinion piece published on the website Mumsnet	
A review of the latest superhero film	
An email you have sent about your availability for a part-time job	
A chemistry textbook	

- 2 In pairs, discuss the clues you used to identify the potential audience of each piece.

Characteristics of an audience

Although an audience is made up of individuals, they have chosen to read, view or listen to the same text, so it is likely that they will share some characteristics. For example, they might share a hobby or interest, live in the same area or belong to the same age group. Identifying the characteristics of an audience can help you to select appropriate content and language to achieve your purpose – if the people that you are targeting feel as though the material has been written for them, it can help them connect better with the text.

The following are some common audience characteristics to consider when creating your text.

- **Age:** What is the general age range of the target audience? Can they be classed as teenagers, children, adults or the elderly?
- **Gender:** Consider whether the text is directed primarily at a particular gender. Or does it address different gender identities equally?
- **Background:** Consider cultural, racial and religious factors.
- **Location:** Where, geographically, is the target audience based? Is it an urban or rural area?
- **Interests:** What is the audience interested in? What are they potentially attracted to, or what might they want to know more about?
- **Existing experience or knowledge:** Does the audience already know things about the subject being discussed, or are readers learning about it for the first time? What other relevant experience may they have?

Each of these elements will affect the way that a text is shaped. For example, an article discussing technology use that is aimed at teenagers will be significantly different from an article on the same topic that is aimed at the elderly. Similarly, a text that is introducing people to the sport of tennis will be different to one that is aimed at longstanding fans of the sport.

A further aspect to consider is whether a relationship already exists between the author and the audience. If a relationship exists, the writer can draw on shared past experience, and their writing might be less formal. For example, an email to a close work colleague would likely be different from an email to a potential new employer.

The following two horror films provide an example of the significance of audience knowledge.



Halloween (1978) was one of the first horror films of its kind, featuring teenagers being attacked by a masked figure. This was a new type of film for audiences, so people were shocked by the events of the plot.



In 1996, *Scream* was released, and it also featured teenagers being attacked by a killer in a mask. By this time, audiences had seen many similar films, and the format had become a cliché. The filmmakers used the audience's existing knowledge of the genre for humour. For example, the 'rules for surviving a horror film' are explained by one of *Scream*'s main characters. These rules include never saying 'I'll be right back' and never drinking alcohol, and characters who do these things in the film end up dead.

The characters in *Scream* live in a world where horror films exist, in contrast to the characters in earlier movies such as *Halloween*.



Identify ways of addressing an audience

- 1 Read the following article published by the BBC (the UK national broadcaster), from their children's news program *Newsround*.

RoboKrill: The tiny swimming robot inspired by krill

Professor Monica Martinez Wilhelmus and her team of researchers at Brown University in the United States were inspired by the way that krill move in the ocean, and decided to try to recreate this in a robot.

Krill are tiny crustaceans – in the same class as crabs and lobsters – and can be found in all oceans on Earth.

They are a hugely important part of the food chain and many ocean creatures depend on them to survive.

Monica wanted to create a robot to study krill better, to help improve our knowledge of them.



A tiny robotic leg modelled on krill could help scientists to study underwater creatures and explore hard to reach parts of the ocean! / Santos et al.

AMAZING krill facts

- > There are around 85 known species of krill.
- > When they feel threatened, krill can use an escape method called lobstering – where they flick their tail and move backwards through the water rapidly, at around 10 to 27 body lengths per second!
- > There are around 125 million tons to 6 billion tons of krill in the waters around Antarctica alone!
- > During certain times of year, krill come together in swarms so big that they can be seen from space!
- > Blue whales eat A LOT of krill. About 4 tons a day – that's about the same as a fully-grown hippopotamus!



- » 2 Highlight words or phrases in the text that suggest that the article is aimed at an audience of children.
- 3 Rewrite two sentences for an educated adult audience.

Writing for a purpose

The purpose of a text is the reason it has been written. It relates to what the writer is trying to achieve by writing it. As you begin crafting your own pieces of writing, you need to be clear about the purpose of each piece. It is likely that you will produce several pieces of writing with different purposes.

While texts can differ significantly, they often have one of the following broad purposes:

- expressing
- reflecting
- explaining
- arguing
- hybrid modes – combining more than one purpose.

Purpose	Typical features	Examples
To express Aims to be enjoyable to read Encourages the reader to <i>feel</i> something (e.g. fear, excitement, pleasure)	Use of descriptive language Use of literary devices A clear narrative structure Character and plot development	Short stories, novels, plays
To reflect Examines or analyses past experience to see what has been learned from it	Often focuses on something small and specific Focuses more on what is learned from an experience, rather than the details of the event itself Uses a clear structure – introduction, development of ideas, resolution Language choices depend on the nature of the reflection	Memoir, personal writing, diary
To explain Provides information to the audience about something	Uses language that is clear and effective States the content in a factual and unbiased way Often contains facts, figures and examples	News reports, textbooks, 'how to' guides, scientific reports



<p>To argue Encourages the audience to support a point of view or opinion</p>	<p>Has a clear contention and supporting arguments Includes evidence to support points Uses persuasive argument and language strategies May use forceful and direct language</p>	<p>Opinion pieces, editorials, speeches</p>
<p>Hybrid text Has more than one purpose and incorporates features from those different types of purpose</p>	<p>Includes a blend of the features listed above, depending on what the hybrid purposes are</p>	<p>Reviews – to both inform and persuade Travel writing – often to entertain as well as inform</p>



Consider purpose

Consider the following texts, and identify the likely purpose of each.

- a** The koala is an Australian marsupial that is found in the south-eastern and eastern parts of the country. It lives in eucalyptus trees in native bushlands and forests, and eucalyptus leaves also form the diet of the koala. They can be difficult to spot in the wild as they spend most of their time in trees, and they sleep for up to eighteen hours per day. Deforestation and the impact of bushfires mean that koala numbers are decreasing, and the species is at risk of extinction in some areas.

Purpose: _____

- b** Breakfast – the most important meal of the day!
Eating breakfast improves mental and physical performance. This has been a well-known fact for many years, yet more than half of all Australians admit to missing breakfast at least once a week, with one-third skipping this vital meal three times a week. Why is this happening? Are we too busy commuting, getting the kids ready for school, or enjoying a few extra minutes of sleep? The time has come to change these bad habits. Make breakfast a non-negotiable part of your morning routine to set yourself up for a successful day.

Purpose: _____

- c** The morning of 4 June, 2022 started like any other Wednesday morning. I dragged myself out of bed at the last moment, scrambling to find my uniform, with Mum's angry voice ringing in my ears. If you'd have told me at that point that it'd be the day that changed my life forever, I'd never have believed you.

Purpose: _____

Considering context

Context refers to the external factors surrounding a text, and relates to the situation in which it is written. Writers and readers are influenced by the world around them and their own experiences, and these factors affect their writing and how it is interpreted by readers.

When writing your own pieces, you need to consider the situation in which you are writing, and how that might influence your work. For example, a student who has lived in Melbourne for their entire life would most likely write a very different reflection on Australian education from a student who has experienced schooling in different cities and countries.

Context needs to be considered in conjunction with purpose and audience to help you determine the most suitable material to use in your writing.

Types of context

Context can be grouped into four main categories: historical, physical, cultural and situational.

Historical context relates to the time period in which a text was written. Different times have different values, behaviours and expectations, and these are likely to be reflected in a text. Consider how attitudes to things such as gender expectations, sexuality, religion and marriage have changed significantly in recent times. Similar changes have occurred throughout history. Therefore, the way that an author from the nineteenth century, such as Jane Austen, writes about women and their experiences will be quite different from the way that a modern author such as Margaret Atwood or Zadie Smith writes about these subjects.



London during Jane Austen's time was very different from Zadie Smith's London.

Physical context refers to the physical setting or location in which the text takes place. Setting or physical context usually plays a significant role in novels and short stories, but it can also influence nonfiction texts. For example, a guide to growing rice in New South Wales is likely to be very different from one about rice-growing in Myanmar, and an article in a local newspaper might differ from one published in a national newspaper because the local paper doesn't need to describe to its readers familiar places or prominent community members.



Cultural context encompasses the expectations, beliefs and values of both the society represented in the text and the one in which the text is produced. As a writer, you need to be aware of the cultural norms of the audience you are writing for, in order to engage with them more successfully. Traditions, beliefs, religious views, gender expectations and social norms all vary between different cultures, and these are reflected in both the writing and reading of a text.

Situational context relates to the specific situation that has led to the text being produced, i.e. the background to the story. For example, a school might send one letter to parents to warn them of an increase in traffic accidents around the school, and another to announce that tickets to the school musical are now on sale. In both cases, the form, audience and general purpose (to inform) are the same, but the context is significantly different.



Compare contexts

- 1 Read the following two extracts that discuss the topic of marriage.

Extract 1

The secret to a harmonious marriage lies in the willingness of the wife to be amenable to the needs of the husband.

A good wife will not pester her husband, nor will she bore him with gossip or domestic trivialities. Instead, she will endeavour to be sweet and charming, always fulfilling his needs. If he wishes to complain, she should listen; if he seeks quiet, she should be silent. The home is her sphere, and she should strive to make it a haven for him, in which he need not lift a finger.

Extract 2

In the present day, a marriage between a man and a woman is a partnership of equals. It is common for both members of a couple to work full-time. This means that it is essential for domestic responsibilities to be shared evenly, too. While housework was once considered to be a woman's job, most women today would be horrified at the idea that they should work full-time and take care of the home by themselves. Men are just as capable of cleaning and cooking as women, and fortunately many modern husbands have realised this crucial fact.

- 2 What are the similarities and differences between the passages? What do you think could be different about the contexts in which they were written?





- 3 a Imagine that you are describing a typical school day in Australia to a much older relative who has never been to this country. Make notes below about differences between your own context and your relative's that will influence your text, and the information your relative will need in order to visualise life in an Australian school.

Relevant aspects of your context, e.g. knowledge of Australia, contemporary schooling experiences, understanding of English: _____

Relevant aspects of your relative's context, e.g. limited knowledge of Australia, schooling experiences in another country and another time period, lack of English vocabulary: _____

- b Write one or two paragraphs about your school day, explaining any important information for your relative.

Looking at language

Language relates to the words a writer uses and the way they are put together to create meaning. There are many variations within the English language, and they are used in different situations and for different audiences and purposes. As a writer, you need to carefully select the language that is best suited to your specific target audience and what you are trying to achieve.

Standard and non-standard register

Put simply, register refers to the level of formality of the language that is used. The three main registers are **formal**, **informal** and **standard**. (See page 165 for more information about the features of different language registers.)

We typically use different registers in different situations. This helps us to convey messages in language that is appropriate to the scenario and reflects our relationship with the audience. For example, the following three sentences all have the same basic meaning; however, they vary significantly in style and language.

Father was extremely fatigued subsequent to his prolonged expedition.

Dad was very tired after his lengthy journey.

The old man was bloody exhausted after his long trip.

The first sentence incorporates extremely formal and obscure vocabulary – so while a reader might be able to decode what is being said, it might appear strange and difficult to understand. If, however, we were reading a text from the nineteenth century, it might be less surprising, as the language and level of formality would be more appropriate to the style of writing that was common then.



The second sentence is the easiest to understand. It contains simple, commonly used vocabulary. It is relatively informal, particularly with the use of 'Dad', but the meaning would be clear to most readers.

The third sentence is the most informal, making use of slang vocabulary – 'the old man' and 'bloody'. This sentence would be inappropriate in many scenarios. It might be used in written dialogue, but such casual vocabulary would rarely be used in other written forms.



Understand register

- 1 Consider the following scenario. Your local council has decided to close the neighbourhood swimming pool. It will not be replaced, and people in your area will now have to travel to a different suburb to go swimming. You, a teenager, are really angry about this. You write two letters expressing your feelings about the situation. One is to the council, and the other is to your good friend, who has recently moved to another state.

Which of the below examples would be best suited to a letter to the council, and which should be included in the letter to your friend? Explain your answers.

Example phrase	Letter to council or to friend?
The proposed closure will have a detrimental effect	
I dunno what we'll do for swimming now	
It'll be rubbish when it shuts	
The council has failed to consider the limited transport options for younger people	
Is this really the best decision for the health of our community?	

- 2 Write the two letters regarding the closure of the swimming pool. You may use the above examples in your letters, and should use other appropriate language to express your feelings to the council and to your friend.

Vocabulary choices

Choosing vocabulary is one of the biggest challenges for a writer. English is a complex language, and it includes many words that have similar meanings – as you’ll have discovered if you’ve ever used a thesaurus! These words, however, are only *similar*, and the small differences between them can be quite significant. Words also often have associated meanings that you need to consider.

Connotations

As well as a dictionary definition, many words also have connotations – associated or additional meanings based on the ideas or feelings they evoke. By selecting words with relevant connotations, a writer can convey information succinctly. Consider the following examples.

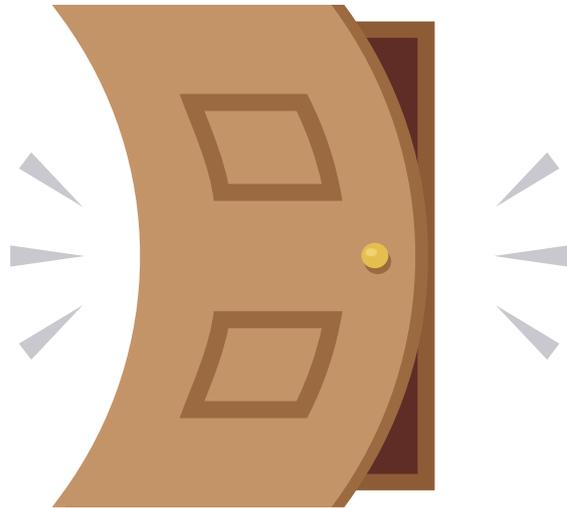
It was a **fairytale** wedding.

The word ‘fairytale’ suggests that the wedding was perfect, traditional and dreamlike. It also may suggest ideas of ‘happy ever after’, and possibly an extravagant ceremony.

Dante **shut** the door.

Dante **slammed** the door.

These two sentences both indicate the same basic action, but the verb choice in the second example gives us more information. The verb ‘shut’ only tells us about the action, whereas the use of ‘slammed’ implies that Dante is angry or annoyed, and gives the reader more information about the situation.



Cumulative effect

A cumulative effect is the overall effect produced by adding or combining elements. When choosing the vocabulary for a piece of writing, consider the cumulative effect of the words you use: the way chosen words work together to achieve a purpose. For example, you might use several words or phrases relating to the same emotion or imagery to paint a picture in the reader’s mind or to convey a particular idea.

The advertisement opposite attempts to persuade readers to use the advertiser’s services for birthday celebration events. Note how different elements of the language work together to produce a cumulative persuasive effect.



Adjectives used throughout the opening paragraph to create a cumulative impression of a calm and peaceful atmosphere.

Three similar verbs used to emphasise the relaxing nature of the activity.

Repetition of 'we can' and use of 'let us' emphasises that everything will be handled by the company – the guest won't need to do any work.

A Picture-Perfect Picnic

Bespoke Birthdays invite you to celebrate your special day in style. Join us for a magical experience on the beautiful banks of the River Yarra. Let us help you to relax in the balmy atmosphere of a warm summer's evening, recline next to the rippling water and indulge in the most decadent of picnics.

We can tailor your evening to suit your every need. We can cater for all tastes and culinary desires. We can take you away from everyday life and make you the centre of attention. Just sit back and let us take care of everything. All you need to do is relax.

We have an extensive range of food and beverage packages to select from, as well as a diverse selection of entertainment options – so, regardless of whether you'd like a string quartet or a DJ spinning the latest tunes, rest assured that we have something to suit:

If you're planning a celebration, and you want your dreams to come true, then Bespoke Birthdays is the perfect choice for you.

While the company is referred to actively ('we can'), the guest is positioned as passive throughout the passage, with an emphasis on their needs. This reinforces the idea that the guest will be the focus of the day and the company will do all the work. The possessive pronoun ('your') helps to make the advert personal, as it seems to be speaking directly to the reader.

Emphasis on choice and variety, suggesting that the company is suitable for everyone.



Annotate a text

Using the annotations for the text above as a model, write your own annotations about the effects of language choices in the following extracts from Simon Tong's memoir 'The Beat of a Different Drum', which was published in the collection *Growing Up Asian in Australia*, edited by Alice Pung.

I loved the pictures of dinosaurs and animals in the science books my uncle sent me from Taiwan, but I liked the pleasure of words even more. The rhythm of a mellifluous poem was honey on my tongue, the shape of a well-balanced duilian [a couplet in Chinese poetry] made me grin and grin. I won the school's essay competition every year; teachers marvelled at my vocabulary, rich and sophisticated for my age. I fantasised about growing up to become a writer.





... My mother decided it was prudent for us to join the new wave of diaspora and we fled to Australia ... The sum total of what I knew about Australia came to three things: it had an opera house, kangaroos and Australians spoke the dreaded English ...

My first day at school in Australia was stinking hot, the only kind of weather this desiccated country seemed to have ... I was on a different planet. Even the thick air, superheated, utterly bereft of moisture (but so clean!), felt alien on my skin.

Syntax and punctuation

As well as carefully choosing the vocabulary to create a text, you also need to consider the order you place the words in, and how you use punctuation. Small changes to word order and punctuation can have a big effect on the meaning and impact of a sentence, and therefore the text overall.

There are thirteen common punctuation marks in English, and they are used in different ways.

Punctuation mark	What it looks like	Main uses	Example
Full stop (known as a period in US English)	.	To indicate the end of a sentence In abbreviations of names and titles	The mouse ran outside.
Question mark	?	To end a sentence that is a direct question	Who broke the window?
Exclamation mark	!	At the end of a sentence; to help to indicate emotion or emphasis	Lucky visitors sometimes even get to see whales!
Comma	,	To indicate a pause in a sentence To separate a sentence into ideas or phrases	Sometimes, during the summer months, I enjoy reading in the garden.
Semicolon	;	To link two closely related clauses To separate long list items that include commas	Peter really liked cats; however, he was horribly allergic to them. She wore a red, green and yellow shirt; a long, flared black skirt; and scuffed white running shoes.



Colon	:	To introduce information that illustrates the point preceding the colon To link two clauses where the second clarifies or expands on the first	There are three colours in the French flag: red, blue and white.
Dash	– or —	En dash – to denote a range, such as in numbers or dates En or em dash — instead of a comma or colon	There were appalling bushfires in the summer of 2019–20. There was only one thing to do in a situation like this – run!
Hyphen	-	In compound words to connect two words	Ex-boyfriend Self-aware
Round brackets	()	To provide further information or detail	Shanina decided (after giving it much thought) that she would stay for lunch.
Square brackets	[]	For clarity, or to indicate that a quote has been adjusted	We went [to London] and really enjoyed ourselves.
Apostrophe	'	In contractions, to show that letters have been omitted To indicate possession	Cannot = can't Charlie's hat
Quotation marks	“ ” or ‘ ’	To denote dialogue, or text attributed to someone else	“Please stop,” she said. “I’m tired of hearing about it.”
Ellipsis	...	To indicate the omission of words that aren't necessary to the meaning To indicate a pause or hesitation	Today, after months of trying, we finally bought a house. ↓ Today ... we finally bought a house.

Punctuation plays an important role in conveying meaning. Missing or wrong punctuation can dramatically alter the intended meaning or make a text ambiguous or hard to understand.

Below are three sentences that consist of the same words but with different punctuation.

I did it.

This is an admission or confession of having done something.

I did it?

This sentence suggests uncertainty and that the speaker might be reluctant to take responsibility.

I did it!

This expresses delight or relief in having accomplished something.



Note the difference the placement of a hyphen can make:

Twenty five-dollar bills = \$100

Twenty-five dollar bills = \$25

Below are two versions of the same letter. The wording is identical in both texts, but the punctuation has been changed.

Dear John,

I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we're apart. I can be forever happy – will you let me be yours?

Jane

Dear John,

I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful people, who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me. For other men, I yearn. For you, I have no feelings whatsoever. When we're apart, I can be forever happy. Will you let me be?

Yours,

Jane



Work with word order and punctuation

- 1 Look at this sentence: She told him that she loved him.

The word 'only' can be added in numerous places in this sentence, changing the meaning.

Create two new sentences, placing the word 'only' in a different place each time. Explain the meaning of each new sentence. An example has been done for you.

- a **Only** she told him that she loved him – this suggests that the female subject of the sentence ('she') was the only person to admit to loving the man.

b _____

c _____

- 2 Change the punctuation in the following sentences to alter their meaning. You can add additional capital letters as necessary, and may use any punctuation mark.

- a I'm sorry you can't come with us.

- b That's all I've finished.

- 3 Are there different options for how the sentences above could be punctuated? Compare your answers with your classmates.

Text types

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Short stories
- » Podcasts
- » Recounts
- » Scripts
- » Memoirs, autobiographies and biographies
- » Diary and journal entries
- » Blog posts and opinion pieces
- » Essays
- » Speeches
- » Letters
- » Hybrid forms

In your study of English as an Additional Language, you will encounter a variety of text types. Different texts are suited to different audiences, contexts and purposes. For example, if you wanted to argue a point (to persuade) you may choose to write an opinion piece or a persuasive speech. If you wish to tell a story (to entertain) you might choose a short story or a script.

However, sometimes it is useful to combine text types or to use them in interesting ways. For example, when George Orwell wanted to write a political piece about the threat of communism, he could have written an opinion piece. Instead, Orwell chose to write a **fable**, *Animal Farm*, and communicating his message through this genre of fiction allowed him to both persuade and entertain readers.

For each of the text types covered in this chapter you will find examples, common features and conventions, and a discussion of how you might choose to write a piece using this text type. Chapter 14 provides more examples and advice on how to use the writing strategies of specific authors.

Short stories

Short stories often focus on a single incident and, unlike most full-length novels, the action might all take place in a single setting or scene. A short story will typically focus on just one character, whether it is told from that character's point of view (first person) or from the point of view of a narrator (third person).

Short stories make excellent mentor texts. Because they don't take long to read, it is possible to study a few short stories on a topic and look for similarities and differences. It is also sometimes easier to identify elements of an author's voice or style in a short story because the language is so condensed.

Features and conventions of short stories include the following.

- They are of limited length – usually 2000 – 20 000 words.
- They include a limited number of characters.
- They usually focus on only one plot.
- They are often based on a specific idea or mood.



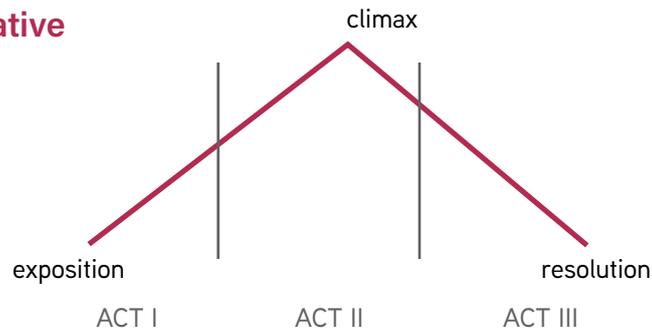
A story under 2000 words is known as **flash fiction** or **micro fiction**; a story of 20 000 to 70 000 words is a **novella** (shorter than a typical novel).

Narrative structures for short stories

Short stories do not need to follow the same narrative conventions as longer texts. However, they do have characters and usually a story arc or plot line, and a variety of narrative structures are possible.

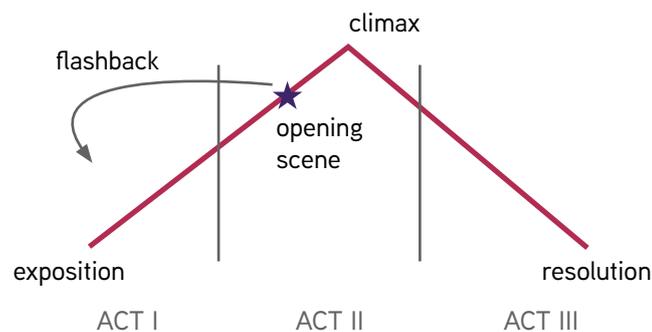
Linear/chronological narrative

A linear or chronological narrative is a traditional three-act or 'beginning-middle-end' structure. This kind of short story typically focuses on events in the life of one character.



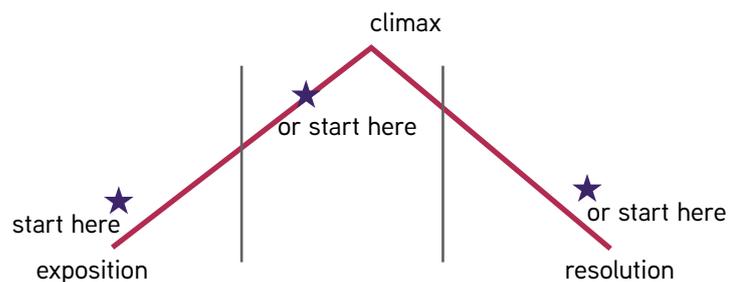
In medias res

'In medias res' means 'in the middle of things'. Short stories sometimes begin in the middle of the action, then a flashback, memory or conversation fills in some of the backstory.



Circular

A circular narrative can begin at any point, and often the first scene occurs at the point of climax or resolution of the plot rather than the exposition. By the end of the narrative, the character's journey has come full circle.



Frame narrative

In a frame narrative, the main story is 'framed' by another; that is, there is a 'story within a story'.

Abstract/no structure

Some short stories have no clear narrative structure, or the structure is quite abstract or strange. This category can include fragmented stories with jumps back and forth in time or memory, or stories that evoke a mood or feeling but have no obvious narrative arc.



Example: 'So Much Water So Close To Home'

The opening passage below is from Raymond Carver's short story 'So Much Water So Close To Home', about a wife who becomes concerned that her husband and his friends continued with their fishing trip after discovering the body of a woman in the water.

My husband eats with a good appetite. But I don't think he's really hungry. He chews, arms on the table, and stares at something across the room. He looks at me and looks away. He wipes his mouth on the napkin. He shrugs, and goes on eating.

"What are you staring at me for?" he says. "What is it?" he says and lays down his fork.

"Was I staring?" I say, and shake my head. The telephone rings.

"Don't answer it," he says.

"It might be your mother," I say.

"Watch and see," he says.

I pick up the receiver and listen. My husband stops eating.

"What did I tell you?" he says when I hang up. He starts to eat again. Then throws his napkin on his plate. He says, "Goddamn it, why can't people mind their own business? Tell me what I did wrong and I'll listen! I wasn't the only man there. We talked it over and we all decided. We couldn't just turn around. We were five miles from the car. I won't have you passing judgment. Do you hear?"

"You know," I say.

He says, "What do I know, Claire? Tell me what I'm supposed to know. I don't know anything except one thing." He gives me what he thinks is a meaningful look. "She was dead," he says. "And I'm as sorry as anyone else. But she was dead."

"That's the point," I say.

The story is narrated in the first person.

The husband's body language – staring, looking away, shrugging – suggest a tension or conflict between husband and wife.

Realistic dialogue reinforces the sense of an unspoken tension between the narrator and her husband.

The reader's suspicion that the couple are disagreeing about something is confirmed. Vague clues about the reason for the argument – 'I wasn't the only man there'; 'we all decided' – increase the reader's curiosity.

Establishes the high stakes of the conflict. The reader's interest is stoked and narrative tension increased by the gradual revelations about what happened, which the rest of the story explores.



Explore short stories

- 1 How does the opening to Carver's story demonstrate the technique of beginning in medias res? Circle or highlight any specific words or phrases you think help to establish the main idea or conflict of the story.

- 2 Use the opening of the story as your starting point. Finish the story by revealing details about the central conflict between the narrator and her husband, and the reasons for his strong reaction during their opening conversation. Begin by choosing a narrative structure from those on page 110 and plotting the main events of your story.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a short story planning activity.

Podcasts

A podcast is an audio text that is usually streamed or downloaded from a particular podcast website or app. Podcasts can be fiction or nonfiction, updated regularly or run as limited series. They often focus on a specific theme, idea or interest such as news, current affairs, sports or music, or they might be a serialised novel. Podcasts can range from simple and straightforward – such as a three-minute news item – to highly complex. For example, some fiction podcasts feature multiple voice-actors, music and sound effects, and follow a narrative structure just like a television series or novel.

To use podcasts as mentor texts, it might be helpful to get a transcript of the podcast, or to make your own. Some podcasts, such as interviews, do not follow a script. Even so, it is likely that the podcaster had a preprepared list of questions for the interviewee, and possible that the interviewee prepared their answers beforehand.



A transcript is a written reproduction or record of what was said in the podcast; a script is written beforehand to guide the speakers and includes directions for any music, sound effects, ad breaks and other common features.

If you choose to write a podcast script, you should create one episode of a podcast series. Your episode can be fiction – like an episode of a television show – or nonfiction. Whichever you choose, be sure to follow podcast conventions involving sound, music and production, as in the example opposite.

Features and conventions of podcasts include the following.

- The length can vary from very short to quite long, but each episode is usually no longer than one hour.
- They might be hosted by a single host or by multiple hosts.
- They are usually recorded in series or seasons.
- They often feature short sound effects called ‘stings’ (also called segues) to separate segments.
- They often feature recognisable music to introduce the podcast or a section of it.
- They are usually scripted or semi-scripted, then edited after recording to bring the separate parts (voice, music, sound effects and so on) together before being published.

Example: ‘What’s In A Name?’

The following text is a transcript of the start of an episode of the SBS *True Stories* podcast series. Cyrus Bezyan describes how he changed his name, hoping for a fresh start when he moved to a new high school in Year 11.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to hear the full episode.



[Opening music jingle and sound effects; spoken words include the program title SBS *True Stories* and the tagline 'Stories told by you']

Podcasts typically open with recognisable music and a consistent introduction from the podcast producer or main speaker.

Hi, my name is Cyrus Bezyan and this a true story from high school. It's called 'What's in a Name?'

Podcast hosts usually begin by introducing themselves and the topic of the episode. This episode features a single speaker.

<musical sting>

Brief music separates the introduction from the main program.

It was my first day at a new high school. Year 11, a fresh start. I crafted the perfect look – shirt untucked, sleeves rolled up, no tie, chunky silver chain hanging from my wrist. I was a new person – happier, edgier and cool. My new school binder displayed a curated selection of hip hop artists – Tupac, Mase, Puff Daddy. My bag hung off one shoulder. I walked with a strut that seemed more like a temporary limp, which in my opinion would make me look carefree. My pants were just the right measure of baggy. Baggy pants were cool back then. I was hyperaware of my look – a reinvention. What my soon-to-be new friends didn't know, however, was that I'd also changed my name.

Podcasts often have a more informal register than some other forms; as this podcast focuses on storytelling, the content is structured and rehearsed in a way that some more conversational podcasts are not.

Humour helps to build a rapport with the audience.



Explore podcasts

- 1 Visit a podcast website or app and listen to a few podcasts about subjects you're interested in. Make a list of the common features of the podcasts (e.g. segments, advertisements, music, taglines or catchphrases).

- 2 Write a short introduction (approximately 150 to 200 words) to a podcast script about a memorable school day of your own. Using the annotations on Bezyan's transcript as a model, annotate your script to identify key features of your podcast, such as your greeting, music and sound effects, as well as how your language choices aim to have particular effects on your audience.
- 3 Create a table like the one below to identify some advantages and disadvantages of choosing a podcast as the form for your written piece. Compare your response with a partner's.

Advantages	Disadvantages

Recounts

A recount is a story that tells of past events. Recounts may be fictional or nonfictional and can be written in a variety of forms.

Recounts can be as simple as one person telling a story to another, like telling a friend about something that happened on your holiday. They can also be more formal, such as police or court reports, witness statements and pieces of journalism. The main purpose of this kind of written recount is to give clear details of an event or situation.

Recounts can also be personal and reflective. They offer one person's perspective on a particular event or moment in time. This means they are often written in the first person. An exception to this is a recount recorded on behalf of someone else, such as a police officer taking a witness statement, or a journalist writing about another person's experience.

Features and conventions of recounts include the following.

- They tell a story of an event in the past.
- They can be written in a variety of forms, such as a story, a report or a piece of journalism.
- They are often written in the first person.
- They focus on providing clear details of the event, but also include reflection on particular feelings associated with it.

Example: 'A Metropolis of Fishes'

The following extract is from Australian writer Zoë Norton Lodge's 'A Metropolis of Fishes', which recounts getting her first pet, and is published in her autobiographical collection *Almost Sincerely*.



The announcement that now, after years of solitude, I could get a fish, came at dinner the night before. We were in the dining room, on one of the rare occasions that dinner had moved away from the lounge room and into this other place where Nicky Buckley and Tony Barber were a mere muted glow from the telly in the kitchen. Mama and Dad sat together opposite me. Dad was wearing his familiar outfit of suit pants and belt, slippers, singlet and waistcoat. His face was an anxious furrow which was slowly courting a more relaxed sheen of Chardonnay-sweat. Mamma was fierce in her I-work-at-home-but-I'm-ready-for-anything-wear which included giant cork heels with gold straps that criss-crossed all the way up her calves, a fitted houndstooth skirt and bright orange blouse to match her amber earrings and necklace set. All tied together with a big gold belt.

— The memory of getting one's first pet is relatable for many readers.

Reference to celebrities of the time establishes the 1980s context; mention of the dining and lounge rooms suggest a suburban home setting.

The descriptions are vivid and evocative, more like creative writing than a formal essay.



They sat opposite me, observing with a measure of concern as I ate at double speed, decorating my part of the table with mincemeat and soggy risoni, enthusiastic, was I, to the point of mild fetishism, about pasta.

‘Zoë,’ said Dad, ‘Zoë, stop eating for a minute.’

I stopped chewing, leaving a chipmunk’s stash of pasta gunk and meat in each of my cheeks.

‘Yeah?’ I ventured through the mush.

‘We’ve decided that you can get a fish.’

My eyes widened to match my cheeks and I gasped, expelling dinner everywhere. So this was happiness.

The essay features dialogue between Norton Lodge and her parents, again like a piece of creative writing.

Though the experience of getting a fish is comparatively common and ordinary, Norton Lodge establishes the high stakes for the narrator, the child version of herself.



Explore recounts

- 1 Identify three important moments from your own life which you could write a recount about in the style of Zoë Norton Lodge. For each moment, write a brief description of what happened.

Moment 1: _____

Moment 2: _____

Moment 3: _____

- 2 Norton Lodge uses vivid, evocative descriptions. Choose one moment from question 1 and write three vivid descriptions associated with that moment.

Description 1: _____

Description 2: _____

Description 3: _____

- 3 Clarity is important in recounts. Complete the planning for your own recount by writing notes on who else was involved, and when, where and why the event took place. Make notes about your feelings at each point, too.

Scripts

A script is the written ‘instructions’ for a play, movie, television series or other audio or audiovisual performance. Scripts generally include more than just the spoken words. They can also include directions to the actors on how to perform, and information about the set design, sound and music. (See pages 112–13 for more information on podcast scripts.)

Scripts follow precise formatting and rules. Different industries have different rules but they have some features in common. For example, dialogue needs to be separated from stage directions. Writing a script will require you to imagine what the scene will look and sound like when it is performed.

Features and conventions of scripts include the following.

- They use specific formatting, such as italics, capital letters and centred or indented lines, for specific purposes.
- They include stage directions, and information about music, sound, props and so on.
- They may include an initial short synopsis of the scene or a description of the mood.
- They must be easy to read and understand.

Example: *Bridge Street Secondary*

This fictional script for an episode of a television series set in a secondary school provides an example of how to format a script for a television show. Movies use similar conventions.

INT. GENERIC CLASSROOM. TABLES IN ROWS – DURING LESSON.

The setting is capitalised. INT. stands for 'interior' – an inside scene. Outside scenes are EXT. (exterior).

Carla Jones, tapping her pencil on the desk, stares out of the window. Mr Mitchell is droning in the background about statistics.

Stage directions are written in normal font, aligned to the left.

CARLA (V.O.)

Character names are centred. Voice-overs (V.O.) may be presented in italics and dialogue in regular font.

The day started badly and got worse. How I made it this far – all the way to fifth period maths – I'll never know. I should have just called it quits at recess.

Mr Mitchell notices Carla staring out of the window and moves to stand next to her desk, still talking about statistics.

MR MITCHELL

... and with the application of probability theory, an incredibly important branch of mathematics, we find – sorry, Ms Jones, am I keeping you up?

CARLA

Hmm? Oh, sorry! No, I was just ...

The dialogue in film and television is usually supposed to be realistic, so speeches are often short and broken by interruptions.

MR MITCHELL

Just appreciating the view of the carpark?

CARLA (V.O.)

Great. Just what I need. A burst of the classic Mitchell sarcasm to snap me back to reality.



Explore scripts

- 1 Write approximately 200 to 300 words continuing the script for the episode of *Bridge Street Secondary*. Introduce at least one new character and a conflict that the episode will focus on.
- 2 Choose an issue or idea you have been thinking about. Brainstorm ways to write about the issue in a script format, such as a television episode, a scene from a movie or a radio play.

- 3 Draw up a table with the following headings to make notes about the various aspects you need to consider when writing your script.

What happens in the scene	Setting/s (including set design)	Characters (including their moods, attitudes, manners of speaking etc.)	Costumes/ Props	Music / Sound effects	Lighting

- 4 Choose one of the formats you brainstormed in question 2 and write a script of 600 to 800 words, including directions.

Memoirs, autobiographies and biographies

Memoirs and autobiographies are written by the author about their own life. A biography is the story of a person's life written by someone else.

Memoirs and autobiographies are personal and reflective texts. They give insight into a person's life either by focusing on a pivotal, important moment or by covering a period of time, usually starting in childhood and working towards the point of writing.

Biographies are produced through extensive research and – if possible – interviews with the subject. If the subject is no longer alive, the biographer might rely on primary sources such as letters and diary entries, and secondary sources such as records of interviews with friends, family and colleagues of the subject.

Memoirs and biographies give writers an opportunity to take an angle or explore a perspective on an issue or idea. Because your own written texts will not be as long as a book, if you choose to write a memoir or biographical piece you will need to select a particular moment or period from the subject's life. If you are writing about your own life, you should focus on only the most significant events or situations.

Features and conventions of memoirs, autobiographies and biographies include the following.

- They are written *by* the subject (memoir/autobiography) or *about* the subject (biography).
- They focus on one important event or situation, or a particular period of time (memoir) or on a person's whole life (autobiography/biography).
- They are written in a personal, intimate style, though biographies tend to be more formal and detached.
- They reveal a compelling insight or a broader idea about the 'theme' of a person's life.
- They might provide a personal perspective on or insight into a specific industry or profession, a particular culture or sector of society, an event or a moment in time.



It is better to explore a single moment or a few moments in greater depth than too many in less depth.

Example: *Unpolished Gem*

The following extract is from Alice Pung's memoir *Unpolished Gem*.

Introduction

In 1980, my father, mother, grandmother, and Auntie Kieu arrived in Australia by plane. They arrived with one suitcase. There was nothing in the suitcase, and the only person who was carrying a heavy load was my mother, because she was eight months pregnant with me.

The opening establishes the time and main place the text is set.

First-person voice ('me') is used.

My parents were both born in Cambodia, a Southeast Asian country less than half the size of California and bordered by Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. In 1953, Cambodia gained independence after nearly one hundred years of French colonial rule. My parents lived in the capital, Phnom Penh. During the 1960s and 1970s, Phnom Penh was a beautiful city, with buildings left over from the colonial era, and under the rule of a prince.

In the Vietnam War, Cambodia became part of the battlefield. More bombs were dropped on Cambodia by American B-52 bombers than were dropped on Germany during World War II, in an effort to destroy suspected North Vietnamese supply lines.

...

My family walked by foot from Cambodia, across Vietnam, to Thailand. There, they settled in a refugee camp in Thailand for one long, hot year, during which I was conceived. So I was manufactured in Thailand but assembled in Australia. I was born here a month after my parents arrived, and I grew up in the working-class suburbs of Braybrook and Footscray, in the Australian state of Victoria.

Humorous, intimate tone helps to establish a connection with readers.



Explore autobiographical and biographical texts

- 1 Pung's memoir is personal and focuses on her own family. On the other hand, a biography is written about another person, who might not know the writer and might even have died long before the biography was written. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches? You can create a table like the one below to record your thoughts.

Text type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Memoir		
Biography		

- 2 Based on these advantages and disadvantages and your own personal interest, choose to write either a memoir about yourself or a biography of another person. Research your subject and record your findings in a document that includes relevant background and perspectives on your topic such as:
 - key events in the subject's life
 - key people who had an impact in the subject's life
 - interviews with people who know/knew the subject
 - major world events that had an impact on the subject.
- 3 Write a short biography or a memoir that focuses on one important event in your subject's life (between 600 and 800 words).

Diary and journal entries

Diaries and journals are highly reflective forms of writing. They are autobiographical but, unlike autobiographies or memoirs, they are not necessarily about the most important events in a person's life. Diary entries often focus on ordinary, everyday events and situations but they reveal aspects of a person's life and thoughts that are deeply personal.

Diaries might be nonfiction – such as *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank – or fictional, such as the popular children's series *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney and Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (which is based on Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*).

Diaries can be used as mentor texts in a variety of ways. You may choose to write a diary or journal entry from the point of view of a famous or important person related to the idea you are writing about. You could also include a short diary entry within a longer creative piece, such as a diary entry by a character in a short story. Because diary entries are personal, they are ideal for providing insight into a character's thoughts and feelings.

Although diary entries can cover ordinary events, if you choose to write one as a creative piece, you should focus on an important moment or period in your protagonist's life in order to craft a compelling narrative.

Features and conventions of diaries and journals include the following.

- They are highly personal and reflective, expressing the writer's inner thoughts and feelings.
- They are written in first person (using 'I', 'me', 'my' etc.).
- They are often 'unfiltered' because the only intended audience is the writer.
- They generally use informal language, sometimes including invented words or shorthand.

Example: entry from the diary of Dawid Sierakowiak

The following extract is from a diary kept by a fifteen-year-old boy during World War II. The diary was published as a book titled *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*.

Thursday. 31. VIII. Lodz.

Today at one o'clock in the morning they sounded the alarm, but after some time it went silent. About 2 a.m. we were told to lie down to sleep. I lay down in my clothes on the tuffet and dozed for two hours. I then decided to risk it and changed out of my clothes and got into bed. There were no further alarms. In the morning Mama brought thick paper, which we stuck over the air vents and secured with rags—a sort of defense against any gas. Air raid sirens are constant.

Starts with the date and, often, the place where the diary entry is written. (Lodz is a city in Poland.)

Describes the events of the day, including both significant events ('they sounded the alarm') and mundane ones ('dozed for two hours').

Refers to other people as they would be addressed in real life ('Mama').



Explore diary entries

- 1 Keep a diary for one week. At the end of each day, write a summary of your actions, thoughts and feelings from the day.
- 2 At the end of the week, review the diary and select the two or three most important or interesting parts. Expand these parts into longer entries, adding more descriptive details.
- 3 'Fictionalise' your diary entries: add imaginary details and descriptions, embellish characters and situations and turn your diary entries into a piece of fiction (between 600 and 800 words).

Blog posts and opinion pieces

A blog is a kind of journal on the web. Many news sites include blogs that present opinions from regular columnists and freelance writers.

Opinion pieces are generally written by someone who is passionate about the issue and has a personal or professional interest, or both. Opinion pieces aim to persuade readers to think or feel a certain way about a current issue. Some publications will indicate if the writer has a particular bias or perspective on the issue, for example because of where they work.



Others will not, and readers will need to consider for themselves whether there might be biases. Opinion pieces will include persuasive strategies and language, and the writer will use evidence to support their arguments. As well as containing text, blog posts and opinion pieces can include embedded multimedia (such as pictures and video).

Blog posts and opinion pieces make effective mentor texts since they are often about the same length as the pieces you will need to write, and they tend to focus on an issue or idea, as your own writing is likely to do.

Features and conventions of blog posts include the following.

- Their average length is 700 to 1000 words, though some are much longer.
- They often use conventions of traditional journalism, such as a ‘hook’ (something that grabs the audience’s attention) or engaging opening, and mostly short, digestible paragraphs.
- They may have an informal, approachable tone and style.
- They are closely shaped by the writer’s awareness of their particular audience, with arguments and language carefully chosen to appeal to that audience.

Example: ‘Smacking your child is unacceptable’

The following extract is from an opinion piece by Susie O’Brien published on the *Herald Sun* news website.

‘Smacking your child is unacceptable’

You can’t hit your partner or your pet, so why should it be acceptable for parents to hit their children? writes Susie O’Brien

Attention-grabbing headline declares the writer’s main contention.

Includes a subheading and by-line.



Embedded video takes readers to a television show segment in which the writer debates smacking.

I welcome new analysis showing smacking should be outlawed in Australia because condoning it makes it difficult to identify abusive parents.

Includes expert opinion and evidence to support the writer’s opinion.

The argument, put by Australian QC Felicity Gerry, among others, is that we should join 49 other countries and ban all corporal punishment of children.

Inclusive language (‘we’) creates a sense of shared values with the audience.

Alarming,ly, this research concludes that allowing “lawful chastisement” keeps abuse hidden.

...



» I still can't believe that in this day and age anyone is defending the right of a parent to smack a child.

I am not saying that any parent who lightly taps a child should be hauled off before a magistrate, but I do think it's time people in this country take a much harder line on children's smacking:

Tone is emotive and the first person ('I') is frequently used.

What happens when slapping lightly stops being an effective deterrent? Do you slap a little harder the next time, and the next, and the next?



Explore blogs and opinion pieces

- 1 Brainstorm a list of issues you are passionate about and that might be suitable topics for an opinion piece or a blog post.

- 2 Choose one of the issues you identified in question 1. Use the following template to plan an opinion piece or blog post.

Contention	Reason 1	Reason 2	Reason 3	Relevant image	Other design features or interactive content (e.g. banners, links to videos or other websites or articles, sound)

- 3 Write an opinion piece or blog post of between 600 and 800 words.

Essays

The essays and responses you usually write for school focus on a topic you are studying and typically have an introduction, several body paragraphs and a conclusion. But essays can be written about a wide variety of subjects and in a wide range of styles.

Essays can fall into a broader category of writing called **creative nonfiction**. In creative nonfiction, writers blend the features of nonfiction – such as research, evidence and facts, compelling arguments and a focus on real-world issues – with elements of creative writing, such as evocative and rich descriptions, figurative language, complex characters and compelling narratives.

When you explore essays as mentor texts, you will see a variety of styles and structures that often go beyond the familiar 'introduction, three body paragraphs, conclusion' structure. But all will show the writer's deep interest in the topic, evidence of research, and imaginative and entertaining writing.

If you choose to write a creative nonfiction essay you will need a compelling topic to write about, and the ability to blend elements of creative writing into your response.



Features and conventions of essays include the following.

- They are based on research, facts and evidence.
- They are longer than other forms of journalism, such as editorials.
- They are reasonably formal in register.
- They contain elements of creative writing, such as figurative language, vivid characterisation and interesting word choices.
- They reflect on important issues.

Example: ‘Science inspires, so don’t let art rule your head’

Read the following extract from an essay by Australian comedian and performer Tim Minchin about the false divide between art and science. The essay was the foreword to *The Best Australian Science Writing 2013* and also published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.



Tim Minchin.

At the heart of some artists’ anti-scientific world view is the suspicion science is unromantic. The beauty of the human form is best revealed with charcoal, not with a scalpel. Love should be expressed in a sonnet, not measured with an MRI. A sunset may be photographed or painted or reflected in song, but getting excited by its rate of fusion or the fact it represents pretty much all the mass in the solar system is seen as somehow unpoetic.

...

Science is not a bunch of facts. Scientists are not people trying to be prescriptive or authoritative. Science is simply the word we use to describe a method of organising our curiosity. It’s easier, at a dinner party, to say “science” than to say “the incremental acquisition of understanding through observation, humbled by an acute awareness of our tendency towards bias”. Douglas Adams said: “I’d take the awe of understanding over the awe of ignorance any day.”

Science is not the opposite of art, nor the opposite of spirituality – whatever that is – and you don’t have to deny scientific knowledge in order to make beautiful things. On the contrary, great science writing is the art of communicating that “awe of understanding”, so that we readers can revel in the beauty of a deeper knowledge of our world.

Art and science feed off each other, need each other, are each other. There is no conflict between art and science: only the wide-eyed pursuit of cool ideas.

Essays are often written about issues that are personally important to the author. As a writer, performer and comedian, Minchin works in a creative field but he is also an advocate of science.

Though the topic and the writer’s contention are serious, the writing has a playful and humorous tone, helping to appeal to a wide audience.

Language becomes more lyrical as Minchin builds to a strong, heartfelt conclusion.



Explore essays

- 1 An essay reflects the writer's personal insights. Minchin writes about a topic he is passionate about: the fact that many people think of art and science as being opposites, while he believes 'there is no conflict' between them. Brainstorm some important passions or strongly held ideas of your own that you could write an essay about.
- 2 Highlight or annotate the elements of creative writing you see in Minchin's essay: for example, figurative and descriptive language, repetition and evocative vocabulary choices.
- 3 Choose one of the topics from question 1 and write an outline for an essay, using the template below.

	Topic sentence	Examples and evidence
Paragraph 1		
Paragraph 2		
Paragraph 3		
Paragraph 4		

Speeches

A speech can be a highly persuasive form of text, as well as entertaining and informative. The best speeches draw on the audience's experiences and emotions to establish a close connection with the speaker. Speakers might use visual aids such as slides, photos or short videos, but the power of the speech relies mostly on the written text itself.

To write a speech, you will need to research your topic and develop an angle or approach that will be both entertaining and compelling. Speeches work best when you have strong feelings and a good amount of background knowledge about the topic.

Speeches are designed to be delivered orally. They should be written in a way that makes them clear and powerful when spoken aloud – for example, by using short, impactful sentences and repetition.



The Rule of Three refers to grouping ideas in a trio, as in 'I came, I saw, I conquered'. This is a common form of repetition used in persuasive writing and speeches.

Remember that speakers will vary their pace and intonation. Including features such as rhetorical questions will help you to achieve this. You might even indicate in the written script some instructions on how the speech should be delivered – where there should be a pause, for instance, or when a more urgent tone should be used.



Features and conventions of speeches include the following.

- Their length can vary from a few minutes to more than an hour.
- They are written to be clear and compelling when spoken aloud.
- They often include persuasive techniques and appeals (see Chapter 17).
- They focus on a topic the speaker feels strongly about.
- The script may indicate tone, pitch and other notes about style of delivery.

Example: Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize speech

The following excerpt is from Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize lecture, given when she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

I have found that people describe me in many different ways.

Some people call me the girl who was shot by the Taliban.

And some, the girl who fought for her rights.

Some people call me a "Nobel Laureate" now.

However, my brothers still call me that annoying bossy sister. As far as I know, I am just a committed and even stubborn person who wants to see every child getting quality education, who wants to see women having equal rights and who wants peace in every corner of the world.

Education is one of the blessings of life – and one of its necessities. That has been my experience during the 17 years of my life. In my paradise home, Swat, I always loved learning and discovering new things.

I remember when my friends and I would decorate our hands with henna on special occasions. And instead of drawing flowers and patterns we would paint our hands with mathematical formulas and equations.

We had a thirst for education, because our future was right there in that classroom.

Repetition is used throughout the speech, e.g. 'some people call me ...'

This anecdote helps to make the speaker relatable, and provides a moment of humour in a serious speech.

The Rule of Three is used in the repeated phrase 'who wants'.

The move from the personal to the broader theme of education marks the main point of the speech: education is powerful.

Yousafzai shifts back and forth between personal stories and broader arguments, sustaining her relatable persona.

Repeating the personal pronoun 'we' reinforces the feelings of friendship and community.

Yousafzai also appeals to strong emotions such as love and pride; these emotional appeals emphasise the positive effects of education.



Explore speeches

- 1 Malala Yousafzai's speech focuses on the importance of education, and she uses personal stories about her own love of education throughout. Identify a subject or idea that you feel strongly about, and identify **three** personal stories that relate to it.

Main idea: _____

Story 1: _____

Story 2: _____

Story 3: _____





- 2 Yousafzai uses repetition to reinforce her central point. Write three examples of repeated ideas or phrases you could use in your speech.

- 3 Review the persuasive techniques in Chapter 17. Plan your speech, making a note of where you will use various techniques.

Letters

Letters are written with a specific audience (the recipient) in mind: a friend, a loved one, a colleague, or perhaps the editor and readers of a newspaper or magazine. They generally begin with a greeting, such as ‘Dear ...’ or ‘To whom it may concern’, followed by an outline of the writer’s intent. Personal letters to a friend or family member might recount recent events and share intimate thoughts and feelings as a way of staying connected. In a letter to the editor or to a public figure or organisation, the writer might give their opinion on an important issue.

Letters used as mentor texts should not be too simplistic or shallow. They should show some evidence of thoughtful reflection on an idea or issue. For your own text, you might consider writing a series of letters between correspondents, or including a letter at the end of a longer article such as an editorial or feature piece. A comment on a blog or other digital text might also be considered a ‘letter’, provided it is substantial enough.

Features and conventions of letters include the following.

- They address a specific audience, often one individual.
- They are often personal, revealing the thoughts and feelings of the author.
- They can be informal (a personal letter) or formal (e.g. a letter of resignation to an employer).
- They are typically structured as a series of short paragraphs.
- They can be part of a series of back-and-forth correspondence.

Example: *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

Stephen Chbosky’s novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is written as a series of letters from the protagonist Charlie to an unnamed friend. Fifteen-year-old Charlie writes about his struggles with mental illness, fitting in, friends and family. The following extract is from his final letter.

I don't know if I will have the time to write any more letters because I might be too busy trying to participate. So if this does end up being the last letter, I just want you to know that I was in a bad place before I started high school and you helped me.

— Language is direct and intimate.



Even if you didn't know what I was talking about or know someone who's gone through it. You made me not feel alone.

Recipient is addressed directly as 'you'.

Because I know there are people who say all these things don't happen. And there are people who forget what it's like to be sixteen when they turn seventeen. And know these will all be stories someday and our pictures will become old photographs and we'll all become somebody's mom or dad. But right now these moments are not stories.

Paragraphs are mostly short.

This is happening. I am here and I am looking at her and she is so beautiful. I can see it. This one moment when you know you're not a sad story, you are alive. And you stand up and see the lights on buildings and everything that makes you wonder, when you were listening to that song on that drive with the people you love most in this world.

Charlie confides his personal thoughts and feelings, using inclusive language that reflects his close relationship with the recipient.

And in this moment, I swear, we are infinite.

Language becomes more lyrical and inspiring, ending on a hopeful note.



Explore letters

- 1 Charlie's letter is highly personal and focused on his feelings. Think of an individual you could address in a letter expressing your thoughts and feelings. This is an imaginative exercise so it could be someone you know well, a public figure you admire or even a literary character. Alternatively, invent a fictional persona to write the letter and the character they would likely confide in.

Letter writer: _____

Recipient: _____

- 2 Choose a particular event, situation or important idea that will be the focus of your letter.

Focus: _____

- 3 Write your letter, then write a reply from the recipient of the letter. Use evocative language and explore key thoughts and feelings connected to the main idea. Aim for between 600 and 800 words in total.

Hybrid forms

Hybrid texts blend one or more forms together to create an interesting or unique style. For example, a hybrid text made up of a diary entry and a blog post may contain the personal, reflective language of a diary but be written with the understanding that the audience of online readers will 'like' and 'share' the text. Often, texts might also have more than one purpose – for example, they might aim both to explain an idea and to reflect on its impact. Using the text types discussed in this chapter, here are a few examples of hybrid texts you could use in your own writing.

- A podcast episode which is a self-contained short story
- A recount told in a letter



- » • A script for a televised speech
- A blog post presented as a diary entry
- A memoir read aloud as a podcast episode
- An essay written for a blog
- An opinion piece contained within a short story (a frame narrative)
- A biography presented as a long-form essay on a blog.

Features and conventions of hybrid texts include the following.

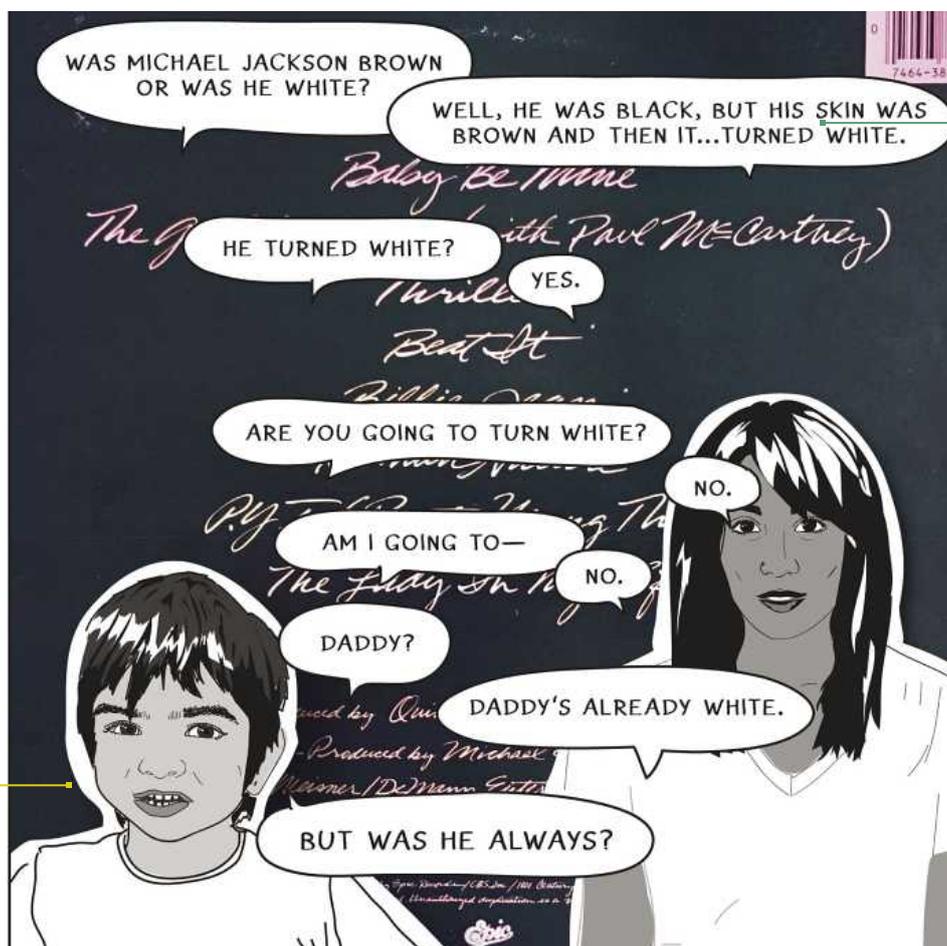
- They blend together the conventions of two or more text types.
- They might combine genres as well as forms.
- They may aim to achieve more than one purpose.
- They are often deliberately constructed to be unique or surprising.

Example: *Good Talk*

Good Talk by Mira Jacob is a graphic memoir told in conversations. It focuses on issues of race and identity and was inspired partly by the questions about these issues from Jacob's six-year-old son, who is Indian and Jewish. The extract below is part of a conversation sparked by Jacob's son's 'obsession' with singer Michael Jackson.

Dialogue is realistic, with sentence fragments and interruptions.

Characters' facial expressions are neutral despite the serious topic they are discussing, reinforcing the ordinariness and naturalness of the child's questions.



The mother's hesitation suggests that she finds the topic of the conversation challenging.

The questions the child asks his mother suggest his close relationship with her and his intense curiosity about colour and racial identity.

Background image is of a Michael Jackson album cover, reinforcing the singer's dominant presence in the child's life.



Explore hybrid texts

- 1 Identify two possible purposes of *Good Talk*.

- 2 Complete the table below, identifying features of two different text types Jacob draws on in her hybrid text.

Text type	Features
Comic book	
Memoir	

- 3 Select one feature you identified above and explain how you think it helps Jacob to explore serious issues in an accessible and relatable way.

- 4 Think about a hybrid text you have read, viewed or listened to. Make notes on the way in which this text uses features of more than one form.

- 5 Think of an idea or issue you have been studying. Which two or more text types could you blend to make a hybrid text about it?

- 6 Make notes in the table below to plan a hybrid text of between 600 and 800 words.

Idea you want to explore	
Two text types you will combine	
Features of text type 1 you will use	
Features of text type 2 you will use	

- 7 Write the first 200 words of your hybrid text.

Responding to key ideas and mentor texts

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Studying a key idea
- » Writing about family
- » Writing about travel
- » Writing about events that shape us

Two important aspects of this area of study are **key ideas** and **mentor texts**. A 'key idea', in this area of study, is a broad concept to help frame and support your writing. You will study a variety of texts related to the key idea, and in your own writing you might choose to draw on insights you gain from reflecting on the key idea.

Studying a key idea

This chapter covers three sample key ideas with annotated examples of mentor texts, and prompts for producing your own writing. Use these in combination with other mentor texts provided by your teacher, or ones you find for yourself. The broader the range of mentor texts you use, the more likely it is that you will be able to craft a well-rounded and engaging text.

The mentor texts provided by your teacher are intended to help inspire and influence your writing. These will vary, but will most likely include extracts of longer texts, complete short texts (such as short stories and poems), nonfiction pieces such as articles and online texts, and multimodal texts such as graphic novels.

All the mentor texts will be linked to the key idea. They will provide a range of perspectives on the key idea to allow you to explore the themes and issues involved. There will also be a range of *styles* and *forms* for you to explore, including different voices and points of view. You will study the use of vocabulary, language features, text structures and conventions in the mentor texts, and draw on these in your own writing.

In Unit 1, your school will choose three mentor texts to study in depth.

Writing about family

'Family' can mean different things to different people, but the typical definition of family is a group of people who are related to each other, either by birth, marriage or adoption. Families can take many forms. Common terms applied to different family structures include 'nuclear' (referring to the family unit of parents and children, stereotypically a husband, wife and two children), 'extended' (referring to relatives beyond the nuclear family, such as



grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins) and ‘blended’ (referring to a family consisting of two adults, the children they have together and their children from previous relationships). The traditional family structure might vary between cultures, but – as social attitudes to marriage, children and other factors change – an increasing variety of family structures are recognised and accepted.

For most people, the family is the first group we belong to and it typically plays a key role in developing individual identity. We learn values, beliefs and culture from family members as we grow up, which helps to shape who we are and how we see the world.

Writing about family usually involves exploring key moments in an individual’s personal history. The writer might explore interpersonal conflict, important events or moments of realisation, often reflecting on the significance of these with the benefit of hindsight.

In your exploration of family, you will come across texts that deal with issues such as:

- identity (e.g. the development of an individual’s personality and values, and the factors that shape them)
- belonging (e.g. finding and establishing one’s place within a family, fitting in and connecting with others)
- relationships (e.g. changing dynamics, the loss or addition of family members)
- conflict (e.g. cultural conflict, interpersonal conflict and internal conflict).

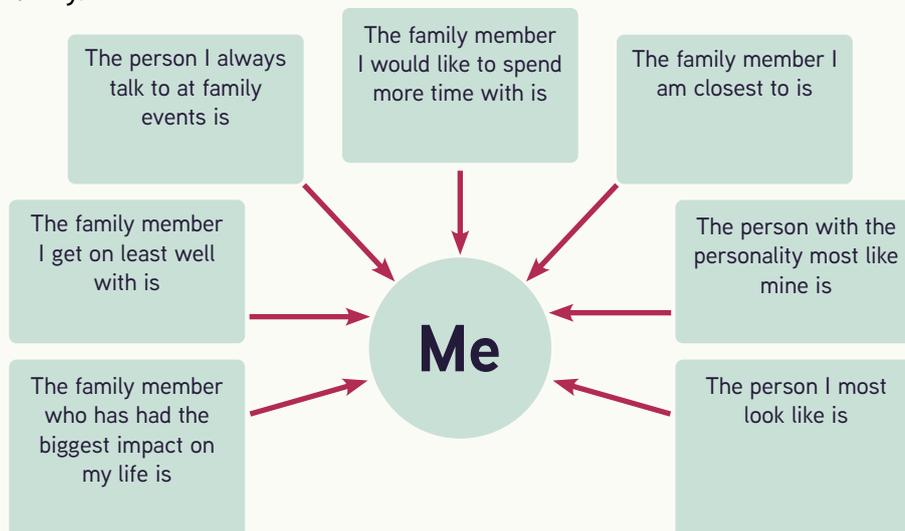
Responding to this key idea

Using your own personal experience and considering the relationships and moments of significance within your own family is a great starting point from which to approach this key idea. Which people are you closest to? Who has had the biggest impact on your life so far and why? Which family members are most similar to you? Who are you least like? Who do you find it most difficult to get on with? Why?



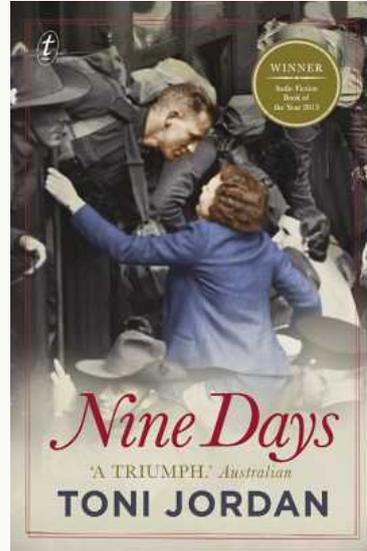
Explore family

- 1 Complete the below chart for yourself, considering the relationships that exist within your family.





- » 2 Photographs often play a significant role in recording family relationships and events. For her novel *Nine Days*, author Toni Jordan used a photograph of two unknown people at a train station as the basis for her narrative about a large extended family.



Choose a photograph of your family. It might be a posed photograph taken at a significant event, or a candid picture taken on an ordinary day. Describe the image, using a combination of observation, memory, research and imagination.

Mentor texts for writing about family

The following are some examples of mentor texts to inspire your writing about family. Your teacher may come up with more, and you are encouraged to find some of your own.

Fiction/Poetry

Coraline by Neil Gaiman (novella)

Hotel Sorrento by Hannie Rayson (play)

I for Isobel by Amy Witting (novel)

Like a House on Fire by Cate Kennedy (short-story collection)

Montana 1948 by Larry Watson (novel)

'Mother to Son' by Langston Hughes (poem)

Nine Days by Toni Jordan (novel)

Past the Shallows by Favel Parrett (novel)

Romulus, My Father by Raimond Gaita (memoir)

Stolen by Jane Harrison (play)

'The Drover's Wife' by Henry Lawson (short story)



'The Father' by Raymond Carver (short story)

'The Stick-together Families' by Edgar Albert Guest (poem)

'This Be the Verse' by Philip Larkin (poem; note that this poem contains offensive language)

Nonfiction

'A dead brother, a mystery, a family reunion – and the question he longed to ask' by Paul Dunne (news article)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read 'A dead brother, a mystery, a family reunion'.

'After my grandfather died, I met him for the first time in poetry' by Jeevika Verma (essay)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read 'After my grandfather died, I met him for the first time in poetry'.

Dreams from My Father by Barack Obama (memoir)

Growing Up Asian in Australia edited by Alice Pung (memoir collection)

The Yellow House by Sarah M Broom (memoir)

Annotated sample mentor text: *Looking for Alibrandi*

Read the following extract from Melina Marchetta's novel *Looking for Alibrandi*, which recounts the experiences of Italian-Australian student Josephine (Josie) Alibrandi during her senior years of secondary school.

Text: *Looking for Alibrandi*

Author: Melina Marchetta

Date: 1992

Form: novel

Audience: teenagers and young adults

Purpose: to express

TOMATO DAY:

Oh God, if anyone ever found out about it I'd die. There we sat last Saturday in my grandmother's backyard cutting the bad bits off overripe tomatoes and squeezing them.

After doing ten crates of those, we boiled them, squashed them, then boiled them again. That in turn made spaghetti sauce. We bottled it in beer bottles and stored it in Nonna's cellar.

I can't understand why we can't go to Franklin's and buy Leggo's or Paul Newman's special sauce. Nonna had heart failure at this suggestion and looked at Mama.

Blunt but mysterious opening – the words are familiar but the context isn't. This is likely to evoke curiosity in the reader and create interest in what will follow.

The conversational narrative style is created through the use of slang, contractions and exclamations. These generate a realistic teenage voice for the protagonist.

The author 'shows' rather than 'tells' – here, Marchetta suggests that making tomato sauce isn't typical 'Aussie' behaviour. She implies, without saying it directly, that most Australians buy branded sauce at a supermarket. »

» “Where is the culture?” she asked in dismay. “She’s going to grow up, marry an Australian and her children will eat fish and chips.”

Robert and I call this annual event “Wog Day” or “National Wog Day.” We sat around wondering how many other poor unfortunates our age were doing the same, but we were sure we’d never find out because nobody would admit to it.

His grandmother and mother and father and brothers and sisters came over as well and we all sat around like Sicilian peasants. My Zio Ricardo had a hanky on his head with each of the four sides tied in a knot. By the end of the day all the little kids had the same type of headpiece.

“We have been doing this for over forty years, Guiseppina,” my Zia Patrizia told me, wiping her hands on a polka-dot apron (the same apron as every other woman in the yard because my second cousin Rita had once bought ten metres of material on sale).

Nonna and Zia Patrizia were sitting side by side, beaming at me. They look very similar except Zia Patrizia isn’t as vain as Nonna and has done nothing about her greying hair. I looked over to where Mama was with Zio Ricardo, wishing she would look my way. I wanted her to save me from Zia Patrizia and Nonna Katia. From their reminiscing and gossip.

The older characters use more formal vocabulary and sentence structures, reflecting both their age and that they are less confident in their use of English.

Use of Italian names and phrasing helps to create authentic Italian characters. Even the main character – Josie – is referred to by the Italian version of her name, Guiseppina.

Marchetta explores tradition and family dynamics through the eyes of a teenager. Although the main character doesn’t particularly enjoy participating in Tomato Day, and approaches it with typical teenage cynicism, there is still a sense of love and connection in the way the event is presented.

Using this mentor text

Marchetta’s novel presents the life of a fictional teenager trying to establish her place in the world. The text explores the challenges of competing cultural identities, family expectations and personal aspirations. It does this in a conversational and relatable way, in order to appeal to young readers.

Some of the literary devices Marchetta uses in this extract to target her teenage audience are:

- first-person narrative voice – allowing the protagonist to ‘speak’ directly to the audience, telling her story in her own words
- use of slang and informal language – which, combined with a first-person narrator, helps to create an authentic voice for the main character
- use of Italian terms and names – reflecting the fact that the narrator is an Australian-born teenager of Italian heritage and highlighting the significant role Josie’s heritage plays in forming her identity.



Write about family

- 1 Brainstorm customs or events that are significant to your family and choose one of these to write about.



- 2 Like Marchetta, imagine that you are writing for a young adult audience – for example, your friends. Write down five words or phrases that you could use to convey the meaning and emotions associated with the custom to your friends. Remember that you want to capture their interest and also entertain them.

- 3 Use a combination of sources (e.g. memory, photographs, input from other family members) to note down as much detail as possible about the custom or event you have chosen.

- 4 Using the ideas and information resulting from questions 1 to 3, write a reflective creative piece in the style of *Looking for Alibrandi*, in about 600 to 800 words.

Sample text about family

The following text uses the extract from *Looking for Alibrandi* as inspiration. In the same way that Marchetta focuses on the strangeness of Tomato Day and its impact on her main character, the student here has used an experience from their own life and adapted their language choices accordingly.

Form: narrative/recount

Audience: young adults

Purpose: to express and to entertain

As the westerly wind whips against my bare skin, I ask myself for the umpteenth time, ‘Why can’t we just be normal?’

It’s Christmas Day. Christmas morning to be exact. A time when most people are opening presents, or sleeping in, or doing *something* that could be classed as fun. And where am I? On a beach, in my swimsuit, about to run into the ocean.

‘But what’s wrong with that?’ I hear you ask. Plenty of people go to the beach on Christmas Day. It’s basically an Aussie tradition: beaches, beers and barbecues, everyone together in the sunshine. A cooling dip in the sea to refresh, and then a game of cricket for all the extended family. Surely that’s the way that half the country would be celebrating?

Now that’s all well and good, except that I’m not in Australia, and it’s definitely not summer. I’m on a wintry beach in England, where daylight has only just emerged despite it being mid-morning, and it is, quite frankly, freezing.

Opening in the middle of the action creates interest. The first sentence raises several questions, encouraging the audience to read on.

Like in Marchetta’s text, a first-person narrative voice is used, along with conversational and informal language. Note, however, that present tense is used in this piece, which helps to convey the action and energy of the events.

The narrator addresses the audience directly, anticipating their questions and assumptions. This aims to draw the audience into the narrative.



» So, what am I doing here? Well, my family loves a Christmas tradition, and somehow one of the traditions that we've adopted over the years is a Christmas swim. And we're not alone. At 11am every Christmas morning, an ever-growing crowd of brave (or foolish, depending on your point of view) souls will gather on the beach, and run headlong into the icy Atlantic waters. It's something we've been doing for most of my life, and it's become increasingly popular with many people over the years. This year there seems to be more swimmers than ever before – I reckon there must be at least 300 people gathered on the frosty sand, all ages, all shapes, all sizes. If there's one thing you can definitely say about this as an event, it's that it's one of the most body-positive things on the planet. After all, it's pretty hard to care what you look like when you can't feel your feet, and when you're surrounded by people wearing elf hats.

Having established the premise for the narrative, the author provides context and detail, to help readers visualise the scenario.

Somehow, as if by osmosis, an awareness sweeps through the crowd that the start is imminent. Dressing gowns and jumpers are reluctantly removed. Santa hats are secured. The beach is awash with lilywhite English flesh, skin that hasn't seen the sun in the better part of six months. The countdown begins: Ten, nine, eight ...

The author uses the passive voice to suggest that the behaviour is being carried out by multiple people within the crowd, rather than just by one person.

One! The sand explodes into life, as hundreds of feet begin running, splashing clumsily through the rivulets left by the outgoing tide, dodging excited dogs who run chaotically through the throng, heading breathlessly towards the distant sea. There's a symphony of shrieks, laughs, groans and barks, as the wave of madness washes down the beach, until the horde reaches the water's edge and stops abruptly, shocked into paralysis by the cold. The cold. My God, it's cold. But somehow the collective energy drives everyone on, on into the water, on into the waves, until the point comes to dive under, because dive under you must, or it doesn't really count.

The use of an exclamation mark works with the verb 'explodes' to convey the sudden burst of energy.

Previously, the writer used shorter sentences, but here they are much longer. This helps to convey the breathlessness of the scenario being described, and the associated energy.

Repetition of 'cold' used for emphasis.

A wave. A breath. I'm under.

For a split second, there is silence.

And then the ice hits my brain, and I stand, gasping, trying to reclaim command of my senses, and the screams of festivity envelop me once again.

A switch again to a longer sentence mimics the narrator's feelings of breathlessness.

Out past the waves, hardy old-timers swim stoically up and down. Years of practice have made them immune to the cold. Girls in bikinis gasp as waves hit their torsos. Dogs cavort in the shallows, looking for their owners, who are too far out for them to reach. A Santa hat washes limply up on the shore.

Use of Christmas imagery helps paint a picture and references the time and place in which the text is set.

I emerge from the water, unsteady but invigorated. My skin is purple and puckered, reminiscent of the turkey waiting in the kitchen. I stagger up the beach to a warm towel, a warm hug and a warm Thermos.

As the hot chocolate slips smoothly down my throat, mixing with the post-swim adrenaline still coursing through my veins, I bask in the Christmas spirit with my family and ask myself, 'Who'd want to just be normal?'

The piece closes with a variation on the opening line, suggesting a change in the narrator's attitude towards the ritual described.



Writing about travel

Writing about travel can mean writing about the journey from one place to another or it can mean focusing on a particular destination. Often physical journeys can involve self-discovery or learning something new. The purpose, distance, mode of transport and difficulty of travel can vary widely, providing opportunities to explore different perspectives on this key idea.

There are many connections and similarities between travel and literature. In his essay 'A reader's guide to planes, trains, & automobiles' (published in *The New York Review* in 2019), writer Tim Parks suggested that stories are a mode of transport, just like cars, buses or planes. He writes:

Both go somewhere. Both offer us a way out of our routine and a chance to make unexpected encounters, see new places, experience new states of mind ... Then, by mixing with strangers of every class and clime, the traveller is bound to become more aware of himself and of the fragility of identity. How different we are when we speak to different people! How different our lives would be if we opened up to them.

These are some of the types of texts you will encounter in your exploration of writing about travel.

- Texts about physical travel: the writer describes a trip that they (or a character) have taken. These might take the form of argumentative or informative writing, aiming to persuade readers to visit particular destinations or to inform them about what to expect when they are there.
- Texts about metaphorical or allegorical travel: the writer might describe a physical journey that represents a spiritual or emotional journey, such as the protagonist's progress from innocence to experience.
- Texts about voyages of discovery: the author learns something through the experience.
- Texts shaped around the hero's journey: this is a common narrative structure of many texts, especially those that follow a quest format.

Responding to this key idea

A physical trip can involve a great deal of learning, problem-solving and self-discovery. The traveller may face challenges and difficulties but, by overcoming the issues they face, they arrive at their destination with new insight and understanding.

Many texts that deal with travel, and particularly quests or adventures, can be fitted into twentieth-century author and literary theorist Joseph Campbell's template of the hero's journey. The full narrative template has a number of stages, as shown in the diagram on the next page, but Campbell summarised it simply as:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

(*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell, 1949, p.23)

Glossary

venture forth: to dare to go, to take a risk

bestow: to give or gift

boons: advantages, benefits



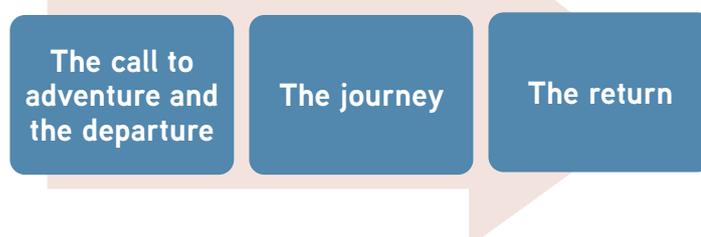
Here are some examples of the hero's journey in well-known texts:

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by JK Rowling, Harry begins the novel as an infant being delivered by wizards from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to his aunt and uncle at Privet Drive. Ten years later he is told that he is a wizard. Despite being initially startled and confused by this information, he travels to Hogwarts, where he must overcome the challenges of the unfamiliar wizarding world. With the help of his friends, he does this, and accepts his place at Hogwarts and the wider wizarding community.

In *The Lord of the Rings* by JRR Tolkien, the protagonist, Frodo, is living happily in the Shire. He is told by the wizard Gandalf that he must destroy the Ring, but is reluctant to leave his familiar life. Eventually he sets out for Mount Doom, accompanied by his friends. They face many challenges and dangers on their lengthy journey. Ultimately, Frodo destroys the Ring, defeats Sauron, and returns to the Shire.

In *The Lion King*, produced by Walt Disney Pictures, Simba begins life as the heir to the Pride Lands. Then his father, Mufasa, is killed by his uncle, Scar, who forces Simba into exile. After spending time alone, Simba meets Timon and Pumbaa, who help him to develop and mature. Ultimately, Simba returns to the Pride Lands, defeats Scar, and claims his rightful place as king.

All of these texts follow the same pattern, or template:





The following example outlines the hero's journey in the Disney film *Mulan*:

Mulan lives a normal life in China with her family. When her father is required to join the army in wartime, she disguises herself as a man to go in his place.

Mulan faces many challenges as she learns to be a soldier while keeping her female identity secret, but is helped by her friends.

Mulan saves the emperor, helps to defeat the enemy and gains respect. She returns home to her family a different person.



Generate ideas

- 1 Note down any other examples of texts you can think of that fit the hero's journey template.

- 2 Think of a real-life example of a trip you have taken, and fit it into the hero's journey template. Which parts of your trip would fit into each section? Remember that your journey doesn't need to have supernatural or magical elements!
- 3 Write a description of a place associated with your trip. Include at least one detail related to each of the senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste.

Mentor texts for writing about travel

The following are some examples of mentor texts to inspire your writing about travel. Your teacher may come up with more, and you are encouraged to find some of your own.

Fiction/Poetry

Around the World in Eighty Days by Jules Verne (novel)

Brooklyn by Colm Tóibín (novel)

'Going Home' by Archie Weller (short story)

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad (novella)

Life of Pi by Yann Martel (novel)

'Tears of Autumn' by Yoshiko Uchida (short story)

'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost (poem)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read 'The Road Not Taken'.

Nonfiction

Eat, Pray, Love by Elizabeth Gilbert (memoir)

Honoring High Places: The Mountain Life of Junko Tabei by Junko Tabei (collection of essays and reflections)

In a Sunburned Country by Bill Bryson (travel memoir)

Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer (creative nonfiction)

Round Ireland With a Fridge by Tony Hawks (travel memoir)

'The City of Light in the Dark' by David Sedaris (essay)

Tracks by Robyn Davidson (memoir)

Travels with Charley by John Steinbeck (travelogue)

Annotated sample mentor text: *The Lord of the Rings*

Read the following extract from Chapter VIII, Book One of JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. The trilogy (series of three novels) is set in the imaginary land of Middle-earth and follows the adventures of the hobbit Frodo as he tries to destroy a powerful magic ring that would allow the evil Lord Sauron to rule over all of Middle-earth.

Text: *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

Author: JRR Tolkien

Date: 1954

Form: novel

Audience: readers of all ages, particularly those interested in fantasy

Purpose: to express

Their way wound along the floor of the hollow, and round the green feet of a steep hill into another deeper and broader valley, and then over the shoulder of further hills, and down their long limbs, and up their smooth sides again, up on to new hill-tops and down into new valleys. There was no tree nor any visible water: it was a country of grass and short springy turf, silent except for the whisper of the air over the edges of the land, and high lonely cries of strange birds. As they journeyed the sun mounted, and grew hot. Each time they climbed a ridge the breeze seemed to have grown less. When they caught a glimpse of the country westward the distant Forest seemed to be smoking, as if the fallen rain was steaming up again from leaf and root and mould. A shadow now lay round the edge of sight, a dark haze above which the upper sky was like a blue cap, hot and heavy.

About mid-day they came to a hill whose top was wide and flattened, like a shallow saucer with a green mounded rim. Inside there was no air stirring, and the sky seemed near their heads.

Long, meandering sentences mimic the journey of the characters.

Tolkien creates a full sensory picture – he describes what can be seen, heard, smelled and felt. This helps to bring the landscape to life.

The opening paragraph presents a beautiful and welcoming scene, but the presence of the shadow at the end suggests that things may not be quite as they seem.



They rode across and looked northwards. Then their hearts rose, for it seemed plain that they had come further already than they had expected. Certainly the distances had now all become hazy and deceptive, but there could be no doubt that the Downs were coming to an end. A long valley lay below them winding away northwards, until it came to an opening between two steep shoulders. Beyond, there seemed to be no more hills. Due north they faintly glimpsed a long dark line. 'That is a line of trees,' said Merry, 'and that must mark the Road. All along it for many leagues east of the Bridge there are trees growing. Some say they were planted in the old days.'

'Splendid!' said Frodo. 'If we make as good going this afternoon as we have done this morning, we shall have left the Downs before the Sun sets and be jogging on in search of a camping place.' But even as he spoke he turned his glance eastwards, and he saw that on that side the hills were higher and looked down upon them; and all those hills were crowned with green mounds, and on some were standing stones, pointing upwards like jagged teeth out of green gums.

At this turning point in the text, the gentle, soft adjectives used to describe the environment start to be replaced by sharper and more threatening ones as the mood begins to change.

That view was somehow disquieting; so they turned from the sight and went down into the hollow circle. In the midst of it there stood a single stone, standing tall under the sun above, and at this hour casting no shadow. It was shapeless and yet significant: like a landmark, or a guarding finger, or more like a warning. But they were now hungry, and the sun was still at the fearless noon; so they set their backs against the east side of the stone. It was cool, as if the sun had had no power to warm it; but at that time this seemed pleasant. There they took food and drink, and made as good a noon-meal under the open sky as anyone could wish; for the food came from 'down under Hill'. Tom had provided them with plenty for the comfort of the day. Their ponies unburdened strayed upon the grass.

Note the increasingly frequent use of 'but' in the descriptions. Although nothing bad has yet happened, Tolkien creates a sense of foreboding through the repeated inclusion of this negative conjunction, hinting that a threat is near.

Riding over the hills, and eating their fill, the warm sun and the scent of turf, lying a little too long, stretching out their legs and looking at the sky above their noses: these things are, perhaps, enough to explain what happened. However, that may be: they woke suddenly and uncomfortably from a sleep they had never meant to take. The standing stone was cold, and it cast a long pale shadow that stretched eastward over them. The sun, a pale and watery yellow, was gleaming through the mist just above the west wall of the hollow in which they lay; north, south, and east, beyond the wall the fog was thick, cold and white. The air was silent, heavy and chill. Their ponies were standing crowded together with their heads down.

Increasing use of words with negative connotations conveys the changed atmosphere.

This closing sentence contrasts with the closing line of the preceding paragraph, illustrating the change in atmosphere.

The hobbits sprang to their feet in alarm, and ran to the western rim. They found that they were upon an island in the fog. Even as they looked out in dismay towards the setting sun, it sank before their eyes into a white sea, and a cold grey shadow sprang up in the East behind. The fog rolled up to the walls and rose above them, and as it mounted it bent over their heads until it became a roof: they were shut in a hall of mist whose central pillar was the standing stone.

Using this mentor text

The Lord of the Rings details the epic journey of the hero Frodo as he attempts to destroy the One Ring and save civilisation.

Notable features of Tolkien's writing style include:

- a focus on the senses, communicated in subtle ways – Tolkien doesn't make obvious statements such as 'Frodo could hear ...'; instead, he describes 'the whisper of air' or 'the cries of strange birds', building a vivid picture of the environment
- the creation of atmosphere through descriptions of elements in the environment – Tolkien's word choices are central to this; note how he initially uses vocabulary that suggests a relaxing, gentle country scene, and how this changes to more threatening, ominous language later on as the mood darkens
- personification, which adds to the sense of foreboding (anticipation of danger) later in the extract – Tolkien portrays the fog in particular as having control of itself, helping to develop a sense that the characters are in danger.



Write about travel

- 1 Using the Tolkien extract as a guide, describe a real or imagined journey that you have taken that started off positively, but then took a turn for the worse. Alternatively, you could describe a journey that started badly and turned out well.

- 2 Brainstorm words and phrases you can use to describe the landscape in this journey. Try to use varied, vivid language that will depict both the positive and negative aspects of your trip.

- 3 Write a draft description of your experience, focusing on the landscape.

Sample text about travel

When working with mentor texts, it's important to remember that they can be used as inspiration for ideas, as well as stylistic examples. The following text is a student sample that uses the extract from *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* as its mentor text, but it takes Tolkien's content in a very different direction. It draws on the original extract, but changes the form and purpose.

Form: travel article

Audience: travel enthusiasts

Purpose: to argue and to persuade



Ponies, peaks and pillars – visit the Barrow-downs today!

If you're in the market for adventure, then the Barrow-downs is the place for you! Come and experience all that Middle-earth's premier outdoor activity location has to offer, with sweeping views, undulating landscape and historic artefacts.

With deep, broad valleys bordered by smooth-sided hills, the Downs are a walker's paradise, offering opportunities for hikers of all ages and abilities. Whether you are looking for a gentle stroll across the springy turf or prefer to challenge yourself with a longer trek to the peaks of the surrounding hills, you're sure to find plenty of options in this special part of the world.

If walking isn't your thing, there are plenty of alternative activities on offer. Pony-trekking is particularly popular, with several companies offering all-inclusive packages ranging from half-day walks close to your accommodation to multi-day treks that enable you to see all the highlights of the region. The ponies enjoy themselves too, free to graze on the area's succulent grass.

The Barrow-downs is an area steeped in history, with signs of inhabitation stretching back centuries. Wander the paths trodden by past generations, and follow historic trails to visit mystical sites from long-lost civilisations. Many of the hills are topped with standing stones, and a guidebook is available from the Information Centre to help you plan your route around these magnificent megaliths. The best known of these, and perhaps the most mysterious, is to be found in the hollow at the top of Shallow Saucer Hill. This stone, a monolith, stands like a guarding finger in the centre of the hollow, casting a wave of awe and wonder across the landscape.

One of the main attractions of the Barrow-downs region is, of course, the climate. The long days, with plentiful sunshine and light breezes, have made the area a sought-after destination for generations. The sight of the Forest 'smoking', as morning dew and evening rainfall evaporate into the atmosphere, is beautiful to behold, and worth the effort of a morning climb to one of our many vantage points. Visitors are, however, warned of the dangers of climbing and walking in the middle of the day, when temperatures rise to extremes, and breezes tend to drop. You are encouraged to plan your more physical activities for the mornings and evenings to avoid this heat – so, in the middle of the day, why not take advantage of the region's wonderful culinary offerings instead?

Also be aware that the Barrow-downs are occasionally subject to heavy fog, which can be quite disconcerting for those unused to such a phenomenon. The fog can appear like a white sea, enclosing everything within it, and making navigation difficult. So check the weather forecast regularly and plan your activities accordingly. Please be aware that pony-trekking activities will be suspended when fog is expected, as these conditions unsettle the animals.

An alliterated title is commonly used in persuasive pieces to capture attention.

Exclamation marks are used throughout the piece, to suggest this is an area full of energy and excitement.

The student uses language directly taken from Tolkien's original piece, but presents the material in the style of a promotional text, rather than a narrative one.

Tolkien's characters travelled by pony, so the student has adapted this to portray it as a possible activity that visitors can partake in.

Note the use of the imperative (command) form of verbs – this is a common stylistic feature of travel writing, where readers are told what they should/could do.

The student again adapts material from the original extract to the chosen form. Weather is often a determining factor for people when selecting a holiday destination, and the student effectively combines information with advice.

The student uses subtle humour and irony here, adapting the more threatening elements of Tolkien's piece into a gentle warning to visitors. The potential danger is downplayed, as the writer would not wish to discourage potential visitors.



» No matter whether you're an outdoorsy couple looking for your next adventure, a family keen for activities, or a solo traveller looking to sample local produce in a tranquil setting, the Barrow-downs has something for you. With its central location, the region can be easily accessed by visitors from anywhere in Middle-earth.

The friendly folk of the Barrow-downs are waiting to welcome you for your next vacation!

The student makes clear links to the original mentor text, but adapts and expands the material to suit the chosen form. Like Tolkien, the writer uses descriptive language, although here the vocabulary is highly positive, appropriate for a text attempting to promote the area.

Writing about events that shape us

Events that shape us can include local, national or international incidents. They can be sad or joyful experiences, expected or unexpected, short-lived or ongoing, recent or historical. You might write about something that had an impact on your childhood or affected you recently. Events that shape people can be seemingly small, such as a chance meeting with someone who ends up being important or a conversation that transforms the way someone thinks. Or they can be more significant upheavals, such as a family divorce, serious illness, migration, the birth of a sibling or winning an important prize.

Exploring an event that shaped someone means looking at how and why the event was important in an author's life, and how it changed their thinking or their circumstances. In your exploration of events, the kinds of texts you are likely to read include:

- diary and journal entries about important events
- novels, stories and poems about global and personal events
- essays that reflect on important events.



Have you heard of the stress scale? Developed in 1967 by psychiatrists Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe, the scale measures an individual's stress levels by identifying how many high-impact stressful events have occurred in their lives. The original scale was developed for adults, but one for younger people was developed later. Scan the code or click [here](#) to work out your own likely stress levels.



Responding to this key idea

When exploring events that shape us, we need to consider the *impact* of the event. Why was it important to the writer/you? What changes happened during the event and as a result of the event?

Some of the ways in which events can change people include:

- psychologically/emotionally – how did the person change?
- socially – how did those around the person and/or their relationships with them change?
- intellectually – what did the person learn?
- in the immediate environment – how did the person's home or educational life change?
- in the wider world – how did the person's society change?



Explore a text about a life-changing event

Choose an autobiographical text or memoir you have read about a life-changing event and answer the questions in the boxes below.

Before the event

What happened before the event? Why did the event occur?

The start of the event

What happened at the start of the event? What was the author thinking?

After the event

How was the author's life changed? Did it change for better or worse? What did they learn? Were others also changed by the event?

During the event

What happened during the event? Who else was involved?

Mentor texts for writing about events that shape us

The following are some examples of mentor texts to inspire your writing about events that shape us. Your teacher may come up with more, and you can find your own.

Fiction/Poetry

'Aquifer' by Tim Winton (short story)

Brooklyn by Colm Tóibín (novel)



» *Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood (novel)

'In a Heartbeat' by Alice Pung (short story)

Jasper Jones by Craig Silvey (novel)

Migrants by Issa Watanabe (graphic novel)

Montana 1948 by Larry Watson (novel)

'Stop All the Clocks' by WH Auden (poem)

When Michael Met Mina by Randa Abdel-Fattah (novel)

'Yellow Glove' by Naomi Shihab Nye (poem)

Nonfiction

Across the Seas: Australia's Response to Refugees – A History by Klaus Neumann (history)

Endurance: A Year in Space, a Lifetime of Discovery by Scott Kelly (memoir)

Enough (a podcast about the mental health of young people)



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a list of episodes of 'Enough'.

'How being a refugee shaped my appreciation for education' by Noor Azizah (interview)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read 'How being a refugee shaped my appreciation for education'.

'How major life events impact our long-term wellbeing' by Arianne Cohen (online article)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read 'How major life events impact our long-term wellbeing'.

'How the pandemic has changed my outlook on life after high school' by Bridie McArthur (online article)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read 'How the pandemic has changed my outlook on life after high school'.

Museums Victoria Immigrant Stories (biographical pieces)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to visit the Museums Victoria Immigrant Stories webpage.

'What coping with cancer taught me about letting go' by Lain Hensley (newspaper article)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read 'What coping with cancer taught me about letting go'.



Annotated sample mentor text: 'Hunger, dust-storms, war'

Read the following extract from a personal essay by Akuch Anyieth.

Text: 'Hunger, dust-storms, war – how I defied the odds as a South Sudanese child refugee'

Author: Akuch Anyieth

Date: 2022

Form: essay

Audience: people interested in life stories, stories of refugees, stories of migration

Purpose: to express and to reflect

Waiting for the cattle truck

I was five years old when I began the journey to Kakuma. With me were my mother, my two brothers — Anyieth and my new younger brother Gai — and my sister Atong. (My older sister, Ajok, had got married while we were in Laboni in South Sudan and moved to another refugee camp in Kenya.)

Starts with a short, simple statement to grab the reader's attention.

One evening, in the back of a truck, I heard my mother talking about me:

The language is personal and informal, using the first person ('I', 'me').

This child has been sleeping the entire journey and I am starting to wonder whether she has died of starvation. How can she sleep on this bumpy road, with the children screaming and soldiers stepping all over us?

The author uses dialogue (speech) to make the memories more realistic and vivid.

Hours later, I opened my eyes. "Mama, where are we?" I bleated.

If you hadn't been sleeping, you would know. Even Gai already knows where we are. We are in Lokichogio, on the border between South Sudan and Kenya, in a reception centre for displaced people seeking refuge in Kakuma.

None of that meant anything to me, of course.

I sat up straight and looked around. Gai and I were sharing a thin straw mat in a shelter with a concrete floor. Everywhere, people were crowded into structures made of plastic sheeting with tin roofs.

Including several details about the surroundings helps the reader to picture the setting.

Using this mentor text

This extract demonstrates many features common to this type of personal, reflective writing. You might see these kinds of essays and articles in blogs, magazines, journals and newspapers.

These features include:

- informal and intimate language that draws the audience in and makes the writing more personal and direct
- dialogue that helps the reader to feel as though they are witnessing events in the past as they happened
- insight into the consequences of a life-changing event
- descriptions of places, people, thoughts and feelings that reflect the writer's interpretation of the event at the time it happened.



Respond to a mentor text

- 1 Anyieth uses a direct tone and often simple vocabulary and sentences to create an authentic child's voice. Highlight any words or phrases that help to create this voice.
- 2 'How can she sleep on this bumpy road, with the children screaming and soldiers stepping all over us?' How is Anyieth's mother's voice different from the narrator Anyieth's? What is the effect on the reader of hearing the mother's perspective on events?

- 3 Think of an important life-changing event in your own life. Identify three specific interesting details of the event.

Event: _____

Detail 1: _____

Detail 2: _____

Detail 3: _____

- 4 Write a short dialogue, from your memory, between two people involved in the event. Try to make their voices very distinct.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about identifying language features in a mentor text.

Sample text about events that shape us

The following student response uses the graphic novel *Migrants* by Issa Watanabe as a mentor text. It is written in the form of a blog post for the fictional website 'Australian Migrant Stories'. The student has chosen to draw on the key idea of writing about events that shape us as well as the mentor text.

Form: recount / blog post

Audience: migrants, people interested in migrant stories

Purpose: to express and to inform



Moving Down Under

16 March 2022

When my family first told me that we would be migrating to Australia I had many confusing feelings. I felt excited, but scared. I felt happy, but nervous. I felt we should leave right away, and that we would never leave.

All of these feelings bubbled up inside me while my parents talked about things like tickets and visas. On the one hand I knew that I would be leaving behind my friends and a lot of my family. But on the other hand I knew that this would give me and my sisters the best chance at a good life.

The idea of leaving was scary, but the village where I grew up was sometimes terrifying too. Our family was very poor, and my parents had worked hard to earn enough money to get us out of that village and away from the poverty and conflict we had grown up with. There were many reasons to leave – more than reasons to stay.

Unlike the animals in Issa Watanabe's story, *Migrants*, we were not

packed into a boat. That's

the first image many people get when you say "immigrant", but for us it was a plane. We weren't packed in like animals, but we were just as afraid. We stayed together closely as a

family, holding hands, as

we moved through airports, making sure that nobody lost contact

for almost the whole time. In the Watanabe story every character

is associated with their own pattern or fabric. For me, it was the

clothes I travelled in: a bright green t-shirt and a pair of orange

shorts. I must have been visible from a mile away! When I think of

the trip now, it is the green t-shirt and orange shorts that stand out

in my memory. Whenever I see those colours I am reminded of the

event that changed my life forever.

We did not leave our home with much, but when we arrived in

Australia, members of the community helped us and made us feel

welcome right away, although we were also aware that this was not

yet our home. The event that changed my life ended up being a good

experience, but at school I have learned about other migrants who

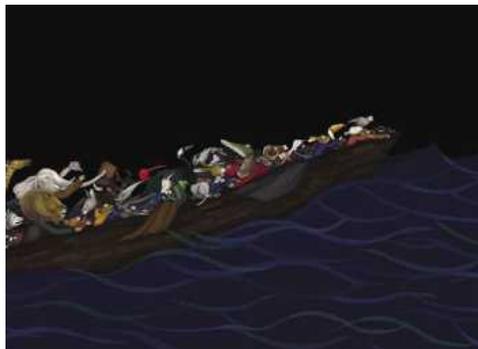
were not as lucky as my family.

This is one reason I have decided that, when I have finished at

school, I am going to join the organisation that helped my family

with our life-changing event. I hope that I can make the move

Down Under as good for other families as it was for my own.



© Issa Watanabe from *Migrants*, published by Gecko Press. Reproduced with permission.

The response is written in the style of a blog post. The language is friendly and personal.

The student uses specific writing techniques to make the story interesting and engaging, such as the Rule of Three.

In a blog, the writer often uses personal and reflective language to write about their experiences.

The student chooses to make a direct link to one of their mentor texts. They compare their own life-changing event to that of the animals in the picture book.

Small personal details help the reader to picture the scene and make it more vivid.

The student finishes their response by talking about how the event has changed them. Because the event was a positive experience, they now want to help others. Ending with this insight and plans for the future helps to give the piece a strong structure and clear purpose.

Crafting a text

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Writing your text
- » Editing your text
- » Annotating your text
- » Sample annotated text

Your assessment for this area of study requires you to create two texts. In this chapter we will look at how to construct your own texts in a variety of forms, drawing on what you have learned about effective writing from your study of mentor texts. Also included here are writing tips and guidelines which, along with advice on editing your text, will help you to craft effective and engaging pieces. The chapter also looks at how to create a set of annotations for your text/s that reflect on your writing process.

Writing your text

This section outlines a five-step process for crafting an original text in a form of your choice, for a specific audience and purpose.

Step 1: Select a focus

Step 2: Decide on your purpose and audience

Step 3: Choose your form

Step 4: Plan your text

Step 5: Write your text

Step 1: Select a focus

The first step in crafting a text is to select an important idea you would like to explore. This might be inspired by your work with the particular key idea you have been studying in class and your study of mentor texts related to this idea. When choosing the main focus of your written piece, keep in mind the following points.

- **Consider what you have learned from studying your mentor texts.** In your own writing, you don't have to use the specific ideas in your mentor texts but you will have been thinking and talking a lot about the key idea that links them. This close consideration of a key idea is likely to inspire and stimulate your own related but original ideas, which you could explore in your writing.



- **Think about texts you have enjoyed or found valuable.** What did they have in common? Are you drawn to fantasy novels with detailed imaginary worlds? To texts that explain complex topics in accessible ways? To reflective pieces in which writers share their personal experiences? It is likely that you will enjoy writing about similar subjects and ideas to those you enjoy reading about.
- **Write what you know.** This advice, often given to writers, does not mean you shouldn't use your imagination or explore unfamiliar ideas. It just means that you should think about some of the areas in which you have some expertise. Perhaps you love to cook and know how to adapt recipes for different ingredients. Maybe you spend a lot of time at your local beach and have observed currents, tides and cloud formations. You may have experienced a challenge, such as a serious injury, disappointment or bereavement, and learned about ways to cope with this. Or maybe you are just very knowledgeable about being a typical – yet unique – teenage student in an Australian secondary school. Your piece does not have to focus only on your area of expertise, but your writing will benefit if you can draw on the particular things you understand well.
- **Choose an idea that genuinely interests you.** It's difficult to write effectively and engagingly about an idea or subject you're not really interested in. Think about the things that excite you – whether that's taking action to protect the natural environment, spending time with your friends, playing a sport, thinking about the meaning of life or making TikToks with your cat. Your passion for your chosen idea will come across in your writing.



Brainstorm ideas

Complete the following sentences to identify some possible topics and ideas you could write about.

- a The key idea linking our mentor texts is _____ One thing I have learned from studying the mentor texts is _____

- b A hobby I really enjoy is _____
- c My closest relationship is with _____
- d A person I really admire and know personally is _____ I admire this person because _____
- e A person I really admire but don't know personally is _____ I admire this person because _____

- f I am very good at _____
- g My favourite book / movie is _____ because _____

- h An issue I have a strong opinion about is _____
- i I have always wondered _____

Step 2: Decide on your purpose and audience

After choosing the main idea or theme you want to write about, the next step is to identify your purpose and your target audience.

Remember, there are four main purposes for writing – to express, to reflect, to explain and to argue. Within one of these broad categories, you should also identify a specific purpose. The table below shows some possibilities.

Broad purpose	Specific purpose
To express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To express an important idea about justice in an imaginative way To express the dismay and fear my friends and I feel about the threat of climate change
To reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect on my experience of moving from my country of origin to Australia To reflect on a vivid memory from my childhood
To explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain the origins of taekwondo To explain, in a humorous way, how to fool your parents into thinking you're a model student
To argue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To argue that Australian schools should provide free lunches to all students To argue that everyone should have a month-long social media 'detox' every year

Your purpose is closely linked to your target audience. Depending on your purpose, ask yourself these questions:

- To whom do you want to express your main idea?
- With whom do you want share your insights into something important to you?
- Who might benefit from your explanation of a topic you understand well?
- Who do you want to persuade to agree with your thinking or to take a particular action?
- Like your purpose, your target audience should be *specific*. Rather than aiming your text at a very general audience of 'adults', 'Australians' or 'students', try to identify the particular group for whom your text will be tailored; for example, adult residents of your city or suburb, Australians interested in environmental issues or secondary school students who enjoy graphic novels.



Consider purpose and audience

- For each of the broad purposes listed below, suggest a possible specific (more focused) purpose for a piece of writing.

To express	
To reflect	
To explain	
To argue	



- 2 For each of the general audiences below, suggest a possible specific audience (narrower group).

Mandarin speakers	
Children	
Politicians	

- 3 Choose one specific purpose from question 1 and one specific audience from question 2. Write one or two sentences describing the sort of language you would use to achieve this purpose and appeal to this audience.

Step 3: Choose your form

The form you choose to write in will be determined by your target audience and the purpose of your writing. Chapter 13 outlines a variety of common text types you might choose to create. The Study Design also encourages hybrid forms of writing; that is, forms that combine elements of two or more text types and might aim to achieve more than one purpose.

Make sure you are familiar with the features and conventions of the form you choose. In your writing, you will need to show you understand these and your annotations on your text/s should explain how you have used particular elements.

Step 4: Plan your text

The plan for your text will depend on the form you have chosen to write in.

If you are writing an imaginative piece, such as a short story, begin by listing the events of the plot in chronological order (even if your story will not present events chronologically).

If you are writing a persuasive piece, you should plan the order in which you will present your reasons and the evidence you will use to support each one.

If you are writing a reflective piece, your plan might be based on the order of importance of the ideas you want to communicate.

You can adapt the basic planning template on the next page to suit the form you will be writing in.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a more detailed planning template.

	What to include	Notes about language
Opening / Introduction		
Body paragraph / Section 1		
Body paragraph / Section 2		
Body paragraph / Section 3		
Body paragraph / Section 4		
Conclusion/ Resolution		



If you write a speech or a script for a podcast, for example, you won't present these as audio texts. But your writing should show your understanding of how these texts are usually delivered by including notes about music or sound effects, for example, or making your speech easy to read aloud and to listen to.

Step 5: Write your text

Whatever form you choose, the following guidelines will help you to write engaging and fluent texts.

Use an organising principle

Structure refers to the way your writing is organised; a strong structure will help to make your written piece clear and coherent. This requires an organising principle – a recognisable system or order, which could be:

- chronological (e.g. in a short story)
- moving from the general to the particular or from the particular to the general (e.g. in an informative piece)
- a strong line of argument substantiating (giving proof or evidence for) a point of view (in a persuasive piece)
- the gradual unfolding of a point of view (e.g. in a reflective essay).

Make your introduction engaging

First impressions count. Make the first line of your written piece intriguing or memorable, and your audience will be keen to read the rest. If you are writing an imaginative piece, start in *media res*, which means in the middle of the action. For example, your protagonist might be running from danger, having an argument with someone, or about to step onstage. The reader is likely to be intrigued and to want to find out how the character came to be in this position. If you are writing a persuasive piece, you might begin with a surprising fact or statistic. If you are writing a reflective piece, you might start by discussing something you have in common with your target audience, to establish a rapport.



Show, don't tell

The short-story writer Anton Chekhov once said about writing, 'Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass'. You may have heard of the writing principle he was referring to: '**show, don't tell**'. This means that, rather than direct descriptions and statements about things such as mood, motivations and feelings, writers should allow readers to draw their own conclusions from, for instance, characters' actions, descriptions of the surroundings or what is left unsaid.

The following paragraph is all 'telling' and no 'showing'. Everything is spelled out to the reader, leaving nothing for them to interpret or wonder about, or to intrigue them.

Maria felt frustrated. She tried to talk to Abul about why she wanted him to leave the police force but he just wouldn't listen. It seemed that the disagreement between this married couple would never be resolved. She started to cry, which only made Abul more angry because he felt her tears were a kind of moral blackmail.

Now compare the above paragraph with the following rewritten paragraph:

Maria clenched her fists and exhaled heavily. 'Abul, please –' He walked over to the window and gazed out at the blue-green hills. Maria stared at his retreating back. A tear tracked down her cheek as she let out a sob. Abul put his head in his hands and swore.

Do you see how the second paragraph is more interesting and engaging than the first? Readers are more likely to become engaged with the story if they are actively involved in considering the questions raised by the text. What is Maria pleading with Abul about? Why is she crying? What is going through Abul's mind as he gazes out the window? Readers are made to feel as though the scene is happening right in front of them.

Dialogue is an effective way to 'show' rather than 'tell' your audience something important about a character; it's much more interesting and gets readers involved because it challenges them to work it out for themselves and have their own reactions rather than simply being told by the narrator.



Build up a word bank of different ways to say 'said' when writing dialogue. These add variety to your expression and can also reveal the speakers' feelings and attitudes.

Vary your sentence structure

Your writing will be more fluent and interesting if you vary the beginnings of your sentences, as well as the sorts of sentences you use. Changing the length and complexity of a sentence affects the pace of your writing. For instance, short sentences can deliver concise, impactful statements or create various effects, such as suspense, speed or humour. Long sentences can be useful for giving complex details, building an argument or slowing the reader down into a relaxed rhythm.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about choosing language carefully.

Use valuable verbs

Some verbs are so overused that they cease to be very interesting or descriptive – words such as ‘walk’, ‘say’, ‘eat’ or ‘look’. Consider the sentence ‘Sam walked home’. It is bland and reveals nothing about Sam. However, we can replace ‘walked’ with a more interesting, powerful verb such as ‘stumbled’, ‘meandered’ or ‘bolted’, which tells us something about Sam’s mood and gives the sentence more impact and meaning.

Use the active rather than the passive voice

Writing in the passive voice omits information about the subject (the person or entity doing the action described). Sometimes this is necessary: for example, if it’s not clear who is doing the action or if there’s a reason for not specifying it. But most of the time using the active voice is preferable if you want to write engagingly.

Compare these two sentences:

- It is suggested that justice is not always blind. (Passive voice: no agent is doing the suggesting.)
- Euripides suggests that justice is not always blind. (Active voice: the person who suggests the idea is identified.)

Use repetition (but not too much!)

Careful use of repetition can improve the fluency and cohesion of your writing. For example, the Rule of Three is a useful writing principle that draws on the fact that ideas presented in sets of three are memorable and effective. The Rule of Three is demonstrated in famous sayings such as ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’ (from the United States Declaration of Independence) and ‘I came, I saw, I conquered’ (translation of a statement attributed to Julius Caesar).

You can also use repetition to strengthen the structure of your piece. For example, many reflective essays or blog posts end by referring to an idea or statement introduced at the beginning of the piece.

Use sensory and other details

Don’t simply describe what a character can see; consider also the sounds, smells and sensations that might help to convey a strong sense of place or information about the plot. Provide enough general information to give readers the gist (essence) of an image or scene, then focus on a few specific, original details that will engage their interest.



Although figurative language such as similes and metaphors can enrich your writing, don’t overdo it. Using too many literary devices, or relying heavily on one particular device, can detract from the quality and effectiveness of your writing by becoming distracting or boring and taking the focus away from the main message or story.

Consider connotations

Carefully consider the connotations of the words you use, as these will convey relevant emotions and attitudes without you having to spell them out (allowing you to ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’, as discussed on page 155).



Write a paragraph

- 1 Below is the opening paragraph of a reflective essay about a student's first experience of skydiving. Write another paragraph continuing the reflection, drawing on the guidelines on pages 154–6.

I've always been fascinated by birds and their power of flight. I imagined what it would be like to be able to travel almost anywhere, to see the world become small and insignificant so far below, to feel so free. The grounded world I lived in seemed so complicated and messy in comparison to the world of vast, clear blue skies. Looking back, I think it was this longing to escape, like a bird taking flight on a whim, that led me to try skydiving. The pull of weightlessness and freedom was strong enough to overpower, at least temporarily, my huge fear of heights.

- 2 Identify three choices you made when writing your paragraph and explain why you made them.

Choice 1: _____

Choice 2: _____

Choice 3: _____

Editing your text

Use the following checklist to edit your text.

- The opening of your piece is original, engaging and likely to make the reader want to read further.
- You have appealed to your target audience by choosing a suitable form for your writing and using appropriate language.
- You have used the appropriate features and conventions of the form you are writing in.
- Your text achieves your main purpose for writing.
- The text follows a logical order.
- The major ideas are connected and the relationships between them are clearly expressed.
- Each paragraph develops just one idea.
- Each sentence is clear and complete.
- You have used appropriate linking words to make transitions between sentences and from one paragraph to the next.
- Your sentences begin in different ways and have varied structures.
- You have used a thesaurus to replace at least one overused word or phrase.
- Spelling has been checked using a computer spellchecker and/or a dictionary.
- Every sentence has concluding punctuation (full stop, question mark or exclamation mark).
- Quotation marks are used to show where speech or a quotation begins and ends.

Annotating your text

Part of your assessment for this task involves annotating your text/s to explain the decisions you made during the writing process. Your annotations might relate to both of your written pieces, or only one. Some guidelines for writing effective annotations are outlined below.

- The task requires you to shape texts for a **particular audience and purpose**, so it is important that your annotations refer to the ways in which you have done this. Clearly identify your target audience, and give examples of the factors you think will appeal to them and how this influenced your choices.
- Comment on your use of **language**. Explain the main tone or style you aimed to achieve and give examples of specific vocabulary choices that contribute to this.
- Comment on **form**, explaining why you chose to write the type of text you did. Refer to the ways you used specific relevant features of the form – for example, stage directions if you wrote a script, or a headline and by-line if you wrote a newspaper article.
- Comment on the **structure** of your piece. Consider paragraph length (for example, does a short paragraph at a key point increase the impact of a surprise twist?). For fiction, comment on the pace you created, placement of crisis or turning points, and how these increase and relieve tension. For nonfiction, do subheadings or lists help the reader to locate and absorb information? For an argumentative text, explain how you ordered your reasons.
- Explain how you applied **what you learned from studying your mentor texts**. Be specific about the way you used language and textual features in deliberate ways to create particular effects, similar to those shown in your mentor texts. If you chose to explore the key idea that your mentor texts also explore, explain why this interested you and the particular perspective you wanted to consider.

You can use a planning sheet like the following to make notes on key elements to address in your annotations.

Element of your response	How you have used or addressed this element
Form	
Main ideas/themes explored	
Language	
Purpose	
Audience	
Context	
Influence of mentor texts	



Scan the code or click [here](#) for further tips and vocabulary for writing annotations.



Sample text

The following sample text draws on the mentor text *The Love Hypothesis*, a romantic novel by Ali Hazelwood. Read the annotations to see how the student has made particular decisions about structure and vocabulary as they crafted their text.

LET'S PLAY A GAME

Mollie is gushing over the bride and groom as if they've just recovered from terminal cancer. Part of me wants to stand up and yell from across the table that the two of them aren't exactly superheroes, and that they should only be given kudos if they manage not to join the 50 per cent of marriages that end in divorce. But, seeing as this is their wedding day and I'm the best man, that probably wouldn't go down too well.

As Mollie's maid of honour speech drones on and on, I feel my phone vibrate in my tuxedo pocket. It's a text from an unknown number.

I'm doing a survey of reasons why people deserve to go to hell. Please select the option below that most qualifies for a life of eternal damnation.

1. Not showing up to a blind date at Balthazar's to meet a beautiful, gorgeous, witty, vibrant woman.

2. Not having the decency to at least call or send a text explaining why said woman is being stood up for the first time in her life.

3. Being a man.

I can't help but smirk. I know I shouldn't. It sounds like this poor woman is having the worst night of her life. But it's helping me to stay awake at my brother's wedding, so I decide to play along, hoping that what I'm about to write won't qualify me for hell.

All of the above? I can't imagine any man who could do those things to a beautiful woman. Except maybe the devil himself. In which case, he would indeed deserve a life of eternal damnation. Though would he consider that a punishment ...

I go to put my phone away, not expecting a reply. But then the screen lights up, and my heart skips a beat.

I find your answer ... intriguing. Though I feel I should add another option.

4. Being bold enough to attempt flirting with a woman who owns two rottweilers and three pit bull terriers.

The idea of five vicious dogs bounding towards me makes me wince, but I can't stop myself from smiling at the same time. Thankfully, Mollie has not stopped talking, which means all eyes are on her and not on the dork with a schoolboy grin on his face and his nose buried in his phone.

The intended audience for my piece is young adults interested in a light, romantic story. My primary purpose is to express, in an entertaining way, the excitement of connecting with a new romantic interest.

Drawing inspiration from the protagonist in my mentor text, I developed a first-person narrator with a sarcastic tone and a dry sense of humour. These elements helped to create a strong voice.

As short stories are usually brief, I decided to focus on one exciting incident that plays out against the backdrop of an otherwise fairly ordinary event (i.e. a wedding).

My mentor text includes email correspondence, so I used text messages to push the narrative forward in an engaging way. This feature is likely to be relatable to my young adult audience.

I played with the concept of 'show, don't tell' by having this character reveal the premise of the story in an entertaining way.

Throughout the piece, I have included humorous dialogue that also reveals the characters and their points of view on life, love and relationships (key themes of my piece and my mentor text).





Thankfully, I happen to be a dog person. And I wholeheartedly accept the challenge to win your dogs over through sheer force of will and chew toys. But, in the meantime, I would like a chance to redeem myself, and all men. Go out with me?

My hands are clutching my phone so tightly they're starting to go white. I wait anxiously for the grey dots to turn into a message.

I'll agree to the above request on two non-negotiable conditions.

1. *We meet tonight. Send me your location and I will come to you, so that I can see what was more important than meeting at Balthazar's as previously agreed upon.*

2. *I will be bringing my dogs, as insurance.*

Reply within the next five minutes, or the offer will be withdrawn.

I don't think twice.

Kaley's Courtyard, along the esplanade in Sorrento.

It's at that moment that I notice all eyes focused on me. Mollie has stopped yapping, and the woman next to me is holding out a microphone. I look at this woman, an expectant look in her eyes, and remember that she's my date for this evening.

I stand to give my best man's toast, dread and excitement bubbling through me in a way I haven't felt in years. I guess this won't be as boring a night as I thought.

I made a conscious choice to differ the language the protagonist uses when narrating and when sending text messages. This is because they are different forms and also because the messages are directed to someone he is infatuated with, and therefore should reveal a different side to his character.

Shifting away from the carefree language earlier in the piece, here I used evocative and emotional language to build tension.

As the story nears its conclusion, I decided to ramp up the stakes for the protagonist with a call to direct action, helping to progress the plot and avoid the story becoming stagnant.

While the first point furthers the plot, I included a more humorous point to maintain the dark sense of humour that links the two characters together.

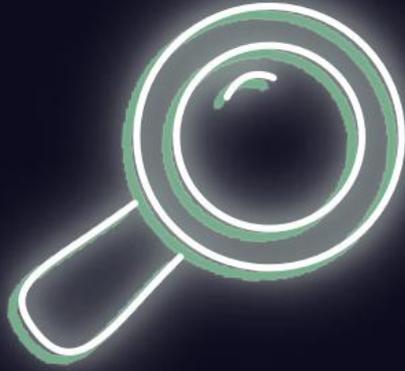
Rather than tying up loose ends, I decided to end on a cliffhanger (a common technique used in short stories), enticing readers to use their own imagination to piece together what might happen next.

To further increase interest and tension, I included a complicating factor in the form of a character reveal.



Annotate a text

- 1 Look again at the opening of Raymond Carver's short story 'So Much Water So Close To Home' in Chapter 13, on page 111. Imagine you are the author of this story. Annotate the opening, explaining the choices you made about audience, purpose, language and so on.
- 2 Swap annotations with a partner. Discuss any differences in your explanations, and possible reasons for these.



Unit 2 Area of Study 2: Exploring argument

This area of study focuses on the use of argument and language to persuade. You will study a variety of persuasive media texts on a current issue or issues and explore how they position audiences to agree. Texts might be written, spoken, audio, visual, audiovisual, or a combination of any of these. You will also apply what you have learned about argument and language strategies to your own presentation of a point of view.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view a table showing the outcome for Area of Study 2 in Unit 2 EAL, and the key knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate.

Understanding argument

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Argument
- » Language
- » Audience, purpose and context

A persuasive text is any text that aims to influence its audience to think or feel a certain way about something. A sponsored social media post promoting a health food, a speech given at a climate-change rally, a movie review, a letter to the editor in response to an article, and an unflattering photograph of a celebrity are all persuasive texts. They use written or spoken language and visual language, or a combination of these, to express an opinion.

In this area of study, the persuasive texts you study will focus on current issues. They will present arguments that aim to position specific audiences to share the writer or speaker's point of view.

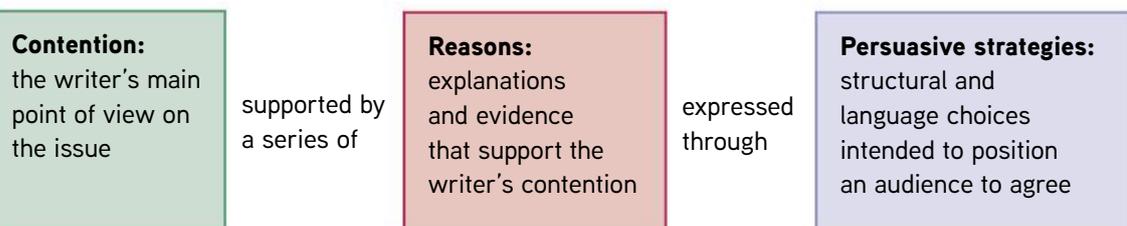
Argument

The **issue** is the general topic of a persuasive text. The **main contention** is the text creator's point of view on the issue. Consider the following text, from a website called The BOO Birds.

Since the beginning of organised sports booing has been part of the behaviour of fans. This practice has in recent times come under criticism. It is said that to boo a bad performance is unkind and demonstrates a lack of sophistication. However, the counterargument is that the combination of booing and applause helps keep the quality of public performance high, by emotionally rewarding the good and punishing the bad. Fans boo in order to vent frustration and disappointment ... it makes them feel better.

The text focuses on the issue of booing at sports events. The writer's main contention is that booing should be allowed.

But an effective persuasive text does more than simply express an opinion. It will present a reasoned argument that aims to persuade an audience to share this opinion. An effective argument is made up of three parts.





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’, ‘in order to’ and ‘for this reason’. These phrases show the logical connection between the point of view and the reasons. The writer of the text about booing presents two main reasons to support their point of view – that booing improves players’ performances and that booing allows fans to release negative emotions.

Bias

Many arguments reveal a writer’s bias. Bias is sometimes thought of as a negative quality, but we all have our own beliefs and values that affect the way we feel about particular issues. Sometimes a writer has a stake (interest or involvement) in an issue, which affects their attitude. For example, a doctor might be more likely to support a medical approach to illegal drug use 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.

For example, the opinion of the writer of the text about booing is likely to be shaped by the fact that they are a sports fan who runs a website all about this particular issue. They are therefore likely to have a strong bias in favour of booing.



When considering a writer’s biases, ask yourself what they might have left out of their argument. Have they purposely omitted key information or alternative viewpoints?



Explore argument

Read the following persuasive text, from the Shark Research Institute, then complete the sentences.

Each year, for every human killed by a shark, our species slaughters millions of sharks. We are stripping the world of one of its most valuable predators – animals that play a critical role in maintaining the health of the world’s oceans. An unreasonable fear of sharks has been implanted in our minds by the hype that surrounds the rare shark attack and by movies that exploit our primal fears. Sharks are vital to the ocean ecosystem. Without sharks our planet’s ocean would soon become a watery graveyard.

- 1 The Shark Research Institute’s contention is _____

- 2 The organisation’s purpose is _____

- 3 The main reason given to support its contention is _____





- » 4 The organisation displays its bias against _____ through the use of the words 'unreasonable fear' and _____
- 5 An important factor that might affect the organisation's defence of sharks is _____

Language

As well as carefully selecting their arguments, writers also make choices about language to communicate effectively with a particular audience.

Some elements of language that writers make choices about include **tone**, **register** and **vocabulary**.

Tone

The tone of a piece of writing refers to how it would sound if you read it out loud. It shows the writer's feelings about what they are saying. The tone can change throughout a piece. If it does, identify the main tone and then consider why it changes when it does.

Look at the tone word bank below. Can you add one more word to each column?

Positive	Negative	Neutral
Appreciative	Aggressive	Bland
Approving	Angry	Businesslike
Assured	Arrogant	Calm
Conciliatory	Bitter	Dispassionate
Enthusiastic	Bullying	Formal
Exuberant	Disparaging	Forthright
Lively	Hostile	Matter-of-fact
Optimistic	Pessimistic	Measured
Respectful	Querulous	Official
Sympathetic	Threatening	Serious

You can use the following sentence starters to write about tone.

- The tone established by the writer is ... and is intended to highlight ...
- Designed to provoke a reaction from the audience, the tone is ...
- In a ... tone, the writer ...
- The author's ... tone elicits sympathy for their position by ...



- Using colourful language, the writer establishes a ... tone designed to ...
- Using provocative language and a dismissive tone, the writer argues strongly against ...
- The ... tone created through the use of ... positions the reader to ...
- The tone shifts from ... to ... as the writer goes on to demonstrate that ...

Register

Register refers to the complexity or style of language. The three main registers are **formal**, **informal** and **standard**. Writers choose a register to suit the audience, purpose and context of their communication. For example, in a conversation with friends, informal language would be used, while an English essay would use formal language.

Features of formal language include:

- no contractions (e.g. *you'll* or *it's*)
- no slang, casual language or colloquialisms
- longer and more complex sentences
- more sophisticated and varied vocabulary
- minimal or no use of the first person (e.g. *I* or *we*).

Features of informal language include:

- use of contractions (see above)
- use of slang, casual language and colloquialisms
- shorter, simpler sentences
- less complex vocabulary
- more frequent use of the first person.

The standard register is somewhere between formal and informal registers.

Vocabulary

Writers choose their words carefully to evoke specific reactions in the reader. One of the ways they do this is by selecting words with particular **connotations**. Connotations are the extra meanings or associations attached to a word, beyond its literal meaning.

For example, the noun 'mum' literally means 'female parent'. However, the word 'mum' also carries emotional associations linked to love and protectiveness. In contrast, the noun 'parent', which has a similar literal meaning, does not have such strong associations.





Look at language

- 1 Choose the best tone descriptions from the list below for each of the examples in the left column of the table. One description is missing an example. Find or create your own example of a persuasive paragraph to suit that description.
- 2 Circle two words or phrases in each example that contribute to the tone.
- 3 Use the sentence starters on pages 164–5 to write complete sentences describing the examples.

Tone descriptions: enthusiastic, concerned, sarcastic, angry

Example	Tone	Sentence
<p>The proposal to lower speed limits to 20km in school zones is absurd. Why not just ban cars altogether and make walking compulsory? It'd be about as quick and convenient.</p> <p>(Letter to the editor)</p>		
<p>Outside is free – it's a big planet but we need to take care of it! Get out there and enjoy what we have #outsideisfree</p> <p>(Instagram post)</p>		
<p>For the one in six Australian children living in poverty, school can also be the beginning of a long and arduous journey to keep up with their classmates. Books and technology are unaffordable, excursions are missed and that lost backpack, lunchbox and too-small sports uniform never replaced.</p> <p>(Wendy Harmer, <i>The Age</i>)</p>		



- 4 Write a sentence for the following persuasive scenarios using the most appropriate register.
- a A wellness influencer is promoting a new vitamin drink in an Instagram post.
Register: _____
Sentence: _____
- b An animal rights activist is speaking at a rally against factory farming.
Register: _____
Sentence: _____
- c A scientist is writing a journal article about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines.
Register: _____
Sentence: _____
- 5 Select a key word or phrase in each of the following examples and identify the intended effect on the audience.
- a [Buying essays] starts off as a rational approach to getting an assignment done quickly and easily. As the student descends the morality ladder, the lines between right and wrong become blurred. The student who engages in academic misconduct is laying the foundations for unethical conduct in the workplace. (*The Conversation*)
- The key word / phrase _____ with its connotation of _____ is intended to make the audience feel / think _____
- b Insufferable celebs need to stop with their sob stories.
- The key word / phrase _____ with its connotation of _____ is intended to make the audience feel / think _____

Audience, purpose and context

In this area of study, an argument is the point of view and supporting reasons that a writer or speaker is presenting, and persuasive language refers to how they're saying it. These two aspects are connected. For example, an argument based on reason and logic might be delivered in a serious tone using formal language, while an argument that appeals to the reader's sympathy might be presented in very emotional language.

A writer's choices about what to say and how to say it are based on three important elements: **audience**, **purpose** and **context**. These also affect the choice of the appropriate **form** for their communication; for example, is the intended audience likely to view a website or read a newspaper? Can the message be better expressed in a video or an in-depth magazine article?

- The **audience** is anyone who reads, views or listens to a persuasive text.
- The **purpose** of a text is what the writer wanted to achieve, e.g. to persuade the audience to vote for a particular politician, sign a petition, donate money to a cause or simply agree with the writer's point of view.
- The **context** of a text is its background, time, place and other surrounding conditions.

Positioning the audience

Writers and speakers use various techniques to position the audience to think and feel in particular ways. Understanding the existing views of the people they are trying to persuade allows writers to shape their arguments in ways that manipulate these beliefs and attitudes. A range of factors, including the following, can shape an individual's viewpoint on an issue.

- Age
- Interests
- Nationality
- Gender
- Education
- Family
- Friends
- Religion
- Political beliefs
- Finances
- Group affiliations
- Past experiences
- Values
- Traditions
- Health



Consider audience, purpose and context

1 Identify the likely audience and purpose in the following examples of persuasive texts.

- a 'It's like milk but made for humans' (Oatly oat milk advertising slogan)

Audience: _____

Purpose: _____

- b **Host a butt clean-up day with your friends around town.** All you need is a plastic bag, gloves, and comfortable shoes.

When people stop to ask why you're picking up butts, you can tell them the shocking reality that **cigarette butts are the most littered item on earth.**

(From <https://www.thetruth.com/take-action/action/clean-butts>)

Audience: _____

Purpose: _____



- 2 Match each of the following reasons for culling kangaroos to the audience most likely to be persuaded by it.

Reason	Audience
Kangaroos cause great environmental damage, especially to native grasses.	Residents in a rural community
Culls are strictly controlled.	People concerned about how their food is produced
Kangaroos are a traffic hazard, damaging vehicles and causing accidents.	Campaigners against cruelty to animals
Kangaroos provide a healthy and sustainable source of meat.	Members of a 'green' political party

- 3 Identify the most appropriate form for the following audiences and purposes.

Audience and purpose	Form
To inform parents of changes to a school's homework policy	
To encourage people over the age of fifty to have regular eye tests	
To persuade zoo visitors to make a donation towards a new orangutan enclosure	

- 4 Tick the argument and language you think would be most effective for the following audiences, purposes and contexts, and write a sentence explaining your choice.

- a **Audience, purpose, context:** a speech intended to persuade a group of young office workers to make a New Year's resolution to ride their bikes to work rather than drive

- Cycling helps prevent heart disease.
 Cycling helps you lose weight.
 Cycling is better for the environment.

This argument would be most effective because _____

- b **Audience, purpose, context:** a post on a social media site for members of a local community, about cleaning up a local park

- It is the civic responsibility of all Collinvale residents to do their part to keep its assets, like the park, clean and useable.
 Get off your butt and get yourself down to Bell Park to give us a hand cleaning up.
 The park is a much-loved and visited Collinvale treasure and we can keep it that way for future generations if we all get involved in cleaning it up.

This language would be most effective because _____

Persuasive strategies

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Structuring strategies
- » Persuasive techniques
- » Analysing argument and language

As discussed in the previous chapter, an argument is an opinion supported by reasons. Creators of persuasive texts carefully consider how to present their contention and reasons in the way most likely to convince their target audience to agree with them. This means making choices about how to organise their text and how to select persuasive words and phrases to evoke particular emotions in their target audience.

This chapter looks at some of these persuasive strategies and how they work to position the reader to agree with a point of view.

Structuring strategies

A common way to structure an argument is to begin with a contention and some background information about the issue, then move on to the reasons for the writer's opinion. But there are many other ways to build an argument. Common structural strategies and features used in persuasive texts are summarised in the table below.

Strategy/Feature	Effect
Beginning with an anecdote or incident before moving into a discussion of the issue it relates to	Suggests the issue is current and relevant; can suggest the writer has personal experience with the issue
Placing the main contention at the beginning of the text, followed by an explanation of reasons	Suggests the writer's strong belief in their opinion; may convey an impression of honesty and openness
Placing the main contention at the end, after reasons have been outlined	Suggests a logical conclusion has been reached; encourages the reader to follow the writer's reasoning
Presenting reasons in order from most to least important	Creates a strong persuasive effect from the beginning of the text
Presenting reasons in order from least to most important	Finishes on a strong note; creates persuasive momentum
Using subheadings and/or dividing the text into sections	Guides readers through the material and draws their attention to key ideas, facts or events
Using bullet lists	Highlights or summarises key information



Strategy/Feature	Effect
Creating visual elements with breakout or 'pull' quotes	Highlights key points or grabs attention
Including graphs, charts, tables or infographics	Presents information in a clear and immediately accessible way; breaks up long sections of text for ease of reading
Using images	Illustrates and provides a point of view on the issue; breaks up the text



Consider structure

Read the following extract from a social media post, then complete the analytical sentences about the structure of the text.



No power to the people – without fuel alternatives we're in for some long cold winters

A few weeks ago, we replaced (at great cost) our gas heater with a wood heater after learning that gas appliances are not good for our health and will be phased out. Now we're being told that wood-burning stoves are also not good for our health and should be phased out.

That leaves electricity, most of which is currently powered by coal, which is also being phased out.

Unless the decision-makers and power brokers stop looking at everything in isolation and get serious about developing alternatives, it looks like we will be in for some cold, dark, jumper-wearing, salad-eating winters.

~~X~~ gas ~~X~~ wood ~~X~~ electricity ~~X~~ coal ???

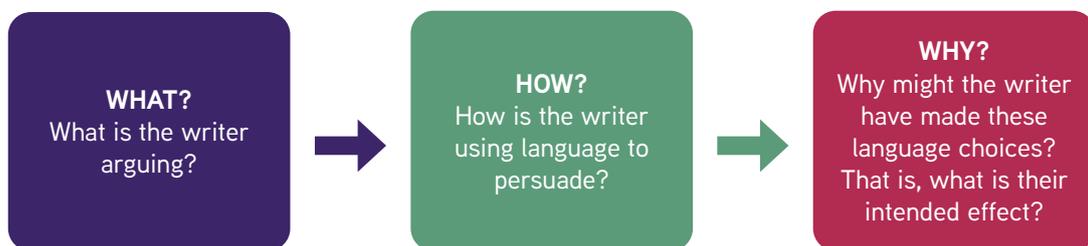


- » 1 Beginning with an anecdote about the expensive replacement of a gas heater gives the impression that the writer is _____. It also aims to evoke _____ in the reader.
- 2 The writer includes an image of _____, which has the effect of _____
- 3 The text with the image highlights the writer's main point, which is _____
Summarising their opinion in this way is a useful strategy on social media because _____
- 4 The writer declares their contention in the _____ paragraph. Including it at this point positions the reader to _____
- 5 The infographic presents a list of fuels with crosses next to them, and an unidentified item with a tick beside it. Ending the post with this visual information suggests to the reader that _____

Persuasive techniques

To analyse persuasive language well, think about how the writer's argument and language work together to create persuasive effects. You need to explain how an argument is supported by the language used to deliver it and how this is intended to appeal to the audience.

A useful approach to analysing a persuasive text is to ask yourself 'What? How? Why?'



Remember that a writer will usually have a specific target audience who have their own interests, biases, experiences and knowledge. Always consider how particular language choices are likely to influence the writer's **specific** audience.



Summary table of persuasive techniques

The following table summarises some important persuasive techniques used to position an audience to agree with a writer or speaker. Fill in the blanks in the final column to complete the analytical sentences about each example.

Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
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 	A lack of transparency and accountability means that choosing an aged-care facility is like playing Russian roulette with your loved one's life.	The comparison between the deadly game of Russian roulette and aged-care facilities implies that aged-care facilities are dangerous, evoking _____ in the reader.
Anecdote: a brief personal account or story, usually entertaining, 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 	Recently, my friend's world was turned upside down in an instant when she lost her mother. Unable to cope, she reached out for psychological support but waiting times have blown out to months. She deteriorated rapidly into a ball of anxiety and depression, an ordeal that could have been avoided if psychologists were more affordable and available.	The anecdote about _____ is a form of evidence that encourages the audience to feel _____ and therefore to agree that _____
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 family, once a tight-knit cluster of parents, siblings, grandparents and relatives, has fragmented into ever smaller and more fragile forms – single-parent and even single-person families that offer little protection against life's challenges.	The writer's description of changes in family structures over time suggests that traditional families offer greater security than non-traditional families, positioning the reader to _____
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 	Experts have urged would-be dog owners to reconsider buying squashed-faced animals such as French bulldogs, warning they are prone to life-limiting health conditions, and that buying such breeds could fuel criminal activity.	The writer aims to evoke alarm in the reader that will cause them to reject flat-faced dog breeds as unethical and _____



Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
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) 	Businesses are increasingly using misleading sales tactics, like pressure selling or hidden charges, to dupe innocent shoppers into parting with their hard-earned cash.	Emotive words such as 'pressure' and _____, help to present an appeal to financial self-interest that positions readers to feel angry towards and distrustful of _____
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 	I dream of a world where left lanes of all highways are converted to bike lanes for us cyclists, where we zoom in our thousands past the tollbooths taxing all the privately owned cars as they sit in gridlock.	The writer establishes an 'us and them' divide between _____ and _____, using inclusive language to imply that all cyclists share a desire for more bike lanes and road tolls for car-users.
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 	Language tests for immigrants put citizenship out of reach for vulnerable groups (like the illiterate and those who have experienced trauma), an outcome that seems inequitable at best, discriminatory at worst.	This comment positions readers to feel that English language tests for immigrants are _____
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 	Imagine if we could create a personalised blood supply for every patient in Australia – even those with incredibly rare blood types. One day, this may be possible.	The words 'imagine if' and 'one day' invite the reader to envisage a future in which people do not have to worry about _____, encouraging them to feel _____
Appeal to sympathy: aiming to evoke pity and concern in the reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage people to feel protective towards someone or something 	Fast food ads that entice young consumers in developing countries contribute directly to healthcare tolls and increased rates of disease in the world's most vulnerable populations.	The word '_____' appeals to the reader's sympathy, inclining them to believe that _____
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, culture and religion, and ruins social unity 	Women taking their partners' surnames is a beloved tradition for a reason – it's still the best way for a couple to display their commitment and unity to the outside world.	Words with connotations of preciousness and value such as 'beloved' and _____, encourage readers to feel positively about and even protective of the custom of _____



Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
Connotations and associations: meanings attached to or implied by words, as opposed to the words' literal or dictionary meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> influence the audience's response through the positive or negative implications of words add an emotive element to a statement of fact or opinion 	A canvas for some of the world's best street artists, Frankston City is now an iconic art and culture destination.	The word 'canvas', with its associations with art and connotations of possibilities for creative expression, works together with the highly positive phrases 'world's best' and _____, to create an impression of Frankston as _____
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 	Delivery apps are squeezing the life out of traditional bricks-and-mortar restaurants, strong-arming them into unfair contracts and gobbling up a huge percentage of their profits.	A sense of violence is conveyed through terms such as 'squeezing the life out of' and _____, This emotive language depicts delivery apps as _____
Evidence: information such as facts, statistics, expert opinion and personal experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support an argument suggest an argument is reasonable and researched suggest independent support for a writer's opinion 	Around two-thirds of Australians over 65 (67%) use social media. While this is much less than the overall population (where 88% use social media), it shows that seniors are engaged.	The writer presents statistics then draws a conclusion (that seniors are engaged with social media) from them. The impression is that the writer's opinion is _____
Exaggeration, overstatement and hyperbole: presenting an extreme view of a situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create surprise and strong dramatic impact provoke a strong emotional reaction add humour 	Why can't our cities be designed to promote our health and wellbeing rather than killing us with poisonous car fumes and toxic pollution?	The writer uses dramatic vocabulary choices such as _____, with connotations of serious physical harm, to present an alarming and exaggerated image of _____
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 	When did teachers become like the round bullseye target on a dartboard?	The comparison between teachers and _____ suggests they are being unfairly attacked and implies that these attacks could cause serious harm.



Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
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 	Once parents put pressure on their teens to succeed. Now teens do this to themselves, striving to create the sort of impossibly perfect, glossy lives they see on social media.	This generalisation suggests that teenagers are all similarly negatively affected by social media; this aims to incite both alarm and _____ in readers.
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 	We are calling on you (our loyal locals) to offer a helping hand so our Chapel Street Precinct businesses can survive, and so the cafes and restaurants you love can remain standing after this is over. So, instead of ordering takeaway through one of the delivery apps who are charging eateries up to a 35% commission, we ask that when possible you call direct and collect.	Using the collective pronoun 'we' suggests that the writer is speaking on behalf of _____ The inclusive pronoun 'our' includes the reader in this community, encouraging them to feel protective of and invested in helping local businesses.
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 	Hardship? How about having to wait a whole month for your \$70 000 luxury car or having to fight off multiple other bidders to nab that \$5m house? Life doesn't get much tougher than that.	A sarcastic tone is developed through the use of emotive terms such as _____, The implication is that people these days are _____
Puns and plays on words: words with multiple meanings, used to imply multiple ideas with one phrase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> present the writer as clever and funny position the audience to want to pay attention 	Aussie cops turn noses up at sniffer dogs	The headline plays on the connection between dogs trained to sniff and the familiar expression 'to turn one's nose up', meaning to reject something. The implication is that Australian police are foolishly and unreasonably refusing to _____
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 that an argument is sensible and intelligently developed 	Airbnb contributes to overtourism by offering more accommodation for travellers. This creates a vicious cycle: more tourists = more money = more properties on Airbnb = fewer local residents.	The audience is encouraged to see a direct link between _____ and Airbnb. Building on their likely feelings of _____ towards places impacted by overtourism, the writer positions the audience to therefore reject Airbnb.



Technique	Often used to ...	Example	Example analysis
Repetition: to use a word or phrase several times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> place emphasis on the words or phrases that are repeated in order to highlight ideas or evoke an emotional response 	We don't need empty praise for our resilience in the floods, we need a government that will take responsibility for the climate change that caused them. We don't need bandaids solutions, we need a government that will increase disaster recovery funding. Most of all, we need a government that will urgently cut coal and gas pollution.	The repetition of the phrase '_____,' reinforces the idea that the government is repeatedly failing to give people what they need, painting a picture of them as _____
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 	If we could live happy and healthy lives without harming others ... why wouldn't we?	The motto of the animal rescue organisation Edgar's Mission positions readers to supply the implied answer that _____, suggesting that avoiding harm to animals is both logical and easy.



Analyse persuasive techniques

- 1 Read the extract from an opinion piece below.

To my beautiful hijabi sisters around the world who are banned from wearing the hijab, I see you.

To my hijabi sisters in India or elsewhere who are denied an education because they wear the hijab, I see you.

To my hijabi sisters in France or elsewhere who are denied from playing the sports they love because they wear the hijab, I see you.

(from 'I don't have to choose between my hijab and going to school, but my sisters aren't so lucky' by Anhaar Kareem, *The Guardian*)

- a Why do you think Kareem chose to use the word 'sisters' to refer to other hijab-wearers?

- b Highlight the repeated words and phrases in the example above.
- c What does Kareem's use of repetition suggest about discrimination against hijab-wearers? _____





- 2 Complete the table to analyse connotations and associations. In the first column, highlight words and phrases with particular connotations. In the middle column, make notes about these associations. In the last column, identify the intended impact.

Example	Connotations and associations	The reader is positioned to feel/think ...
Nothing wrong with going shooting to feed your family. Love a bit of venison, or kangaroo patties like Nan used to make. It's a healthy form of protein and the act of getting it is great exercise. (Comment on an opinion piece about gun control)		
Decades of neglect have put aged care at the mercy of Covid-19 tsunami (News article headline)		
Feast for Freedom is here and we want you to be part of the celebration. It's a shared food experience that makes a difference in the lives of people seeking asylum. (Email from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre)		

- 3 Identify two persuasive techniques in each of the examples below.
- a Etiquette is a lost treasure of the past. Loud public phone conversations, freely sprinkled with swearing and uncomfortably intimate revelations, are now the preferred form of communication.
- _____
- b Friday night's family trip to the movies cost me an eye-watering \$124.50. Do cinema-owners think the average cinema-goer is a celebrity millionaire?
- _____



- 4 Choose one of the examples from question 3 and write two analytical sentences identifying the effect each persuasive technique is intended to have on the reader.

- 5 Rewrite the sentences below to include techniques that make them more persuasive. Identify the techniques you have chosen and explain the effect you aim to have on the target audience.

- a Take part in 'Free Dress Friday' by donating \$2 to Blankets for the Homeless. (Audience: senior secondary students at your school)

New sentence: _____

Technique: _____

Intended effect: _____

- b The local swimming pool should offer free entry to all lower-income earners. (Audience: attendees at a local council meeting)

New sentence: _____

Technique: _____

Intended effect: _____

Analysing argument and language

An effective analysis will do more than simply identify the persuasive techniques a writer has used. A strong analysis involves considering the text as a whole, and not just its individual parts. This means thinking about how argument strategies and persuasive language work together to create overall effects on the reader.

The following strategies will help you to analyse argument and language together.

Consider purpose and audience

A writer's purpose is linked to their main contention, so start by identifying this. A contention might be broad, such as 'More should be done to lower the crime rate in Melbourne'. Or it could be quite specific, such as 'The current rate of 270 police officers for every 100 000 people should be increased to 300'. Identifying the main contention will help you to understand what the writer wants the reader to think and feel, and the techniques they might use to achieve this.

It is also helpful to consider the writer's intended audience, as some persuasive techniques will work more effectively with some audiences. For example, appeals to tradition might work best with older people or more conservative audiences, while appeals to being modern might be more effective for younger audiences.

Consider the overall approach

Before identifying individual persuasive techniques in a text, read (or listen to, or view) the text once and make notes on the overall angle, argument and strategies used. Is the approach predominantly logical or is it more concerned with evoking an emotional response in the reader?

Consider how the techniques work together

If a writer wants to make the audience feel a certain way, they will structure their argument around techniques – such as emotional appeals or attacks – that rely on feeling rather than logic. For example, a writer who wants to persuade people to donate money to an animal shelter might try to evoke the audience's pity, and a desire to help. This might be done by starting with an emotive anecdote about a familiar domestic animal, such as a dog or cat, followed by an appeal to a sense of justice (e.g. 'it's unfair that vulnerable creatures like this should suffer because humans neglect or mistreat them').

The structure of an argument also helps to position readers, so it is important to consider how techniques work within a text's particular structure. For example, if a writer wanted to persuade their audience that a rail link between Melbourne Airport at Tullamarine and Melbourne city should be built, they might begin by emphasising the convenience for people catching flights, so that readers – many of whom are likely to use the airport at some time – feel the development would benefit them. The writer might address the cost of the project later in the piece, so that readers aren't immediately put off by the large sums of taxpayers' money involved, but have been prepared to accept this because the benefits have already been outlined.

In contrast, if a writer wants to portray themselves as balanced, they might structure their argument by starting with a discussion of the pros and cons of the issue and stating their contention at the end. This suggests they are working through the issue in a fair and thoughtful way.

Focus on the intended effects

Remember that your analysis should focus on *why* a writer has presented their opinion in a particular way. This means considering the intended effects of different elements of the text. It can be helpful to group persuasive techniques according to the effect they are trying to achieve. For instance, a writer might use emotive language, an anecdote and appeals to justice in order to evoke a sense of outrage in the reader and position them to agree that a situation is unfair.

Relate the visual and audio material to the text

The media texts you analyse in VCE EAL will often include a visual, audio or audiovisual element. The intended effects of any non-written material should always be considered in terms of how it supports and extends the writer's argument, or (less commonly) how it contradicts it.



Analyse argument and language

Read the text below and scan the code or click [here](#) to view the video, then answer the questions that follow. VICSES is the Victoria State Emergency Service.



SES: A role for everyone

Each of our volunteers receives accredited, recognised training as part of their role, ranging from first aid to general rescue, chainsaw operations, community education, media training and much more.

You can read more about training on the 'Training for new volunteers' page.

You will find our volunteers assisting their local communities throughout Victoria in rural, regional and metropolitan locations: on the front lines, in emergency planning and strategy centres, and providing education to help community members understand what to do when an emergency strikes.

We have teachers working alongside electricians, retirees and university students. The diversity of our members is the key to our success.

1 What is the purpose of the text?

2 Who do you think is the target audience for the text? What makes you think this?

3 What is the main emotion the text aims to evoke in the audience? Identify three words or phrases in the written text or the video that target this emotion.

4 Highlight or circle three lists in the written text. What is the intended effect of these?

5 Identify another persuasive technique used in the text. What effect does it aim to have?

6 How does the content of the video support the written text?

Written persuasive texts

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Blog posts and opinion pieces
- » Editorials
- » Letters to the editor and online comments
- » Letters, newsletters and emails
- » Petitions
- » Social media posts

Newspapers and news programs on television and radio were traditionally the main sources of information about news and current events. However, nowadays many people access news on the internet. Online versions of newspapers are popular sources, but social networking sites are also important in the creation and distribution of information about society, politics and significant events.

Additionally, issues arising out of current events are written about in a wide range of text types, both online and offline. This chapter looks at text types that rely mainly on the written word.

Blog posts and opinion pieces

Opinion pieces and blog entries express a definite point of view on a particular issue. They are often written by people who have a special interest in or knowledge of the issue. Both opinion pieces and blogs usually employ highly persuasive argument and language techniques, but opinion pieces are more likely to be written in a formal and sophisticated style.

The following opinion piece by Patrick Carlyon was published in the *Herald Sun* newspaper.

‘Empowered’ students still have big lessons to learn

Today’s students throw around words like “empowerment” and “inclusivity” but are they so empowered they can pick and choose when they confront a measure they don’t like?



Blue hair and piercings are not part of the school uniform policy at this secondary college.



If I got to express how I feel, on my terms, I'd turn up to work each day about noon, in cap, thongs and shorts, and sit around discussing Warnie's death, the pillage of Ukraine, and the roadworks that have once again turned a 10km Melbourne drive into an hour-long ordeal.

Then, I'd go for lunch.

Unfortunately, my feelings don't matter much. They bow to a higher power. Short of illness, I'm obliged to maintain standards which demand something more.

In schools, or so it seems, kids are being taught that meeting standards is now an optional extra.

As far as I can tell, blue hair and piercings are not part of any school uniform policy. They're certainly not at a local secondary school.

But an outcry erupted when year 12 students with blue hair and piercings were excluded from official photos last week.

The students were removed moments before the pictures were to be taken, prompting other students to refuse to have their photo taken, too.

This was a "public humiliation", one parent argued, notwithstanding that many people would be humiliated to wear blue hair and piercings in public, and that many people form instant judgments of those people who choose blue hair and piercings.



A student said that "students ... deserve to be allowed to express ourselves – express how we are feeling".

Indeed, today's students sound terribly literate in the language of self-awareness and identity. They throw around words like "empowerment". They are trained in "inclusivity". By the time they get to university, they will assume that everyone really wants to know their preferred pronoun.

For the rest of us, that is, anyone who grew up when blasting Kiss bangers was rebellious, and "empowerment" was having \$10 to blow at the pinball arcade, it all sounds so twee.

Schools, like workplaces, impose standards of presentation, as they always have.

The newsy bit was what happened next. The school is thought to have apologised for trying to impose standards, and has promised a school council review of policy. The obvious question is: why? Must children demand the right to ignore the rules because of how they feel? Are they so empowered that they can pick and choose – under threat of revolt – whenever they confront a measure they don't like?

There is a bigger lesson here. When these apparently precious little balls of feelings do grow up, they will notice that the adult world isn't terribly concerned about how they feel.

They will have to present in ways that may not affirm their inner child. They may even have to go to work when they don't feel like it, because troublesome distractions, such as paying the rent or filling up the car, tend to trump the need to express your identity at any cost.

They might also learn that while everyone has a voice, not everyone commands much of an audience. Especially people with blue hair and facial piercings.



Analyse an opinion piece

- 1 Who do you think is the writer's primary audience? _____
- 2 Circle or highlight three words or phrases that help you to work out the primary audience.
- 3 How might an audience of school students respond to Carlyon's opinion? Why?

- 4 Circle or highlight one use of sarcasm in the opinion piece.
- 5 Complete the sentence: Carlyon argues that school uniform policies _____

- 6 What broader point is Carlyon making about young people? Express this in your own words in a single sentence.

Editorials

Editorials are written by a newspaper's senior editor or a group of editors. They reflect the newspaper's position on an issue. Editorials take a definite viewpoint on an issue, use evidence and argument to support their position and are written in mostly formal language.

The editorial below was published in Victorian newspaper *The Age*.

Scooter safety calls for balanced measures

When you walk through Melbourne's CBD, besides the numerous empty storefronts, the most noticeable change is the proliferation of electric scooters. They are hard to miss. Brightly coloured, they stand, lean and lie scattered around the city.

They are part of a one-year trial, which began last week, of 1500 e-scooters from Neuron Mobility (orange scooters) and Lime (green and white) that have been distributed across the municipalities of Melbourne, Port Phillip and Yarra. It did not take long for them to become a talking point.

Travelling at good speed, they can be seen scooting along on roads, footpaths and everything in between. It's not meant to be that way. There are rules. You must be over 18 and wear a helmet; their speed is restricted to 20km/h; you cannot carry another person; and they should be ridden only on bike lanes, shared paths and low-speed [50km/h or less] roads. Footpaths are supposed to be off limits.

The police were quick to crack down on errant behaviour. On the first weekend the scooters were available, officers recorded 38 offences that mainly involved riders running red lights and not wearing helmets. But there is no shortage of footage of riders ignoring the rules and people telling of either having a near miss or being struck by an e-scooter. While this is unsettling and potentially dangerous for pedestrians, a Queensland University of Technology study indicates that the greater risk of injury is to riders who come unstuck.



It should hardly come as a surprise. The e-scooter-hire craze has expanded globally to more than 100 cities, mostly in Europe and America, during the past few years. Many people have embraced electric bikes and scooters as a means of getting out of their cars and filling the gap in public transport for trips that are



too far to walk or don't follow transport routes. But concerns about rule breaking and safety have followed them at every turn. In Stockholm, where e-scooters were introduced in 2018, authorities have dramatically cut by about half the number allowed to be hired, after growing concerns about them being strewn across the city. Paris cracked down on them last year when a pedestrian was killed after being struck by one.

In Australia, Brisbane was first off the block, kicking off a trial in 2018, but Adelaide, Hobart and Canberra have also followed suit. The trials have been met with mixed reviews. Two councillors in Hobart recently called for the trial there to be put on hold over safety concerns and the Queensland government is considering new ways to crack down on illegal use of e-scooters.

To keep them on the streets of Melbourne, there are some lessons that can be learnt from other cities. The most obvious is the need for an expanded campaign to educate people on how to use them safely. The e-scooter hire companies should be forced to step up. While police have a role to play in enforcing the rules, until there is a broader understanding of requirements, policing will have limited impact. Another step would be to keep a strict limit on how many e-scooters can be left out to be hired. Experience shows that people get fed up if too many clog up the footpaths. Set parking spaces would also help.

The City of Melbourne has done much in recent years to constrain the use of cars while encouraging people to use public transport and cycle. E-scooters could be a welcome addition to this strategy. But they must be brought in safely and in a way that limits the chaos on already crowded roads and footpaths, otherwise they will soon lose favour with Melburnians.



Analyse an editorial

- 1 Identify two ways in which the editorial suggests e-scooters could be made safer.

- 2 Why do you think the editorial refers to e-scooter schemes in other countries and states?

- 3 Complete the sentence: The editorial argues that _____

because _____

Letters to the editor and online comments

Letters to the editor and online comments written in response to articles published online are written by members of the public, rather than journalists. They are shorter than opinion pieces and allow readers of a publication to have their say on a particular issue. Space limitations usually mean that letters and comments can only present a brief contention with one or two supporting reasons. They often use highly persuasive language.

The following online comments were made in response to an article in the Tasmanian newspaper *The Mercury* about a proposal to drain Lake Pedder in Tasmania. Lake Pedder and its inland beach were flooded fifty years ago to create a dam for hydroelectric power generation. A campaign to drain the lake and restore its beach received a range of responses from the public.

COMMENTS

Stephen

The idiocy of the proposal to drain Lake Pedder beggars belief. The lake is an important part of a network of hydroelectric power stations in Tasmania which deliver clean, green and sustainable/renewable energy. The very same energy which is sought the world over to mitigate the effects of global warming.

Not only does Tasmania enjoy the benefit of such clean energy, at times it also has the capacity to export this energy to mainland Australia, thus reducing their reliance on energy generated by coal-fired power stations.

I suspect there would be no argument that the original Lake Pedder was picturesque. Unfortunately that beauty was enjoyed only by the few who had the capacity to walk in or fly in to the lake. However, to now sacrifice the very real environmental and economic benefits of power generation which the lake currently provides would be vandalism on a monumental scale. The proposal is nothing more than an ill-considered, sentimental pipe-dream.

Aimee

I think the point of the article is that such a beautiful spot on earth should have never been interfered with, never sullied.

It seems amazing to me that true locals don't have very much respect for Tasmania and just cannot appreciate just how beautiful it truly is compared to anywhere else I have travelled.

One does not have to be a Greenie to appreciate Tasmania.



Analyse online comments

Complete the following table to summarise the writers' opinions and approaches.

	Stephen	Aimee
Main contention		
Main tone		
Example of emotive language 1		
Example of emotive language 2		

Letters, newsletters and emails

Persuasive letters and emails may be sent to and from an individual or a group. Many organisations, such as political parties and charities, that are based around particular issues (for example, the environment or human or animal rights) send letters, newsletters and emails to existing and potential supporters. These texts can include images and embedded videos, in addition to written text.

Persuasive letters sent by individuals might be aimed at encouraging another individual or organisation to take action on an issue.

The following email was sent by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), an environmental protection group, to its subscribers.

Hi Nina,

The humble Australian backyard – there's nothing like it.

Perhaps you're lucky enough to step outside your back door and experience sprawling bushland and wildlife. Maybe it's a swing set, a hose and a thriving veggie patch.

Or you might even have a backyard like my own – a simple balcony, complete with an under-watered and somewhat neglected herb garden. (*Look, I'll water them tomorrow, I promise!*)

No matter what kind of backyard you have, I'm sure you'll agree there's one backyard that matters more than anything – our **Big Backyard**, Australia.

We live in one of the most biodiverse places on the planet, cared for and managed by First Nations Peoples for tens of thousands of years.

But our unique and extraordinary plants, wildlife and ecosystems are at risk. Australia now has one of the worst extinction records on Earth.

We've got a simple but hugely impactful way you can help.





Next week – on Thursday 17 February – we’re holding ACF’s very first giving day to help Save our Big Backyard.

And the great news is, any donation you can give will be matched for **24 hours only** by a group of generous ACF supporters, **DOUBLING your impact**.

It’s your chance to protect the unique animals we love that live nowhere else but right here in our Big Backyard.

On Thursday 17 February all donations will be doubled.

\$50 = \$100

\$100 = \$200

\$250 = \$500

Don’t miss out on your chance to **DOUBLE your impact** and help protect the forests, wetlands, bushland and oceans that our unique animals and birds call home.

They’re counting on you.

Thank you,

Kelly

Kelly O’Shanassy
Chief Executive Officer



**AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION**

We are Australia’s national environment organisation. We speak out, show up and act for a world where forests, rivers, people and wildlife thrive. We are proudly independent and funded by donations from our community.



Analyse an email

- 1 Identify three features of the text that indicate that this is an email.

- 2 Highlight all examples of inclusive language used in the email.

- 3 Complete the sentences: The email is encouraging readers to _____

One way in which it does this is _____

Petitions

A petition is a written formal request, signed by multiple people, directed at a person or 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. Petitions are usually written in a formal register, may use a firm and urgent tone, and generally encourage the reader to add their signature.

The petition below was written by local resident Winnie Wong to the City of Monash. It was published on the website change.org, which hosts petitions on a wide variety of issues.

← → ↻

🔍 ⏴ ↶ ⋮

Keep weekly red rubbish bin collection



»»

»

← → ↻ Search 🔍 ↓ ↶ ↷ ⋮

The community at Monash cares a lot about the environment and we have already taken measures to reduce waste. A weekly rubbish bin collection cycle just barely meets our needs. Therefore, we strongly object to changing this to fortnightly.

Our community has already taken various measures to reduce or manage waste:

1. Many of us have already set up food compost at home.
2. Some of us have other ways of recycling food waste.
3. We already sort out waste appropriately into those that can be recycled, green/food waste, and general rubbish.
4. Some of us with large families, multi-generation households, families with medical conditions that generate waste, families with babies etc. have already purchased and upgraded to a larger/extra bin. It is JUST enough to meet our needs.

But even with the above measures, many of us find that our weekly bin collection only just sufficiently meets our needs.

This means that a **fortnightly collection cycle will lead to unintended consequences** that will cause nuisance and health hazards to our community:

1. Overfilled bins, making it more difficult for our rubbish collection staff
2. Rubbish flying into the gutter due to overfilling
3. Unwelcome insects and pests scavenging around the neighbourhood
4. Larger families needing to visit the various waste centres on a weekly basis thereby creating unnecessary inconvenience
5. Additional stress to families with medical needs or babies, because some recycling methods are difficult to adopt in their circumstances.

We hope that the Council will listen to the collective voice of the community and **MAINTAIN OUR WEEKLY RED RUBBISH BIN COLLECTION.**

Thank you.



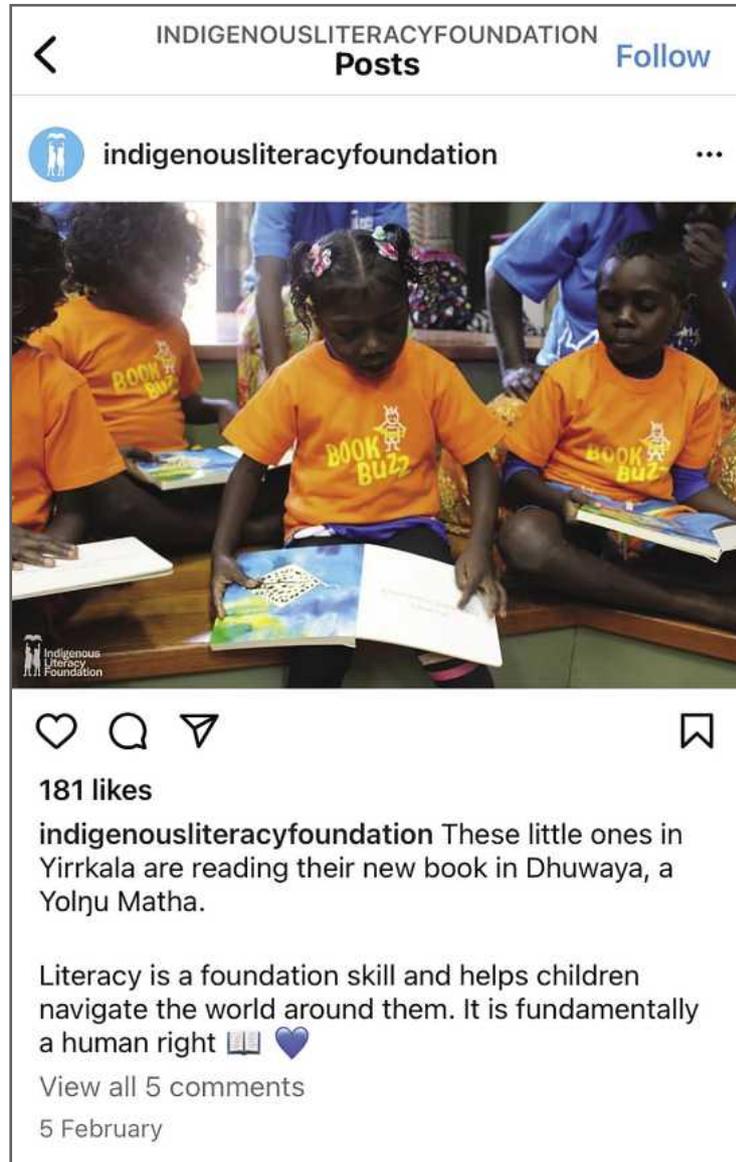
Analyse a petition

- 1 Who is the main audience for the petition? _____
- 2 Identify a secondary audience for the petition. _____
- 3 Explain in your own words three reasons Winnie Wong gives to support her argument.



Social media posts

The following post is from the Instagram page of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, an organisation committed to promoting literacy in Australian First Nations communities.



Analyse a social media post

- 1 Describe the image used in the post. _____

- 2 Identify two features of the image that encourage the reader to support the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.

- 3 The children are described as 'little ones'. What emotions is this phrase intended to evoke in the reader? _____

Visual persuasive texts

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Photographs
- » Cartoons and illustrations
- » Graphs, charts, tables and infographics

This chapter looks at texts whose primary mode is visual. They might include some words but the main way in which they communicate a point of view is through the use of visual language such as framing, perspective and colour. Visual texts might accompany written texts, such as a photograph included in an opinion piece, or they might stand alone, like a political cartoon.

For more detailed information on annotating a visual text, see Chapter 21.

Photographs

When photographs accompany a written persuasive text, they can highlight specific aspects of an argument, evoke particular emotions and position the reader to respond in certain ways to the written text.

It is important to remember that photographs are not objective; they are usually consciously set up. Even spontaneous or candid shots can be edited to present the subject in a particular way – for example, by altering the colours, cropping, and darkening or lightening the image.

The photograph below, taken by Josh Woning, related to a news story about the rescue of baby gliders (small marsupials) by the Queensland Koala Society following severe storms in Queensland.





Analyse a photograph

- 1 Give three words to describe the baby glider.

- 2 What do these words suggest is the main emotion the image is intended to evoke in the viewer? _____
- 3 Complete the sentences:
The viewer is positioned to view the glider as _____.
This is likely to incline them to feel _____ about the work of the Queensland Koala Society.

Cartoons and illustrations

Just as writers use words to persuade, cartoonists and illustrators use visual language to present a point of view. This visual language may be supplemented by text, which is usually brief.

The image below was published on the website *The Happy Broadcast*, which shares positive news stories.





Analyse a cartoon

- 1 Fill in the table below to analyse the effects of the different elements used in the cartoon on the previous page.

Element	Effect
Nurse's cap worn by the robot	Suggests coral is being treated with professional care
Smiling coral baby	
	Conveys an impression of a clear, clean, calm environment
Smiling snail	Suggests that reintroduction of coral will benefit other sea creatures
Text	

- 2 Drawing on your notes in the table, write two analytical sentences about the visual language used in the image.

Graphs, charts, tables and infographics

Some articles are accompanied by visual information in the form of graphs, charts, tables or infographics (graphic presentations of information, often used to illustrate patterns or trends). Some reasons for including this type of information are:

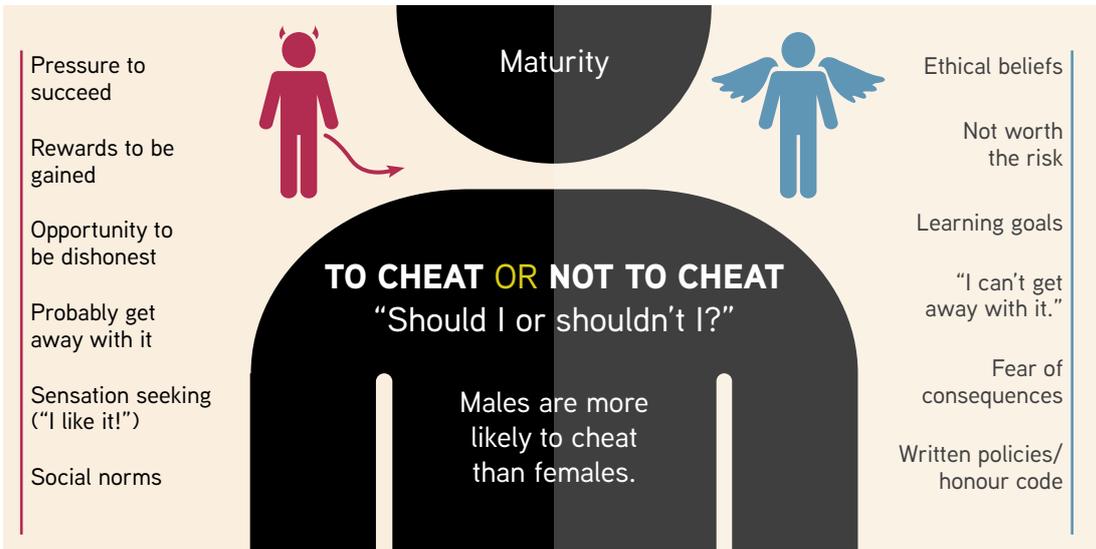
- to suggest that the writer's opinion is supported by independent evidence
- to imply that the writer has arrived at an opinion as a result of research
- to draw the reader's attention to information the writer thinks is important.

Although graphs, charts, tables and infographics can appear to be presenting information in a neutral way, you should always consider the following questions when analysing them.

- What is the source of the information or figures presented? Is it stated? Does the source appear to be unbiased?
- How has the information in the graph, chart or table been 'framed'? That is, do the accompanying article, headline and captions encourage the reader to interpret the information in a certain way?
- What information has been left out?
- How do design elements, such as colour and graphics, affect the way the information is presented? For example, is certain information emphasised through the use of bold colour? Are there any pictures accompanying the graph, chart, table or infographic that provide a context or extra information?



The following infographic, about academic cheating, appeared in a research paper by Jason Openo titled 'The International Dimension of Academic Integrity'. The paper was published in the academic journal *Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity*.



Analyse an infographic

1 What opinion on cheating is implied by the infographic?

2 Complete the table to analyse how particular features of the infographic convey this opinion. An example has been done for you.

Feature	Effect	Analytical sentence
Red devil figure	Associates cheating with evil	The red devil figure aligned with the list of reasons students might cheat suggests that academic cheating is evil and immoral.
	Helps to set up a contrast between good and evil	
Lists of reasons to cheat and not to cheat		
		The prominent central text reads 'To cheat or not to cheat', setting up the issue as a common moral dilemma faced by students.
Direct question as though from a student's point of view – 'Should I or shouldn't I?'		

Audio and audiovisual persuasive texts

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Speeches
- » Radio news and talkback programs
- » Podcasts
- » Filmed texts

Audio texts communicate meaning primarily through the spoken word. Music or sound effects might also be used to generate a mood, give additional information or support an opinion. Audiovisual texts use the spoken word, sound, and visual language in the form of moving images to convey ideas and opinions.

Speeches

A speech is an oral text delivered to an audience. In addition to considering the content of a speech or presentation, 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 or digital material to position the audience to agree.

The following is a transcript of the acceptance speech given by the 2021 Australian Local Hero of the Year Rosemary Kariuki. Kariuki is the multicultural community liaison officer for the Parramatta Police. She helps migrants facing domestic violence, language barriers and financial problems.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to watch Kariuki deliver her speech.

We live in a multicultural country with more than 270 ancestries and many indigenous cultures. However, we often live in silos. We keep to our own people, what is familiar and miss that beautiful sharing of culture.

Like many migrants and refugees, when I came to Australia I was very lonely – I was in a foreign land and could not understand the Australian accent. I didn't understand the culture and it was so far away from what I knew. It took me a while to feel like this country is home.

I lived in an apartment with 15 families who never looked at me or talked to me. One day I sent each one of them a Christmas card with my name and door number, and from then, everyone stopped to say hi, ask about my culture, and invite me for meals. Everyone even started talking to each other.



I would love to see more Australians – those born here, refugees, migrants, anyone who calls Australia home – open their doors to their neighbours. Get to know them, knock on their door, organise a street barbecue, go for a walk or a picnic.

When I say neighbours, I don't just mean the people living next door. I mean the people around you, another mum at your kid's school, someone you see at the gym, a "stranger" in your office.

Many families who open their homes during our Cultural Exchange Program say it's a life-changing event. They'll tell you, when we open our doors to our neighbours, we open our hearts. And we give ourselves the chance to rejoice with others. To learn from them and grow with them. It takes courage to open our hearts to our neighbours, to reach out in friendship to those we don't know.

Sometimes we don't realise the differences the smallest gesture can make – like smiling at a stranger or saying hello, or hello mate. Sometimes we don't realise how much sharing information, even things like our local services, can help someone. Be open and not scared of any perceived differences, because as humans we have more similarities than differences.

We have an amazing opportunity to learn about different cultures and traditions, not to mention the food, music and dance. And together we can make this wonderful country that I call home even greater.

So let us share what we know and give a helping hand. Let us embrace our multicultural nation, building on it, and looking for the opportunities and positives. I would like to encourage every one of you to meet someone new from a different background this week and see what doors open to you – you will possibly be helping that person to experience their new homeland in a new way and to feel they belong.

Thank you.



Analyse a speech

- 1 Circle or highlight a place in the speech where Kariuki tells an anecdote.
- 2 Which of the following statements most closely reflects Kariuki's main contention?
 - Australians should learn to speak other languages so they can communicate better with people from other countries.
 - Getting to know other people builds a stronger community.
 - Sharing meals helps people to connect.
 - Everyone in the audience should join a cultural exchange program.
- 3 a What is the main emotion Kariuki aims to evoke in her audience?

- b Circle or highlight three words or phrases that help to evoke this emotion.





- » 4 Imagine you were giving this speech.
- a Annotate the transcript to identify:
- three words or phrases you would emphasise
 - three places where you might pause
 - three places where you could use particular body language, facial expressions or hand gestures
 - one place where you might speak more loudly
 - one place where you might speak more slowly.
- b Suggest two visuals that could be presented as slides to accompany the speech, such as photographs, cartoons, graphs, charts or infographics.
-

Radio news and talkback programs

Current events are reported on radio news programs daily. In addition, issues arising from the news are also discussed on talkback programs.

Talkback radio involves listeners calling radio stations to share their opinions with the hosts and the audience. Some talkback hosts take a thoughtful approach to issues and encourage listeners to express and consider a variety of viewpoints. Others are overtly biased and inflammatory (deliberately provoking anger or passion).

The following transcript is an extract of an interview between Perth's 6PR radio host Liam Bartlett and then Federal Minister for Home Affairs Karen Andrews about the issue of scam phone calls. ('Telcos' is short for 'telecommunication businesses'.)

LIAM BARTLETT: Minister, can I just ask you, I noticed you had an announcement yesterday, and I ask you this question because we've had a lot of calls to the program – some on-air, some off-air – about the scam text messages that have been going around for the last couple of months. I notice you're moving to force the telcos to put an end to those. How long will it take to put the brakes on them, do you know?

KAREN ANDREWS: Well, work is already underway – clearly – with the telcos. We – as a government – have worked very closely with them. Everyone is sick of getting those text messages coming through, but there is a much darker side to that which is that [if] you click on those links or take any action in relation to the SMS messages that come through, you're potentially just supporting criminals – because they will steal your identity; they will steal your data; they will steal your money given a chance. So what we needed to do was work with the telcos, to make sure they can do all that they possibly can to stop these SMS messages at the source.



They've already done a whole heap of work to make sure that they can identify the SMS messages and they can block them. They needed additional support from the government, and that's why we put in place the regulatory amendment to give the telecommunications sector the authority that they needed to block the SMS messages at scale.

LIAM BARTLETT: So, you're saying they had the ability to do it, they just didn't have the law on their side?

KAREN ANDREWS: Look, it's a combination of both. They're developing the technology to be able to do it – some of that is already in place now. They needed to have the authority to be able to block it at scale, which is what we're doing. Both Optus and Telstra have been very clear that they will continue to work on the technology. It's artificial intelligence machine learning; it's going to get better over time, but, yes, they're already in a position where they're able to block some of the messages coming through and that's fantastic.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to listen to the full interview.



Analyse a radio interview

- 1 Highlight three examples of casual or colloquial language in the text.
- 2 Complete the sentence. The interaction between the host and the interviewee is _____ This is shown by _____
- 3 What is the effect of repetition when Andrews says, 'They will steal your identity; they will steal your data'? _____
- 4 In pairs, come up with three questions that callers to the radio program might want to ask Andrews about scam phone calls.

Podcasts

Podcasts are digital audio texts, usually presented as a series of episodes, that can be listened to on a computer or mobile device. Podcasts often present information and opinions on news and current events. Presenters may craft stories to convey a particular perspective or point of view on an issue, and they might use subtly or highly persuasive language to position an audience to agree.

The following transcript extract is from a podcast called *Slow English*, hosted by Rob McCormack. The podcast aims to help people to learn the English language while also learning about daily life in Australia. This episode is called 'Rabbits in Australia'.

Hi,

One of my favourite activities over the ten years of my retirement has been to go for a morning walk down the Yarra Trail here in Melbourne. (See podcast <https://slowenglish.info/a-morning-walk-in-melbourne-the-yarra-trail/>) This trail leads through native bush on the edge of the city, next to the Yarra River. I almost always see wild rabbits on my walk. While they seem harmless enough, they are in fact a major problem for Australia's environment and for our agriculture. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about how rabbits got to Australia, how they have affected our country and what we do to control them.

Rabbits were first brought here in cages on the first fleet of European settlers in 1788, to be used as food animals. However, there were no real problems with rabbit populations in the wild until, in 1859, a Victorian settler released 24 rabbits into the bush on his farm, so that he could hunt them for sport. From there they spread in a manner which no one could have predicted.

When they reach large numbers, rabbits have a very bad effect on the environment and on our agriculture. The rabbits eat many of the available plants which native animals or livestock would eat. Furthermore, because they graze very close to the ground, they tend to remove the young seedlings of grass and clover, leaving the ground bare. Without a cover of plants, the soil gets blown or washed away in a process called erosion. During droughts (of which Australia has many – see podcast <https://slowenglish.info/podcast-126-drought-in-australia/>), rabbits will eat the bark off shrubs and trees, causing the plants to die. When rabbits dig their warrens into the ground, this too causes damage which can affect large plants, also contributing to erosion. So all up, it's a very bad situation. When rabbit numbers grow to plague proportions, it means disaster for farmers and the environment.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to visit the *Slow English* website, where you can download the full episode of 'Rabbits in Australia', as well as many other episodes about daily life in Australia.



Analyse a podcast

- 1 Identify two features of the text that are appropriate for a podcast.

- 2 Complete the sentences: McCormack argues that rabbits harm the Australian

environment by _____,

and _____. He presents this opinion in a mostly

_____ tone, shown in his use of words / phrases such as

_____ and _____.



Filmed texts

Persuasive filmed texts that cover topical issues include television news and current affairs programs. It can be easy to assume that such programs present credible and impartial perspectives on issues because the visual elements and firsthand accounts make viewers feel they are witnessing events as they happen. However, all news programs are edited and the stories carefully selected to focus on the most dramatic aspects of an issue.

Documentary films and series, such as *Seaspiracy* (2021 documentary directed by Ali Tabrizi) and *Treaty* (2019 documentary series directed by Nayuka Gorrie, Robert Bundle, Daniel King and Paul Gorrie), present a point of view on an issue in greater depth, including interviews and exploring the development of an issue over time. For both individuals and organisations, short videos are a low-cost, accessible way to communicate ideas or persuade people to buy a product or service.

The following video is produced by the Adventure Bag Crew, an environmental movement started by Australian Jackson Groves.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view the video.



Analyse a video

- 1 What action is Groves encouraging viewers to take?

- 2 What mood is evoked by the music in the video?

- 3 Why do you think Groves calls the bags 'Adventure Bags'? What are the connotations of this term? _____

- 4 Choose two features of the visual material (e.g. the background, the colours, the people or activities depicted, the words on the screen). Write a sentence for each, explaining how it positions the viewer to support the Adventure Bag Crew cause.
 - a Feature: _____
Analytical sentence: _____
 - b Feature: _____
Analytical sentence: _____

Note-form summaries and annotations

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Creating note-form summaries
- » Annotating visual texts

In addition to writing analytical essays about persuasive texts, your assessment in Year 11 could include writing analytical note-form summaries of texts and annotating a visual text.

This chapter presents explanations and guidelines for approaching both these types of assessment tasks.

Creating note-form summaries

Your notes need to present a short summary of the main argument and the supporting reasons in a text or texts. In notes, you use only key words – that is, you do not need to write in complete sentences.

Notes can be set out in a number of ways, some of which are outlined below.

- You could begin with a contention as your heading, then organise your notes in **two columns** or sections that summarise the points made **for** and **against** a particular position. This approach is best suited to analysing two texts that present opposing opinions, or a single text that explores more than one side of an issue.
- You could use a **chronological approach**, summarising the writer's supporting reasons in the order in which they are presented.
- You could use a **concept map** or **mind map**, starting with the writer's contention in the middle and identifying the supporting arguments in boxes or bubbles around this contention. You could also use colour, arrows and symbols to indicate the connections between ideas.
- You might organise your notes according to the **points of view of different people or organisations**.

Remember that you should show **how different points are connected**. Simple linking words may be used for this purpose (e.g. 'and', 'or', 'but').

Note-taking symbols and abbreviations

The following table shows some common symbols and abbreviations that can be used when taking notes. If you abbreviate (shorten) a word, do so **only** if you are sure your abbreviation will make sense to the person reading your work.



=	Equal; is the same as	@	At
≠	Does not equal; is not the same as	?	Question
∴	Therefore	\$	Money, cost
∵	Because	~	Approximately
<	Less than	w/	With
>	More than	w/o	Without
→	Leads to; causes	e.g.	For example
←	Comes from; is caused by	i.e.	That is
esp.	Especially	gov.	Government
max.	Maximum	min.	Minimum
re.	Regarding, about	diff.	Difference

Writing effective notes

The following table shows some guidelines for writing effective notes, with examples from the opinion piece on pages 182–3.

Guideline	Ineffective note	Effective note
Notes are usually not complete sentences.	Today's students are too empowered, feeling entitled to express themselves however they like, wear whatever they want, and have their feelings listened to and affirmed.	Today's students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> entitled expect to express themselves wear what they want demand to be listened to
Notes are not lists of unconnected words or ideas.	blue hair, not photogenic, student selfish	blue hair, piercings violate uniform policy
Notes include only the major points, not the details.	Carlyon wants to go to work at midday, wear cap, thongs, shorts, talk about Shane Warne, Ukraine and roadworks, have lunch	Adults/workplaces etc. have rules ∴ students/schools should
Notes are single words and short phrases that include only the major content words.	Students need to learn that their feelings are not more important than following rules and maintaining standards.	rules/standards > students' feelings
Notes must be logically organised and clear to the reader.	blue hair, face piercings, no like, don't listen	Having voice ≠ should receive attention, esp. when breaking rules, e.g. blue hair

Sample note-form summary

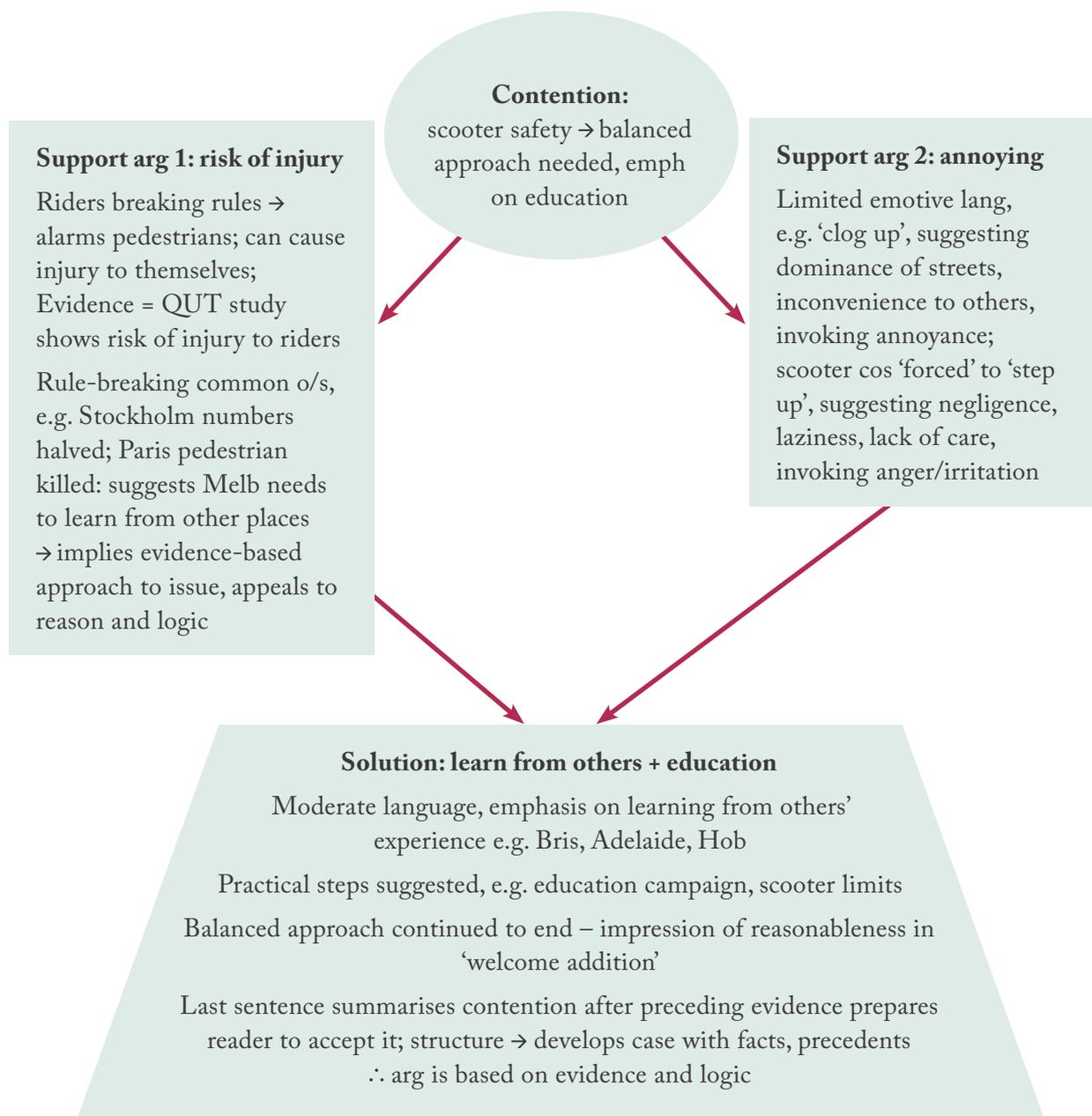
The example below shows one way of summarising the main and supporting arguments in a text. It uses the mind map approach and is based on the editorial on pages 184–5.

Text type: editorial, *The Age* newspaper

Audience: educated Melburnian readers – fair, fact-based approach likely to appeal

Tone: matter-of-fact, calm, logical – ‘some lessons that can be learnt’, ‘Experience shows’; ‘Another step’ – supporting call for balance

Background: 1-yr trial in Melb; popular in other countries; rules = over 18; helmet; bike lanes + shared paths; low speed; NO footpaths





Scan the code or click [here](#) to see an example of a note-form summary of Rosemary Kariuki's speech on pages 196–7, using a chronological approach.



Practise note-taking



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view a video about protecting the Great Barrier Reef. Create two note-form summaries of this text, using two different structures (refer to the different possible structures listed on page 202). Use at least two note-taking symbols or abbreviations in each of your summaries.

Annotating visual texts

Another option for assessment in Unit 2 Area of Study 2 is to annotate a visual text to identify key persuasive techniques. The visual text might be a cartoon, a photograph, an illustration, an infographic, or another type of visual text. It might also include some written text.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about analysing a visual text.

The first step in annotating a visual text is to make sure you understand the message it is presenting. Express this clearly in your own words.

Your annotations should address the key features of visual language that are used to persuade. The table below summarises the most common of these.

Feature	Questions to consider
Background and setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What background details has the creator of the image chosen to include? What do these details suggest about the subject? • What is the setting of the image? Is it indoors or outdoors? Real or imagined? What does this setting communicate about the issue?
Caption, title or other written text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a caption, title or other text? • If so, how does this orient the audience to view the main subject or underlying theme of the image?



You can use dot points for your annotations rather than full sentences. Just make sure your ideas are clearly expressed.

» Feature	Questions to consider
Colour and contrast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the dominant colours in the image? Are these colours associated with particular qualities or ideas? For instance, the colour green may evoke associations with nature and growth, while red might be associated with anger or passion, depending on the context in which it is used. • Are there strong contrasts between light and dark spaces, or between different textures? What is the intended effect of these contrasts on the viewer? For instance, a face half in darkness and half in light may suggest duplicity or a divided nature.
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the image published? On a website? In a magazine? A newspaper? • Does the image accompany a written text (e.g. news story, opinion piece)? If so, does it present a similar or different point of view? • What does the type of publication suggest about the creator's intended audience? • Does the image comment on a topical issue? Is the audience assumed to be familiar with the people, events or situations represented?
Framing and angle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is in the foreground of the image? What do the size and prominence of different elements of the image suggest about them? • How has the image been framed? What has been included and what has been left out? Why did the creator choose to create the boundaries of the image in this way? • Is the subject presented from an unusual angle? Does this cause viewers to look at the subject in a new way?
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the subject literal – for example, a picture of a celebrity accompanying an article about that person? • Does the subject carry a deeper symbolic meaning – for example, an image of a crushed flower used to represent destroyed innocence?
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main mood the image conveys? Is it humorous? Bleak? Angry? Thoughtful? • Which aspects of the image help to convey this tone? For example, does it have dark colours that communicate a sense of despair? Or does natural sunlight and a colourful background help to communicate a joyous mood?



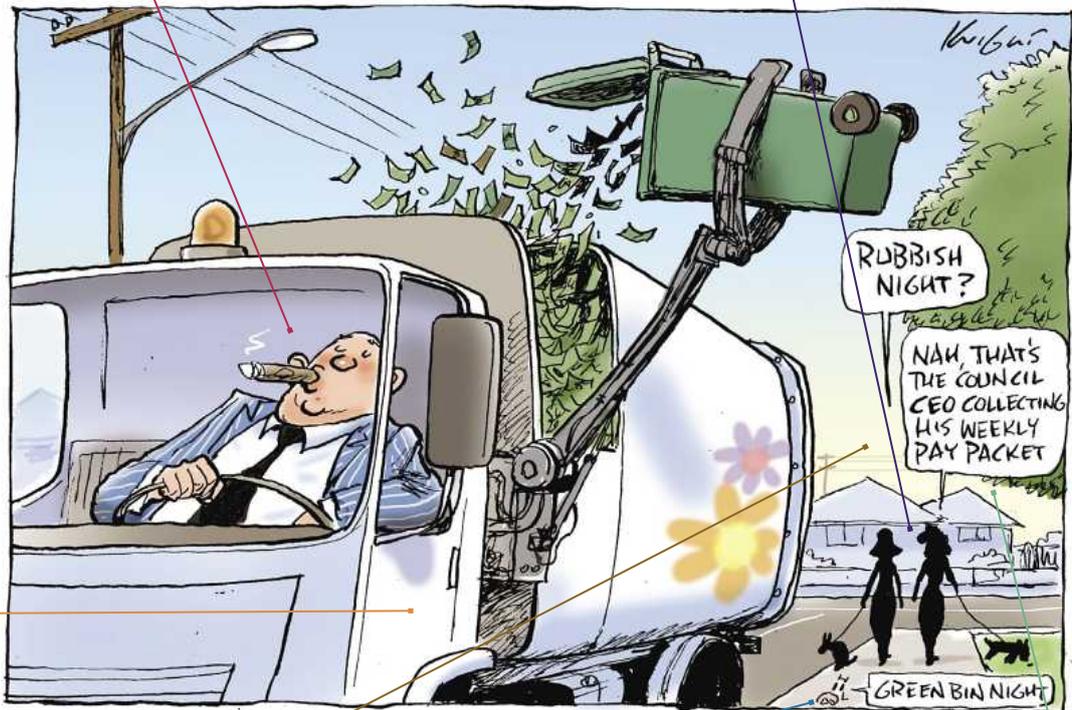
Sample annotated visual text

The notes on the Mark Knight cartoon below, which was published in the *Herald Sun*, show one way of annotating a visual text to identify persuasive techniques.

The figure in the foreground – the council CEO – is overweight and smoking a cigar, conjuring a wealthy, comfortable lifestyle. His suit implies an office job, rather than manual labour. His eyes are closed, suggesting that he is blind to his own privilege. He is also depicted as larger, more imposing and physically higher than the other two people in the cartoon, reinforcing an impression of his elevated status.

The two women walking are shown in silhouette, suggesting their particular identities are unimportant – instead they represent average suburban residents engaged in the ordinary daily activity of dog-walking.

The truck the CEO drives resembles a rubbish truck but instead of containing rubbish, the back of the vehicle is filled with money. The implication is that the CEO is collecting money from the suburb's residents for his own use.



Mark Knight, *Herald Sun*

The background suggests a typical suburban neighbourhood, with well-trimmed lawns and clean footpaths. The bright colours and blue sky reinforce the impression that the area is a pleasant place. The positive depiction of the neighbourhood aims to evoke sympathy in the viewer for the residents who are being unfairly disadvantaged by the actions of the overpaid CEO.

The small snail in the bottom right making a brief comment on the issue is a common feature of Knight's cartoons. The reference to 'green bin night' is a pun, referencing green garden-waste bins and the green colour of the banknotes, highlighting how the CEO's greed benefits himself and takes away a benefit from residents.

The dialogue refers to the CEO's 'weekly pay packet', emphasising the excessive amounts of money he is receiving. The women's apparently matter-of-fact tone suggests that residents have come to accept this unfair situation or perhaps feel powerless to change it.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see another example of an annotated visual text.



Annotate an image

Using the questions in the table on pages 205–6 and the annotations on page 207 as a guide, complete the annotations of the photograph below, which accompanied a national news story about the impact of drought on farmers.



The main message communicated by the image is _____

The _____ expression on the child's face aims to evoke _____ in the viewer.

The child looks directly into the camera, prompting the viewer to _____

The shot is taken from above. The intended effect of this is _____

Most of the image is taken up by dry, cracked earth, suggesting _____

The dominant colour is _____, which has associations with _____

The empty watering can suggests _____

Writing an analysis

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Preparing your analysis
- » Writing your analysis
- » Editing your analysis
- » Sample analysis

Part of your assessment for this area of study might involve writing an analysis of the ways in which argument and persuasive language are used in a persuasive text or texts. The text/s you will analyse will include an audio or audiovisual component. Therefore you will also need to analyse the intended effects of audio and/or visual language. This chapter explains how to prepare and write an effective analysis of argument and language in a persuasive text.

Preparing your analysis

The first step in comprehending and analysing any text is to **read it through carefully** and **annotate it** to identify important information and persuasive elements.

One method of annotating the text is to use different coloured pens or pencils. For example:

- **red** for circling or underlining supporting reasons
- **orange** for circling or underlining evidence
- **green** for circling or underlining persuasive strategies
- **blue** for making notes about intended effects on the reader.

Your annotations will help you to work out the details you will talk about in each paragraph.



Each body paragraph of your analysis will have three main sections:

- **WHAT?** What persuasive strategy or language is being used?
- **HOW?** How is it being used?
- **WHY?** Why is it being used?



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see an example of an annotated persuasive text.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a video about annotating a persuasive text.

The letter below was published on the website of a company called Ocean Protect, which designs and installs stormwater treatment systems. The writer, who is a co-founder of Ocean Protect, argues that stormwater runoff (water washing rubbish into drains then out into waterways) is a major source of pollution. Read the letter, then answer the questions that follow.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view the video that accompanied the letter.

← → ↻ 🔍 ↓ ↗ ⋮

An open letter to our politicians

By Jeremy Brown

An open letter to Australian politicians and councillors – you are missing one very important environmental policy in your election promises.



Dear Members of Parliament and Senators,

As you pound the pavement campaigning to win office, we would like to draw your attention to a gaping hole in your environmental policies.

And we're not talking about climate change.

There is one immediate issue facing us: 80% of ocean plastic pollution comes from land-based sources and it flows there via urban stormwater runoff. Urban stormwater runoff also contains harmful levels of other less visible (but extremely damaging) pollutants, such as suspended solids, heavy metals, nutrients and bacteria.

The evidence is irrefutable. The technologies and legislation already exist to solve the problem. However, there is a massive divide between what we should be doing and what we are doing.

I ask you: if your tap was running and flooding your kitchen, what would you do first? Grab a mop and bucket or turn off the tap? You would turn the tap off, right? Let's make it a legal requirement for private and public sectors to stop the flow of pollution to the ocean.



Search



I acknowledge that our business will benefit from this initiative. However, so too will thousands of Australian businesses across multiple sectors – as will all Australians via more jobs and healthy oceans.

With the ocean providing over half the oxygen we breathe and being a major source of food for the world's population, there is a critical need for action and we all have the ability to make change.

The facts:

- Each year, at least eight million tonnes of plastics flow into the ocean – which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute. If no action is taken, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050.
- Stormwater is recognised as the key source of pollution in our urban waterways and the vast majority of marine debris entering Australian waters is land-based and generated locally.
- Every time it rains, stormwater runoff from most urban areas within Australia flows to our waterways and oceans without any stormwater treatment to remove pollutants (including plastics). Where stormwater treatment assets are present to capture pollutants, they seldom receive appropriate maintenance, meaning captured pollutants aren't removed – often making the assets completely ineffective.
- The degradation of our waterways and oceans is a public health risk and has a direct impact on our economy, with the ban on commercial fishing and cautions around consumption of fish products from Sydney Harbour due to pollution just one current example.
- A recent national survey found that the number one concern for Australians when it comes to population growth is marine and waterway health – rated higher than traffic congestion, competition for jobs and housing density.
- The solutions to mitigate the aforementioned problems are available and cost-effective. However, the future cost to rectify these problems and implement appropriate solutions will only increase unless urgent action is taken now.
- Solutions exist. We need your help to implement them.

We are calling on the federal, state and local governments to collaboratively achieve the following key outcomes:

- Appropriate stormwater management for all new development, including targets associated with litter (pollutants greater than 5mm in diameter) and other pollutants, such as suspended solids and nutrients
- Appropriate management and continued maintenance of existing and new stormwater treatment assets (on both private and publicly owned land)
- Zero discharge of litter from all urbanised areas within Australia by 2040

If we kill the oceans, we kill ourselves.



Annotate a text

Refer to the open letter on pages 210–11 to answer the following questions.

- 1 In **black**, underline the place in the text where the writer's contention is most clearly expressed. Next to this, in note form, summarise his contention in your own words.
- 2 In **red**, circle or underline three places in the text where the writer presents reasons to support his point of view.
- 3 In **orange**, circle or underline two pieces of supporting evidence.
- 4 In **green**, circle or underline four examples of persuasive words or phrases. Next to each, make a note in **blue** about the main emotion this language aims to evoke in the reader.
- 5 In **green**, make a note in the margin about a structural strategy used by the writer. In **blue**, note down the intended effect of this strategy.
- 6 Identify three features of the embedded video. In **blue**, make notes in the margin about the intended effects of each element on the viewer.

Writing your analysis

This section includes advice for writing your analytical essay, as well as models, sentence starters and useful vocabulary.

Introductions

The purpose of an introduction is to demonstrate that you clearly understand the context of the text. You should identify the main facts about the text, including its title, writer, text type, place of publication and any relevant background information. Your introduction should also identify the writer's main contention, main tone and main persuasive strategies. You should also briefly identify any visual, audio or audiovisual material accompanying the text.

Writing about main contention and tone

When introducing either the contention or the writer's supporting reasons, you could use the following model.

The writer	· advances	· (a particular idea).
	· advocates	·
	· asserts	·
	· champions	·
	· endorses	·
	· promotes	·
	· proposes	·
	· recommends	·



When referring to a point of view rejected by the writer, you could use the following model.

The writer	challenges	(an opposing opinion).
	condemns	
	contradicts	
	criticises	
	denigrates	
	dismisses	
	disputes	
	mocks	
	refutes	
	undermines	

Writing about tone enables you to discuss what the writer is saying and how they are saying it. Use the tone word bank on page 164 and these sentence starters as a guide.

- The writer's tone is ... and is intended to highlight ...
- In order to reassure / provoke / amuse the audience, the writer uses a ... tone.
- In a ... tone, the writer ...
- The ... tone encourages the audience to ...
- The writer's attitude towards ... is clear from their ... tone, which ...
- The speaker's use of a ... tone influences the audience to ...

Body paragraphs

To plan your body paragraphs, select the strategies and examples you will discuss and decide on the order in which you will analyse them. One effective way to structure each body paragraph is the PEE approach. PEE stands for:

- **Persuasive element:** Identify the persuasive element the paragraph will focus on. This might be a supporting reason, a persuasive language technique, a persuasive word or phrase, an aspect of the text's structure, or visual material.
- **Example:** Give an example or examples from the text. Use short quotations.
- **Effect:** Analyse what the writer aims to make the intended audience think and feel.

Remember that you are not expected to analyse every persuasive strategy or use of persuasive language in the text or texts. Instead, you need to be selective. In deciding what to analyse, choose examples based on the following:

- strategies or language you feel confident about analysing
- strategies or language you believe must be analysed to explain the overall intended effect (i.e. if you didn't analyse that feature, your statements about the overall purpose or intended effect wouldn't really make sense)
- a strategy or example of persuasive language that is an important part of the writer's approach. For example, if the writer cites five facts about increasing crime rates to shock readers, you are not expected to analyse all five; however, you should analyse at least one of them, as this is an important persuasive strategy used by the writer.



All words from the text that you quote in your analysis – even if they are just single words or short phrases – must be in quotation marks.

Writing about the structure of an argument

When writing about the structure of an argument, consider the following.

- **Placement of the main contention:** Is the main contention clearly stated, or only implied? Does the writer declare their position at the beginning of the piece, or do they examine both sides of an issue before coming to a conclusion?
- **Use of headings, subheadings, lists, tables, charts and audio or audiovisual content:** What does the heading or headline suggest about the topic, the writer's point of view and their main approach to the issue? Do subheadings indicate a logical structure or that the writer is considering different angles on an issue? Are figures, charts or graphs presented to convey an impression of objectivity? Does accompanying audio or audiovisual material convey the same message as the written text or does it provide new information or perspectives?
- **Order of reasons:** Does the writer present the main points in order of strongest to weakest? Or do they save their most convincing point till last, to leave the reader with a strong impression?
- **Shifts in tone:** Does a change in the writer's tone signal a shift to a different approach to their argument? (For example, they might begin with an anecdote presented in a humorous tone, designed to relax the audience and establish a rapport, before moving to a more serious tone when presenting evidence and statistics to support their point of view.) Is the tone of any audio material similar to the main tone of the written material, or does it provide a contrast?

Use the following sentence starters and model sentences as a guide to writing about structure.

- Subheadings and bulleted lists resemble those in a report, inclining the reader to feel ...
- The writer begins by listing particular examples, before discussing the general ideas underlying them, encouraging the reader to think / feel that ...
- The writer uses a series of rhetorical questions designed to evoke positive responses from the reader, preparing them to accept the conclusion that ...
- The writer summarises their main arguments in the introduction, before discussing each in the body paragraphs. This logical approach conveys an impression of the writer as ...
- By beginning with a humorous anecdote, the writer aims to establish a friendly rapport with the audience.
- Using tables and charts to present complex statistics makes the information easier for a general audience to understand and suggests that ...
- The sombre tone of the narration supports the serious tone of the written text, conveying ...
- Compared with the written text, the video clip's more humorous approach aims to appeal to a different audience because ...



Writing about argument and language together

In your analysis you will need to write about how argument and language work together to position the reader. You may notice that certain persuasive strategies are often used together. For instance, an appeal to group loyalty often uses inclusive language, while an argument based on logic and reason might include statistics and expert evidence.

When writing about the language that is used to present or support an argument, you could use the following model.

The writer's use of ... (language/strategy)	advances, bolsters, develops, enhances, promotes, reinforces, strengthens	their argument that ... (argument being presented).
--	--	---

Writing about audio elements

The text you will analyse for your assessment task for this part of the course may include an audio or audiovisual element. This might be a voice-over, music or sound effects, narration, a video, a filmed speech or similar. The table below shows some of the questions you should consider when analysing audio components of persuasive texts.

Speech	Does the audio material include speech, such as actors saying lines, a person giving a talk or a narration? Is an opinion explicitly expressed, or just implied? Does the message of the spoken words support or challenge the message of the written text? Is the tone of the spoken text similar to or different from the main tone of the written text?
Music	Does the audio material include diegetic or non-diegetic music? (See pages 41–2.) What atmosphere is created by the choice of music? Do lyrics communicate a particular message?
Sound effects	Are sound effects used to create a mood, convey a sense of realism or evoke a particular emotion in the listener?

Below are some useful adjectives for describing audio content. See also pages 229–30 for more information about delivery features of spoken texts.

Powerful	Humorous	Dramatic
Striking	Stark	Confronting
Evocative	Arresting	Sympathetic



The audio and audiovisual texts you will study might accompany a written text or they might stand alone. They might also include transcripts or subtitles.

Below are some useful sentence starters for analysing audio content.

- The formal, serious tone of the narrator suggests ...
- Sound effects such as ... and ... are used to ...
- While the main message of the written text is ..., the audio presents a slightly different perspective on the issue.
- Dramatic music is intended to evoke ... in the listener, reinforcing the idea that ...
- Like the cheerful and positive imagery shown in the video, the lyrics convey a ... message.
- Supporting the writer's main contention, the audio presents ...

Writing about visual language

Visual language can refer to:

- still images, such as photographs, cartoons, drawings, graphs and charts
- moving images, such as videos, animations and GIFs
- design features, such as the use of colour and typography (the choice of fonts and the arrangement of text on the page or screen).

When studying any visual text or visual element of a text, consider the following elements.

Context	Is the visual material a stand-alone image or video, or is it part of another text, such as an opinion piece or website? What message or messages are conveyed by any surrounding text? What is the broader context of the issue being addressed?
Caption, titles or other text	How does any text incorporated into the visual material position the viewer to agree with a certain point of view?
Background	How do background details, such as setting and props, contribute to the viewer's understanding of the main message conveyed by the visual material?
Design elements	What main colours are used? What are some of the main associations of these colours? What mood do they evoke? Does the visual material include borders, pull-out quotes or similar features? If so, what is the purpose of these?
Editing	For filmed texts containing multiple shots how have these been edited together? Have special effects been used to enhance the still or moving image/s?
Framing	What has been included? What has been left out? Why did the creator choose these boundaries?
Lighting	What is the predominant style of lighting or colour scheme? Do dim lighting and shadows create a sombre or frightening mood? Or is bright lighting used, to evoke a cheerful or optimistic atmosphere?
Perspective of the viewer	How is the viewer positioned? For example, is the subject of a photograph viewed from above, causing it to appear smaller and less powerful than if the camera had been on the same level?



The table below contains some useful words and phrases to compare and contrast the persuasive effects of audio, visual or audiovisual material with those of written texts.

Similarity	Difference
The audio / image / video ... supports, reinforces, echoes, backs, reiterates, endorses, seconds, bolsters, upholds, confirms, corroborates, consolidates ... the point of view expressed in the written text.	The audio / image / video ... undermines, contradicts, conveys an alternative message to, places pressure on, counters, belies, challenges, calls into question, disputes, negates, opposes, repudiates ... the point of view expressed in the written text.

Below are some useful sentence starters for analysing images.

- Bright colours and ... music work together to project a/an ... atmosphere.
- The director / photographer has chosen to include ... within the frame, contributing to an impression of the subject as ...
- The sarcastic tone of the caption works with the exaggerated elements of the cartoon to encourage the viewer to see the subject as ...
- The extreme close-up shot highlights the subject's ..., positioning the viewer to feel ...
- By shooting the subject from above, the director / photographer makes the subject appear ..., arousing the viewer's ...
- The wide-angle shot is intended to convey an impression of the large scope of ...
- By filming the main subject against a backdrop of ..., the director aims to suggest that ...
- The cartoonist's use of short, sharp lines and dark shading work together to ...
- Dim lighting creates a ... effect, conveying the idea of ...
- The visual imagery reinforces the message conveyed by the voice-over by ...



Chapter 6: Film contains more useful information about analysing sound and moving images in an audiovisual text.



Write an introduction and body paragraph

Look at the open letter on pages 210–11 and answer the following questions.

- 1 Using the model on page 212, write a sentence summarising the writer's main contention.

- 2 Using one of the sentence starters on page 213, write a sentence identifying the writer's main tone.





- » 3 Using one of the sentence starters on pages 216–17, write a sentence describing the overall mood or emotional impact of the video accompanying the opinion piece.
-
- 4 Write a short introductory paragraph that gives details about the text's title, text type, writer and place of publication, and incorporates the sentences you wrote for questions 1, 2 and 3.
-
-
-
- 5 Make notes below about one key persuasive strategy used in the open letter and/or accompanying video.
- Persuasive element: _____
- Example: _____
- Effect: _____
- 6 In your workbook, turn your notes for question 5 into an analytical body paragraph.

Conclusions

In your conclusion, you should draw together the main strategies used in the text/s and comment on the *overall* intended effects.

Writing a conclusion

The following sentence starters are useful for writing a conclusion.

- At the close of the piece ...
- In closing, the writer declares ...
- The final impression the audience is left with is ...
- The culmination of the argument is ...
- Finally, the writer ...
- The overall effect of this is ...
- The reader is encouraged to view the writer's conclusion as ...
- Through the use of highly emotive language, supported by powerful visual and audio imagery, the text's creator establishes ...
- The text relies on a careful, reasoned approach, which is carried through in the sound clip with its emphasis on facts, positioning the reader to ...



Write a conclusion

- 1 Choose one of the sentence starters on page 218 and complete it, referring to the open letter on pages 210–11.

- 2 Write one or two sentences identifying the overall approach of the writer and the intended effects on the target audience.

Editing your analysis

An important part of the writing process is editing your work. Use the checklist below to assess your analysis and revise it where necessary.

- The introduction gives the key details of the text/s (creator, publication details, text type).
- You have discussed the impact of context, purpose and audience on the writer's choices regarding argument and language.
- You have discussed the tone of the text, identified any shifts in tone and analysed their intended impact.
- Each body paragraph follows the 'what, how, why' structure (see page 172).
- Each body paragraph includes a variety of short examples or quotes to support the discussion.
- The impact of any audio, visual or audiovisual elements is discussed.
- The main message of any audio, visual or audiovisual material is analysed in relation to the main message of the written text.
- Every sentence is clear and complete.
- Spelling – including names of people and places in the text/s – is accurate.



Sample analysis

The following sample analysis responds to the open letter on pages 210–11.

Much of the packaging and products people use every day are made of plastics, and the question about where this waste ends up has been widely discussed by government, the media and the public in recent years. Jeremy Brown's open letter was published on the website of Ocean Protect, a company that sells systems to treat pollution from stormwater runoff. This site is likely to attract an audience interested in environmental issues. Thus the letter targets two audiences – both the politicians it specifically addresses and readers of the website. The letter takes a direct approach, using a firm and urgent tone, which is reinforced by a dark and dramatic video, to urge politicians to implement strategies to reduce plastic ocean pollution to protect the health of people and the environment.

The letter opens with an image of Parliament House, with its prominent Australian flag, identifying this as an issue affecting all Australians. The tranquil-seeming surface of the water in front of the building is broken in one place, suggesting problems beneath the surface that politicians have ignored. Clicking on the image leads to a dark, dystopian-style video that reinforces the message of the text – that politicians must act now to protect the ocean as lives are at risk. The serious tone of the narrator and the disturbing images of rubbish and injured animals aim to evoke pity and outrage at the impact of humanity on nature. This positions politicians and other readers to see the urgency of taking action on this issue. The dramatic images of people in gas masks suggest that people, especially politicians, have ignored the problem for too long. The gloomy lighting, use of black-and-white and slow-motion footage, quick cuts and sad and alarming background music are similar to techniques used in horror movies, arousing fear in the viewer. This is reinforced by the images of the sea filled with plastic waste, suggesting the problem is huge. The narrator uses words such as 'kill', 'corpse' and 'conquered' that blame humans directly for harming the ocean's creatures, like the pelican shown tangled in rubbish, evoking guilt and sympathy that encourage viewers to want the problem fixed.

This is reinforced by the written text. The alliterative 'pound the pavement' is used to accuse politicians of mindlessly campaigning to be elected with no regard for 'important' environmental policies that go beyond the obvious one of 'climate change'. Here, politicians are encouraged to recognise the 'gaping hole' of ocean pollution, which is often neglected. Brown then includes the shocking statistic that '80% of ocean plastic' comes from urban environments. This implies that

Demonstrates an understanding of the broader social context of this piece.

Acknowledges the specific publishing context of the letter, as well as the multiple audiences it addresses.

Mentioning the overall approach and main tone of the piece in the introduction sets up the analysis that will be developed in the essay.

Clearly identifies the writer's contention.

Linking the writer's contention to their purpose shows an understanding of the way these key elements are connected.

Analysing the text in order, from start to finish, can create a more cohesive essay with a logical structure, as well as showing that you have considered how the argument is constructed holistically.

Where possible, link any visual, audio or audiovisual material to the written text to show how these elements support the argument.

The evidence is effectively linked to its intended effect on the target audience.

It is important to go beyond just describing audio, visual or audiovisual material in general terms – focus on details: tone, framing, lighting, sound effects etc.



the problem is both caused by and affects everyday people. Therefore politicians, who may have believed this issue does not relate to them, should see that they urgently need to act to solve this problem.

This, along with the notion that solutions ‘already exist’ and criticism of the ‘massive divide’ between ‘what we should be doing and what we are doing’, allows Brown to emphasise the government’s lack of action on this issue, provoking shame and guilt to motivate them to combat this neglect. Brown uses the analogy of a running tap ‘flooding your kitchen’ in another attempt to position those in power to be able to relate to this issue by comparing the problem of ocean pollution to an everyday situation. The rhetorical question ‘You would turn the tap off, right?’ is used to make the solution of ‘stop[ping] the flow of pollution’ seem obvious and simple so that politicians are more likely to accept it.

Brown addresses potential criticism about his personal investment in the issue because he is a business owner who ‘will benefit’ from politicians tackling this issue. He does this by broadening the stakeholders to ‘all Australians’ so his personal gain is minimised and the benefits for everyone who can enjoy ‘more jobs and healthy oceans’ are emphasised. Here, Brown goes on to list the many health, environmental and economic risks of the current inaction on this issue through the dot-point outline of ‘the facts’. The blunt tone of this list and the separation of this information from the surrounding text suggest that there can be no valid argument against these ‘facts’.

Using simple syntax to emphasise that ‘solutions exist’, Brown calls on politicians to help. He calls for unity using inclusive language, in statements such as ‘we need your help’ and ‘collaboratively’, in order to inspire those in power to work together to tackle this global problem. By outlining the strategies in three clear, achievable goals (‘key outcomes’), Brown offers politicians practical steps that they can easily include in their policies for targeting stormwater pollution. The final statement, ‘If we kill the oceans, we kill ourselves’, echoed in the video, finishes the letter on a sombre note, with a clear warning against continued inaction. This effectively leaves politicians with only one reasonable action, which is to adopt Brown’s strategies.

Despite Brown’s personal stake in this issue, he focuses on outlining both the far-reaching risks of failing to act, and the broad benefits of tackling this pollution. By addressing politicians directly in this open letter, he aims to motivate them to take on the solutions he outlines in order to prevent more plastics from entering the ocean environment, and at the same time communicates a sense of urgency and alarm in general readers, to encourage them to support his stance.

Shows an awareness of how the writer is targeting a specific audience.

Acknowledges how the writer has anticipated potential opposition and rebutted it.

Analysing the effect of structural features (such as overall layout and composition as well as sentence structure or syntax) adds complexity to your analysis.

This statement acknowledges the shift in tone, showing understanding of how the argument is developed in the text. Brown is mostly blunt and critical about the consequences of inaction, then moves to a more uplifting tone as he calls for unity and action, before finishing with a warning.

Conclusions can be fairly short; there is no need to list all the textual features you analysed in your body paragraphs. Instead, focus on the overall message audiences are left with.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see another sample student analysis of argument and language in a persuasive media text.

Presenting a point of view

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Researching an issue
- » Writing your point-of-view piece
- » Editing your point-of-view piece
- » Delivering an oral presentation
- » Sample point-of-view piece

The presentation of a point of view requires you to research an issue, then deliver an oral presentation on that issue. Your teacher might let you choose any appropriate issue, or they might specify a topic. Issues selected for Unit 2 should be local and/or national ones and should have appeared in the media since September 1 of the previous year. You must present a point of view. This means that you have to argue for or against something, giving reasons for your viewpoint.

For this assessment task you might deliver your point of view in an individual oral presentation but other options include taking part in a debate, a discussion or a dialogue, in small groups or as a class. Your teacher will let you know which form you should use. This chapter presents a process and guidelines for developing a point of view on an issue and delivering it orally in a variety of forms.

Researching an issue

If you are given the option of choosing your own issue, start collecting news articles, opinion pieces and other information about three or four issues that interest you and that you think could be suitable for your presentation. If your teacher specifies the issue, or you have to choose from a limited range, you will still use the same strategies to collect information.

When collecting articles from newspapers or magazines, record the place and date of publication. You might also discover relevant information and perspectives in news broadcasts or current affairs programs on television or radio; again, make sure you note relevant details about the source. Many media outlets, such as the ABC, have extensive material on their websites including sound and video files, as well as summaries of broadcasts and transcripts of radio shows.

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. 'Dogs should be banned from Shelly Beach between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.' (not 'There are too many dogs on the beach')
- able to be argued against, e.g. 'The council should impose tougher penalties for littering' (not 'Littering is bad', which few people would argue against)
- reasonable and practical, e.g. 'The school canteen should provide more affordable meal options' (not 'The school canteen should provide free meals to all students').



Explore issues

- In small groups or as a class, divide into two teams to debate the topic: 'Learning an additional language should be compulsory until the end of Year 12.'
 - Create your own class rules for the line debate (e.g. there will be no use of 'like' or 'um').
 - Begin by defining the key terms – 'learning' (How many classes? To what degree of fluency?), 'additional language', 'compulsory'.
 - Brainstorm arguments with your team. At the end of your brainstorming session, each team member should have a note card with at least one major point in support of your contention.
 - Teams then stand facing each other. A facilitator chooses someone from each team to explain their point. If the student does not have a point to share, cannot explain it convincingly, or breaks one of the class rules, they have to join the other team and argue that team's point of view. If the facilitator decides another team member has made a strong argument, the lost team member can return. When everyone has had a turn, the team with the most members wins.
- Choose an issue you have gathered some information and opinions about (or the issue your teacher has specified). Draw up a table like the one below to record important information and perspectives from a variety of sources.

	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4
Publication details (title; writer/speaker; text type; date; place of publication)				
Writer's connection to the issue / relevant background information (e.g. are they an expert or do they have a personal stake in the issue?)				
Main contention				
Main reasons				
Evidence				

- Write two contentions about the issue you explored in question 2. Each contention should express a different opinion on the issue.

Contention 1: _____

Contention 2: _____

Writing your point-of-view piece

Whether you are presenting your point of view in an individual speech to your class or taking part in a group discussion or debate, your argument should be reasoned and logical. It should also be well supported with evidence.

Begin by identifying three or four strong reasons you will present to support your contention. Next, select one or two pieces of evidence to support each reason. Evidence can include:

- facts and statistics from reliable sources
- research findings and case studies
- statements from experts
- real-world examples
- anecdotes or personal experience.



When you are using ideas you discovered during research, it is important to put them in your own words. You should never just copy or cut and paste someone else's words (unless you make it clear that it is a quotation and state the source). This is called plagiarism and is a form of cheating. (It can even be illegal.)

Once you have decided on your main points and the evidence you will use to support them, you could use the following template to plan your speech or contribution to a discussion, as well as the persuasive techniques you will use to convince your audience.

	Information, evidence and examples	Language and delivery
Introduction Briefly explain the issue to your audience. To understand your argument, what background information do they need? Clearly state which side of the argument you agree with. This will be your main contention.		
Body paragraph 1 Begin with a good reason that your contention is valid. Identify the main emotion you want to evoke in the audience and the persuasive techniques and vocabulary choices that will help to achieve this.		



	Information, evidence and examples	Language and delivery
<p>Body paragraph 2</p> <p>Present another strong point in support of your main contention, reinforced by evidence and presented using appropriate persuasive strategies.</p>		
<p>Body paragraph 3</p> <p>Make your final point in support of your contention, supported by evidence and other persuasive strategies.</p>		
<p>Body paragraph 4</p> <p>Show how well-informed you are by acknowledging the opposite point of view.</p> <p>Next, explain the weaknesses or faults in this opposing argument. This forms another reason in support of your contention.</p>		
<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Use new vocabulary to remind the audience of your main contention and emphasise its validity.</p> <p>Ask your readers to support your opinion, perhaps by taking some action themselves.</p>		



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see guidelines for holding a debate, and the roles of the first, second and third speakers on each side.



Dos and Don'ts

Remember these dos and don'ts when writing and drafting your piece.

Do:

- **use cue cards.** If you are giving an extended oral presentation like a speech or formal debate, you should memorise your text. Don't have the script in front of you. Hold cue cards in the palm of your hand – one for each main point. As well as listing these main points, the cards should contain any facts and figures, statistics, difficult words or other details that you might forget. Cue cards can also be helpful when taking part in a discussion or dialogue, as reminders of important points or information.
- **signpost your speech or contribution.** This will make it easier for the audience to follow your reasoning. You can do this by using words and phrases such as 'firstly', 'secondly', 'thirdly' and 'in conclusion'. You should also clearly signpost your contention by introducing it with phrases such as 'I believe that ...' or 'I contend that ...'.
- **remember that you are writing for an oral presentation, whether you give a speech or take part in a debate, discussion or dialogue.** It will be easier for you to express your opinion, and for your audience to understand it, if you use simple, direct sentences to introduce and conclude each new point. Depending on the form of your presentation, you could also engage the audience by asking rhetorical questions, use repetition to emphasise important points and/or repeat your contention at the end.
- **cite your sources.** As the task requires you to respond to an issue that has been in the media, you should refer to the title and/or place of publication of any media sources you have consulted. You should also give the name of any writer or expert whose information or ideas you have used.
- **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.
- **listen respectfully to others.** If you are taking part in a debate, discussion or dialogue with other members of your class, make sure you listen carefully to their contributions. This will be helpful if you need to reply to or rebut their arguments. It is also an essential aspect of polite discussions of ideas.

Don't:

- **make exaggerated or unsupported claims.** For example, avoid statements such as 'The food in the school canteen is so expensive that only the children of millionaires can afford to buy a hot meal'. Instead of strengthening your point of view, wild and exaggerated claims are likely to make an audience dismiss your argument as silly.
- **use personal attacks.** You need to argue for or against an idea, not criticise individuals or groups on the other side of the debate. You can critique their ideas, but you shouldn't attack their character. This is especially important when taking part in debates or discussions with classmates.
- **use overly aggressive or inflammatory language.** This is likely to alienate your audience, not persuade them.



Vocabulary for writing a point-of-view piece

As well as using an appropriate structure to develop an argument, you will need to use appropriate language to connect your points. The following sentence starters and transition words can be useful.

To introduce a new point of argument or evidence:

- The first point ...
- Secondly ...
- It is clear that ...
- The evidence to support this ...
- As the evidence shows ...
- To illustrate this ...
- This is demonstrated by ...

To introduce the other side of the argument:

- Some people believe, however, ...
- On the other hand, there are those who argue that ...
- Despite the facts, there those who claim ...
- The opposition suggests that ...; however, this is not supported by the evidence ...

To refute (contradict) the opinion of your opponents:

- Despite these objections ...
- Nevertheless, it is clear that ...
- The reality is, however, ...
- I respectfully disagree with that point, because ...

To indicate that you have reached a conclusion:

- It must, therefore, be clear that ...
- There can surely be no doubt that ...
- No reasonable person could disagree with ...
- Thus we can clearly see that ...
- I believe that I / we have clearly proved our point that ...

To show the connections between your ideas and examples:

To show similarity	To show difference	To expand on a point
Similarly	: By contrast	: Furthermore
Likewise	On the other hand	Moreover
In the same way	However	In addition
Equally	Yet	For example
Just as	: In comparison	: In this way

Editing your point-of-view piece

Whether your point of view is presented as an individual speech or as part of a discussion with others, use the following checklist to edit your written transcript or notes.

- The piece demonstrates research into and understanding of the issue and identifies relevant stakeholders.
- The contention is clearly expressed.
- All the reasons and evidence clearly support the contention.
- Your argument is logically structured.
- A range of audience-appropriate persuasive strategies is used.
- You use a range of interesting persuasive vocabulary choices.
- Your opening and concluding statements are engaging and powerful.
- Sources are appropriately cited.
- You know how to pronounce every word.
- 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.
- Signposts and transition phrases are clear and appropriate.



If your speech or contribution contains any difficult words or names, spend some time practising how to pronounce them, or rewrite to eliminate them.



Improve a point-of-view speech

Read the following opening paragraphs of a contribution to a class discussion, then answer the questions that follow to identify and fix some of its flaws.

So we're all here today to talk about the new park benches with solar panels and wi-fi capabilities that the council has installed in Windara Park. Some of you might think they sound like a great innovation. But I think there are some issues with them.

For starters, as we all know, everyone has a phone with internet capabilities now, so these very expensive and honestly pretty ugly-looking wi-fi benches aren't really necessary or helpful to most people who live in this community or who might use the park. The only people who might use them will be homeless people. If the benches are going to attract people like this, who are having a hard time, then they'll need a lot more than a solar-powered bench to help. Unfortunately, many of these people often have drug addictions or other problems – at least seventy per cent, apparently – which is not really what we want to attract to our local park. Only a massive idiot would think these dumb benches will improve the park. There are probably other ways the money could be better spent. If any of you are planning to present the other side of this issue, don't waste your time.



- 1 Rewrite the contention so that it is clearer and more specific.

- 2 Identify one very long sentence and rewrite it so that it is easier to say.

- 3 Highlight one piece of evidence for which no source is cited.
- 4 Circle an example of inflammatory language that is likely to offend rather than persuade the audience.
- 5 Rewrite a sentence to include more persuasive vocabulary.

Delivering an oral presentation

You will be assessed not only on the quality of your arguments, but also on how you present them. Whether you are giving a speech, taking part in a debate, presenting a dialogue with a partner or small group, or participating in a whole-class discussion, you will need to use your voice and body language to help persuade your audience. Keep in mind the following elements.

Pitch

The level of your voice and the notes it hits are referred to as the pitch. You must vary your pitch, otherwise you will speak in a monotone (on the same note), which gives your audience or fellow speakers the impression that you are not really interested in your topic. Lack of expression in your voice can also make it hard for listeners to identify the important points in your argument.

Pace

The speed at which you speak is called the pace. When delivering a speech, you should speak at around 120 words per minute. This is slower than the speed at which you would normally talk to friends in your first language. Speaking at 120 words per minute enables your audience to better understand, and also to think about, what you say. This means that a five-minute speech should be around 600 words.

If you are taking part in a discussion, you should still aim to speak slowly and clearly, so that your points are easily understood.

Volume

Speak loudly enough that the back row of the audience or the classmate furthest away from you can hear you comfortably.

Pauses

Pausing for two or three seconds, particularly after stating an important point, will help your audience or fellow contributors to understand key points in your argument.

Pronunciation

Practise carefully saying unusual words – particularly technical terms, people’s names and place names – before you present your point of view. Stumbling over words when you are speaking suggests that you have not prepared thoroughly.

Tone

When you deliver your speech, think about the emotions you are trying to elicit from your audience at different points, and pay attention to the language techniques, words and phrases you have used. Your delivery of your opinion should reflect the tone you have used in your writing and your feelings about the topic. For example, if you want to elicit outrage, use an angry tone; if you want to gain the audience’s sympathy, use a gentle tone.

Eye contact

Look out at the audience or at your fellow speakers rather than down at your cue cards or your hands. Make brief, regular eye contact with various members of the group you are addressing.

Appearance

Although you will not be assessed on how you look, being dressed neatly suggests to an audience that you are taking both them and your topic seriously.



Rehearse your speech

- 1 To begin with, rehearse your speech alone. Time yourself and revise your speech if it is too long or too short, or if any sentences are too long for you to get through without taking a breath.
- 2 In pairs, rehearse your speeches in front of each other. Give each other feedback, indicating areas for improvement and noting what worked well.
- 3 Video yourself delivering the speech. Take notes on your performance – what you see is how you will appear to your audience.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view a video about how to use PowerPoint to get feedback on your speech delivery.



Sample point-of-view piece

The following sample point-of-view speech presents an opinion on the issue of First Nations land rights and mining.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see the cue cards the student used to deliver their speech.

Long, long ago, an ancient group of people found shelter in a secret cave. Here, they added to a plait of hair, woven from the hair of several people, in what may be a ritual of family and traditions long gone.

They ate together, and no doubt shared stories that connected them to each other and their culture. These were the Puutu Kuntj Kurrama and Pinikura people, who lived through the last ice age and whose descendants still live in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

Evidence of their lives from over thirty-two thousand years ago could be found in the Juukan Gorge caves. This is a sacred and historical site rich in archaeological artefacts of the longest living culture of people on Earth.

That is, until May of 2020.

Good afternoon everyone. Today I ask you to consider what is worth more: legacy, history and respect for culture ... or money?

It seems like an easy question to answer, right? Then why, only two years ago, did a huge, multi-billion-dollar mining company blow up the Juukan caves, permanently destroying them just so they could mine the iron ore deposit below?

When Rio Tinto chose money over respect, they decided that adding \$132 million-worth of iron ore to their business was worth losing an irreplaceable First Nations site. Sure, \$132 million is a lot of money, and Rio Tinto as a company contributes a lot to Australia's economy. But in 2020, Rio Tinto's income was over \$9 billion. Yes, you heard right – \$9 billion. You would think they could just leave the Juukan caves alone and focus on their other mine sites. But instead their greed meant that a precious and ancient natural wonder was lost forever.

Sure, the big bosses lost their bonuses that year, and the company was subjected to an inquiry. They suffered condemnation from around the world, as they should. But the mining continues, and no apology or compensation can bring back what was lost.

Beginning with a vivid scene is likely to intrigue the audience, as it is unexpected. In order for a speech to have impact, it needs to be engaging and hold the audience's attention from the beginning.

There is a clear positioning of First Nations culture and history as being valuable and respected, for example, through the alliterative 'longest living' and positively connotated word 'rich'. This alludes to the contention of the speech without being too obvious or generic in approach.

This blunt sentence shows a clear shift in tone, from awe to dismay, as the central issue is introduced.

Listing 'legacy, history and respect' and comparing these with 'money', together with the use of an ellipsis for an impactful pause, suggests that the answer to this question is obvious (and that choosing 'money' would be immoral).

Hyperbolic language ('huge', 'billion-dollar', 'blow up') aims to evoke outrage in the audience and convey a sense of the large scale of the problem. »

The dismissive 'Sure' here clearly conveys a sense of dissatisfaction with the consequences of the event, indicating that this issue is ongoing rather than resolved.

Acknowledging opposing arguments and then rebutting them strengthens the argument and suggests that the speaker is informed and reasonable.



The loss of the Juukan caves is a sign of ongoing and systemic erasure of Australian First Nations history since settlement. Australia is often thought of as a young country, a lucky country even, celebrated for its multiculturalism and diversity. But it is not young – it is home to the oldest civilisation in the world. And how can it be called lucky when it was founded on the massacres of its First Nations peoples? Settlers believed in their own superiority, to the point where Australia was called ‘terra nullius’ or ‘no man’s land’ because the original inhabitants were not viewed as having any rights to the land. How is it celebrated, when First Nations peoples were not allowed to vote or recognised as citizens in their own country until 1967 and when they still suffer today with shorter life expectancy and much higher rates of children in care?

Descendants of ancient peoples are advocating for the protection and preservation of lands and sites used by their ancestors. These are places of significant historical interest that can give us all an insight into the past and how people lived thousands and thousands of years ago. Yes, the reality is that we live in a global economy that is largely driven by huge companies. Our roads, hospitals, schools and welfare are all influenced by the contributions of big companies, like mining companies, to this economy. Yet even mining is a dying industry – there is a limited amount of natural resources that can be dug up. Perhaps we should look in other directions to protect the future of our economy and natural environment.

Mining is the easy option and involves living completely in the present. It denies the past and has no future. When we weigh its benefits against its shortcomings, it fails.

First Nations peoples have suffered enough in the last two hundred years of colonisation. Together, we need to unite behind the voices of the traditional owners of the country we are privileged to be able to call home, and protect their legacy before any more is lost. Mining is dying anyway, so it is time to leave the land alone.

Let’s support those advocating for First Nations land rights and challenging greed and big business. If we really are the lucky country, we need to respect the culture that developed here long before any of us. Let’s look to the past and the future to guide our actions. It’s the right thing to do.

The issue has been broadened here from a one-off event to a social issue, giving it more weight and positioning the audience to consider their own role as people living in Australia.

Repeated questioning of commonly accepted ideas about Australia encourages the audience to reject them and to consider First Nations peoples’ perspectives more closely.

Inclusive language helps audience members to see the relevance of the issue to them, encouraging them to reflect on their own position as stakeholders.

Repetition of previous arguments helps to reinforce key points.

A call to action expressed in inclusive language helps to convey a sense of hope, inspiring the audience to agree with and to feel invested in the idea of change. This is reinforced by the declaration that this is ‘the right thing to do’, which frames the issue as a moral one and encourages audience members who might still be swayed by the lure of money to instead be guided by ethics.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see a sample dialogue between two students discussing the issue of level-crossing removal at a local train station.



Scan the code or click [here](#) for a bonus chapter about preparing for SACs and exams.

Course overview

		Area of Study 1: Reading and exploring texts	Area of Study 2: Crafting texts
Unit 1	EAL	<p>You will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one text (or extracts from a text) selected by your school. <p>You may produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a personal response to the text OR a note-form summary of key connections and ideas within the text. 	<p>You will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three mentor texts. <p>You may produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two texts • a set of annotations on your texts, identifying the qualities of effective writing.
	English	<p>You will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one text selected by your school. <p>You may write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a personal response to the text. 	<p>You will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three mentor texts. <p>You may write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two texts • a description of your writing processes.
		Area of Study 1: Reading and exploring texts	Area of Study 2: Exploring argument
Unit 2	EAL	<p>You will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one text (or extracts from a text) selected by your school. <p>You may produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an analytical essay on the text OR a detailed mind map of vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas in the text. 	<p>You may produce one or more of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a note-form summary of key arguments and supporting arguments in persuasive text(s) • an annotated visual text(s) identifying key persuasive techniques • an analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language and techniques in persuasive text(s). <p>You may produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an oral presentation of a point of view on a local and/or national issue.
	English	<p>You will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one text selected by your school. <p>You may write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an analytical essay on the text. 	<p>You may produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an analysis of the use of argument and persuasive language and techniques in persuasive text(s) OR a set of annotated persuasive texts. <p>You may produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an oral presentation of a point of view on a local and/or national issue.

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