

Conventions of speeches and talks

Speeches are usually formal spoken presentations for a particular purpose – often to persuade an audience to support an idea, or to explain or describe an interesting topic or past event. When you compose a speech, you need to think about:

- how you will engage your audience's interest as you begin to speak
- how you can structure your speech to retain their interest and make your points effectively.

Explore the skills

Have you ever given a speech? If so, what was the topic? Was it at school or at a family event? What do you think is the biggest challenge for someone giving a speech to an audience?

- 1 Try talking (without preparation) for two minutes on a topic you feel strongly about to a partner: how easy or difficult was it? Were you able to keep them interested?

Read the following extract from a speech given by the actress Angelina Jolie on World Refugee Day in 2009.

We're here today to talk about millions of desperate families – families so cut-off from civilization that they don't even know that a day like this exists on their behalf. Millions. And numbers can illuminate but they can also obscure. So I am here today to say that refugees are not numbers.

They're not even just refugees. They are mothers and daughters and fathers and sons – they are farmers, teachers, doctors, engineers, they are individuals all. And most of all they are survivors – each one with a remarkable story that tells of resilience in the face of great loss. They are the most impressive people I have ever met and they are also some of the world's most vulnerable. Stripped of home and country, refugees are buffeted from every ill wind that blows across this planet.

I remember meeting a pregnant [...] woman in a completely abandoned camp. [...] She couldn't travel when everyone else



sets out the context for why she is speaking

repetition to stress a point

use of personal pronouns connects with the audience directly

repetition of 'They are' punches home message

provides reasons why she is speaking

personal anecdote engages interest

was relocated because she was too late in her pregnancy. She was alone with her two children and another woman. There was nothing for miles around the camp – not a single tree, no other people in sight. So when they asked me to come in for tea I said I didn't feel it necessary. But [...] they take pride in how they treat their guests so they insisted and they guided me into a small dirt house with no roof to keep out the scorching heat, and they dusted off the two old mats that they ate, slept and prayed on. And we sat and we talked and they were just the loveliest women. And then with a few twigs and a single tin cup of water, they made the last of their tea and insisted on me to enjoy it.

Since before the parable of the Widow's Mite it has been known that those who have the least will give the most. Most refugee families will offer you the only food they have and pretend they're not hungry. And the generosity of the poor applies not only to refugees. We should never forget that more than 80% of refugees are hosted and have been for years and years in the poorest developing countries.

From <http://speakola.com>

pattern of three details creates rhetorical impact

vivid descriptive images build picture

develops and provides further detail on the speech's purpose

- 2 Read the speech again, this time aloud. Are there any obvious changes in tone or focus? If so, where are they? How might they affect how the speech is given?

Build the skills

Part of the speech's overall effect comes from the way that Angelina Jolie:

- connects with her audience through her voice and style
- creates an emotional impact with her language
- paints vivid pictures to describe what she has experienced.

- 3 How does Jolie draw attention to herself and her audience? Note down:

- a) how she refers to herself and her audience
- b) the purpose for the speech
- c) her own personal experiences.

- 4 What particularly emotive language does she use to
 - a) describe the families at the start of the speech
 - b) describe the way in which refugees are mistreated all over the world by misfortune?

Vocabulary

parable of the Widows' Mite: a Bible story in which a very poor woman gives a few small coins to the local government

Key term

rhetorical: designed to have a powerful effect on a reader; rhetorical questions are intended to create impact rather than elicit information (for example: *Should we simply forget the awful suffering and hardship?*)

- 5 What is the rhetorical impact of the single word 'Millions'?
- 6 How does she use descriptive/sensory details to convey her message? Think about the references to:
- the mats
 - the making of the tea.

Develop the skills

The structure of the speech is also important. How exactly does Jolie's speech work?

- 7 Copy and complete the table below to sum up the focus of each section.

Section	Purpose	Key language or feature	Effect
Paragraph 1	to introduce the purpose of the speech	'We're here...' 'I am here' 'Millions.'	draws audience in; states her own commitment; shock and surprise
Paragraph 2	to get across message that refugees are individuals	'Mothers and daughters' 'each one with a remarkable story'	creates image of...?
Paragraph 3			
Paragraph 4			

- 8 How are the paragraphs linked? Think about:
- how the second paragraph elaborates or builds upon the first
 - how the third and fourth paragraphs are connected by the Widow's Mite
 - how they all contribute to the overall message.



In summary, any speech you give will need a structure with:

- an **opening** that engages the audience and makes the purpose clear (perhaps through personal references, shocking or interesting facts or something similar)
- middle sections** that provide specific examples or further detail so that the tone is not too abstract or general (perhaps further personal experiences or, at the very least, vivid details of actual events or examples)
- a **conclusion** that links back to previous points or examples and enhances the overall effect.

Apply the skills

- 9 Look at this speech task.

Write a speech for your classmates, persuading them to do more physical exercise and/or sport.

Decide:

- who the audience is
- what the purpose is.

Draft your opening two paragraphs (up to 75 words).

Try out your opening on a partner. How well did you do?

If you wish, complete your speech, building on what you have learned and remembering to show a clear, well thought-out structure.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Make sure that your voice or viewpoint is lively, strong and engaging.
- ✓ Structure your speech so your listeners are immediately interested.
- ✓ Keep their attention with new points or ideas, and finish strongly.
- ✓ Speak directly to the audience by using inclusive pronouns (you, we) and rhetorical devices.
- ✓ Use appropriate language for your audience and vary sentences to change pace or tone.
- ✓ Use personal references (such as reference to your own experiences) and emotive language.

Top tip

Make each of your points clearly, using rhetorical language or an anecdote to strengthen your view not to take you off course.



Conventions of interviews

Interviews have their own conventions. How do interviews usually start and end? Who tends to say more – the interviewer or the ‘guest’?

Explore the skills

Read the bullet points below about the Siberian tiger, which come from a conservation website.

- Only 350–400 tigers left
- Used to be in north-east China, Mongolia and Korean Peninsula
- Poaching and cutting down trees for logs are main problems; need vast forests to survive
- Body parts used in traditional medicine

- 1 Now read the interview in which a conservation expert discusses these issues with a reporter. As you read, make notes about the different roles of each speaker, and how this is represented by the way they speak.

Reporter: I'm here to talk to Dr Sandra Cappello, a consultant for animal charity Save Our Species.

Expert: Good evening.

Reporter: So, Dr Cappello – with just under 500 tigers still in the wild, it seems like conservation efforts have failed, haven't they?

Expert: Well, it's true that numbers have dwindled. There were once many more tigers in China, Mongolia and Korea. Places such as the Eastern Himalayas were ideal for them but it's a fragile landscape.

Reporter: (interrupts) You haven't answered my question. Have efforts failed? I have been reporting for years on this issue and it's just not improving.

Expert: There are so many problems – we can't do everything. Many, many organisations are committed to protecting different tiger species, but it's a monumental task.

Reporter: So, what would you say is the biggest threat to them?

Key term

Interviews: conversations in which one person asks the other questions on a topic or aspect of their life



speakers' names/roles on left

questions directed personally to the 'expert'

reply to question – or part of it.

Expert: It's difficult to single one out – but **loss of habitat** is clearly a huge issue. Once hunting grounds have disappeared, it can take literally hundreds of years to recover them.

specialist language of expert

Reporter: **Right – I get it. No trees, no tigers.**

punchy, informal summing up

Expert: It's not quite as simple as that, but broadly speaking that is the situation.

Reporter: Thank you, Dr Cappello. That's all we have time for.

Build the skills

- 2 Write brief answers to these questions.
- How are the roles of the reporter and expert different?
 - Where have synonyms or **paraphrases** been used?
 - In what way is this obviously an interview?
 - What information from the website was not used in the interview?

Key term

paraphrases: rewording of things that have been said or written

Develop the skills

Look at this list from a tiger charity's website, which offers some solutions for saving the tiger.

- Identify high-priority tiger populations – larger areas are better, as tigers need 1000 square kilometres free of human activity.
- Enforcement officers and guards to protect tigers from poachers.
- Develop local community-based conservation programmes.
- Continue well-managed captive breeding (for instance, in game parks) for the most at-risk tigers.

- 3 In pairs, carry out a brief role-play of an interview between the manager of the charity and a reporter. Use some of the content above. Make sure that:
- the reporter continues to speak in the same style
 - the charity manager is forceful and tries to get his or her message across about what needs to be done.

Apply the skills

- 4 Write up your own version of the interview using the conventions of the written interview.

Conventions of diaries and journals

A diary or journal is a personal record of things that have happened to the writer. It can also record the writer's thoughts or feelings.

Explore the skills

- 1 Read this diary extract. Who do you think is writing?

Monday, 11 March

What a day it's been! I overslept and missed the school bus and then, when I finally arrived, I found out the whole class was on a science trip and they had already left. I felt such a fool. I had to sit on my own outside the head teacher's office all day. It was so boring!

I'm back home now, sitting in my room. I haven't told Mum or Dad I missed the trip. If I do, they'll go mad. Dad's home. I'd better pretend I'm asleep.

date of entry

use of the first person and past tense

recounts events that have happened that day

reference to time/sequence

personal feelings

present tense gives sense of things happening now

future tense shows worries

Build the skills

Diaries and journals give a sense of the writer's personality and explain his or her changing emotions. They focus on key moments or incidents in the writer's world and (usually) provide a sense of time or sequence.

- 2 Make notes on the following.

- **Content:** What incident made this student record his thoughts? Identify three different emotions felt at different times of the day.
- **Structure:** How does the structure reveal what he feels about the situation?
- **Style:** How does the style of the writing match the likely age of the person writing?

Develop the skills

Your diary entries should aim to develop and extend ideas fully.

- 3 How does the following diary entry do this? It is written by Tanya Saunders, a woman who lives in Kenya, East Africa.



Yesterday, it was cloudy and rainy all day, the crocodiles starved of any sunlight and barely any warmth [...] then today we awoke to a totally different morning: back to the scorching heat and the crocodiles returning in droves to bask on the sandbanks, while the Goliath Heron, too hot even to finish washing, just sat down in the river and stayed there (and who could blame it?) I had to take a cold shower at midday, just to fortify myself for the onslaught of the afternoon heat.

Tonight, as might be expected, the thunder and lightning are raging again, huge storm clouds fomented in the heat of the day, now towering overhead [...] and the rain continues, and the bugs multiply, and the flowers prepare to launch into their reproductive cycles once again [...] the tiny pretty blue commelina flowers are already blooming everywhere you look (including on our nascent lawn) and the sansevieria we transplanted into our garden (both on the balcony and outside) are sending up a proliferation of shoots, the new spikes breaking the surface of the earth like spiky aliens, and reaching up towards the light.

From the blog 'Tales from Kulafumbi: The Diary of a Nature Lover'

- 4 Answer these questions.

- What does the writer focus on? Is this like the student's diary? Why/why not?
- How does she use words or phrases related to time and sequence to structure her entry?
- How are tenses used in different sections to show what has happened and is happening?
- How does she use detailed description of the natural world to develop a vivid picture of the weather, and the flowers and plants in the garden?

Apply the skills

- From reading Tanya Saunders' diary entry, what picture do you get of the writer and her interests?
- Reread the diary entry in Task 3. Write the beginning of the entry for the next day in which you:
 - refer to the time(s) of day and how the weather affects you
 - give a detailed and well-developed observation of some aspect of nature.

Vocabulary

nascent: starting to grow
sansevieria: type of flowering plant with tongue-like leaves



Conventions of reports

At many times in your life you may find you need to report on situations. Reports usually tell the reader about an event that has taken place, using factual detail. The writer may analyse or observe these events, or offer a more personal perspective.

Explore the skills

Reports are always written for a particular audience. They must be clear and sound convincing.

- 1 Read this short extract from a report. Then make brief notes on the following:
- a) What is the subject or topic?
 - b) Who is the likely audience?
 - c) Why is the report split into two paragraphs?
 - d) What sort of report is it?
 - e) Where might you read it?
 - f) Does the report sound convincing?

The school fundraising day was a great success, thanks to you all. Three things made the day such a success: the weather, your hard work and the generosity of visitors and parents.

The day began well, with clear blue skies, but it wasn't too hot. As our families arrived, it began to get really busy. I was working on a stall selling cold drinks. We soon ran out and needed more supplies desperately! I must thank Kiki in particular, who cycled all the way to the shop and back with baskets full of lemonade and soda. She's been my best friend since Grade 2 and now you all know why. In fact, just as we restocked, the Mayor appeared and we were able to serve him a wonderfully cool drink.

Build the skills

Understanding your audience will make your report sound realistic. For this, choose the right content, style and structure.

- 2 Copy and complete the table below, based on the extract above.

Report to classmates in school magazine about charity day

content	It gives clear information, but also covers...
structure	It could be in time sequence, but could also jump around to topics such as the weather, money raised and number of people there.
style	

Develop the skills

Read this longer report, then answer the questions below.

Getting students to give to charity is one of our school's biggest challenges, and it's time we and readers of this magazine did something about it.

Recent research I have carried out shows that one in five students has given to charity, although slightly more (two out of five) have been directly involved in some form of fundraising. As our head teacher Mr Marquez said, 'Getting good results and working hard is, of course, vital. But if we are to show that we are a caring community, we must do more, right now, for those less fortunate than ourselves.'

The good news is that since the start of the year, we have raised over \$2000 for charity, so we can do it. But is it enough? Surely we can do more.

Tomorrow at 3 p.m. there will be a meeting in the school hall for any teachers and students who wish to organise fundraising events in the coming term. Let's hope it is well attended. Watch this space!

- 3 Content:
- a) What is the purpose of this report? How do you know?
 - b) What evidence is there of statistics, expert comment, and so on, to support this purpose?
- 4 Structure:
- a) How effectively does the report use paragraphs?
 - b) Does it have a strong beginning and ending? Why/why not?
- 5 Style:
- a) Is it clear who the report is for?
 - b) How formal or informal is it?
 - c) Does it use detail to make events clear?
 - d) Does it use a variety of sentences to engage listeners?



Apply the skills

- 6 Imagine that the meeting has taken place. Write a follow-up report of at least 100 words including:
- facts or statistics about who and how many attended
 - the outcome of the meeting and your views on this, good or bad.

Top tip

Put different points into separate paragraphs for clarity. Write a strong opening and a powerful conclusion to draw points together.

Conventions of news reports and magazine articles

News reports and articles, whether online or in newspapers or magazines, are vital sources of information. They usually fall into two types. Those that report the main facts or information about very recent specific incidents are news reports. Those that discuss, analyse or investigate a topic are called feature articles. Feature articles are often, but not always, in magazines.

Explore the skills

Sometimes the headings give clues about what sort of report or article the text is. Look at these headings:

Temperatures dip to -30° for coldest night on record
Why are our winters getting colder?
 Ice causes chaos on motorways
Snow go – 36 hours stuck on train
 How to predict cold winters

- 1 Try to identify which of the headings belong to news reports and which to feature articles.

Build the skills

This news report has a very clear structure, which is indicated in the annotations. Read the article, and then answer the questions below it.

Mountain Goat Kills Hiker

by Alex Robinson

ROBERT BOARDMAN, 63, was hiking with his wife and friend in Olympic National Park on Monday when he was attacked and killed by a mountain goat. The trio was

news article: it is a specific single happening that has just occurred

Top tip

Succinct vocabulary in headlines can capture an idea immediately.

simple headline sums up what happened

main event/news



hiking up a popular switchback trail and decided to stop for lunch when the goat approached them and started acting aggressively.

Boardman tried to scare the goat off, but instead of running away, it charged him goring him badly in the leg. More hikers came to try to help Boardman, but the goat stood over the man's body and wouldn't let any other hikers come to his aid.

An hour after the attack, rescuers finally arrived at the scene but Boardman died from his injuries. Park officials eventually shot and killed the goat.

Apparently, that specific goat had shown aggressive tendencies in the past. 'It has shown aggressive behaviour, however, nothing led us to believe it was appropriate to take the next level of removal,' park spokeswoman Barb Maynes told the Associated Press. 'This is highly unusual. There's no record of anything similar in this park. It's a tragedy. We are taking it extremely seriously and doing our best to learn as much as we can.'

The goat is being examined by scientists to see if it had any diseases that could have caused it to act so aggressively.

From www.outdoorlife.com

how the incident happened and what led up to it

how the incident ended

'expert' comment, often with direct quotation

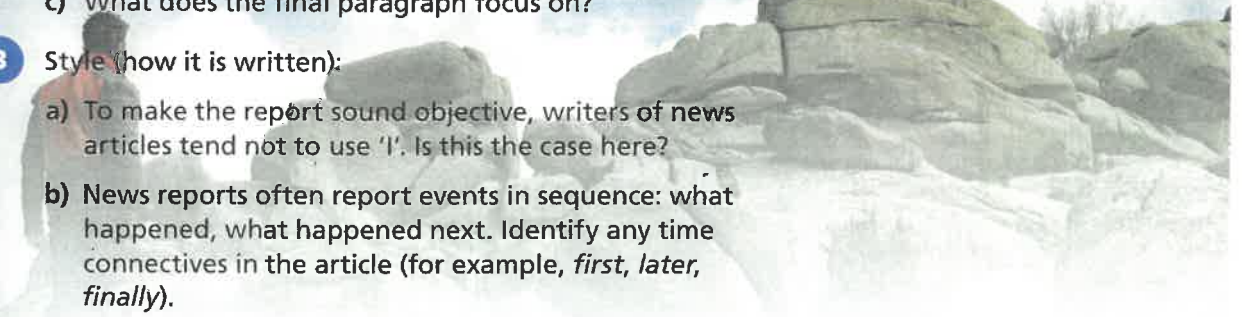
current situation and what is happening next

- 2 Content and structure (what is in the article):

- a) News reports often have the 'who, what, where and when' at the start of the story. Is this the case here? If so, note down each aspect. For example, 'who' is Robert Boardman?
- b) Expert or witness comments in direct speech are often included to give weight to a story. What do we find out from Barb Maynes? Why wouldn't this be the first paragraph of the report?
- c) What does the final paragraph focus on?

- 3 Style (how it is written):

- a) To make the report sound objective, writers of news articles tend not to use 'I'. Is this the case here?
- b) News reports often report events in sequence: what happened, what happened next. Identify any time connectives in the article (for example, *first*, *later*, *finally*).
- c) Most verbs about what happened are in the past tense (for example, *goat approached them*), but what do you notice about the headline and the last paragraph? Why do you think these are different?



Develop the skills

Feature/magazine articles are often more complex than news reports. They:

- are often personal (the writer refers to himself or herself)
- cover wider ground or more complex ideas
- offer a distinct viewpoint
- explore ideas more deeply.

Read this feature article, then answer questions 4 and 5.

First, catch your *feral* kitten. then call in the experts.

My neighbourhood is inundated with *feral* cats, scraggy wild things that cadge food from animal lovers in winter and cadge baby blackbirds and robins from their nests each spring. Typically, I've moaned about this without taking any responsibility – until last week, when I became so exasperated, I set a humane trap.

I bought a wire cage to see if I could catch a squirrel or rat to show my animal-mad daughter, Esme. Luckily she was at school when the door slammed on an adorable kitten. Clueless about what I should actually do, for the first time in my life I called the **RSPCA**. Rather like the first time I needed a hospital and was astounded by the brilliance of the doctors and nurses, the RSPCA was amazing.

The charity knew all about my street's cat problem and had caught 20 feral cats so far. I was asked to take "21" to meet an RSPCA officer at a nearby vet, where the kitten was checked (cats are assessed and adults scanned for microchips to ensure they are not pets) and pronounced a feral tomcat.

Because 21 is only eight weeks old, he will be found a home as a pet. Adults are neutered and released wherever they came from, which my neighbourhood blackbirds won't welcome, but feral cats have hard lives and only survive for a couple of years.

The RSPCA has now lent me a better trap so I can join other neighbours in helping feral cats and other wildlife, at no expense to the taxpayer. Bravo for the **big** (cat) **society**. One problem remains: Esme is tearfully begging to keep the next catch.

From 'First catch your feral kitten' by
Patrick Barkham, *The Guardian*

article title explains the topic

opening sentence is about problem/issue

descriptive detail paints picture of cat

personal involvement of writer



writer ends with a dilemma

4 Structure and content:

- Is this feature article about a news event that has just happened? Check the opening paragraph and see whether it describes a particular incident.
- Compare the mountain goat news report with this one. How is the structure different? For example, think about how the report recounts information about the event.

5 Style:

- What is it about the headline that suggest this is a feature article rather than a news report?
- What can you infer about the viewpoint of the writer based on the language he uses? For example: what can you learn from the adjectives *humane*, and *adorable* and the reference to cats' *hard lives*?

Apply the skills

- Write your own feature article about animals that are not normally seen as problematic, but which can cause issues or be dangerous.
 - Use some of the ideas or facts from the goat report and feral cat article.
 - Give a clear viewpoint: whether you think all animals should be treated as 'wild' or 'dangerous'.

You could start with the goat attack but do not make it the whole focus. For example, you could begin:

The recent death of a hiker, gored by a mountain goat, might make us think that all animals, however 'cuddly', are a real danger to humans and other wildlife...



Vocabulary

feral: wild, undomesticated

RSPCA: Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (in the UK)

big society: a political idea in the UK related to helping others

Conventions of letters

In some areas of life, written letters are still very important.

Explore the skills

When writing letters, make sure that you:

- think about the audience (this will change your style)
- focus on purpose (why you are writing)
- match your style to both (how formal or informal).

- 1 Here are two short letters. Compare their style, tone and structure. What is similar and different about them?

14 Jacaranda Street
Hightown
HK1 3BS

7th June 2017

Dear Jo,

I'm so sorry it's been so long since I contacted you. We don't have a computer here and I can't get a signal on my phone. Anyway, I just wanted to say that the new house is ok. Only four rooms so I have to sleep with Leila, who still sucks her thumb and snores! I miss you so much. I can't write more now as I have to catch the post before it goes. I'll try to phone you or send something longer when I have time.

Love to you and the rest of the gang.

Davina

Sharp's Stores
23 Willow Avenue
Hightown
HK1 3BS

7th June 2017

Re: Post of shop assistant

Dear Mrs Sharp,

Thank you for your letter of 1st June, in which you kindly offered me the post of shop assistant. I am writing to inform you that I would be delighted to accept and look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,
Davina Khan



Build the skills

- 2 What do you notice in particular about the different styles used in the letters? Consider:

- choice of vocabulary
- punctuation
- abbreviations and sentence types
- openings and closings.

Develop the skills

Unfortunately, Davina makes a poor start when dealing with a customer. The customer has now written a letter of complaint.

Dear Mrs Sharp,

I'm writing to complain about the unsatisfactory level of service I received when I visited your store yesterday.

As you are aware, I am a regular customer and expect high levels of courtesy and advice from your staff.

Unfortunately, your new assistant, Miss Khan, did not meet my expectations in either regard.

Firstly, it was extremely disappointing that when I approached the counter...

makes the reason for writing clear

develops and begins to explain in what areas the shop failed

links to and develops the previous point, beginning to specify the bad service she received

The customer then explains:

- the first specific problem with Davina
- the second specific problem
- what action the customer would like Mrs Sharp to take.

- 3 Note down some ideas you could use if you were the customer writing the letter.

Apply the skills

- 4 Now complete the customer's letter of complaint, developing the points in the plan into full paragraphs. Make sure that you write with an appropriate level of formality.



Writing to inform and explain

Informative or explanatory texts, such as articles or reports, should be clear and provide information in a logical, structured way. The features listed in the box also apply when you include informative writing in other texts, such as argument texts (see Topic 4.5).

Explore the skills

Read the opening two paragraphs from an article about grey wolves.

There are many reasons why humans view wolves harshly.

For a start, fairy tales such as the Brothers Grimm's *Little Red Cap* from 1812 often feature the wolf as an evil beast. Then there's the fact that wolves are a genuine threat to livestock, especially as their natural prey in the wild declines. Finally, there is their pack mentality – the idea of wolves being prepared to act together to get what they want.

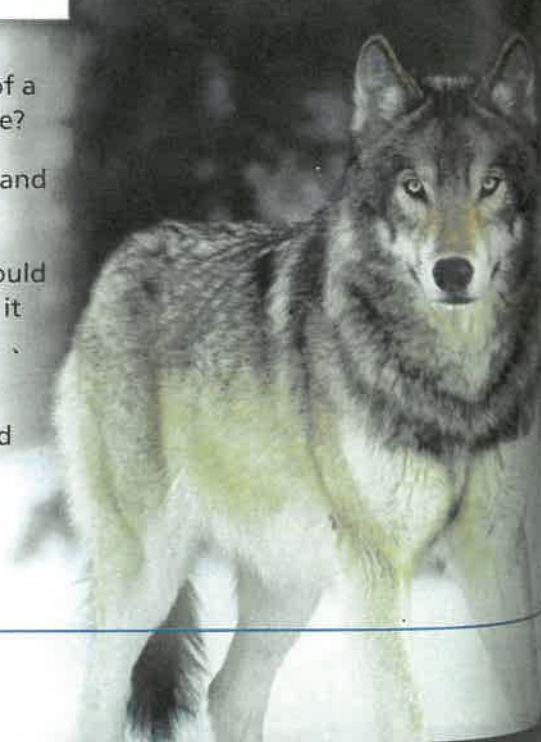
So, have fairy stories and myths always represented the wolf as a malignant force? Not exactly. For example, the formation of the city of Rome is said in myth to have been achieved after twin brothers were saved from death and suckled by a she-wolf. One of them, Romulus, gave his name to the city. Such a myth dates back to the 3rd century BC, but for whatever reason this image of the wolf as caring parent has not continued.

- 1 The text opens with a general statement in the form of a topic sentence. What is the focus of the text as a whole?
- 2 In what way is factual information used in the second and third sentences?
- 3 Is the information presented logically? For example, could the final sentence be swapped with the first – or does it have to go at the end?
- 4 The opening paragraph presents the general picture. In what way is the second paragraph more focused and detailed?

Features of informative writing:

- clear and concise sentences
- connectives to explain processes or make things clear
- precise vocabulary
- data and statistics, diagrams, tables, illustrations
- subheadings or different categories of information
- a general statement and introduction
- both past and present tenses
- references, quotations or citations.

topic sentence



Build the skills

The topic sentence often comes at the beginning of a paragraph, as in the example above, but it does not have to. Read this later paragraph from the same article.

They have strong jaws with sharp canine teeth for tearing and chewing meat. Add to this their swimming prowess and their ability to travel up to 50 kilometres a day to hunt. All in all, they seem to be the ultimate hunting beast.

- 5 Which is the topic sentence in this paragraph? How do you know?

Develop the skills

The way you link sentences together is also important. In the examples on page 100 and above, the **connectives** *For a start*, and *Add to this* link the sentences in the following ways.

- *For a start* introduces a first example to show the reader what the writer means.
- *Add to this* introduces another example to provide even more information.

Read these further details about the grey wolf.

- Usually hunt in family packs of 3–30 wolves.
- Packs useful for killing larger animals such as deer.
- Packs usually led by an 'alpha' male and female (whose offspring comprise the pack).

- 6 What is the common thread or focus in each of these statements? How does this information link to the original paragraphs?

Apply the skills

- 7 Write a paragraph of three or four sentences, using the bullet points above. Include either a topic sentence that introduces these specific details or a concluding sentence that sums them up.

Use some of the connectives and prompts from the word bank below to help organise your paragraph.

What is more Also For example In fact So Wolf packs

Key term

connectives: words or phrases used to link sentences

Structuring informative writing

You can use paragraphs and tenses to order your texts logically.

Explore the skills

Read this short article about a different type of predator.

Falconry is a centuries-old activity, and it is still revered today. It is the act of hunting animals in their natural habitat through the use of a trained bird of prey.

The process of training hawks is highly skilled. It begins with 'manning' – that is, getting the hawk used to your presence. Once the hawk trusts you and will feed calmly on your gloved fist, training can begin. The hawk now has to learn to come to you for food. First, it needs to be attached to a line – called a 'creance' – and placed on a post or an assistant's hand. Then, you hold a piece of meat in your gloved fist so the hawk can see it. To start with, it will probably only come for a very short distance, but after a few days you can increase the distance to about 50–100 metres. When the hawk comes this far without hesitation, you are ready to let it fly freely. Then, using a 'lure' (a line with meat at the end) you can train it to follow or come to you.

These specialised words go back many, many years. In fact, back in the 16th century, Shakespeare wrote a speech in his play *The Taming of the Shrew* in which the main character, Petruchio, talked about how he was going to tame his wife as if she were a hawk!

Nowadays, falconry is used for more pleasant purposes. People hire displays for fairs, exhibitions and even weddings. But, don't forget the ancient skills or training that go into it as you watch such a display this summer.



- 1 What is the main focus or purpose of each paragraph? Check for:
- a topic sentence (often, but not always, at the start of the paragraph)
 - the particular content (the facts or specific details covered in each paragraph).

Build the skills

- 2 The second paragraph explains a process.
- a) What main tense does it use?

- b) What words or phrases does the writer use to explain the order of events? (Look for time-markers such as *Once*.)

Develop the skills

- 3 Now think about the article overall.
- a) Would the four paragraphs make sense in any order? Why, or why not?
- b) How are the paragraphs themselves linked? (Look at the first sentences of the third and fourth paragraphs.)

Imagine that you have been asked to write an article about whaling for a magazine. First, read these three columns of information on the subject.

The past/history	The process	The situation today
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whaling dates back to 3000 BC • First organised whaling fleets in 17th century. • In late 1930s, more than 50 000 whales killed annually • The 1986 International Whaling Commission banned commercial whaling • Not all countries signed up to it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many different types of whaling, for example, Norway catches Minke whales by firing harpoons from cannons on bow of boat; follow up with rifles if not killed immediately • Hunters have to take safety classes and proficiency exam to prove that they know how to use weapons • Other methods include beaching whales by driving them onto land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some countries have continued so-called 'scientific-research' whaling • They believe that whale stocks are now at a level where whaling could start again • Many arguments over whaling, including who should decide whether it is legal, whether the data about stocks is correct, and so on

- 4 How would you order the information? Create a paragraph plan.

Apply the skills

- 5 Now, write your article. Make sure that you:
- explain the history of whaling
 - give information about what whaling is
 - explain what the situation is in the present day.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Decide what the function of each of your paragraphs will be (for example, to give the history or to explain a process).
- ✓ Think about the tenses you will use.
- ✓ Decide which connectives of time or sequence will help you organise the information.
- ✓ Consider what the topic sentence for each paragraph might be and where it should go.

Writing to persuade

When you write to persuade, you aim to change someone's beliefs or point of view. To achieve this, the information you include must be carefully selected to justify your own point of view. In addition, you will need to apply various other persuasive techniques.

Explore the skills

There are three key elements to bear in mind when writing to persuade:

- **A:** ideas – the points you choose to make and the evidence you use to support these points
- **B:** language – the vocabulary or other techniques you use to influence how your reader thinks
- **C:** structure – the way you present and order your points so that they have the greatest effect.

Look at this opening to an article about 'driverless' cars.

I cannot see a future for driverless cars. The idea of robotic machines with minds of their own ferrying passengers from A to B appals me: technology is just too unreliable.

A key problem is hacking. What happens if the computer that drives the car is affected by a virus or some other nasty attack? It would be absolute chaos!

- 1 What other powerful uses of language can you identify here?
- 2 The structure of this text is logical because the first paragraph introduces the general view and the second paragraph develops it. In what ways does the second paragraph develop the first?

Features of persuasive writing:

- strong, single-minded viewpoint
- personal tone expressed in the first person
- direct appeals to the reader/listener (you)
- rhetorical questions: *Do you really think that climate change is a myth?*
- emotive images or other language (*dying gulls slicked with oil on a trash-covered beach*)
- patterns of three (*the Antarctic will soon be a myth, a memory, an extinct continent*)
- counter-arguments acknowledged and demolished
- a 'call to action'.

Element A: clear statement of viewpoint and evidence

Element B: strong, negative language

Build the skills

You can use vocabulary and persuasive devices to make an emotional appeal to your reader and to make a 'call to action'. Read this extract from a parent to a head teacher.



- 3 Write down answers to these questions.

- a) What does the parent want to happen?
- b) What 'happy picture' does the parent paint?

Just picture the street by our school if you were to ask the council to ban cars: instead of huge metal monsters belching out smoke, grinding their gears and skidding to a halt with a screech of brakes, all you would hear would be the happy chatter of little children and their parents. After all, what could be more important than the safety and well-being of our precious children?

Develop the skills

How do you achieve such emotional appeal? Look at this table.

Method	Example	Effect
powerful or emotive vocabulary	<i>huge metal monsters</i>	suggests that they are enormous beasts, threatening children
rhetorical question	<i>After all, what could be more important than the safety and well-being of our precious children?</i>	emotional appeal: makes the point unanswerable – no one is likely to disagree!
pattern of three	<i>belching out smoke, grinding their gears and skidding to a halt</i>	has a rhythmic emphasis that hammers home the message

- 4 Which verbs in the table have a particularly powerful impact? What comes to mind when you read them?
- 5 Why is the opening sentence of the letter especially effective?

Key term

emotive: likely to make people feel strong emotions

Apply the skills

- 6 Reread the extract about driverless cars. Below is the start of a paragraph that is *in favour* of driverless cars. Continue the paragraph.
 - Add one supporting sentence with evidence or reasons to back up your view.
 - Include language that has emotional power (use the table to help you).

Driverless cars are a great idea! Just think of ...

Structuring persuasion

When writing to persuade, you need to make sure that the arguments or ideas you include, and the way that you organise them, are as effective as possible.

Explore the skills

- **Content:** You need strong arguments supported by persuasive evidence or examples.
- **Structure:** You need sentences or paragraphs sequenced in a logical way to have maximum impact.

Read this paragraph, which effectively presents an argument on the topic of parking outside school. Note how it *builds* the argument.

One benefit of a traffic-free zone outside school is clear. Recent research has shown that when cars are banned, up to 70% of parents walk their children to school, which would be incredibly beneficial to our children's health. Furthermore, it might be good for parents too – we all need that extra bit of exercise.

clear topic sentence to introduce the point

factual evidence to support the point
specific benefit from the evidence

- 1 What additional point does the final sentence make?
- 2 Is this the only logical place for this sentence to be positioned in the paragraph? Why, or why not?

Build the skills

It is vital to decide what your key arguments are and plan how you will present them before you start writing.

- 3 What other points can you think of to support the proposal to ban cars outside the school? Consider:
 - the social benefits to children – and parents – from walking to school
 - the financial benefits or savings
 - the impact on the environment in and around school.

Top tip

Develop your key points fully. Just mentioning a fact without saying what it shows does not help your persuasive argument.

Develop the skills

The tone you use in persuasive texts is also important. It is tempting to get angry and demand changes – ‘Ban cars now!’ – but it is usually more effective to show the effects of a particular course of action, using modal verbs and ‘if’ clauses.

Modal form	Condition	Example (in an ‘if’ clause)
will, would	probable or, in theory, likely	If you <i>ban</i> cars, you <i>will</i> improve air quality. If you <i>banned</i> cars, you <i>would</i> improve air quality.
might, could, may	outcome unsure	If you <i>ban</i> cars, you <i>might</i> improve air quality.
would have	not possible (too late)	If you <i>had banned</i> cars, you <i>would have</i> improved air quality.

- 4 Look back at the paragraph about parking outside school.
 - a) What modal forms have been used?
 - b) Which of the two points being made is more certain or likely, according to the writer?
- 5 Complete the following ‘if’ clauses:
 - a) If parents had used their cars less, they
 - b) If the children are exposed to car fumes, they

Apply the skills

- 6 Write a further two paragraphs about the traffic-free zone. Explain:
 - what you want to happen
 - the further benefits or advantages of the proposed traffic-free zone.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Structure your paragraphs to build an argument, adding evidence and further ideas.
- ✓ Use modal forms to show the benefits of acting or the problems that might arise if no action is taken.
- ✓ Use emotive language where appropriate.

Writing to argue

Persuasive texts tend to be one-sided. When you write an argument text, however, you need to consider both sides of an issue.

Explore the skills

There are different ways of organising argument texts. For example, consider how you could approach this topic:

Bike rental schemes: should they be introduced into your local town or city?

The simplest structure is:

- Paragraph 1: introduction – the issue: what bike rental schemes are
- Paragraphs 2–4: points for bike rental schemes in your town
- Paragraphs 5–7: points against bike rental schemes
- Paragraph 8: conclusion: weigh up the points and give your opinion.

- 1 Do you think this would be an effective structure to use? Why, or why not?
- 2 What alternative ways of structuring the essay can you think of?

Build the skills

Evidence can come in different forms. For example, it could be:

- facts or statistics
- 'expert' or witness comments
- personal experience (from the writer).

- 3 Read the following response to the bike-rental scheme topic on page 109. Which of the three forms of evidence have been used?



Features of argumentative writing:

- a less personal tone than persuasive writing
- considers the facts and ideas on both sides of an issue
- supports points with evidence (for or against), but also **rebut**s counter-arguments
- use of counter-balancing linking words or phrases (*on the other hand...*)
- works logically towards a conclusion that states the writer's viewpoint.

Key terms

counter-argument: the opposite or contrasting viewpoint

rebut: to 'knock down' a counter-argument

Bike rental schemes are very popular right now, but are they really worth it? After all, it costs a lot of money to build the **docking stations**, create and plan signage and run the schemes. However, think of the income generated. In London in 2011, a bike scheme raised over nine million dollars in one year, which seems good value to me.

Some critics claim that you need to be earning a lot of money to hire a bike, but consider the alternatives. As **commuter** Jon Devani says, 'I used to have to pay to park my car at the station and then for my rail ticket – now I'm paying less for the bike and I'm getting fitter too.'

- 4 What 'personal experience' could be added to the argument? Remember – it needs to be related to the advantages of using a bike to get to work.

Develop the skills

The structure of the response above is slightly different to the simple structure outlined at the start of this topic.

- 5 Look at the structure of the response above.
 - a) Where are the counter-arguments placed in the extract? Do they appear in different paragraphs?
 - b) What are these counter-arguments and how have they been rebutted?

This approach can be summarised as follows:

- Paragraph 1: introduction – the issue
- Paragraph 2: point 1 plus counter-argument
- Paragraphs 3–4: points 2 and 3, with counter-arguments alongside
- Paragraph 5: further points to strengthen the main view but which do not have counter-arguments
- Paragraph 6: conclusion – summing up the evidence.

Apply the skills

- 6 Write the third paragraph of this argument. Use the 'counter-argument' structure:
 - Start with a new problem (for example, you live too far away to cycle all the way to work).
 - Suggest the solution (it could be to take the bus to a certain place, then pick up a bike).
 - Finish the paragraph with a short, impactful sentence or a rhetorical question.

Vocabulary

bike rental schemes: many cities have schemes where you rent bicycles from docking stations and cycle them to others

docking stations: the places the bikes are kept

commuter: someone who travels to work by car or public transport

Structuring paragraphs in argument texts

Cohesive devices can help you structure your paragraphs to present arguments and counter-arguments clearly. They can also help you develop and expand on a point of view.

Explore the skills

When you write to argue a point of view, you should use a variety of connecting words and phrases to make your ideas and evidence clear.

Look at this example.

Tidal energy is plentiful **and** can generate significant power.

first idea

conjunction *and* gives additional information to support the first idea

second idea

Now look at this second example.

Tidal energy is plentiful, yet it can be difficult to harness.

- 1 Which is the **conjunction** in the second example? (Remind yourself about conjunctions by looking back to Topics 2.1 and 2.2.)
- 2 What is its function? (Is it supporting the first idea or doing something else?)
- 3 Conjunctions can be used for different purposes. Match each conjunction to its purpose. One has been done for you.

Conjunction	Purpose
idea + <i>and</i> + idea	to offer an alternative
idea + <i>so</i> + idea	to give additional information
idea + <i>but</i> + idea	to give a reason
idea + <i>or</i> + idea	to show a result or consequence
idea + <i>because</i> + idea	to give a contrast, indicate difference or problem

Some adverbs act in a similar way to conjunctions, linking ideas or actions, or suggesting causes or sequences. These **conjunctive adverbs**



Key terms

conjunction: a word used to join clauses or words in the same clause or sentence, for example, *and*, *but*, *or*

conjunctive adverbs: a conjunctive adverb links independent clauses in a sentence, or links ideas between two sentences – for example, *finally*, *therefore*, *moreover*, to show cause and effect

include words or phrases such as *however*, *finally* and *immediately*. Both conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs are sometimes referred to collectively as connectives.

- 4 What is the purpose of each conjunction and conjunctive adverb in the passage below?

Tidal energy is plentiful, **yet** can be difficult to harness. We need to invest in research **in order to** find out how practical it is. **However**, this is not straightforward **as** research costs a lot of money.

conjunction

conjunctive adverb

Build the skills

You need to know how to construct paragraphs that use conjunctions or conjunctive adverbs to build arguments. Look at this opening to a speech about wind turbines.

Every drive or train journey along a major road or route now reveals a wonderful phenomenon – wind turbines. These inspiring structures, sprouting like giants from the landscape, are huge and beautiful. They attract the eye like wonderful visitors from another planet. People even divert their journeys in order to experience the thrill of seeing them up close. Indeed, I love them because of their other-worldly appearance, and, furthermore, I'd be happy to have one of them stand guard over my own house.

topic sentence introduces the subject of the speech

follow-up sentences give supporting detail to the argument about wind turbines

- 5 What viewpoint is expressed here? How do you know this from the very first sentence?
- 6 Write down the conjunctions or adverbs used to:
 - a) add further information or evidence (that is, one idea plus another one)
 - b) strengthen an idea
 - c) present the outcome or consequence of something.
- 7 Note down any other language that supports the argument (for example, the choice of adjectives or noun phrases).
- 8 Write an opening paragraph in the same style but arguing *against* wind turbines. Use conjunctions or conjunctive adverbs to add information, strengthen ideas and to show the outcome of a course of action. You could start:

Every drive or train journey along a major road or route in the UK now reveals a dreadful spectacle – wind turbines. These...



Develop the skills

When you want to present points in a straightforward way, you can use conjunctive adverbs such as *Firstly*, *Secondly* and *Finally* to sequence ideas. However, weighing up or contrasting the ideas or argument requires a different approach.

Read this extract from an article about fracking – a controversial means of getting gas from the ground. As you read, think about how the article sets up the debate and then introduces the arguments for and against fracking.

Hailed as a game changer and the harbinger of cheap energy or as an ecological disaster, the cause of earthquakes and pollution, fracking's entrance into our lives has been colourful. The fundamentals are clear. Fracking is a method of extracting gas from rock formations by using high-pressure water and chemicals.

It enables us to extract from places that were hitherto uneconomic, but it's not cheap and is only cost-effective because of the high price of energy. Nevertheless, in the USA, it has transformed costs and is rapidly replacing coal as a source of generation. Dirty coal produces higher emissions, so fracked gas cuts American pollution and allows the country to claim to be fighting climate change. However, gas, like coal, is a fossil fuel. Its emissions are significant and, in the absence of carbon capture and storage, still contribute hugely to global warming.

From 'Fracking: the pros and cons' by Lord Deben and Emma Hughes, *Country Life* magazine website



9 According to the article, what are the arguments for and against fracking?

10 How are the different ideas presented? Copy and complete the table below to track the progress of the argument of the debate.

Sentence	Conjunction or conjunctive adverb used	Effect (To contrast? To show an outcome?)
Hailed as... colourful.	or	presents the positive and negative sides
It enables us... price of energy.		
Nevertheless... generation.		
Dirty coal... climate change.		
However,... fuel.		
Its emissions... global warming.		

Read the following task and think about how you would answer it.

You have learned that a wind farm is to be built very close to your village or town. The council has invited people to come to a public meeting to express their views and you have been asked to make a speech arguing against wind turbines. Write your speech.

Here are some arguments you could include:

- It spoils the natural beauty of landscape.
- It costs too much: currently wind energy is not as efficient as fossil fuel or nuclear energy; farms are expensive to build.
- Noise pollution: some people living close to turbines claim low-level noise causes stress-related illness.

11 Add some ideas of your own to this list. For example, consider issues such as: birds or wildlife; TV, computer and radio reception; military defence.

12 How would you organise these points? Note down the order in which you would present your ideas.

Apply the skills

13 Write your speech.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Begin with a paragraph that 'sets up' the argument (look again at the first 'pro-turbine' example).
- ✓ Link ideas *in* your paragraphs by using conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs you have come across in this unit. Here are some others you could use: *in order that*, *since*, *unless*, *until*, *whenever*, *while*, *similarly*, *likewise*, *nonetheless*, *furthermore*, *accordingly*, *otherwise*, *in fact*.
- ✓ Use these connectives to give reasons, strengthen points, suggest outcomes or present the other side of the case in order to knock it down.

Top tip

Look back at Topic 3.1 to remind yourself about the conventions of speeches.

Writing to explore and discuss

If you are asked to *discuss* or *explore* a topic, you need to show that you have thought about it in depth by taking into account different viewpoints.

Features of discursive writing:

- engages the reader in the opening paragraph, perhaps by using an anecdote or by giving unusual or surprising information
- has a *measured tone* – although it can still be personal
- provides a *clear explanation* of an issue, often by reference to *facts* or *statistics*
- explores *different viewpoints* about an issue
- comes to some sort of *conclusion*, although this may not be strong or forcefully expressed.

Explore the skills

Read the following article.

Last week I was taken to a local restaurant by a friend, and was surprised to see on the menu such things as 'yarrow flower shortbread' and 'nettle soup'. Such items represent a new craze around here – food that has been 'foraged', or gathered in the wild. So, is it worth all the fuss?

My friend believes foraged food is the future. 'It's natural, it's unusual, and it tastes great!' he says. It seems local people agree: there are now three restaurants in our town (including the one we visited) that serve strange-sounding things that you would normally regard as weeds or wild plants.

However, is it such a good thing? For example, it is often the most expensive restaurants that feature foraged food, such as Danish restaurant Noma, voted the best in the world in 2014. This leads some to say that it is a fad and just an excuse for restaurants to charge a lot for weird-sounding dishes.

Yet the popularity is not just down to a celebrated restaurant or two. At a time when more and more people are rejecting fast food, which is often unhealthy, the idea of going back to nature seems very appealing. While foraged food is free and close to hand, it seems likely to remain popular, even if not everyone is convinced.

- 1 a) What issue is being discussed?
b) What is the writer's viewpoint, if any?
c) What statements, if any, suggest this?

Build the skills

- 2 Reread the article. Which features from the list at the start of this topic can you identify?

Develop the skills

One of the ways that you can identify the 'exploratory' nature of the text is through its tone. Look at how the final sentence might have been written:

Because foraged food is free and close at hand I **am convinced** it is an **absolutely wonderful innovation!**

- use of first person
- powerful verb of personal belief
- emphatic noun phrase
- exclamation mark

- 3 Look at the final sentence in the article. How is it more measured than the example above? Consider:

- the use of the first person
- the effect of the verb *seems*
- the final subordinate clause after the comma.

Apply the skills

- 4 Here is another paragraph on a similar topic. Rewrite it so that it has a more measured tone by replacing the underlined sections.

I am utterly appalled by the way restaurants want to make food look like art. **I hate** the idea of my meal looking like a painting, but like **everyone** I **just want** something nutritious, tasty and filling.

Start: *It seems slightly...*

End: *... even though...*



Structuring content in discursive writing

It is important to have a clear structure for your discursive writing. Just because you are 'exploring' a topic, this does not mean that you should lose sight of the focus of the task.

Explore the skills

In Topic 4.7, you read an article about foraging. The tone of the article was key, but the structure was equally important:

- Introductory paragraph: anecdote of personal experience
- Second paragraph: developing point made in first paragraph
- Third paragraph: introduces alternative viewpoint
- Fourth (concluding) paragraph: weighing up both sides.

In a directed writing task, you may be given some information on which to base your writing. Below is some information about a different food topic: chocolate and what is good/bad about it. The information includes comments from an expert and the writer.

100 g dark chocolate per day could reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke by 21%. (*British Medical Journal* research)

Chocolate usually contains large quantities of antioxidants (chemicals that can prevent the build-up of harmful pollutants in the body and lower blood pressure).

'I bought a large bar of chocolate recently and finished it all in one go, and I felt really guilty, especially when the dentist told me a week later that I needed two fillings.'

Contains caffeine which can help make you more alert.

Too much caffeine can lead to disturbed sleep.

Typical ingredients in a chocolate bar: butter, sugar, cream or milk, lots of calories that can make you put on weight.

'Eating chocolate is fine, provided it is in moderation and you stick to dark chocolate.' (Dr Miles Better)

Chocolate can be a pleasant reward, from time to time.



- 1 How would you organise the information into a structure similar to the one used in the foraging article? You may need more than four paragraphs.
- 2 Come up with an alternative structure that addresses some of the pros and cons within the same paragraphs. For example:
 - First paragraph: anecdote – visit to the dentist
 - Second paragraph: problem of calories/weight versus benefit of antioxidants
 - Third paragraph: ...

Build the skills

An overall structure such as this allows you to balance the different arguments, but it also helps you to build ideas across your paragraph.

Look again at the final paragraph from the foraging article.

Yet the popularity is not just down to a celebrated restaurant or two. At a time when more and more people are rejecting fast food, which is often unhealthy, the idea of going back to nature seems very appealing. While foraged food is free and close to hand, it seems likely to remain popular, even if not everyone is convinced.

topic sentence introduces point

second sentence provides supporting information

final complex sentence sums up writer's view

- 3 Write a paragraph about the benefits of chocolate. Start with the topic sentence below, then:
 - add any supporting information
 - finish with a summary point.

Some believe that chocolate has a role to play in our physical health. For example...

Develop the skills

Another important feature in effective discursive writing is how you link and connect ideas *within* paragraphs. The words and phrases you use to link or explore ideas are sometimes called 'discourse markers'.

Time or sequence markers	Cause and effect markers	Comparison markers	Contrast markers	Development markers
This morning, that day	As a result	In the same way	On the other hand	Moreover
Earlier,	Thus	Similarly	In contrast	Furthermore
Afterwards	Therefore	Likewise	However	Additionally
Once,	Following this	As	Yet	What is more
Finally	Because	Both	But	Also,
Subsequently	In this way	Also	Although	In addition
	As can be seen			For example

Read this opening to an article on the benefits of chocolate. It uses a slightly different anecdote from the notes in 'Explore the skills'.

This morning at break time, I noticed hundreds of students tucking into their favourite chocolate bar. Perhaps they were rewarding themselves with a quick snack, **which is often something sweet**, or perhaps they felt they needed the energy from a sudden sugar rush. **However**, I wondered if they really understood the effect that chocolate is having on them.

adverbial of time specifies the moment

relative clause adds extra bit of information

coordinating conjunction offers alternative possibility

adverb signals writer's personal question

All these discourse markers and phrases allow the writer to explain, explore and suggest. These things help create the measured tone needed for discursive writing.

- 4 Here is another paragraph. Choose an appropriate joining word or phrase for each space from the word bank on page 119 to create the same sort of measured tone.

_____, sugar is known as a contributory factor to weight gain, _____ can lead to heart disease. _____, chocolate usually contains large quantities of antioxidants (chemicals that can prevent the build-up of harmful pollutants in the body and lower blood-pressure). _____, 100 g dark chocolate per day could reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke by 21%. _____, we are talking about relatively small portions of dark chocolate.

Key terms

adverbial of time: a word or phrase expressing when something happened

relative clause: part of a sentence which usually explains or adds detail to a preceding noun

yesterday that who which at the present time
yet so as nevertheless as a result

Now consider this additional information that you could use in a discursive article about the benefits or drawbacks of chocolate:

- retail sales of chocolate worldwide = 101 billion US dollars
- sales of M&M's in the USA = 616.5 million US dollars
- some producers of chocolate are household names, such as Mars, Nestlé and Lindt
- chocolate plays a part in festive and religious celebrations, for example, Easter, Christmas and Hanukkah. In Mexico, chocolate is used to make offerings during El Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead festival).

- 5 What links all these items of information?

- popularity of chocolate
- sales of chocolate
- consumption of chocolate

- 6 Where would this sort of information work best in your article (beginning, middle or end)? Why?

Apply the skills

- 7 Write an article exploring the role that chocolate plays in people's lives and whether it does harm or good.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Begin with an anecdote, personal experience and/or background information to the topic.
- ✓ Continue with a range of viewpoints.
- ✓ Link your ideas carefully, using appropriate connective words and phrases.
- ✓ Keep a measured, balanced tone throughout.
- ✓ End with a conclusion that provides some idea of your own viewpoint.



Top tip

Look back at Topic 3.5 to remind yourself about the conventions of articles.

Descriptive writing

What makes a description effective? Whether the description is part of a story or whether the place or experience being described is the focus of the writing, there are several key techniques for creating good description.

Explore the skills

When you write to describe, your main purpose is to give the reader a vivid or accurate sense of the person, object or experience. To do this well, writers often:

- use specific vocabulary (for example, *dinghy* rather than *boat*)
- choose vivid **imagery** such as **similes**, **metaphors** or symbols to make their descriptions original (*arrowing through the water*)
- use the senses to provide a memorable picture or impression (*icy wind chilling the bones*)
- use language techniques such as **personification**
- create an overall mood or atmosphere
- use a variety of sentences and paragraph structure to create different perspectives or viewpoints.

Read this description of a remote place.

The long, dangling tendrils of the huge tree fell to the damp soil. Like the hair of a giant monster, they swayed and rolled as the weather began to worsen. Under them, sparkling raindrops danced on the forest floor. A tiny tree frog on one tendril gulped twice. Its orange eye swivelled. Then, it leapt off into space. The tendrils continued to shift and shake to the rhythm of the rain.

Key terms

imagery: words or comparisons that create a mental picture

simile: a vivid comparison of two things or ideas using *as* or *like* – for example, *the hoarse voice sounded out like sandpaper on a broken brick*

metaphor: a powerful image in which two different things or ideas are compared without using *as* or *like* – for example, *my fingers were tiny splinters of ice*

personification: when a thing or idea is described as if it has human qualities (*the storm bared its teeth and roared with anger*)

- 1 Which of the features listed in the bulleted list above can you identify in this description?



- 2 What is the paragraph as a whole describing? Consider each of these possibilities:

- the tendrils of the tree
- the raindrops
- the tree frog.

- 3 What different things are described in order to create the whole picture?

- 4 Are there any descriptive details that particularly stand out? Are all five senses used by the writer? If so, how?

If you are going to describe a particular person, place or experience, you need to think about *what* you describe. For example, the student who wrote the paragraph on page 120 made these notes:

Remote place – no people; tropical forest or river? Both?

When? Before, during and after a storm – sun's rays disappearing; rain hitting ground.

What? Plants and trees – branches, roots etc.; earth/soil; forest creatures – red ants, python, tree frog.

- 5 What ideas from the notes has the student *not* used yet?

Build the skills

It is important to have a wide vocabulary to use in your descriptive writing. Having a variety of words and phrases at your fingertips means that you are less likely to repeat yourself and, more importantly, you will be able to choose the most appropriate or powerful word or phrase.

Do not just use the first word that comes to your mind. Many words have **synonyms** – some of which might be better than your first choice. For example, consider the sun's rays: they can ...

shine

glow

sparkle

shimmer

dazzle

glitter

beam

flicker

- 6 What is the difference in meaning between each of these verbs?

- 7 Which would be best for describing the rays coming through the branches or trees? Write a sentence or two describing the rays, using the word (or words) you have chosen.

Key term

synonym: a word that is identical, or very close in meaning, to another word

In the description of the forest, the student uses a number of closely related words to describe the movement of the tendrils: *swayed, rolled, shift, shake*. The tendrils are likened to the *hair of a giant monster*.

- 8 What synonyms or related words can you find for the following words?

- a) hair
- b) monster
- c) shake

It can also be helpful to think in terms of the **semantic field** when describing. This is a good way of making sure that you have enough to describe in relation to a particular experience or setting. Look at the table below, which contains some words connected to various features of the rainforest setting.

Storm	Forest	Creatures	River
thunder	tendrils	red ants	muddy banks
raindrops	roots	python	
disappearing sun	canopy	tree frog	
darkness, gloom	leaves		
oppression			

- 9 Copy and complete the table, adding further nouns to each semantic field. You could create an additional table with a set of related verbs – for example, to describe the movement of a river you could add *swirl* or *flow*.

- 10 Choose one of the words or phrases from the table (not one used in the original extract) and write one or two sentences using it.

Develop the skills

Descriptions can be structured in a range of ways. One effective way of planning is to select the key elements from the overall scene or place you are describing and allow a paragraph for each one. If you can, go one step further, and break down each paragraph into further details.

Key term

semantic field: vocabulary or set of terms closely linked by subject or usage

Paragraph	Overall focus	Elements	Up close
1	tree and its tendrils in the storm	tendrils and how they move, tree frog on tendrils, raindrops	eye of the tree frog
2	tree canopy		
3	banks of river		
4			
5			

- 11 Copy and complete the table, adding your own ideas to each row.

Apply the skills

You might be asked to describe a person rather than a place, but you can take the same approach to this description. Look at this start of a student's plan for a task about seeing a lonely person.

1. Bench with a homeless woman – clothing/face – old newspapers
2. A child stopping ...
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Here is the first paragraph.

The old woman lay on the wooden bench fast asleep. Wrapped in several layers of tattered brown coats she seemed cocooned from the busy workers who rushed by. Her wrinkled face lay on its side, propped up on a bundle of old newspapers with frayed, greying edges.

- 12 Finish or rewrite the plan, using a structure like the one in the table in Task 11. Come up with your own ideas.
- 13 Write another paragraph from the plan.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Have a general overview or idea of what you are describing in the paragraph.
- ✓ Describe several elements using vocabulary to create a vivid picture.
- ✓ Zoom in on a specific detail or feature.

Narrative writing

A story is a type of writing built around events and their effect on the people involved. So, what makes a good story?

Explore the skills

Some basic guidance is useful for all short narratives:

- Stick to a limited number of main/developed characters (usually just one or two, although others can be mentioned in passing).
- Have one main plot and avoid too many actions, time spans or events.
- Develop a convincing voice or style for your main character(s).
- Make their story memorable through its structure and language (such as unusual imagery or lively dialogue).
- Capture the reader's attention from the start.

- 1 Look closely at the points above. What further guidance or points would you add, based on good stories you have read?

The way you structure your story is very important. You need to know what will become of your main character, even if this is something you do not reveal until the end.

It can be useful to plan your plot in five stages:

1. **Introduction:** the reader finds out about the situation and usually the main character.
2. **Development:** something happens or changes that affects the main character.
3. **Complication:** a problem or obstacle faces the main character and creates rising tension – the reader wonders what will happen.
4. **Climax:** the most dramatic or emotional point of the story.
5. **Resolution:** the tension drops and loose ends are tied up (for better or for worse).

Top tip

This is just one useful plan for stories, but it can be varied. For example, you could add more stages or have more than one complication or problem.

Read this short story plan by a student based on a fictional or autobiographical account of a disappointing experience.

- The reader finds out about six school friends, their names, what they're like.
- A school talent contest is announced.
- There is not much time to rehearse.
- The night of the talent show; none of them win.
- They meet in a cafe the next day and agree to enter next year.



- 2 How effective is this as a story structure? Consider the following:
- a) Does it follow the five-stage sequence in the order suggested above?
 - b) Does it reflect the guidance given in the bullet points in 'Explore the skills'?
- 3 Try to improve the plot and the details. What would you change? Note down your ideas.

Build the skills

The overall plot is very important, but as you have seen, it is the individual ingredients that make the story work. After the plot, perhaps the most important element of a story is the choice of character. Here are four possible main characters for the story 'A Disappointing Night'.

Jake	Michelle	Priya	Marco
A popular and confident boy who is good at most subjects and sport. He usually wins prizes in competitions or rewards for his work.	A newcomer to the school, she appears a tough person who rarely reveals her feelings, but in fact has a heart of gold.	A talented musician but not good at English, Maths or Science. She longs to leave school and make her living as a performer.	Shy and small for his age. Marco prefers fiddling around writing software or mending laptops to school subjects.

- 4 Which of these would you choose as your main character? Consider which character:
- you can visualise best in your mind
 - you can imagine speaking or thinking
 - you think would fit best with any ideas you have for 'A Disappointing Night'.
- 5 Come up with an alternative main character. It does not have to be a student.

Develop the skills

Whether you write in detail about a character or mention people in passing, **characterisation** needs to be convincing. Characterisation is built by providing the reader with details such as:

- how someone behaves
- how they speak
- what they look like
- what others say about them.

- 6 Which of the factors listed above can you identify in the following extract?

Marco scurried, like a mouse in a hurry, into the computer suite. He hopped up on to the stool, peered through his glasses at the laptop and rapidly tapped in a code. A voice suddenly interrupted his train of thought.

'Ah, Marco. Aren't you supposed to be in Science now?'

It was the head teacher. Marco gulped, and turned around guiltily.

- 7 How do you think Marco would reply? Write a sentence of speech that fits with his character.

It can help to consider the character's journey. Sometimes, this is literal – they go from one place to another. More important, however, is their personal or emotional journey – how they develop as a person, or how events change them over time. For example, look at these notes a student has made when planning a story:

Introduction	Marco likes messing around with computers; we find out he lacks confidence in other subjects, and doesn't have many friends.
Development	He misses a lesson because another student has bullied him into fixing his laptop.
Complication	He is caught by the head teacher and given detention. The head teacher gives him a letter for his parents asking them to come in to see him. At detention are some other students. They want to enter the talent show but they need some good backing music...

Climax

Resolution

Key term

characterisation: how an author presents a particular character



- 8 Marco's emotional journey begins with him lacking confidence and friends. What could happen to Marco? How might it change or help him? Copy and complete the table, adding your own ideas.

Finally, where you set your story is important. There is more information about settings in Topic 1.7. Good locations can even make you think of good plots! Here are five different settings:

- a subway covered in graffiti in a dark, remote part of a city
- an ultra-modern office at the top of a tower block with huge glass windows and a white desk
- a pond full of still, slimy water in the middle of a dark forest
- a pretty walled garden with roses climbing the sides, and colourful birds singing
- a storeroom in a school in which old pieces of computer equipment are dumped.

- 9 What stories come to mind when you consider these locations? Make some basic notes on:

- characters you might see or associate with the locations – or perhaps someone who would be out of place there
- story ideas based on what might happen or have happened in these locations.

Top tip

Beginning in an atmospheric location can really engage your reader, especially if it is linked directly to the events of your story. Stories can work well in everyday places, too, but the characters or events have to be especially interesting in that case. See Chapter 9 for more information about story openings.

Apply the skills

- 10 Using what you have learned, write a fictional or autobiographical account of a dangerous experience or time in someone's life.
- Decide on a main character and location (or locations) – this might be you, if the account is true!
 - Use the five-stage plot structure to help you.

You can use any of the ideas you have worked on or encountered in this topic. You do not need to go on and write the whole story, but if you wish to you could try writing the opening paragraph or two.

Identifying and selecting according to the question focus

If you are asked to summarise one or two aspects of a passage, your first task is to identify the focus – what information is the question seeking?

Explore the skills

Look at this question about a passage written by a retired professional footballer:

According to the author, how has football changed since the start of his career?

- 1 Which phrase in the question above tells you that the focus is not the overall history of football?
- 2 Now imagine that the points below all appear in the text. Which are relevant to the focus?
 - a) The author disliked rugby.
 - b) Players become millionaires.
 - c) Players used to represent their home town.
 - d) The author's family was poor.
 - e) Football has become highly commercial.
- 3 Rewrite the question in your own words retaining its key ideas. For example, find a synonym for 'changed'.

Build the skills

Read the passage below about Malakhara wrestlers in Pakistan.

The wrestlers wore the baggy trousers of their *shalwar kameez*, with the bottom of the trousers pulled up and tucked into the waist, looking like short baggy bloomers which ballooned from their bottoms. They [...] wore a turban on their heads. Before the fight, they carried out a **sacrosanct** ritual particular to this sport. Each took his *sundhro*, which is a very long piece of green material, and with the help of his opponent twisted it into a long rope. Then each wrestler wrapped his *sundhro* round his waist and tied it securely.

From *A Game of Polo with a Headless Goat* by Emma Levine

Vocabulary

sacrosanct: time-honoured and therefore important

- 4 What two aspects of Malakhara wrestling are described?
- 5 Imagine the question asked *what* the wrestlers do and *why* they do it.
 - a) Which points in the passage would be relevant?
 - b) Which would be irrelevant?

Develop the skills

Read how the account continues.

The rule of this form of wrestling, which is quite unique, is for each man to aim to get his hand inside the back of his opponent's *sundhro*, and then throw him to the ground from that position. (Some believe that this is the origin of *sumo*.) Other than this move, the arms may not be used to perform any type of wrestling grip, the legs being more important and used to trip and overbalance the opponent and eventually floor him. [...]

They darted, each trying to grab at the other's waist, snatching their necks, trying to spin them round to overbalance them. The pair nearest to me grabbed each other's arms, trying to fling each other around, legs kicking in a kind of clumsy waltz; after a few minutes of this, one eventually got his hand in the other's *sundhro*, grabbed it, pulled it and flung his opponent on his back. He hit the ground with a tremendous wallop.

Such force meant that the fallen wrestler suffered not only defeat, but also it seemed to me severe concussion. He lay motionless on the ground with no one overly concerned except me. The victor went over, slapped him around to revive him and poured water over his face, so if he didn't die by knock-out it would probably be through drowning.

- 6 Jot down the rules and aims of Malakhara wrestling. Be selective. For example, do not include what happens to defeated wrestlers.

Apply the skills

- 7 Make notes on:
 - a) what happens to a defeated wrestler
 - b) what the author's attitude to this is.

Check your progress:

I understand what is meant by 'focus'.
I can identify the focus of some questions.
I can sift out irrelevant information.

I can identify the focus of most questions.
I understand implied meaning.
I can distinguish separate aspects of a passage.



Selecting and ordering main points

When writing a summary, you will need to identify the *main points* in the text relating to the question focus, excluding details and examples. You must also organise these main points to show that you understand the passage as a whole.

Explore the skills

Read the passage below from a travel account.

The Italian Lakes are a little slice of paradise. Generations of travellers from the north, descending wearily from the chilly Alpine passes, have come into this Mediterranean vision of figs and palms, **bougainvillea** and lemon blossom, and been lost for words. Elegant ribbons of blue water stretch out ahead, folded into the sun-baked foothills: after the **rigours** of the high Alps, the abundance of fine food and wine must have been a revelation. Warming, awe-inspiring and graced with natural beauty, the lakes are still a place to draw breath and wonder.

These days, of course, mass tourism has found the lakes, and the shoreside roads that link every town can be as packed as the ferries that chug to and fro. But the chief reason to visit the area – its spectacular landscapes – remains compelling, and there are plenty of ways to avoid the crowds.

The lakes – deep, slender fjords gouged by glaciers – are sublime. All are orientèd north-south, ringed by characterful old villages often wedged onto narrow beaches between rugged cliffs and the water. And those classic lakes images of flower-bedecked balconies, Baroque gardens and splendid waterside villas can be found here in abundance.

From The Rough Guide to The Italian Lakes

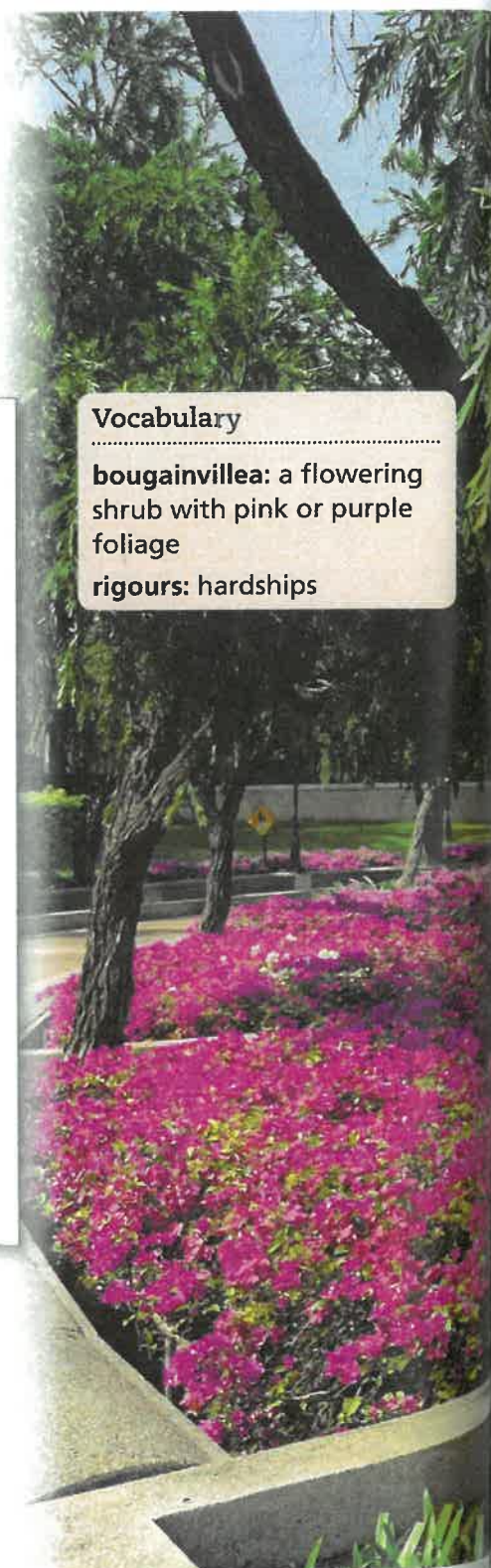
Remember:

- A *main point* is essential information, which often reflects the purpose of the text.
- A *detail* enhances the main point, but is non-essential information.
- An *explanation* usually develops a main point, often for information or emphasis, but can sometimes be a main point in itself if it is important.

Vocabulary

bougainvillea: a flowering shrub with pink or purple foliage

rigours: hardships



- An *opinion* expresses the writer's point of view on the topic, and could be regarded as a main point if you are asked about the writer's views.

Imagine that you have to summarise the following:

What would attract visitors to the Italian Lakes area?

Which of these do you think is a main point?

- Travellers have descended 'wearily from the chilly Alpine passes'.
- They found 'figs and palms, bougainvillea and lemon blossom'.
- Newcomers to the area have found it delightful.

The answer is the last bullet point. The statement would be true even if the travellers were not weary and encountered roses and bananas rather than figs and palms!

It can sometimes be difficult to distinguish essential information (main points) from non-essential information (details or explanations). Punctuation may provide a clue. For example, the commas around the subordinate clause 'descending wearily from the chilly Alpine passes' suggests that this is non-essential information.

- 1 Look at the start of the third paragraph. If you were summarising what would attract visitors to the Italian Lakes area, what piece of information here is non-essential?
- 2 In the second sentence of paragraph 3, which piece of information is relevant to the focus of the question?

Build the skills

Now read the continuation of the passage below.

Dotted around and between the lakes are some of Italy's finest art cities. Milan is pre-eminent, while Verona, Bergamo, Mantua and others display – in their architecture as well as their art – a civilized, urban vision that stands in marked contrast to the wild, largely rural character of the lakeside **hinterlands**. Italy only became a unified state in 1861 and, as a result, people often feel more loyalty to their home town than to the nation as a whole – a feeling manifest in the multitude of cuisines, dialects and outlooks that span the region.

Geography, of course, doesn't adhere to political boundaries: the lakes are intimately connected in culture and landscape with the southernmost, Italian-speaking extremities of Switzerland. Lakes Maggiore and Lugano have shorelines in two countries.

Individual details can often be summarised within a main point. For example, the details 'Mediterranean vision of figs and palms, bougainvillea and lemon blossom' could be summarised as 'exotic plants' or 'Mediterranean fauna'.

Vocabulary

hinterlands: nearby area

- 3 How could you summarise these details within main points?
- 'Verona, Bergamo, Mantua and others'
 - 'the multitude of cuisines, dialects and outlooks' that span the region'

Not all explanations are main points.

- 4 Look at the sentence beginning 'Italy only became a unified state in 1861...'. What consequence of this event might not qualify as a major point?

Develop the skills

When planning a summary, first list your selected points, then decide how best to order them. The order you choose may not be the same as in the text – it will depend on what aspects you have been asked to summarise.

In a summary, aim to demonstrate an overview – do not just summarise one bit at a time.

- 5 Below is a list of points summarising tourist attractions in the Italian Lakes. Which points could be grouped together to create a concise overview?
- lush vegetation
 - lots of play areas
 - good weather
 - food and wine
 - variety of watersports
 - beautiful landscapes
 - ferries
 - theme parks
 - possible to avoid crowds
 - beautiful lakes
 - interesting villages
 - horse-riding and cycling routes through woodland
 - art and architecture
 - city-country contrast
 - local variations.
- 6 Imagine that you are asked to summarise: 'What would make the Lakes region appeal to *families*?'. Reorder the list to answer this question.

Top tip

Do not include your own opinions in your summary.

Apply the skills

Read the text below, which is another introduction in a travel guide.

Welcome to Crete

There's something undeniably artistic in the way the Cretan landscape unfolds, from the sun-drenched beaches in the north to the rugged canyons spilling out at the cove-carved and cliff-lined southern coast. In between, valleys cradle moody villages, and round-shouldered hills are the overture to often snow-dabbed mountains. [...]

Crete's natural beauty is equalled only by the richness of its history. The island is the birthplace of the first advanced society on European soil, the Minoans, who ruled some 4000 years ago, and you'll find evocative vestiges all over, including the famous Palace of Knossos. At the crossroads of three continents, Crete has been coveted and occupied by consecutive invaders. History imbues Hania and Rethymno, where labyrinthine lanes – laid out by the Venetians – are lorded over by mighty fortresses, and where gorgeously restored Renaissance mansions rub rafters with mosques and Turkish bathhouses. The Byzantine influence stands in magnificent frescoed chapels, churches and monasteries.

If you're a foodie, you will be in heaven in Crete, where 'locavore' is not a trend but a way of life. Rural tavernas often produce their own meat, cheese, olive oil, *raki* and wine, and catch their own seafood. Follow a gourmet trail across the landscape and you'll delight in distinctive herbs and greens gathered from each hillside, cheeses made fresh with unique village- or household-specific recipes, and honey flavoured by mountain herbs. [...]

Crete's spirited people champion their unique culture and customs, and time-honoured traditions remain a dynamic part of the island's soul. Look for musicians striking up a free-form jam on local instruments, like the stringed *lyra*, or wedding celebrants weaving their time-honoured traditional regional dances. Meeting regular folk gossiping in *kafeneia* (coffee houses), preparing their Easter feast, tending to their sheep or celebrating during their many festivals is what makes a visit to Crete so special.

From *Welcome to Crete*, 6th edition



- 7 Select points to answer the following question:

According to the text, what makes Crete an enjoyable and interesting place to visit?

- 8 Use a mind map or spider diagram to order your points. (Hint: the question says 'enjoyable and interesting', so you might address each factor in turn.)

Check your progress:

- I can identify main points in a text.
- I can combine details within a main point.
- I can order points logically.
- I can identify main points relating to the question.
- I can distinguish between essential information and non-essential information.
- I can convey an overview.

Writing a summary

When writing a summary, your response should be concise, fluent and written in your own words as far as possible. You should also use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Explore the skills

Read the first part of a review of a documentary film.



Jillian Schlesinger's 'Maidentrip' [...] chronicles Dutch teen Laura Dekker's sail around the globe at age 14, a feat which would win her the title in 2012 of youngest person in history to make the voyage alone. Observant and unassuming, the documentary looks at the significance of Laura's trip not in terms of records, but as a rite of passage, and as a way for the teen to negotiate her past.

The film gets the ugly stuff out of the way first. Following Dekker's announcement to sail in 2009, she and her father were embroiled in a ten-month legal battle. Dutch authorities claimed that Laura needed a custody transfer, while the internet tossed words at her including 'arrogant', 'spoiled' and the particularly nasty sentiment: 'I hope she sinks.' After a year of warring with the courts and shouldering waves of media opinion, Laura was permitted to make her voyage, and to remain under her father's custody. This period in time Schlesinger keeps to an economical five-minute montage.

Indeed, 'Maidentrip' is pleasantly free from the hysteria that surrounded Laura Dekker for over a year, and instead presents her trip in a judgment-free manner. It neither suggests (as it understandably could) that 14 is an alarmingly young age to traverse the mightily unforgiving Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, nor takes a blindly positive 'Ra! Ra! Go Laura!' stance. [...]

Instead, Laura is portrayed as an independent outsider, at once open-hearted, enviably confident and a bit prickly, sick of what she sees as daily life in Holland (which she rounds up succinctly: 'Get money, get a house, get a husband, get a baby, then die'). She pines for a truly outsized adventure. While other young record-holding sailors completed the round-world trip without lengthy stops at ports, Laura gives herself two years for the excursion, so that she can soak in the land-bound culture of the different climes where she alights (among them French Polynesia, Australia, the Galapagos Islands and South Africa).

From Indie Wire website by Beth Hanna

You may need to work out the meaning of some words in the passage from their context (see Topic 1.5).

1 What is the correct meaning of 'embroiled' in line 8?

- cooked
- entangled
- found guilty

To summarise an aspect of a text you should:

- identify the main points
- write them out, using fewer words and paraphrasing if possible.

Read the following question.

What do we learn about Laura Dekker's trip and what made it newsworthy in this passage?

Here are some possible points you could make in response:

- sailed round the globe at the age of 14
- youngest person in history to make the voyage alone
- embroiled in a ten-month legal battle before the trip
- internet tossed words at her including 'arrogant', 'spoiled' and 'I hope she sinks'
- gave herself two years for the excursion.



However, these notes are too close to the wording of the text to use in the summary. In addition, some of the points should be combined. For example:

At 14 Dekker became the youngest ever solo circumnavigator.

- 2 a) Identify the points that have been combined in this sentence.
- b) What single word has been used to replace several?

Build the skills

- 3 Some details may be important, such as Laura's age, but others can be omitted. Which could be omitted or replaced with one word in the third bullet point?

Examples can be combined to save words:

We ate apples, oranges and bananas. → We ate fruit.

The British love rabbits, cats and hamsters. → The British love pets.

- 4 a) Rewrite the fourth bullet point more concisely by combining examples.
b) Find an even more concise way to say this, beginning, 'She received...'

Develop the skills

The best way to write a concise and fluent summary is to aim for an overview rather than just using synonyms for individual words or even summarising one sentence at a time. Complex sentences will help you combine ideas. Compare the following:

- 'Maidentrip' is about a Dutch girl. She sailed round the world solo. Her name was Laura Dekker.
- 'Maidentrip' is about a Dutch girl, Laura Dekker. She sailed round the world solo.
- 'Maidentrip' is about Laura Dekker, a Dutch girl who sailed round the world solo.

The third version is the most fluent because it is a complex sentence, using a subordinate clause and punctuation to combine information.

- 5 Copy the line below, filling in the gaps with your own words to combine all the bullet points from Activity 1 in a single sentence that provides an overview.

We learn that at 16, after overcoming... and spending two...
Laura Dekker became...

Experiment with different wording until you think you have found one that includes all points fluently in your own words.

Top tip

To achieve an overview, try writing your summary from your notes without looking back at the text.

Apply the skills

Now read this continuation of the review of 'Maidentrip':

Dekker acts as her own camera operator and narrator, periodically filming herself throughout her trip, commenting on the winds, weather and whatever else might be on her mind.

Laura's camera proves **therapeutic** for the onset of loneliness that strikes her early in the expedition; the device is something to talk to. She comments on the silly and mundane, but also on the more profound experiences of being thousands of miles from land or another human. We hear her sniffing through tears as she films a pod of dolphins swimming alongside her boat, pleading with them to stay awhile and **assuage** her feelings of isolation.

Yet as time and the documentary go on we sense a change in Laura. She's relishing the days on end of alone time, and seemingly more attuned to the fluctuations of the ocean.

- 6 Using both parts of the review, write a 100–150-word summary in response to the question:

What do we learn about Laura Dekker?

Begin by listing your main points, remembering to focus on Laura herself. Write in your own words, using complex sentences to write fluently and concisely. Aim to demonstrate an overview.

Vocabulary

therapeutic: describing something that has a healing effect or that makes you feel better

assuage: to relieve, or make something feel less unpleasant

Check your progress:

I can rewrite sentences using my own words.

I can combine details in single ideas.

I can replace examples.

I can rewrite sentences fluently and concisely to present an overview.

I can find synonyms for words from their context.

I can combine simple sentences into fluent complex ones.

Explaining the suggestions that words can create

As well as showing that you understand the literal meaning of words and phrases, you need to be able to explore the ideas that phrases suggest.

Explore the skills

Read this passage about a soccer match.

- The spectators followed the ball, open-mouthed, as it shot through air. When it hit the back of the net, the crowd erupted. With only one minute of the match remaining, they leapt to their feet and cheered excitedly. Looking around at the spectators, Etebo grinned widely and punched the air in triumph. His team mates ran towards him, throwing their arms around his shoulders in congratulation. He basked in their attention, his heart warm at the idea of having scored the winning goal. Aware that there were still sixty seconds to play, the players quickly returned to their positions and Etebo refocused on the match, resolute that the opposition wouldn't manage a late equaliser.

A short-answer question might ask what the phrase *punched the air in triumph* shows about Etebo's feelings during the match. You might start by putting the phrase in its context (Etebo has just scored a goal), then break the phrase down. 'Triumph' means celebration, joy or pride. Punching the air suggests an expression of excitement or pleasure.

- 1 Put these ideas together to create an explanation in your own words, in a single sentence.

Build the skills

- 2 Here are two phrases from the text. Below each phrase are three explanations for what it suggests about Etebo during the soccer match. Decide which explanation is correct.
 - a) 'refocused on the match':
 - The phrase shows that Etebo stopped thinking about his goal and returned his attention to the game.
 - The phrase suggests that Etebo hadn't been concentrating hard enough.

Top tip

To remind yourself about how words carry implicit meanings, look back at Topics 1.6 and 1.7.

- The phrase suggests that Etebo didn't want his happiness about the goal to get in the way of winning, so he refocused on the match.

b) 'his heart warm':

- The phrase shows that Etebo felt hot.
- The phrase shows that Etebo felt pleased with himself for having scored the goal.
- The phrase shows that scoring the goal made Etebo feel warm inside.

Top tip

Remember to keep using your own words to show your full understanding.

Develop the skills

- 3 Look at the sixth sentence. What does the phrase 'basked in their attention' suggest about Etebo's feelings during the match?
 - Think about what Etebo has just done and how his team mates have reacted (the context of the phrase).
 - Consider the meaning of *attention* and *basked*, and what these words suggest Etebo is feeling.
- 4 What does the phrase 'resolute the opposition wouldn't manage' suggest about Etebo's feelings during the match?
 - Think about what the opposition are going to want to do (the context of the phrase).
 - Consider the meaning of the words *resolute* and *manage*, and what these words suggest that Etebo is feeling.



Top tip

When explaining a phrase, you do not need to explain each word. Focus on key words or consider what the phrase as a whole suggests.

Apply the skills

- 5 Using your own words, explain what the underlined phrases suggest about the crowd during the soccer match.
 - a) The spectators followed the ball, open-mouthed, as it shot through air.
 - b) When it hit the back of the net, the crowd erupted.
 - c) With only one minute of the match remaining, they leapt to their feet and cheered excitedly.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Use your own words.
- ✓ Don't just say what words mean.
- ✓ Consider the precise effect of individual words – what do they suggest?

Check your progress:

- ▲ I can use my own words.
- ▲ I can work out the implied meanings of individual words and phrases and explain what these phrases suggest to the reader.
- ▲ I can use my own words with clarity and precision.
- ▲ I can consider the specific effects of individual words and phrases and explore what they suggest to the reader.

Identifying the writer's craft

Writers craft their work in order to achieve effects in an interesting and impactful way that is enjoyable to read. Most writers try to do three things:

- convey meaning/feelings/atmosphere
- create a sensory picture
- provoke an emotion.

They achieve this through careful selection of words that have literal and implicit meanings, which build an effect. Writers also achieve effects through a range of devices such as imagery, comparison and personification.

Explore the skills

Read the following extract from a novel.

At first we walked along the beach, hoping to circle the coast, but the sand soon turned to jagged rocks, which turned to impassable cliffs and gorges. Then we tried the other end, wasting precious time while the sun rose in the sky, and found the same barrier. We were left with no choice but to try inland. The pass between the peaks was the obvious goal so we slung our bin-liners over our shoulders and picked our way into the jungle.

The first two or three hundred metres from the shore were the hardest. The spaces between the palm trees were covered in a strange rambling bush with tiny leaves that sliced like razors, and the only way past them was to push through. But as we got further inland and the ground began to rise, the palms became less common than another kind of tree—trees like rusted, ivy-choked space rockets, with ten-foot roots that fanned from the trunk like stabilizer fins. With less sunlight coming through the canopy, the vegetation on the forest floor thinned out. Occasionally we were stopped by a dense spray of bamboo, but a short search would find an animal track or a path cleared by a fallen branch.

After Zeph's description of the jungle, with Jurassic plants and strangely coloured birds, I was vaguely disappointed by the reality. In many ways I felt like I was walking through an English forest, I'd just shrunk to a tenth of my normal size. But there were some things that felt suitably exotic. Several times we saw tiny brown monkeys scurrying up the trees, Tarzan-style lianas hung above us like stalactites—and there was the water: it dripped on our necks, flattened our hair, stuck our T-shirts to our chests. There was so much of it that our half-empty canteens stopped being a worry. Standing under a branch and giving it a shake provided a couple of good gulps, as well as a quick shower. The irony of having kept my clothes dry over the swim, only to have them soaked when we turned inland, didn't escape me.

From *The Beach* by Alex Garland

- The writer has created a detailed sensory picture for the reader. How has he achieved this?
 - Which nouns has the writer chosen for their precise literal meaning?
 - Select adjectives and adverbs that help to create a sensory picture.
- The writer has also conveyed the narrator's different thoughts and feelings. How have these been presented?
 - Which verbs show that the narrator found the exploration of the island difficult?
 - Which adjectives add to the impression that the narrator found the journey difficult?
- Reread the first paragraph. Look at the list of paired words below. Considering what the words tell you about the narrator's feelings or experiences, decide which is the most powerful word in each pair.
 - try picked
 - barrier inland
 - sky precious
 - goal pass

Vocabulary

liana: a long, woody vine (often used by monkeys to swing from tree to tree)

Top tip

When you are analysing the writer's craft, there is not one correct answer – all readers will have an individual response to a text. However, there *will* be wrong answers. Make sure that you can explain why your chosen words are interesting, powerful or impactful. If you can do this, your choices are correct.

Build the skills

Try to comment on any powerful imagery that you read in a text. This means that you should look out for any effective examples of:

- simile
- metaphor
- personification.

- Look at the table below, which gives a definition, example and effect of the three types of imagery. Which type of imagery goes with which row in the table?

Definition	Example	Example effect
a descriptive technique, giving human characteristics to an object or idea	'He gazed around at the bright fireworks of flowers with their petals of reds, blues, and yellows.'	This describes the sun as if it is angry or unwelcoming in order to convey the discomfort caused by its heat.
a descriptive comparison, using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	'The sun glared down from the cloudless sky.'	This captures the sparkling appearance of the water. By comparing it to diamonds, the writer also suggests how much the thirsty man values the water he has found.

Definition	Example	Example effect
a descriptive comparison, written as if one thing <i>is</i> something else (rather than it being <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>)	'The man looked thirstily at the pool of water as it glistened like diamonds in the sunlight.'	This makes the multicoloured flowers sound vibrant and in abundance, as well as suggesting that they were a striking sight.

Develop the skills

- 5 Consider the phrase 'trees like rusted, ivy-choked space rockets' from paragraph 2 of the extract on page 164. Make notes using the following prompts.

- What type of imagery is this phrase?
- What is the writer trying to convey by comparing the trees to space rockets? How does this make the trees sound? What might the narrator be feeling about the trees?
- Why does the writer describe them as *rusted*? How does this help the reader to imagine what the trees look and feel like?
- How is the ivy made to seem when it is described as *choking* the trees?

- 6 Reread the second paragraph of the extract on page 164, then copy and complete the table on page 167. Choose powerful phrases, apply subject terminology and consider what the phrase suggests about the narrator's feelings or experiences. Some examples have been given.



Top tip

Do not try to explore *all* the words in a quotation. Focus only on those that are powerful or interesting.

Chosen phrase	Subject terminology	Effect
'strange rambling bush'	noun phrase	This shows the vegetation is unusual which makes the narrator's journey more interesting and could suggest that something is wrong.

simile

This shows that the journey was physically difficult but that the narrator was determined to continue.

'dense spray of bamboo'

Apply the skills

- 7 Reread the final paragraph of the extract. Choose the two individual words and the two phrases that you think are most effective in suggesting the narrator's emotions in the paragraph. Note them down, use subject terminology to identify the type of words and devices the writer has used and what they suggest.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Select interesting and powerful words and phrases from a text.
- ✓ Analyse the effects of language in a text.
- ✓ Use subject terminology.

Check your progress:

- I can select some interesting words and phrases from a text.
- I can explain what my chosen words and phrases suggest to the reader.
- I can apply some subject terminology to my chosen words and phrases.
- I can select a range of interesting or powerful words and phrase from a text.
- I can analyse the effects of my chosen words and phrases.
- I can apply a range of subject terminology to my chosen words and phrases.

Analysing the writer's craft

Once you have selected powerful words and phrases from a text, you need to explain how they are being used effectively by the writer.

Explore the skills

Reread the extract from *The Beach* on page 164. Then look at the example of analysis below.

In the first sentence, the adjective 'jagged' is a powerful way to describe the texture of the rocks as it highlights how sharp they are. This makes the narrator's exploration of the island sound challenging as well as suggesting that this could be a dangerous place.

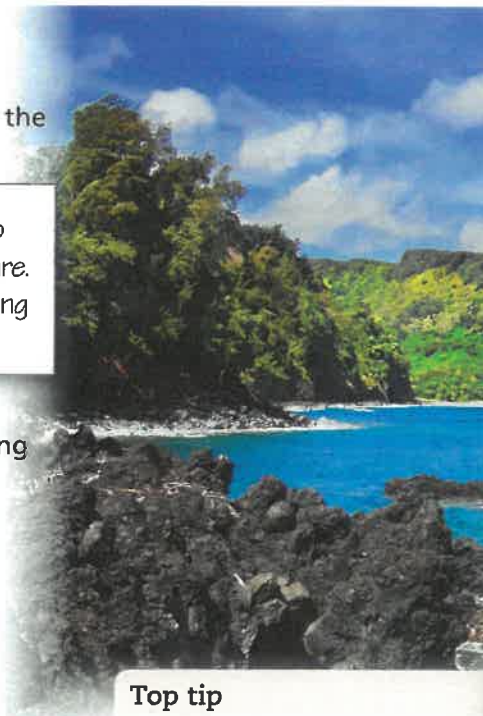
- 1 Annotate a copy of the analysis, identifying the following elements:
 - a) evidence (reference to the text)
 - b) use of subject terminology
 - c) analysis of why the word is powerful
 - d) further development of the explanation.

Build the skills

When writing about a text, it is important to focus on specific details, give clear and precise explanations and try to make use of subject terminology.

Look at the following two examples of analysis.

In the second sentence, the writer uses the verb phrase 'wasting precious time' to convey the narrator's feelings when exploring the island. The verb 'wasting' suggests that he is getting frustrated by their inability to get across the island. The adjective 'precious' adds to this frustration by creating a mood of urgency: the narrator feels the hours of the day are quickly passing and they are running out of time. These examples of word choice clearly show his feelings.



Top tip

You can use the following steps to effectively analyse the writer's craft:

- 1 Point: make your point by stating the effect created.
- 2 Evidence: make reference to the text as evidence of your point.
- 3 Analysis: give your analysis, which may be:
 - literal meanings
 - associations (that is, the senses or emotions)
 - language devices.
- 4 Effect: restate the effect.

The writer uses the words 'wasting precious time' when they are exploring the island and failing to find a way to get further inland. Despite wanting to explore, the narrator feels that the day is being 'wasted' and this word is a powerful way to show how he feels. The word 'precious' is also powerful as it describes the hours of the day. The text said the sun had already 'rose in the sky' which means that they are running out of time because they are spending so long trying to find a passable route around the island.

- 2 Decide which response is the best and why. Which aspects of the less successful example need improvement?

Develop the skills

Look back at the information on imagery in Task 5, Topic 7.3. Consider again the phrase 'trees like rusted, ivy-choked space rockets' from paragraph 2 of the extract from *The Beach*.

- 3 Turn your notes into an explanation of why the phrase is effective. Remember to:
 - make a clear reference to the text
 - use subject terminology
 - explain the effect of a specific word or device that you think is powerful or interesting
 - develop your explanation by focusing on another specific aspect of your quotation.

Apply the skills

- 4 Pick out three powerful words or phrases from the last paragraph of the extract on page 164. Include one example of imagery. Explain how each of your choices has been used effectively by the writer.

Checklist for success

- ✓ Write a concise yet detailed response.
- ✓ Use subject terminology.
- ✓ Include at least one example of simile, metaphor or personification.

Check your progress:

- ▲ I can respond to a text in some detail.
- ▲ I can use some subject terminology in my response.
- ▲ I can explain the effects of some descriptive devices.
- ▲ I can construct a concise and detailed response to a text.
- ▲ I can include a range of subject terminology.
- ▲ I can explore a range of descriptive devices.