

# Year 11

# GCSE English Language



## Writing Revision Booklet (Components 1 & 2)

2019

There are 10 main types of writing you might be asked to complete:

Type of writing
A Formal Letter
A Letter to a Newspaper
A Letter of Application
An Informal Letter/Email
A Lively Article
A Speech
A Guide to a Place
A Review
A Report
A Narrative/Short Story

## Accuracy matters: check the column on the left-hand side.

### Are you 100% accurate with these things?

Every time you write, you should remember to check:

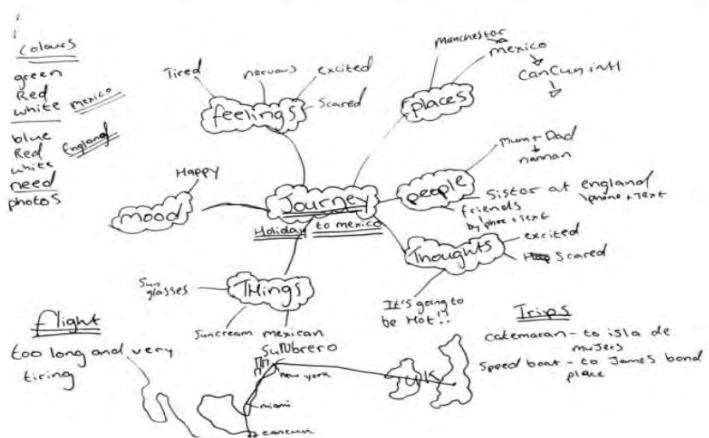
Capital letters at the start of Sentences and for the word 'I'	The first word of every sentence should begin with a capital letter. 'I' also needs to be capitalised.
Capital letters for proper nouns	Use capital letters at the start of: <b>The names of people:</b> <u>Albert Einstein</u> , <u>President Obama</u> <b>The names of places:</b> <u>Tunbridge Wells</u> , <u>New York</u> , <u>East Sussex</u> <b>The names of organisations:</b> <u>Wagamamas</u> , <u>The United Nations</u> , <u>BBC</u> , <u>Uplands Community College</u> <b>Days and months:</b> <u>Monday June 13<sup>th</sup></u>
Full stops	Every sentence must end with a full stop unless it is a question or an exclamation.
Question marks	Make sure you put a question mark at the end of a question.
Commas:	
After connectives	Firstly,... However,... Moreover,... In addition,... As well as this,... Conversely,...
After dependent clauses at the start of sentences	These are when you start sentences with words like Although..., Whilst..., Despite..., If..., When..., After... 'Although many people enjoy playing sport, they do not always find time to participate.'
In lists	'For the experiment, I will need a Bunsen burner, tripod and gauze.'
Around 'which' and 'who' statements	'The play, which was written in 1601, explores the nature of monarchy.'
Apostrophes for contractions (shortened words)	Do not=don't, Will not=won't, I will=I'll (only use in informal writing)
Apostrophes for possession	The boys' football...(plural), Queen Elizabeth's reign...
Homophone – your/you're	Your (belonging to you), you're (shortened form of 'you are')
Homophone – there/their/they're	There, their (when it belongs to an individual – 'their flag'), they're (shortened form of 'they are')
Homophone – to/too/two	To, too (meaning 'too many' or 'as well' 'Are you coming too?'), two (2)
Homophone – here/hear	Here (a place), hear (you hear with your ear)
Homophone – its/it's	Its (belonging to it), it's (shortened form of 'it is')
Double consonants	Tri <u>pp</u> ed, skip <u>pp</u> ed, begin <u>nn</u> ing, scan <u>nn</u> ing...
Common words	Sentence, although, because, friends, solder, unnecessary, argument, believe, definite, height, awful, appalled
'Y' endings when 'Y' has a consonant before it	Baby=babies, lady=ladies but holiday=holidays

**Learn these things to do before you start writing**  
**(don't spend more than five minutes on this)**

1. Work out TAP. Every task will be a combination of the following:

Text	Letter, speech (talk), article, review, guide
Audience	Teenagers, your classmates, the head teacher, the council, a friend, a newspaper, the general public
Purpose	Persuade, advise, inform, argue, entertain

2. Get all your initial ideas down in a thought shower



3. Plan a four or five part structure

*You hear that a supermarket plans to build on a local recreation ground. Write a letter to the local newspaper expressing your view on this.*

Reasons Against (my viewpoint) <i>Simplify in the exam to 'me'</i>	Arguments I may come up against <i>Simplify in the exam to 'counter'</i>
I AM A <u>parent &amp; villager</u>	4. WHAT'S THE COUNTER Some might say... That the supermarket will be convenient and offer more choice
1. Worried there will be no safe areas for children to play - bring in concerns over lack of physical exercise already.	
2. Concerned about increased traffic in the village - mention recent accident & congestion	HOWEVER... At what cost - children's health and wellbeing? Children's lives? The livelihood of our friends and neighbours?
3. Worried about the effects on the village - we should support the local businesses	

## **A Formal Letter to a Head Teacher or Other Adult:**

### **Top tips for a formal letter**

1. Start with the correct salutation 'Dear Mr Collins' and sign off 'Yours sincerely'.
2. Use a four paragraph structure with introduction, your complaint, what you would like the head to do about it and a polite ending.
3. Use connectives at the start of each paragraph.
4. Write in a formal, polite manner.
5. Use powerful, emotive words to get your point across.
6. Use rhetorical questions and lists of three.
7. Don't use contractions (shortened words like 'don't').
8. Don't use too many exclamations.

See if you can find these eight features in the example on the following page ...

## **A Formal Letter to the Head Teacher or Other Unfamiliar Adult (eg. Council)**

17 White Hart Wood  
Sevenoaks  
Kent  
TN13 1RR

27<sup>th</sup> November 2012

Uplands Community College  
High Street  
Wadhurst  
TN56AX

Dear Mr Collins,

I am writing to you in order to complain about the amount of tests we have to sit each term here at Uplands. I think it's horrific!

The most important reason I think for getting rid of most of our tests is because they take up valuable lesson time. In English we have two tests a term every term. That makes twelve tests in total! Often we then go straight on to something else and don't even know if we've got good grades or not. If it's twelve tests then that could've been 12 lessons instead which I am sure you agree would be a lot of time we could have spent learning instead. Especially in key stage 4 I think it makes much more sense to do just one exam at the end of every other term. This would help us prepare better for our actual GCSE exam and let us know what grades we are getting.

Another reason why I would like you to consider giving us less tests is the amount of stress they cause. I know that sometimes you have to have a bit of stress in order to motivate you to do better, but my example above was only for English. Imagine doing that many tests times eleven...because that's how many different subjects we learn! Who wants to cause people stress when no good comes out of it?

Some people might argue that we need tests to see how well we are doing, but I don't think that works in reality. Once we've finished our test we get our scores back then move on to something new. Also, if the stress is making us do less well because of all the worry and not being able to prepare properly, what use are the scores anyway?

Ultimately, I understand that some tests are necessary (even though I wish they weren't) but all I'm asking you is to consider lowering the amount. That way we will be less stressed and more likely to do better! I will be coming to the next meeting you have with the student council and I look forward to hearing your views on my ideas then.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Scribbles.

**Have a go at one of these:**

The headteacher/principal of your school/college has proposed that all students should take part in a camping and outdoor activities week every year.

**Write a letter to him/her giving your views on this proposal. [20]**

A local school has decided to allow girls to play in football and cricket teams alongside boys.

**Write a letter to the Headteacher either agreeing or disagreeing with this decision.**

Write a letter to your local council, persuading them to support a project to improve your area

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## A Letter to a Newspaper

### Top tips for a letter to a newspaper

1. Start with the correct salutation 'Dear Editor' and sign-off 'Yours faithfully'.
2. Start your first paragraph by referring to something you have read in the newspaper.
3. Don't have a go at the editor! You are writing about an issue not criticising the paper.
4. Provide a personal story about the issue.
5. Use a five paragraph structure with introduction, main arguments, supporting arguments, counter arguments with reasons why these are wrong and conclusion.
6. Use connectives at the start of each paragraph.
7. Use powerful, persuasive techniques like rhetorical questions, list of three and emotive language.
8. Don't use contractions (shortened words like 'don't').

See if you can find these eight features in the following example (see next page) ...

## A Letter to a Newspaper

A supermarket chain is planning to build a new store on land which is currently used by local youngsters to play sport, and has a children's playground. *The supermarket chain says that it will create up to 60 jobs and will give shoppers more choices. Those opposing the plan believe it will put local shops out of business and destroy a valuable amenity for youngsters.* The newspaper has invited readers to give their views on the plan.

**Write your letter, giving reasons why you support or oppose the plan. You may wish to develop the arguments above, but can also give other views as well. [20]**

5 May Cottages  
Ticehurst  
Wadhurst  
TN5 6UV

18<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Mr Simmonds – Editor  
Wadhurst Daily News  
Tonbridge Road  
Wadhurst  
TN6 1PX

Dear Editor,

I was very disappointed to read that Wadhurst Parish Council have given Sainsbury's the go-ahead to build an express store on the recreation ground ('All set for Sainsbury's' 10/10/16). This decision shows little thought for how many villagers, like myself, may be affected.

Firstly, as a mother of two young boys, both of whom are keen footballers, I think that any plans which take away safe playing areas for children are very damaging. Due to traffic and the recent closure of the Youth Centre, the village already has very few safe areas for children to play and are we not repeatedly told how important physical exercise is? Removing the only green field left for recreational use is a disgraceful decision on the part of the council.

In addition, a new supermarket will also mean more traffic – something Wadhurst certainly does not need. The six accidents in the last year are evidence of this! Also, more shoppers, and therefore more traffic, will make the school run even more unbearable for parents. The queues at 3.30pm are already ridiculous!

I also find it hard to believe that the council have not considered what will happen to our High Street and local businesses. Local shops, like Crittles, which has been in the village for years, simply will not be able to survive with a supermarket to compete with – and nor should they have to. Our village is likely to become another soulless route through to the next Sainsbury's.

Although I can appreciate that some may welcome the cheap prices and convenience a supermarket may bring, I worry that it would all come at a cost: to our children's health, to their safety and welfare and to the livelihood of our friends and neighbours.

I do not think I am alone in feeling betrayed by the decision and I only hope that the council will see the bigger picture before any further developments are made.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Caroline Hawkins

**Have a go at one of these:**

A local businessman has applied for permission to hold an outdoor music festival in your area.

**Write a letter to your local newspaper either supporting or opposing this idea**

The National Blood Service has been campaigning in your local area to try to encourage people to give blood.

Write a letter to your local newspaper giving your views on this. [20]

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## **A Letter of Application**

### **Top tips for a letter of application**

1. Start with the correct salutation 'Dear Sir/Madam' and sign-off 'Yours faithfully'.
2. Use connectives at the start of each paragraph.
3. Write in a formal, polite manner.
4. Use positive adjectives to describe yourself.
5. Start your first paragraph by referring to the job you are applying for and the advert that you saw advertising it.
6. Use a four paragraph structure with introduction, your experience, your personal qualities and polite ending requesting an application pack.
7. Don't use contractions (shortened words like 'don't').
8. Write accurately to make a good impression!

See if you can find these eight features in the following example on the next page...

## A Letter of Application

15 Fortuna Avenue  
Wadhurst  
East Sussex  
TN5 8PD

Ms Pearson  
Summer Camp Coordinator  
Bewel Water  
Wadhurst  
TN5 6AB

26<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Dear Ms. Pearson,

I am interested in the position of extra summer staff, as listed on your website. I am currently in Year 11 at Uplands College and am looking for an exciting job for the summer before I begin at sixth form. I have some experience of working with younger children as I babysit regularly and also buddy one of the Year 7 forms every week in my school, so I would be eager to contribute my skills to your company.

Most recently, I have been helping an eleven year old girl, who is struggling with reading: I listen to her read each week and help her with the words she doesn't understand. Supporting people who are younger than me is certainly a rewarding experience, and I would love to continue with this type of work in the summer.

Furthermore, I have experience working with adults as I have a part-time job at Sainsbury's. My responsibilities include operating the tills, as well as dealing with customers' questions. Consequently, I have developed a strong sense of patience and awareness about how to interact with the general public, two skills that will be important in this position. During my time at work, I am part of a team of adults, working closely with a team manager and my colleagues. This experience has taught me how to be cooperative and responsible.

In addition to working with students in the year 7 tutor group, I have taught horse-riding lessons and barn safety to children at my local stables. Through this experience, I have developed an understanding of how to help children to follow instructions and have fun, while staying safe.

Last but not least, I love outdoor activities and regularly participate in several clubs including horse riding, swimming, and tennis. I also have experience of canoeing and rock-climbing. Although I might need some training in the activities you offer, I can assure you that I will bring plenty of enthusiasm.

The position sounds like a wonderful opportunity that I am eager to be involved in. I absolutely love working with children, and also have a passion for activities, so it's certainly a job I would be very excited to have. Thank you so much for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

**Louisa Smith**

**Have a go at this one:**

A company that runs family activity holidays wants to recruit extra staff over the school summer holidays. The company is looking for people who are able to work well with children and adults, work as part of a team, and carry out a variety of tasks.

**You decide to apply for one of the jobs available**

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## **An Informal Letter to a Friend or Relative**

### **Top ten tips for an informal letter**

1. Include your address in the top right.
2. Employ a light-hearted, chatty tone but still write accurately!
3. Ensure you have four or five clear paragraphs.
4. Use informal connectives (linking words).
5. Use one or two exclamation marks.
6. Use contractions (shortened words like 'don't').
7. Employ humour.
8. Link your opening and ending.
9. Use short, punchy sentences.
10. Use rhetorical questions.

See if you can find these ten features in the following example ....

### An Informal Letter to a Friend or Relative

Imagine you have a friend or relative who has decided to run in the London Marathon (a distance of over twenty-six miles).

Write a letter to your friend or relative giving your opinions [20]

Wadhurst  
Monday 18<sup>th</sup> Oct

Dear Sal,

I was absolutely amazed when Jack told me you've applied to run in the London Marathon next year! I mean, it's an amazing challenge, what with the course being 26 MILES and all, but have you really thought it through?

I know it's six months away and, no doubt, you have a full training programme organised, but it is still a massive undertaking. I speak as someone who has known you a long time. I have shared thousands of big Macs with you; been to hundreds of gigs and parties with you; slobbed on the sofa in front of hundreds of trashy movies with you; so I am wondering just how you will get through the next few months without any of that... Are you really prepared to eat healthily? Can you go out running through the coming winter? Will you choose a gym session instead of 'X Factor'? Maybe there's a side to you I haven't seen because you don't seem to be the obvious candidate for such a demanding challenge. I know you know this and that I'm only saying it because I know and love you.

On a more serious note, did you know that quite a lot of runners develop health problems during or after running 26 miles? Apart from the odd actual heart attack, there are pulled muscles and tendons, broken limbs and breathing problems. I'm not being dramatic but every year there are many injuries and I'm guessing that the less fit you are, the more likely you are to have a problem. Please look into all this thoroughly before you make your final decision.

OK, now I've got all my insults and worries off my chest, here's the positive bit. If you do manage a training programme, get fit and complete the run, I will be the first to bow down at your feet in admiration. It will be an awesome achievement and one I can't even imagine doing myself. I have heard that the support you get on the day makes all the difference – people cheering for you as you run past. So.... I will be there, Sal, shouting my loudest to help carry you across that finishing line.

Let me know when you start training and I'll bring along the Lucozade.

Love,

Jo

**Have a go at this one:**

A friend has written to you saying they are considering taking up boxing. Write a letter to your friend giving your views on this idea.

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## **A Lively Article**

### **Top ten tips for a lively article**

1. Include a bold and catchy headline.
2. Employ a light-hearted, chatty tone but still write accurately! You could imagine you are someone else and write from their perspective (a teacher for example).
3. Ensure you have four or five clear sections.
4. Use informal connectives (linking words).
5. Use rhetorical questions, lists of three and pronouns like 'we', 'our', 'us' and 'you'.
6. Use one or two exclamation marks.
7. Use contractions (shortened words like 'don't').
8. Employ humour.
9. Link your opening and ending.
10. Use short, punchy sentences.

See if you can find these ten features in the following example on the next page...

### A Lively Article

**Write a lively article for your school or college magazine with the title: 'How to Survive Your GCSE Exam Year'. [20]**

Write your article.

To be honest, I'm surprised you're even reading this article. Are you sure you don't have some revision to do? A controlled assessment to prepare for? A target to meet? To be honest, sometimes, I feel that targets, assessments, revision and exams are swallowing me up like a terrifying tsunami. I seem to have an endless list of things I should be doing.

So, how do you cope with all this?

The best advice I can give you is to listen in lessons. I mean, really listen. If you listen carefully to the teachers' advice and you make sure you understand everything the first time around, revision is a lot easier. Revision should just be going over all of the things you have already learnt, so you need to make sure you understand it in the first place. When you don't understand something, ask a teacher, a parent or a friend, or look it up on the internet when you get home.

My second piece of advice is to get yourself organised. I know that we all groan when our form tutors tell us to "Make a revision timetable," but, it really does help. I know it might sound geeky, but I feel really good when I can tick things off on my to-do list. A timetable also helps when you're planning your homework. For example, if you've got a History controlled assessment tomorrow, you want to be revising History, not finishing off a piece of homework for Maths.

Furthermore, I know some people in my class aren't going to bed until midnight because they are still revising or preparing for controlled assessments. It's really important to rest and relax, so make sure you plan time to do the things you enjoy, like seeing friends or doing your hobbies.

So, how do you survive your GCSE exam year? Get yourself organised, pay attention and remember to relax.

**Have a go at one of these:**

B2. You have been asked to write a lively article for your school/college magazine welcoming new Y7 pupils into the school, and giving them information and advice about their new school.

Your article should tell them what is good about the school, but also what to look out for.

**Write an article for a teenage magazine about recent trends in either music, fashion or film.**

If you wish, your article could cover more than one of these topics. [20]

Your school/college is keen to save energy.

**Write an article for the school/college magazine on this issue.**

You could include:

- examples of how energy is wasted at the moment;
- your ideas about how the situation could be improved.

A magazine is running a series of articles for parents under the heading *An Enjoyable Day Out for the Family*.

**Write an article recommending a place to visit, and explaining its appeal to all the family.**

You might like to think about a town, a seaside resort, a theme park or a museum, but you are free to make your own choice.

It has been proposed that the legal age for buying alcohol should be reduced from eighteen to sixteen.

**Write an article for a teenage magazine exploring the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal.**

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## A Speech

### **Top ten tips for a speech**

1. Ensure you include an engaging opening, perhaps by asking direct questions to the audience.
2. Use connectives to make the links between your sections clear.
3. Ensure you have four or five clear paragraphs – just because it is a speech, doesn't mean you should write in one big block!
4. Consider counter arguments.
5. Defeat counter arguments.
6. Use facts and statistics (make them up).
7. Use rhetorical questions, lists of three and pronouns like 'we' and 'you'.
8. Use contractions (shortened words like 'don't') if your audience is familiar to you.
9. Link your opening and ending (perhaps by answering the questions you posed in your opening).
10. Use short, punchy sentences.

See if you can find these ten features in the following example on the next page...

## A Speech

You have to give a talk to your class with the title “CCTV in schools: what do you think?”

**Write what you would say.**

I'd like to begin by asking you a question: how would you feel if you came into school tomorrow and discovered that CCTV cameras had been installed all over the school? You're probably sitting there thinking, "That'll never happen!" Well, listen carefully because we recently found out that two hundred schools across England have already put CCTV cameras in their corridors, playgrounds, canteens and even in toilets and changing rooms.

Before we all start shouting about our rights, I have to admit that I can understand some of the reasons why teachers might want to have CCTV.

Firstly, I know that sometimes children get bullied in school and maybe that is the most positive reason to have CCTV, especially in places where the teachers don't go, such as the toilets. I remember, when I was in Year 7, I felt really nervous about going into the toilets because you never knew who would be in there. Nothing ever happened to me, but I did hear about a few people being called names by older students when they went to the loo. Teachers want to protect students and make sure that we feel safe and CCTV could be one way of achieving that.

In addition - and I personally think this is the most persuasive reason to have CCTV in schools – CCTV might prevent people from stealing. One of the worst things that happened to me and my friends was when someone (we still don't know who) sneaked into the changing rooms while my class was playing football on the fields and stole anything valuable they could find: mobile phones, wallets and iPods were all taken. My mum couldn't believe there was no way of finding out who was responsible. If there had been a camera, it would have been easy to track down the criminal.

On the other hand, there is the issue of our privacy. We are just kids and generally, people behave well and do what they are supposed to do, so I don't really feel like we need CCTV everywhere. After all, if someone wants to bully, or steal or truant, I guess they will just find another place to do it because no school will be able to have cameras that cover every single area and any decent thief will simply chuck a jumper over the camera before they start searching through our belongings.

So, while I can see the reasons for CCTV, I have to conclude that there are more important things schools could spend their money on. What do you think?

**Have a go at one of these:**

Many older people don't use computers or the internet, either because they don't see any value in them or because they are afraid of modern technology.

You have been asked to give a talk to a group of older people to persuade them to use computers and the internet.

Some of the benefits of the computer and the internet that your talk might include are:

- keeping in touch with distant relatives and friends;
- getting information on hobbies or interests.

**Write what you would say.**

Students from your school/college have been selected to join an expedition to a remote part of the world. Your year group is debating whether to raise money to support this. Some students believe the expedition should be supported because of the opportunities it offers all those involved. Others disagree, saying that there are more deserving local charities.

**You take part in the debate. Write the speech you would make to your year group.**

Your school or college has agreed to raise money for a charity.

You decide that you will give a talk to your fellow students to persuade them to agree to raise money for the charity of your choice.

**Write what you will say to them, explaining why your choice of charity is a good one, and giving suggestions about the fund-raising events that could be held.**

You have to give a talk to your class with the title 'Mobile phones: a blessing or a curse?'

**Write what you would say.**

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## **A Guide to a Place**

### **Top ten tips for a guidebook entry**

1. Make it interesting, lively and entertaining.
2. Begin with the general information about location and history.
3. Ensure you have four clear paragraphs – write an introduction, two main paragraphs weighing up positives and negatives and a recommendation (You will enjoy this place if...).
4. Use connectives to make the links between your sections clear.
5. Use some good descriptive words.
6. Use contractions (shortened words like 'don't').
7. Use words like 'Whilst...' and 'Although' to balance good and bad.
8. Use facts and statistics (make them up).
9. Link your opening and ending.
10. Use short, punchy sentences.

See if you can find these ten features in the following example on the next page...

### A Guide to a Place

B2. *The Rough Guide* is a guide-book for tourists which prides itself on giving frank and honest opinions about places, both the positive and the negative.

Write an entry about a place you know well for *The Rough Guide*, including details the tourist board would like visitors to see, but also providing an insider's view of any less attractive features.

Once a popular spa resort, Royal Tunbridge Wells lies 30 miles south of London in Kent. You can explore the beautiful architecture of The Pantiles and wander round the independent shops, cafés and restaurants. Unless you're prepared to return on a summer evening for the Jazz Festival, The Pantiles can seem quiet. The High Street boasts boutiques and jewellery shops, but you can also find second-hand bookshops and cafés.

Since it is hilly, expect a long walk up along the High Street, past the railway station. At the top of the hill is the modern shopping centre with all the usual chain-stores. Next to the indoor shopping centre is a pedestrian street where people can sit outside at a café. While there are lots of restaurants, some are expensive.

On a less positive note, the town, outside the Pantiles, is much like any other, with the normal selection of chain stores, £1 stores and sports shops. The out-of-town shopping centre is one to be avoided and traffic can be a real headache around rush hour. For cheap parking, use one of the supermarkets and walk into the centre. Just don't forget to buy something in store or you may find yourself clamped! Parking in the centre is almost impossible and we would advise not even to try during business hours.

The train takes 50 minutes to London, so you can visit Royal Tunbridge Wells in a day. Alternatively, you could drive into the gorgeous countryside to see the traditional oast-houses and find a pub for lunch.

**Have a go at this one:**

*The Rough Guide* is a guide-book for tourists which prides itself on giving frank and honest opinions about places, both the positive and the negative.

**Write an entry about a place you know well for *The Rough Guide*, including details the tourist board would like visitors to see, but also providing an insider's view of any less attractive features.**

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## A Review

### **Top ten tips for a review**

1. Include a bold and catchy headline.
2. Employ a light-hearted, chatty tone but still write accurately! Write as if you are an expert on the topic.
3. Ensure you have four or five clear sections: basic information, plot synopsis (what happens in the film/book in present tense), good points, bad points, is it worth seeing/reading etc.
4. Use connectives at the start of each paragraph (linking words).
5. Use rhetorical questions, lists of three and pronouns like 'we', 'our', 'us' and 'you'.
6. Use lots of adjectives to describe the film eg. fast-paced, action packed chase scenes.
7. Use contractions (shortened words like 'don't').
8. Employ humour.
9. Link your opening and ending.
10. Use short, punchy sentences.

See if you can find these ten features in the following example on the next page...

### A Review

#### **Write a review of a film, CD or book you have bought recently.**

Adapting *The Hunger Games* for the big screen was never going to be easy. The popular novels are full of sci-fi details like human/dog hybrids, burning dresses and genetically modified wasps. Thankfully, though, instead of going for endless CGI graphics, the director has chosen a more intelligent approach and it really works! The first movie in *The Hunger Games* trilogy has something to please everyone: a good love story, great action sequences and a more intelligent story-line than your average teen-action movie.

#### **What's the plot?**

It's the near future. The world we know has been destroyed by war and the government now rule by fear. People live in districts, where they are forced to provide for the wealthy people of the capital. Every year, the districts must send a tribute to take part in a reality TV show. The twist with this particular show is that the contestants are children and these children must fight to the death! Katniss, the heroine of the books, is a poor and lonely girl, who has lost her father and whose mother is paralysed with grief. She finds an escape beyond the fences of District 12, where she hunts deer with her bow and arrows. When the *Games* come around, who should get picked? Well, not Katniss actually, but her sister Primrose. Knowing her little sister wouldn't stand a chance, Katniss steps in to save the day.

#### **Is it any good?**

As far as teen action films go, this is a very watchable one. Unlike *Twilight*, *The Hunger Games* is subtle and isn't packed with too much action. The acting, too, leaves R-Patz and K-Stew in the shade. Another good thing is that the CGI isn't overdone and the director doesn't rely on music to build tension. There is, however, plenty to keep sci-fi fans happy with all sorts of imaginative creatures, lethal weapons and some gory deaths.

On a less positive note, some of the supporting performances are weak and clichéd. Haymitch, played by Woody Harleson, becomes rather annoying after the first few minutes. Fans of action, might find the opening half-hour slow and laborious and some younger fans may find the violence frightening although it is never too graphic.

#### **Should I go and see it?**

All in all, if you enjoyed the novels, you will enjoy the film; however, fans of non-stop, blood and guts action beware: you might find *The Hunger Games* a little slow and wordy.

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**Have a go at this one:**

Write a review of a book, film or music CD for a magazine which is read by people of your age.

Your review should include:

- Details about the book, film or CD you have chosen;
- Comments on its strengths, if any;
- Comments on its weaknesses, if any;
- A clear recommendation.

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## A Report

### **Top tips for writing a report**

1. Include a clear title at the top.
2. Write an introduction that gives the reason for the report, key features of the topic and action to be taken.
3. Develop relevant details following a problem/solution structure (3 or 4 ideas). Use subheadings to signpost your points.
4. Recommending action in terms of priority.
5. Closing report with thanks and sign-off.
6. Keep language formal and clear at all times.
7. Use connectives to structure your paragraphs (Firstly, Secondly, Finally).

See if you can find these 7 features in the following example on the next page....

### **Report about how waste could be reduced in our school**

With a student population of over 1,500, the amount of waste that we produce as a school is a problem which certainly needs to be addressed. We waste far more food and energy than is necessary and, considering the constant cuts to education, it is paramount that something is done to ensure that our resources are used wisely and in a way which will ensure our school's economic and environmental future.

After the average lunch hour in our main school café, Café Q, between six and seven large bins are filled to bursting with various types of food waste by students who simply do not eat all of what they purchase. Often students in our cafeteria will purchase food and then discover that they dislike it and simply throw it away. The sausage broth that is often served on subject review days is a clear example. Students are only able to eat the food if they like it so by producing food that they do not enjoy we are immediately creating excess waste, which could be avoided.

To avert this situation I would recommend that we find and utilise a variety of healthy yet delicious meals for students to enjoy. Note should be taken of student favourites such as fish and chips, roast chicken or beef dinners and also the paninis, in order to find a more successful menu that would encourage students to eat more of their food, thereby reducing waste.

For some time now the school has been clamouring for funding for solar panels. The school site is incredibly large and a great deal of energy is used every day through lighting and heating. With prices rapidly increasing, it is very important that the school should take action to prevent the waste of valuable energy, money and resources.

Therefore, it is my view that our school should move into more sustainable methods of producing its own energy. Solar panels could be placed across the roofs of buildings such as the sports hall, which would produce a huge level of energy capable of powering much of the school site. Lighting on sports pitches should be turned off when there are no matches taking place in the evenings, thereby saving a great deal of energy. Wind turbines could even be built onto hills beside the school, which would greatly increase the amount of energy which the school could sustainably produce.

It has come to my attention that there are a great deal of bins scattered across the school site – almost a hundred at the last count – to discourage littering. While this has been greatly effective, keeping the number of bins clean and empty takes a lot of work and time, which could perhaps be better spent doing other things. The bins also encourage students to be wasteful, allowing them to throw away things that they could eat or which could be recycled.

For this reason, I believe that the volume of bins on the school site should be significantly reduced so that students produce less waste and maintenance costs are significantly brought down. There would be enough bins to make littering inexcusable while also cutting down on costs. Recycling bins should also be introduced so that the school is disposing of its waste properly and sustainably.

I hope that this report has been of use to you in finding key areas which need to be addressed.

**Have a go at this:**

Your school is thinking about changing the school uniform

**Write a report for the Headteacher suggesting ways that this might be done.**

You could include:

- Examples of how the current uniform is not fit for purpose
- Your ideas about how the uniform could be improved/changed

30 minutes, 300-400 words

## **A Narrative / Short Story**

### **Top tips for writing a short story**

1. Your first line is important. Hook your reader/s.
2. Last lines are important too. Know where you are going. What will your last line be?
3. Include a maximum of three characters. Make them different from one another.
4. Focus on description – use effective verbs, adjectives and adverbs.
5. Concentrate on one dramatic moment in time.
6. Show don't tell. Don't explain that your character is grumpy and tired. Make her/him do stuff that shows this.
7. Consider including dialogue and punctuate it properly.
8. First person is always a possibility but consider using third person.
9. Your story should have a clearly described setting, a few defined characters and a plot that makes logical sense.
10. Avoid the obvious and steer clear of violence, death, zombies, gangs and shooting people!

Three examples follow – see next 3 pages ....

## Blue

Heart thumping like a drum in her chest as she steps up to the blocks. Crowd cheering. Whistle. Gasp. Dive! The crowd erupts in a roar of applause as the eager swimmers plunge into the depths of the turquoise pool. Splash! She hits the water. Bubbles surround her as she slowly exhales. The chaos of the previous minutes starts to disperse in her mind, like the bubbles around her. Drifting. Drifting away...

...Splashing and kicking, she's a gurgling baby in the bath. Dad looming over her, encouraging her to blow bubbles in the soapy water. Both laughing uncontrollably. Blinking and spluttering between her giggles as he pours the warm water over her head with a small plastic watering can. Colourful toys and cups surround her as she slaps the water excitedly with tiny hands. The image of the smiling faces of the father and daughter gradually fades away...

...A warm breeze blows in her face as she runs away frantically from the waves, hand in hand with her dad, both screeching with joy. As they walk along the sandy water's edge collecting shells, their footprints are washed away by the sea. Soft sand tickling between her bare toes while the waves lap on the shore. Paddling in the shallow waters and licking chocolatey ice cream while seagulls squawk at one another, scavenging for their next snack, then disappearing high into the cloudy sky...

..."Ring a ring a roses, a pocket full of posies, atishoo, atishoo, we all fall down!" Memories of her first swimming lesson, kicking legs, blowing bubbles, orange armbands, mastering the mushroom float, the exhilaration of launching herself into the blue of the pool. Her dad looking on from the spectator's gallery beaming with pride...

...She can hear herself breathing loudly through her mask and snorkel. The comforting heat of the sun on her back. Rainbow coloured fish wiggling away, crabs scuttling across the smooth sandy seabed, shells of all shapes and sizes are scattered across the ocean floor. The crystal clear waters ahead and below her are full of mystery. Not knowing what amazing creature or object she will see next, she glances towards Dad floating alongside her, sharing this fascinating experience. Beautiful sights, great memories...

She's tiring now, each stroke a challenge. "One last push, you can do this!" urges a voice inside her head. As her-fingertips touch the wall she comes up gasping for breath, she hears the deafening roar of the crowd. Cheering and shouting all around her, she finally comes to her senses to accept the fact that she has won! While the other competitors battle it out for second place, she looks up to where her mother is sitting, clapping and grinning with bittersweet tears streaming down her cheeks. Her eyes move to the empty seat next to Mum's.

He's not there.

He never will be again.

She looks into the pool and sees dad's faint reflection in the sparkling water.  
"I did it for you." she whispers.

## Hunted

Two amber eyes blinked from within the darkness. The beast stood alone. She moved with ease, her paws slipping through the undergrowth. No twigs snapped. The clearing was full of life and death. Fungi grew up trees as tall as skyscrapers. Small bugs lay in webs. She took a deep sniff. The smells of the forest curdled in a wave of air, mixing rotting meat with fragrant flowers and in the heart of it all, fresh blood. Food?

The stream gurgled incessantly as the beast tracked the blood. Small puddles of scarlet liquid pooled in the pockets of russet leaves. The blood had yet to clot. The beast moved on.

At the Eastern Checkpoint the emergency system started to beep. Something was wrong. The men grabbed their guns and hurried off.

The beast was desperate. It hadn't had any game, let alone an animal this big, for weeks. Normally it would prey on rabbits, squirrels and birds but those had all been killed by the traps. Now it was forced to the extreme of hunting humans. Last year's cubs had died of starvation. She wouldn't let that happen again. Her species had to survive.

She slipped silently through the trees constantly seeking cover. Finally she saw her prey. A small girl, her wounded leg seeping blood each time she moved. The metal trap had left clear puncture marks from where its teeth had sunk into her pale skin. Her black hair whipped round as her fear filled eyes scanned the trees. She turned and struggled on at a fast pace. The beast knew it would have to make its move soon.

The men were getting close, following the trail of human and beast through the trees. Death hovered in the air. They picked up their pace and ran.

The beast reached a scorched clearing, very different to the one it had started at, human made, lifeless. In the centre of the circular space the girl sat on a decaying stump her leg lying awkwardly. It was time. The beast flattened her ears, tucked in her tail and leapt.

Everything ran in slow motion. The girl spun round to face the beast. With cold eyes she lifted a silver pistol from her lap. As the beast widened its gaping mouth the girl carelessly flicked the safety and pulled the trigger.

Silence fell across the clearing. The young girl pulled out her mobile and sent a prepared text which simply read "Got it". Struggling with the weight she dragged the dead wolf onto her shoulders, the money was more than worth her damaged leg. Five minutes later a group of men reached the clearing. They were rangers with one mission, to protect the sole surviving wolf. The clearing was empty. The girl and her prey had gone. All that remained was the casing of a silver bullet lying on the damp leaves. The men were silent.

Far away, the wolf cubs opened their eyes. They were starving. Their mother would never return.

## The Den of Decay

I wake with a start, and a sick feeling spreads through my body like blood seeping from an open wound. It is my day of reckoning, the day I hoped would never come.

A dry, firm hand drags me from my safety chamber and thrusts me roughly towards the exit. Outside, the awaiting vehicle has its engine running and the back door gapes open with a grimace. The driver upfront is studying instructions on a screen and I sense that this could be my only chance for escape. The road in front of me is empty, the air is still and I creep stealthily towards a thin sliver of alleyway to my right. Just as I'm about to break into a run, the shadow of a threatening figure blocks my path. I am hopeless and helpless. I am condemned.

"Why am I here?" I challenge. "What have I done?". As the car door slams behind me, I howl for help but no answer comes. The steely eyes of my captors ricochet off the mirror and pierce my core. Through the window, birds fly freely in the azure sky, trees sway in the breeze and in the distance the jaunty jingle of an ice cream van sings out, mockingly. We turn off the main road and as we approach an open, barren space the car begins to slow. My heart is beating so fast it feels like it may burst through my rib cage.

I am dragged up a long winding staircase with uneven wooden steps and my legs begin to give way. The hard walls press coldly on either side of my weak trembling arms and the stench of decay catches my throat.

A voice booms out from an ante-chamber.

"You're late. You must go straight in", it rasps. Then, with menace, adds, "DON'T keep him waiting".

Drained of their power now, my captors wilt and simperingly they shuffle me towards another door.

"Please, no, no, no don't this" I beg. But it's too late.

What stands before me is the face from my nightmares! Thin as a whippet, with cheek bones like daggers, his long bony fingers beckon me. The room is stark and surgical implements spark in the whiteness. A tiny window, no bigger than a letter box, lets in a slash of daylight and the only sound I can hear is the hiss of electricity. Test tubes, rubber gloves and needles litter the worktop which runs along one side of the room. In the centre, a huge chair dominates like a lion waiting for its prey. I approach with dread, but accept my fate.

The leather prickles against my skin, which is now mottled with sweat. The chair begins to buzz and a blinding light blocks my vision. Stars appear behind my eyes and I feel the last shred of hope leave my body. The chair shakes and strains and drags me down to the underworld. I whimper.

"Open wide", says the dentist.

**Have a go at one of these:**

- a) The Gift
- b) The Trap
- c) Write a story which begins: 'Life had been good, until now'...
- d) Write about an incident when you had to show courage
- e) Write a story which begins: "Everything changed after that day..."
- f) Write about an occasion when you felt disappointed

45 minutes, 500 words