# Everyday English 2

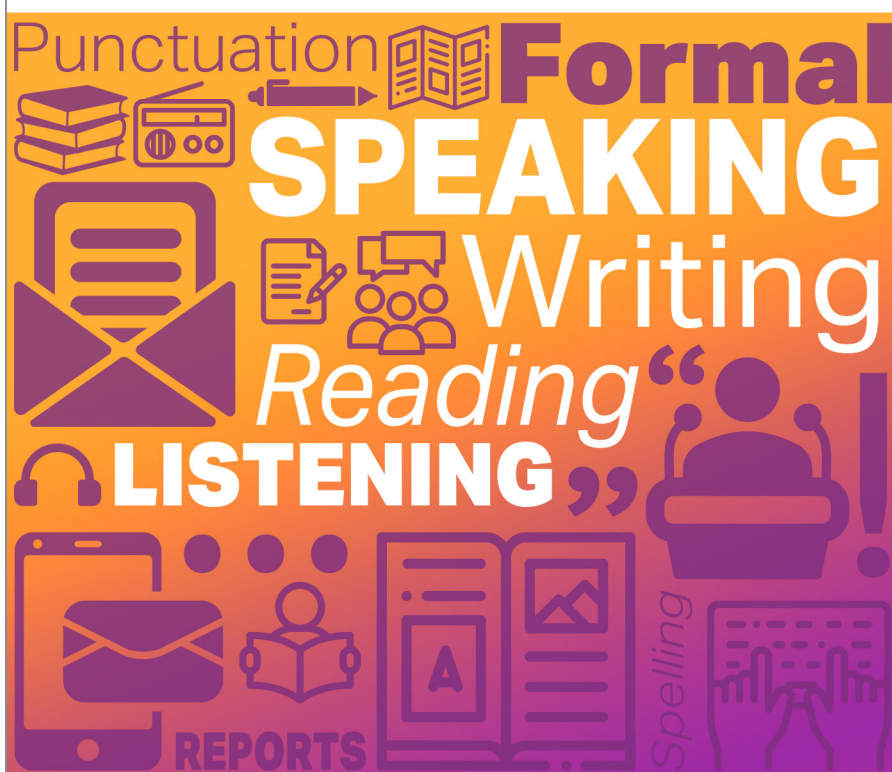# Everyday English
# **level 2**

**Open**Learn | Free learning from The Open University

**About this free course**

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# Contents

# Introduction and guidance

## Introduction and guidance

This free badged course, *Everyday English 2*, is an introduction to Functional Skills English Level 2 and Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2. It is designed to inspire you to improve your current English skills and help you to remember any areas that you may have forgotten. Working through the activities, and learning the tips and techniques outlined in this course, will help you to communicate more effectively in everyday life and make progress in your career.

You can work through the course at your own pace. You may find it helpful to have at hand a notepad and pen, although you can make and save notes online within the course material.

The course has three sessions, with a total study time of approximately 48 hours. The sessions cover the following topics: speaking and listening, reading, and writing. There are plenty of examples to help you as you progress, together with opportunities to practise your understanding.

The regular interactive quizzes form part of this practice, and the end-of-course quiz is an opportunity to earn a badge that demonstrates your new skills. You can read more on how to study the course and about badges in the next sections.

After completing this course you should be able to:

- listen, understand and make relevant contributions to discussions with others in a range of contexts
- apply your understanding of language to adapt delivery and content to suit audience and purpose
- read a range of different text types confidently and fluently, and apply your knowledge and understanding of texts to your own writing
- write texts of varying complexity, with accuracy and effectiveness, and correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
- understand the situations when, and audiences for which, planning, drafting and using formal language are important, and when they are less important.

### Moving around the course

The easiest way to navigate around the course is through the 'My course progress' page. You can get back there at any time by clicking on 'Back to course' in the menu bar.

It's also good practice, if you access a link from within a course page (including links to the quizzes), to open it in a new window or tab. That way you can easily return to where you've come from without having to use the back button on your browser.

# What is a badged course?

While studying *Everyday English 2* you have the option to work towards gaining a digital badge.

Badged courses are a key part of The Open University's mission *to promote the educational well-being of the community*. The courses also provide another way of helping you to progress from informal to formal learning.

To complete a course you need to be able to find about 48 hours of study time. It is possible to study at any time and at a pace to suit you.

Badged courses are all available on The Open University's **OpenLearn** website and do not cost anything to study. They differ from Open University courses because you do not receive support from a tutor. But you do get useful feedback from the interactive quizzes.

## What is a badge?

Digital badges are a way of demonstrating online that you have gained a skill. Schools, colleges and universities are working with employers and other organisations to develop open badges that help learners gain recognition for their skills, and support employers to identify the right candidate for a job.

Badges demonstrate your work and achievement on the course. You can share your achievement with friends, family and employers, and on social media. Badges are a great motivation, helping you to reach the end of the course. Gaining a badge often boosts confidence in the skills and abilities that underpin successful study. So, completing this course should encourage you to think about taking other courses, for example enrolling at a college for a formal qualification. (You will be given details on this at the end of the course.)

# How to get a badge

Getting a badge is straightforward! Here's what you have to do:

- read all of the pages of the course
- score 70% or more in the end-of-course quiz.

For all the quizzes, you can have three attempts at most of the questions (for true or false type questions you usually only get one attempt). If you get the answer right first time you will get more marks than for a correct answer the second or third time. Therefore, please be aware that for the end-of-course quiz, it is possible to get all the questions right but not score 70% and so not be eligible for the OpenLearn badge on that attempt. If one of your answers is incorrect you will often receive helpful feedback and suggestions about how to work out the correct answer.

If you're not successful in getting 70% in the end-of-course quiz the first time, after 24 hours you can attempt it again and come back as many times as you like.

We hope that as many people as possible will gain an Open University badge – so you should see getting a badge as an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned rather than as a test.

If you need more guidance on getting a badge and what you can do with it, take a look at the **OpenLearn FAQs**. When you gain your badge you will receive an email to notify you, and you will be able to view and manage all your badges in **My OpenLearn** within 24 hours of completing the criteria to gain a badge.

Now get started with Session 1.

# Session 1: Speaking and listening

## Introduction

Being able to communicate effectively is the most important of all life skills. Whether we are speaking to our boss, chatting to our friends or just popping to the shop to buy a pint of milk, most of us use our speaking and listening skills every day. But have you ever really stopped to think about what makes someone a good communicator?

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In this session, you will explore the differences between formal and informal language, identify positive and negative non-verbal communication and practise your presentation skills.

If you are doing this course to prepare you for either the **Functional Skills English Level 2** qualification or the **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** qualification, remember that speaking and listening is an important part of both programmes.

For both qualifications, the speaking and listening assessment is split into two parts:

- **A formal discussion**: for this, you take part in a timed discussion on a set topic. In the Essential Skills assessment, this is linked to the reading element of the

assessment. The discussion is with a minimum of two other people and you are assessed on your ability to communicate information, feelings and opinions, and to ask relevant questions. You are also expected to use appropriate language and non-verbal communication. You use preparatory notes to support your contribution to the discussion.

- **A short talk/presentation**: for this, you prepare and present a short talk to a group of at least three other people. The talk can be on a topic of your own choosing. In the Essential Skills assessment, it must include an image or other materials to enhance or aid understanding. Both the structure and delivery of the talk are assessed, together with its suitability for the intended audience.

# 1 Speaking in different ways

Speaking and listening skills are important in all aspects of your life. It is through them that you get by in everyday situations, connect with other people, and build and maintain relationships. They can influence people's judgements about you. People are influenced by what you say and you need to make sure that you are easily understood by others.



Figure 1 Everyday speaking and listening

This applies to your working life as well as your personal life. Being able to listen and to speak clearly and confidently are skills that are highly valued whatever your job. So, what does it mean to be a clear and confident speaker?

### Activity 1 What makes a clear and confident speaker?
Allow about 10 minutes

Watch the speaker in the short video below. Do you think she speaks clearly and confidently? Why do you think that?

Video content is not available in this format.

Discussion

The speaker looks and sounds nervous and unsure, which probably makes you, the listener, feel a bit uncomfortable. There are lots of pauses and 'ums' and 'likes'. It's hard to work out what she is saying or trying to say, and is quite frustrating to listen to. She does not speak clearly or confidently.

Now watch the video below. Tick the statements that you think apply to the speaker in this case.

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Interactive content is not available in this format.

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Discussion

You probably ticked most or all of the statements. They all apply to someone who speaks clearly and confidently. It's much easier in this video to follow what the speaker is saying compared to the first video. She knows what she wants to say and looks and sounds relaxed and confident, which makes it easier to understand the point she is making and is more enjoyable to listen to.

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It is important that you use the correct language for the context. You should adapt your style and approach to suit your audience. For example, the way you would describe your symptoms to the doctor is likely to be different from describing the same illness to a friend. Or, if you were collecting money for a good cause, you would persuade your friends to contribute using different language from what you would use with a stranger.

The language and style you use when you are speaking will depend on:

- who you are talking to
- the situation
- what you expect or hope to happen as a result.

# 1.1 Adapting your style

In a **Functional Skills English Level 2** or an **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** discussion, you gain marks for using appropriate language. This means that for both qualifications, you need to understand the kind of language that is appropriate in different situations.

You can adapt your language to the listener and the situation by keeping these questions in mind as you plan what you are going to say:

- Who …?
- Why …?
- What …?
- How …?

For example:

- **Who** am I speaking to?
- **Why** am I giving this explanation?
- **What** do I want to achieve?
- **How** can I achieve that?

Your own experience tells you that you speak in different ways depending on the people and the situation. The main difference, which helps to decide on your form of language, is whether the situation is **formal** or **informal**.

Formality usually depends on who you are speaking to and in what context. For example, you may use more formal English to speak to your boss and less formal slang to speak to your friends.

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## Activity 2 Formal and informal situations
Allow about 5 minutes

Decide whether each of the situations below is formal or informal.

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### Discussion
Being able to identify whether a situation is formal or informal can help you to communicate more confidently. When you go to an event or activity, knowing whether it is formal or informal can help you to decide what to wear, the language to use and how much preparation you need to do beforehand. This can help you to be better prepared and more confident in your communication.

# 1.2 Formal and informal language

Now that you have identified different formal and informal situations, it is time to look at formal and informal language.

> **Formal** language is a style of speech used when you are speaking to someone you don't know or on whom you want to make a good impression.

> **Informal** language is a style of speech where choice of words and grammar tends to be familiar rather than formal. It is used when you know, or want to get to know, the person you are speaking to.

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## Activity 3 Formal and informal phrases
Allow about 5 minutes

Match each formal phrase to its more informal equivalent.

> I am unable to attend tomorrow.
>
> Would you like anything else?
>
> I am ringing to enquire about the job.
>
> The manager will return your call.
>
> I received your email.
>
> He returned the item to the shop.

Match each of the items above to an item below.

> I can't come tomorrow.
>
> Anything else?
>
> I'm ringing to ask about the job.
>
> The manager will phone you back.
>
> I got your email.
>
> He took back the item to the shop.

---

### Discussion

In some of these examples, simply replacing a word makes something sound more formal: 'attend' rather than 'come'; 'enquire' rather than 'ask'; 'received' rather than 'got'; 'returned' rather than 'took back'.

Using a different phrase can also make something sound more formal: 'am unable' rather than 'can't'; 'return your call' rather than 'phone you back'.

In the following example, using a full sentence rather than a shortened form makes it sound more formal: 'Would you like anything else?' rather than 'Anything else?'.

**Slang** is very informal language that is usually spoken rather than written. It is commonly used among friends when speaking or sending text messages.

### Activity 4 The difference between slang and formal language
Allow about 5 minutes

Can you match each formal phrase to its slang equivalent?

She was devastated when the team lost.

He had his wallet stolen.

They were intoxicated on Saturday night.

She went shopping with her friends.

His son can be outspoken at times.

I'm feeling hungry.

Match each of the items above to an item below.

She was gutted when the team lost.

He had his wallet nicked.

They were legless on Saturday night.

She went shopping with her mates.

His son can be gobby at times.

I'm feeling peckish.

### Discussion

The slang words used here – gutted, nicked, legless, mates, gobby, peckish – are words that might be spoken or texted among friends. It is unlikely that you would see these words in formal writing.

Formal language is more likely to be grammatically correct. For example, you would say 'I have not' rather than the grammatically incorrect 'I ain't'.

When speaking and listening, you should think about three important questions:

- Who am I speaking to?
- What is the purpose?
- Is this a formal or an informal situation?

## Activity 5 Formal and informal phrases
Allow about 10 minutes

Think about each situation below and decide whether it's formal or informal. Then write a phrase that you might use in that situation.

1. Making an appointment at the doctor's surgery

*Provide your answer...*

2. Chatting with friends

*Provide your answer...*

3. Parents' evening at a children's school

*Provide your answer...*

4. Job interview

*Provide your answer...*

5. A community drop-in session

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion
Compare your ideas with the examples below.

| Situation | Formal/ informal | Example |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Making an appointment at the doctor's surgery | Formal | Good afternoon. I'd like to book an appointment,please. |
| 2. Chatting with friends | Informal | Hey! You all right? |
| 3. Parents' evening at a children's school | Formal | It's nice to see you again. |
| 4. Job interview | Formal | Good morning. I'm pleased to meet you. |
| 5. A community drop-in session | Informal | Hi! I thought I'd pop in today. |

**In this section** you have:

- looked at what makes a confident speaker

- identified formal and informal situations
- considered the differences between formal, informal and slang language.

You will now turn to the important subject of non-verbal communication.

# 2 Non-verbal communication
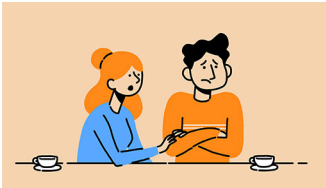


Figure 2 Communicating through body language

> In a **Functional Skills English Level 2** or an **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** discussion, you gain marks for using appropriate non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication is all about the subtle cues between people that give an idea of how they are feeling. Non-verbal communication can include body language, tone of voice, facial expressions and hand gestures.

When you speak, much of the message that you convey comes through your tone of voice and body language rather than the words you use. This means that whether you are trying to persuade your friends to watch the movie you like, presenting information at a staff meeting or answering questions at a job interview, it is important that you always use positive body language.

## Activity 6 Non-verbal body language
Allow about 10 minutes

Watch the short video below. Make a note of all the non-verbal signals that are demonstrated.

Video content is not available in this format.

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

The video features both positive and negative non-verbal signals.

- **Leaning in** shows that you are actively listening.
- **Leaning back** can suggest that you are not interested in the discussion or even feel hostile about it.
- **Folding your arms** gives a signal that you are not interested in what's going on.
- **Relaxing your arms**, so that they hang comfortably at your sides, or resting your hands in your lap, shows that you are open to what others are saying.
- **Talking with your hands** and emphasising words with gestures can make you appear more credible and assured.
- **Making eye contact** lets others know you are interested in the conversation.
- **Nodding and smiling** are ways of showing empathy and letting others know you understand what they are saying. Laughing is another way of doing this – when appropriate.

### Activity 7 Positive body language
Allow about 5 minutes

Decide whether each of the pictures below shows generally positive or negative body language or elements of both.



Figure 3 Talking

○ Positive
○ Negative
○ Both

### Discussion

Both people in this picture are making eye contact and look engaged in the conversation. They are turned towards each other and their arms are open rather than folded.

However, they are leaning away from each other and neither is smiling. He seems to be pointing in her direction.

This picture seems to show both positive and negative body language.
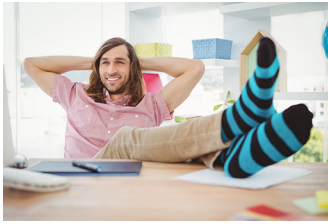
Figure 4 Leaning back

○ Positive
○ Negative
○ Both

Discussion

This man looks very relaxed, happy and confident! But his body language seems a bit *too* informal, as his shoes are off and his feet are up on the desk. His body language – and his feet! – could make someone who is talking to him feel quite uncomfortable.



Figure 5 Discussing

○ Positive
○ Negative
○ Both

Discussion

Both people here look interested in the discussion. They are leaning in slightly and are focused on whatever is on the sheet of paper. The woman is pointing something out with her pen and smiling. The body language is positive.



Figure 6 Listening

○ Positive
○ Negative
○ Both

Discussion

The woman on the right is displaying negative body language: she has her arms folded and her expression suggests she doesn't believe or agree with what is being said. The man to her left has a more neutral expression, although he looks a little concerned. His body language is more open.

Figure 7 Explaining

○ Positive

○ Negative

○ Both

Discussion

The woman talking in this picture is using her hands to emphasise her point and her arms are open. She seems to be making eye contact with one of her listeners; her body language is positive. The woman next to her is making eye contact and looks as if she is really listening.



Figure 8 Shaking hands

○ Positive

○ Negative

○ Both

Discussion

These two women look happy to be making contact! They both smile and look at each other as they shake hands. Both show positive body language.



Figure 9 Head in hands

○ Positive

○ Negative

○ Both

Discussion

The man on the left looks frustrated and upset. He is grimacing, his eyes are closed and he looks as if he wants to tear his hair out. His body language expresses very negative feelings.

The woman on the right, however, looks concerned but calm. Her facial expression is open. She is leaning towards him and reaching out to comfort him. Her body language is positive.

## 2.1 I'd like to say something …

During a group discussion you may also want to use body language to indicate that you wish to speak.

### Activity 8 Showing you want to say something
Allow about 5 minutes

Below is a list of body language actions. Select the ones that are useful signals that you want to say something in a discussion.

- ☐ Thrusting your arm up dramatically
- ☐ Making eye contact with the speaker
- ☐ Raising one hand slightly
- ☐ Folding your arms and sitting back
- ☐ Standing up
- ☐ Lifting your head slightly

Discussion

Throwing your arm up dramatically or standing up during a discussion can make you come across as unprofessional and aggressive. If you have something to say during a discussion, you are more likely to gain respect and get your point heard if you are polite, make eye contact and change your posture to signify you are ready to speak.

## 2.2 It's the way you say it

It is not just your body language that can give the game away about how you feel. The old saying 'It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it' contains a great deal of truth. Your voice carries a lot of hidden messages to the listener. It can reveal:

- your emotions
- how interested you are in what is being said
- even your state of health.

Your voice shows these differences in a variety of ways, particularly:

- how fast or slowly you speak: your **pace**
- how clearly you say the words: your **articulation**
- how loudly or softly you speak: your **volume**.

## Activity 9 Pace, articulation and volume
Allow about 10 minutes

Listen to the audio below, in which a spokesperson introduces a new England rugby coach to journalists. What do you notice about the speaker's pace, articulation and volume?

> Audio content is not available in this format.

> *Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

See if your observations match those below.

- The speaker starts hesitantly. He tests the microphone to check it is working.
- He speaks slowly and clearly in an attempt to gain the attention of the people in the room. They need to know he has an important announcement to make.
- He articulates his words and keeps the pace slow. This might be so that the journalists can write down what he is saying. However, he might be talking too slowly, as they sound increasingly impatient.
- He tries joking and apologises for any inconvenience.
- Towards the end, he slows the pace again because he wishes to build up the tension before revealing who the coach is. Again, the journalists want him to hurry up and urge him to 'get on with it'.

Several things can affect the way you speak.

- If you are angry or upset, you may talk very quickly. So emotions can affect the **pace** of speaking.
- If you are interested in what is being said, you tend to be more precise. This focus helps you to **articulate** more clearly.
- If you are not feeling at your best, you may turn your **volume** down and talk quietly or with little energy.

You can use this **flexibility** in pace, volume and articulation to create different effects when you are speaking.

**In this section** you have looked at:

- the ways people communicate non-verbally
- how to use positive body language to enhance your speaking and listening
- how to change your pace, articulation and volume to convey a message.

# 3 Taking part in a discussion

Figure 10 A group discussion

Discussions with a particular purpose are often more formal and involve some form of negotiation. It can be useful to produce a written plan for this in advance.

If you don't prepare, you can find yourself in situations like the following:

- You are caught 'on the hop' when someone asks you a question you were not expecting.
- Someone comes up with a proposal completely unexpectedly.
- You have not even thought about what the proposal under discussion might mean for you.
- You do not know what the reasons for the proposal are.
- You do not have enough background information.

The better prepared you are, the more likely you are to find solutions and reach decisions in discussions. Many discussions are really some form of negotiation. For example, if you are in a discussion with your manager about making changes to your job, the more you have planned what you want to say, the more likely you are to negotiate and influence the outcome.

## 3.1 Preparation

In a **Functional Skills English Level 2** discussion, you gain marks by showing the assessor you are well prepared. One of the ways you can do this is by making notes before the discussion.

In an **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** discussion, you gain marks for producing written prepared notes before the discussion. This is therefore an essential part of your preparation.

You can approach the preparation stage by asking yourself a series of questions. This enables you to do a considerable amount of thinking in advance and to think of some of the points that others in the discussion might make. This means you are less likely to be surprised by something unexpected.

## Activity 10 Initial questions

Allow about 10 minutes

Imagine you have worked as a sales assistant in a clothing store for six months and you want to do work that has more variety. You want to discuss this with your manager.

Write a list of questions that you could ask yourself in preparation, related to the purpose of the discussion and what you want out of it.

> *Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

Here is a list of questions that you could ask yourself during the preparation stage:

1. What is the discussion about?
2. What is its purpose?
3. What do I want?
4. What might others in the discussion want?
5. What are the differences between what I and others want?
6. Are there any other ways I can achieve what I want?
7. What *don't* I want and why don't I want it?
8. What would be a good outcome?
9. What would be a satisfactory outcome?

Here are the questions again, with an explanation as to why each is useful.

| Question | Why is it useful? |
| --- | --- |
| 1. What is the discussion about?<br><br>2. What is its purpose?<br><br>3. What do I want? | Q1, 2 and 3 help you to clarify your thoughts and be clear about what you want to say. |
| 4. What might others in the discussion want? | Helps you to start thinking about what other people want. As you cannot be sure at this stage, you may have to consider more than one idea. You should then think about your response to these ideas. This helps you to be flexible during the discussion. |
| 5. What are the differences between what I and others want? | Helps you to consider in advance what problems or differences there might be. This helps you to generate ideas on how to solve the problems and make progress. |
| 6. Are there any other ways I can achieve what I want? | Helps you to be creative in your thinking. Have you thought enough about the issue? |
| 7. What *don't* I want and why don't I want it? | Helps you to be certain about your own thinking. |
| 8. What would be a good outcome?<br><br>9. What would be a satisfactory outcome? | Q8 and 9 help you to think about possible proposals and solutions that could come from the discussion. |

Answering these questions in advance is good preparation for any discussion. You can prepare a range of information that helps you to be flexible and creative in keeping the discussion moving.

## Activity 11 Answering those initial questions
Allow about 10 minutes

Again imagining yourself as a sales assistant, and in further preparation for the discussion with your manager about doing more varied work, try answering the nine questions to help you plan your response.

1. What is the discussion about?

*Provide your answer...*

2. What is its purpose?

*Provide your answer...*

3. What do I want?

*Provide your answer...*

4. What might the other person or people in the discussion want?

*Provide your answer...*

5. What are the differences between what I and the other person/people want?

*Provide your answer...*

6. Are there any other ways I can achieve what I want?

*Provide your answer...*

7. What *don't* I want and why don't I want it?

*Provide your answer...*

8. What would be a good outcome?

*Provide your answer...*

9. What would be a satisfactory outcome?

> *Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Below are some suggestions for each of the questions that could help you with your discussion. You may have your own ideas.

1. **What is the discussion about?**

   Discussion with manager about more variety in the job role.

2. **What is its purpose?**

   To negotiate more variety.

3. **What do I want?**

   More variety in the job role.

4. **What might the other person or people in the discussion want?**

   Manager may want me to stay in current role.

5. **What are the differences between what I and the other person/people want?**

   Different overall goals.

6. **Are there any other ways I can achieve what I want?**

   Apply for a different job or promotion.

7. **What *don't* I want and why don't I want it?**

   Don't want to lose my job because I like what I do.

8. **What would be a good outcome?**

   More responsibility and a promotion.

9. **What would be a satisfactory outcome?**

   Unpaid work experience.

# 3.2 Moving the discussion on

In a **Functional Skills English Level 2** or an **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** discussion, you gain marks for asking and answering questions and helping to move the discussion forward.

Once you are involved in a discussion, you need to be able to identify when it is getting stuck and to move it on.

You know a discussion has lost its way when the conversation seems to be going round in circles. There are a number of reasons why this might be happening:

- Proposals may not have been put forward clearly.
- Those present may not be able to agree for some reason.
- People may not be listening to each other properly.
- There may be some external pressure limiting the discussion, such as lack of time.

- The outcome is unclear.
- Not all the facts are known.

There are several things you can do to make sure a discussion moves on again.

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### Activity 12 Moving things on or slowing them down?
Allow about 5 minutes

Listen to the short audio below, which is part of a discussion among four people about making a shared hallway safer and more welcoming for visitors.

When you hear someone say something that either moves the discussion on or stops it moving on, pause the audio and write down:

- who spoke
- whether they moved the discussion on or slowed it down
- how they did so.

You will probably need to listen to the audio more than once.

When you have finished, write down whether you think the discussion was generally moving on well or not, and why you think this.

Audio content is not available in this format.

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

| Who spoke? | Did they move the discussion on or slow it down? | How did they do this? |
|---|---|---|
| Paul | Tried to move it on | By reminding people what the meeting was for. |
| Sharon | Tried to move it on. | By focusing on the future, not the past. |
| Nita and Julie | Slowed things down. | By making negative comments, e.g. Nita: 'It's been a mess for years.' |

Overall, the discussion was not moving on well because there were no clear proposals for how to improve things.

---

Constructive contributions build on what is being said in a discussion and move it forward. You can make constructive contributions by:

- acknowledging other people's contributions, for instance by picking up and developing their point or by encouraging them to make a contribution to the discussion
- asking an open question
- giving information or an opinion

- reminding people of the purpose of the discussion so that everyone can refocus
- summarising what has been said so far.

**Recapping** or **summarising** can be particularly helpful during a long discussion or when there are lots of details. At various times during the discussion you (or someone else) can stop and remind people of what has been said so far and what you still have to do.

Here are some useful phrases:

'Let's just check where we have got to.'

'Can we just recap?'

'Is everyone clear about what has just been said?'

'Does anyone want to add anything to what has been said?'

'Can we confirm that we have all agreed to …?'

'Does everyone know what they have to do next?'

---

In a **Functional Skills English Level 2** discussion, you gain marks for presenting your ideas clearly and persuasively to others.

In an **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** discussion, you gain marks for providing appropriate information and offering opinions and feelings about the topic under discussion.

---

# 3.3 How to have a good discussion

Discussions can go wrong quite easily. Some people talk too much, while others struggle to get their points across. Often there is not enough time given to sharing facts and information so that everyone understands what is under discussion. There are no clear decisions and the discussion seems to go round in circles.

Here are is a summary of common reasons why discussions go wrong:

- The purpose of the discussion is not explained clearly.
- People are not introduced to each other.
- People are not sure why they are there.
- Key people have not been invited.
- Some people do all the talking.
- Some people do not say anything and should do.
- Information is not clear.
- No one asks any questions.
- Too much time is spent on irrelevant items.
- There are too many disruptions, such as phone calls.
- Important items are left out.
- Decisions made are not clear.
- No decisions are made.

## Activity 13 When a discussion goes wrong
Allow about 10 minutes

Watch the video below in which a group of people discuss an issue that has arisen in their village. List the things that make the discussion go badly. You may find it useful to refer to the list above for guidance.

You may also find it useful to pause the video as you go along, so that you can write down your ideas.

Video content is not available in this format.



*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

Here are some of the things that you may have noticed about the discussion:

- Its purpose was not explained. One participant at least had no idea why he was there.
- Participants' comments were not always treated respectfully. ('Duh! … Honestly, what a question!')
- People were not introduced to each other at the beginning, so not everyone knew each other or why the others were there.
- Questions and opinions were dismissed by the chair, for example when she said, 'The Parish Council never have the information … look it up online.'
- One person – the chair – seemed to dominate the discussion: 'Anyway, I've a few ideas as to what we can do.'
- Someone who would have been helpful to the discussion was not invited (Miriam from the Parish Council).
- Time was taken up talking about something quite irrelevant (the maple tree).

- Only at the end did one of the participants have the chance to make a suggestion, as the chair dominated the discussion so much. Even then, he didn't manage to say anything as he was interrupted by her mobile phone.

- The discussion was disrupted by the chair's mobile going off and her answering it.

- It was unclear at the end what decisions had been made and who was going to carry out the suggestions that had been made. It felt unlikely that anything would actually be done following the discussion.

- All the participants other than the chair looked unhappy by the end of the discussion. They may have gone away and immediately organised another meeting because the discussion had been so unhelpful!

In the discussion you have just watched, the chair didn't help the discussion go well. She didn't make sure that everyone knew each other or understood the purpose of the meeting. She didn't ensure that everyone had a chance to speak.

Note that some groups prefer to work less formally, without a chair. They create a set of ground rules about how discussions should be managed. Everyone is asked to agree to these beforehand.

In the next video, you can see how a chair can help a discussion run smoothly.

## Activity 14 When a discussion goes well

Now watch the video below. The discussion is on the same topic. As you watch, make a note of the things that make it go rather better than the discussion in the previous activity. Why does this discussion go well?

Again, you may find it useful to pause the video while you write down your ideas.

Video content is not available in this format.



*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

- People introduced themselves so everyone knew each other and why they were there before the discussion started.
- The purpose of the meeting was made clear right at the beginning.
- Relevant people with useful contributions to make, such as Miriam from the Parish Council, were present. She had already done some research on the issue, which was helpful.
- During the discussion, the chair asked if anyone had any questions; she made sure everyone understood what was going on.
- The chair invited suggestions from all the participants, including from someone who had been quiet. She didn't dominate the discussion, but kept it moving and made sure everyone participated.
- The chair made it clear who had to do what and at the end summarised all the decisions and actions. It felt as if something really was going to happen after the discussion!

**In this section** you have looked at:

- how to prepare for a discussion
- how to move a discussion along
- why a discussion can go wrong
- the things that make a discussion go well.

# 4 Presentations



Figure 11 Giving a presentation

There may be many times in your life when you are asked to present information. You might do so formally, for example for a training event at work, or informally, for example if you give your opinion on something at a local community meeting.

Before you present information, it is important that you are prepared and that you have done some research.

Researching is just as important as presenting. This means allowing time beforehand for thinking, reading and writing.

You should think carefully about the reasons for the presentation – what is its purpose? Thinking about the purpose helps you to focus your search for information. The usual reasons for a presentation are to:

- share your opinion on a topic, such as on climate change
- persuade your audience to do something, such as to donate to a cause
- describe a place or an event, such as giving a commentary on the Second World War
- provide information on a topic, such as a news report.

You can collect information from a wide range of sources, including websites, books and other publications, podcasts, places such as museums and libraries, and people such as teachers and historians.

## 4.1 Structure

When you present information, you need a structure to help both yourself and your listeners. *You* need a structure in order to plan and organise what you are going to say. *Your listeners* need a structure so that they can follow and understand you.

A structure can look like this:

- Introduction
- Main points
- Conclusion.

> ### Activity 15 Summarising a talk
> Allow about 5 minutes
>
> Listen to the short audio below, in which someone reports back on a presentation that they attended, and answer the questions below.

You may want to pause the audio while you write down answers to the questions and/or listen to it more than once.

Audio content is not available in this format.

1. What does the speaker say as her introduction?

*Provide your answer...*

2. What are her main points?

*Provide your answer...*

3. How does she conclude the piece?

*Provide your answer...*

## Discussion

1. The speaker was asked to attend the presentation by the manager. It took place on Wednesday in the staff restaurant. It was about plans to introduce a new computer system.

2. The main points were as follows.

   ○ The reason they need a new system: the current one is out of date and cannot keep up with the workload.

   ○ A demonstration of three new systems will be given next month. Each one is different and will mean changes in the way they work.

   ○ People from each department will be invited to the demonstrations.

3. The computer changes are going to happen. The staff need to decide who they would like to send to the demonstrations.

## 4.2 Describing and persuading



Figure 12 How (not) to persuade

When you prepare a talk, you need to structure your main points to help your audience follow what you are saying. The way you do this will depend on the purpose of your talk. Your structure will be different if you are:

- **describing** an experience or a series of events
- **persuading** people by presenting your case.

## Describing

Imagine that you have been asked to talk to a group of new employees to tell them about your job as a nurse. The main part of your talk could be organised under these five headings:

- Background information about the hospital or surgery
- What goes on in the department
- Details of your work
- What you most enjoy about your work
- What you dislike about your job.

## Persuading

However, if your talk is to persuade, you need to adopt a different structure for your main points, such as this:

- Background
- Other people's arguments
- Problems with other people's arguments
- Your arguments
- Benefits of your arguments.

Here is an example based on persuading people not to smoke.

- General background to smoking
- Why smokers enjoy smoking
- Evidence of damage to health
- Cost of smoking to individuals and the NHS
- How to give up smoking easily.

---

**Activity 16 Deciding on the main points of a talk**

Allow about 10 minutes

Imagine you work for the NHS and are planning to give a talk persuading people to donate blood. Write down some headings for your talk to show how you would structure your argument.

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

You could include any or all of the following:

- General information about giving blood – how to make contact with the Service and where donor sessions take place.
- Some of the ideas people have about giving blood.
- Putting the facts straight – what actually takes place.
- A case study about an individual donor.
- The benefits to both individuals and the NHS.

---

# 4.3 Cues

When you are preparing a talk, you don't need to write out everything that you are going to say. You can use cue cards. These are small pieces of card about the size of a postcard. They are called cue cards because they help you to remember what to say by giving you a 'cue' or prompt.

You need one cue card for each of your main points. The heading of the main point goes at the top of the card and then short notes expanding on it under the heading.

Figure 13 is an example of a cue card from a talk about giving up smoking.

Figure 13 Example of a cue card

---

### Activity 17 Making cue cards
Allow about 10 minutes

Read the information below about a community centre. Plan some cue cards for a talk on the community centre. Decide on your main points and write a heading for each. Then write brief notes under each heading.

> The centre is in Queen Street near the library and supermarket. The centre is open every day, Monday to Friday 7.00 am to 10.00 pm. On Saturdays and Sundays it is open 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. It has a varied programme of events for all ages. There is plenty for everyone to do and enjoy. You can start a new hobby or brush up an old one. For parents we have pre-school and toddler groups. For youngsters there are after school clubs, a drop-in centre and sound studio. Pensioners can enjoy our friendly luncheon club and coach trips out and about. We are now fully staffed with a professional team of people here to help you. There is a centre manager, two team workers, admin assistant, cook and caretaker. We look forward to seeing you soon in the centre.

*Provide your answer...*

---

---

Discussion

There is quite a lot of information for your listeners to take in. But the information is in three sections, so you could organise your cue cards as follows:

Cue card 1: Whereabouts of the centre and opening times

Cue card 2: Programme of events and activities

Cue card 3: Staff at the centre.

---

# 4.4 Markers and signposts



Figure 14 Markers and signposts

If you have a lot of information to get across in a talk, you might need to make your structure even clearer to your listeners. You can do this by using markers or signposts in the main part of your talk.

These are words that show listeners where the conversation or presentation is going.

For example, for the talk in the previous activity, you might start like this:

'I am going to talk about the centre in three sections. Firstly, the whereabouts of the centre and opening times; secondly, the programme of events and activities; and, finally, the staff at the centre.'

This tells the listener what to listen out for in the main body of the talk. 'Firstly', 'secondly' and 'finally' become markers for them to follow.

Other marker words include:

- on the one hand
- on the other hand
- whereas
- nevertheless
- even so
- however
- therefore.

### Activity 18 Identifying markers and signposts

Allow about 10 minutes

Listen carefully to the audio, which is a conversation between a doctor and a patient called Lorna. Pause it when you hear either of the speakers using a marker or signpost. Make a note of the word(s) and how they help you to follow the discussion.

Audio content is not available in this format.

*Provide your answer...*

#### Discussion

Here are the markers and signposts you may have spotted.

| Who said what | How it helped |
|---|---|
| Doctor: 'Right. As you know, ...' | Shows the doctor is ready to start to explain things. |
| Doctor: 'Quite. Well, ...' | Shows the doctor is ready to move on. |
| Doctor: 'I have the results here and what I'd like to do is ...' | Indicates that the doctor is about to explain what he is going to do. |
| Lorna: 'Oh, I see.' | Lorna shows she has heard what the doctor said and is ready for him to continue. |
| Doctor: 'OK.' | The doctor shows he has heard what Lorna has just said and is going to respond to her concerns. |
| Doctor: 'I can see that you're looking anxious, so ...' | The doctor acknowledges that his patient is anxious, so he'll move on to address her fears. |
| Doctor: 'Firstly, ... Secondly, ...' | The doctor shows he is going to make a number of points; here is the first … and now the second ... |
| Doctor: 'If I could move on to explain a little about migraines, ...' | The doctor shows he's moving on to talk about something else. |

# 4.5 Are they listening?



Figure 15 Is your audience listening?

When you are asked to speak in public, you should always remember your listeners. It is easy to concentrate so much on what you are saying that you forget about the people listening.

Have you ever noticed someone not listening to you? Did they do any of the following:

- looking around the room
- gazing out of the window
- doodling on a piece of paper
- fidgeting
- yawning
- not looking directly at you?

If someone behaves like this when you are speaking, it may mean they are no longer listening to you. They may have stopped listening because they did not understand what you were saying or because you haven't kept their interest.

To avoid this, you should check their understanding as you are speaking. You can do this with questions like these:

- 'Does what I have said make sense?'
- 'I would be interested to hear how you see it.'
- 'Does anyone have any questions?'
- 'Does anyone have any comments?'
- 'I would very much like to hear what this will mean for you.'
- 'Would anyone like me to go over any of the points?'
- 'I would be very interested to hear how you feel about this.'

You should adapt the questions to suit the audience and the purpose of your talk.

---

### Activity 19 Checking your listeners' understanding
Allow about 10 minutes

Listen to the audio below, which contains three different speaking situations. For each one, note down a question you might ask the listeners, to check their understanding of the topic.

> Audio content is not available in this format.

> *Provide your answer...*

#### Discussion

Here are some questions you may have asked listeners. Your ideas may be slightly different.

A.   'Can you remind me when the council meeting is?'

B.   'What is your opinion on the changes to the new school year?'

C.   'Will you continue to come to classes at this centre once I have left?'

---

# 4.6 Any questions?

Once you have checked your listeners' understanding of the topic you are delivering, you should show that you value their opinions. You can do this at the end of your presentation by inviting them to ask questions. You can use phrases like, 'I would welcome any questions', or 'Does anyone have any questions?'

Answering questions is an important part of giving a talk. Your listeners' response to the information you have given will be influenced by the way you handle their questions.

When someone asks a question, you should show that you are listening and respond carefully and respectfully. You have probably seen a speaker listen to a question while pacing up and down and not looking at the questioner. Perhaps you have heard a speaker cut off a question halfway through. This kind of response does not encourage listeners to clarify their understanding.

---

### Activity 20 Encouraging your listeners to join in
Allow about 5 minutes

Below is a list of conditions. Some encourage listeners to join in. Others make listeners feel uncomfortable or upset and discourage them from taking part. Decide whether each condition is positive or negative and drag it to the appropriate column.

> Interactive content is not available in this format.

#### Discussion

Recognising what it's like to be a member of an audience can help you to become a better speaker. There are things you can do to make listeners feel comfortable and to encourage them to ask questions. When someone asks a question, you should:

- look at them as they speak
- be aware of their body language, which may give clues about how they feel
- give them time to gather their thoughts
- listen to and acknowledge their own views.

Do not:

- put them down
- give them a lecture or unwanted advice
- deny their opinion.

---

If you answer a question in the middle of your talk, you can use your cue cards to help you to pick up the thread again.

Here are some of the ways that you can deal with questions:

- **Prepare for questions in advance.** Think about questions that you may be asked and information that your listeners might want to know more about. You will probably be able to anticipate most of their questions. Practise answering them on your own or with a friend or colleague before the talk.

- **Repeat the question for the whole audience** if there is a chance that anyone did not hear it.
- **Clarify the question** if it's complicated or in several parts, by checking your understanding. You can do this by restating the question in your own words:

  'Can I check that I have understood your question? You are wanting to know if the new IT system will affect the time we spend with customers?'

- **Be honest!** Don't try to pretend you have an answer when you haven't. It is far better to admit you don't know and offer to find out the answer later.

**In this section** you have looked at:

- how to structure a presentation or talk
- how to use signposts and markers
- how to use cue cards
- how to check listeners' understanding
- how to deal with questions from the audience.

# 5 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz.

Session 1 quiz

Open the quiz in a new window or tab, and then return here once you've finished it.

# 6 Summary of Session 1

Well done for completing the first session of the course! Here are the key learning points from this session.

- Being able to communicate effectively is an extremely **important life skill**.
- To communicate effectively, you need to know whether the situation is **formal or informal** so that you know what kind of language to use.
- People convey a great deal through body language, so **being aware of your own body language** will help you to communicate effectively.
- You can change the **pace, articulation and volume of your voice** to convey different feelings and messages.
- The more **prepared you are for a discussion**, the more likely you are to make positive contributions, respond well to other participants' points, find solutions and reach decisions.
- When a discussion gets stuck, you can **move it on by making constructive contributions**, such as reminding people of the purpose of the discussion or summarising what has been said so far.
- When you prepare a talk or presentation, giving it a **clear structure** helps you to organise what you want to say and will help your listeners to follow you.
- When you give a talk, **cue cards can help you to remember your main points** and what you want to say about each of them, while verbal markers and signposts help your listeners to keep track of where your talk is going.
- While you are giving your talk, **check your audience is listening** and that they understand what you say, and at the end, invite them to ask questions.

You can now go to Session 2.
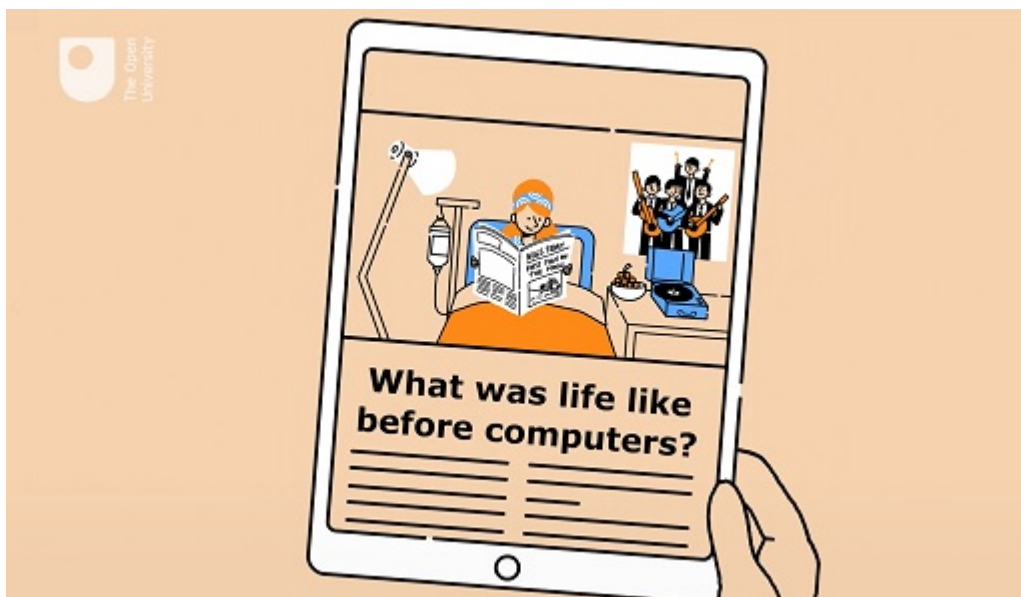
# Session 2: Reading

## Introduction

Reading is important in all areas of life. We now have to take in a lot more information compared to 50 years ago and so reading is becoming more, not less, important. In education, reading well is a skill needed for all subjects. At work, it is often necessary to read a range of material for a range of reasons.

Everyone needs to be able to read in order to cope with everyday life, but for Functional Skills English Level 2 and Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2, you must also be able to read *well*. This means being able to:

- read quickly
- say why what you are reading has been written, i.e. recognise its purpose
- recognise other people's opinions in what you read
- take the information you need from what you read
- make judgements about what you read.

As you work through this session, remember that reading well will come with practice. It may feel like a slow process when you are first trying out your new reading skills, but you will definitely improve if you practise.

Video content is not available in this format.

Throughout this session, you will be reading about 'texts'. In this course, a 'text' does not refer to a message you send on your phone but to any piece of writing, long or short. A

text can be a newspaper article, a letter, a leaflet, a report, a poster, an email, an advert, a text message or anything else that can be read.

> If you are doing this course to prepare for either the **Functional Skills English Level 2** qualification or the **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** qualification, remember that reading skills are an important part of both programmes.
>
> • For the **Functional Skills English Level 2** qualification, the reading assessment asks you to read and answer questions on two different but related texts. These could include job adverts, newspaper articles, formal letters and reports. You get marks for your ability to identify and interpret information, as well as how well you can read for meaning and your ability to detect bias.
> • For the **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** qualification, your reading skills are assessed in both the controlled task and the confirmatory test.
>> For the controlled task, you are asked to read, understand and summarise information independently from at least two different documents about the same subject. You need to use the information you obtain from the source documents to prepare for and take part in a ten-minute discussion and to plan a piece of writing.
>>
>> For the confirmatory test, you are given two texts to read and you answer ten questions based on each piece of text. The questions assess various reading skills and test your knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar at this level.

# 1 Why and how you read



Figure 1 Reading fast and slow

How you get information from written material depends on what you are doing. If you are reading at work, for example, you will probably be pushed for time. Essays in education have to be written to a deadline and there will usually be a limited amount of time to do the background reading. Newspapers and novels, however, can be read at your own speed.

# 1.1 Why you read



Figure 2 Everyday reading, everywhere

You start this session by thinking about why you read.

## Activity 1 What do you read and why?
Allow about 5 minutes

Write down five things you have read in the past couple of weeks and say why you read them. You can include all kinds of things, not just books and newspapers. Include both short and long pieces of writing if you can.

| What you read | Why you read it |
| --- | --- |
| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |
| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |

### Discussion

Here are some example responses.

| What I read | Why I read it |
| --- | --- |
| Novel | For pleasure |
| Newspaper | For information – to catch up on the news |
| Newspaper | For pleasure – to do the crossword |
| Leaflet on smoking | Information – the practice nurse gave it to me and asked me to read it |
| Rail timetable | Information – to plan my journey |

| | |
|---|---|
| Note from partner | Information – wanted me to take the cat to the vet |
| Internet article on healthy eating | Information – am trying to lose weight |
| Report on adult reading | Information – am writing an essay on adult reading |
| Cereal packet | Information – am trying to eat a healthy diet and wanted to know what was in the cereal |

It can be quite daunting when you think about reading, but reading doesn't necessarily mean only books. Every day, and without much thought, you read lots of different texts for different reasons.

# 1.2 Highlighting

Highlighting means picking out the most important information in a text and making it stand out from what is not so important. Highlighting information while you read is useful because it helps you to identify the key points of a text (also known as 'the main points'). You can then return to it at a later date (such as when revising for an exam) and you won't need to read the whole thing again. Although not possible with all texts, this technique can help with things like revision notes or information you bring into a job interview.

You only need to highlight key words or phrases. You can do this by underlining or using a highlighter pen. You might like to use two or more highlighting colours to help you remember different kinds of information.

Activity 2 Practice with highlighting
Allow about 10 minutes

In the newspaper report below, highlight what you think are the three main points, not including the headline.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Discussion
The headline suggests that the article is mainly about benefit fraud. So one possible choice for the three main points would be:

- 'fined for fraudulently obtaining benefits'
- 'sentenced to 200 hours Community Service'
- 'failing to disclose income'.

Highlighting is a skill that improves quickly with practice. When highlighting key points, it can also be useful to make notes on them to help you to remember the points and use the information later, for example if you need to do a piece of writing using that information.

# 1.3 Extracting information

You will now explore different techniques for extracting information and reading with a time limit. This skill is particularly important for situations such as exams when time is short. Staying calm and being able to read under pressure can be the difference between a pass or a fail!

---

### Activity 3 Reading with a time limit (1)
Allow about 5 minutes

This activity involves reading something in a limited time. Click anywhere on the image below and read as much of the advert as you can in 15 seconds. After this time, the advert will disappear. Then have a go at answering the questions.

> Interactive content is not available in this format.

1. What is the job?

> *Provide your answer...*

2. What are the duties of the post?

> *Provide your answer...*

3. Who should applicants contact?

> *Provide your answer...*

4. When is the closing date?

> *Provide your answer...*

5. What is the rate of pay per hour?

> *Provide your answer...*

---

### Discussion
Check your answers against these:

1. Lunchtime supervisor team leader.
2. To coordinate and supervise the school's team of lunchtime supervisors.
3. Michael White.
4. Two weeks from the date of the advert.

---

5.   £8.21.

It can be quite difficult to take in a lot of text in a short time. The layout can help you to identify what the text is about. If the text is important, spending more time reading will help you to digest the information.

## Activity 4 Reading with a time limit (2)
Allow about 5 minutes

Complete the same activity again with a different text.

1.   Click anywhere on the text below and read as much as you can in 15 seconds. After this time, the text will disappear. Then have a go at answering the questions.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

a. Name one of the places in North Yorkshire with a hostel.

*Provide your answer...*

b. From where are excursions available?

*Provide your answer...*

c. Which area is recommended if you like peace and quiet?

*Provide your answer...*

d. Is payment refundable?

*Provide your answer...*

e. When do you pay the full costs of the holiday?

*Provide your answer...*

2.   Did you find it easier to extract information from one of the texts? If so, which one? Why do you think this was so?

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Check your answers against these:

1.

   a.

      Scarborough

   b.

      Scarborough and the two other coastal centres in the north

   c.

      Devon

   d.

      No

   e.

      One month in advance

2. You may have found the second text more difficult to read than the first. There was too much writing and there were not enough clues as to where you had to stop or which were the important points in the passage.

   The first text had clues as to the key points that the author wanted to get over:

   - bold type

   - headings in the middle

   - short paragraphs.

   This made it easier to extract the information.

**In this section** you have:

- thought about the different types of text you read
- practised identifying the main points from a text.

# 2 Skimming, scanning and detailed reading



Figure 3 Skim, scan or read?

It can be difficult to read and digest lots of important information in a short time, but skimming and scanning can help.

**Skimming** involves reading the headings and subheadings of a text to get the main idea or 'gist' of the text. This can be useful when trying to decide whether to read it.

**Scanning** involves looking through the text to find keywords and phrases that are important or interesting.

Imagine you are looking at the magazine shelf in a supermarket. You may **skim** the titles of the magazines to find one you like and then **scan** the articles to find specific words or pieces of information.

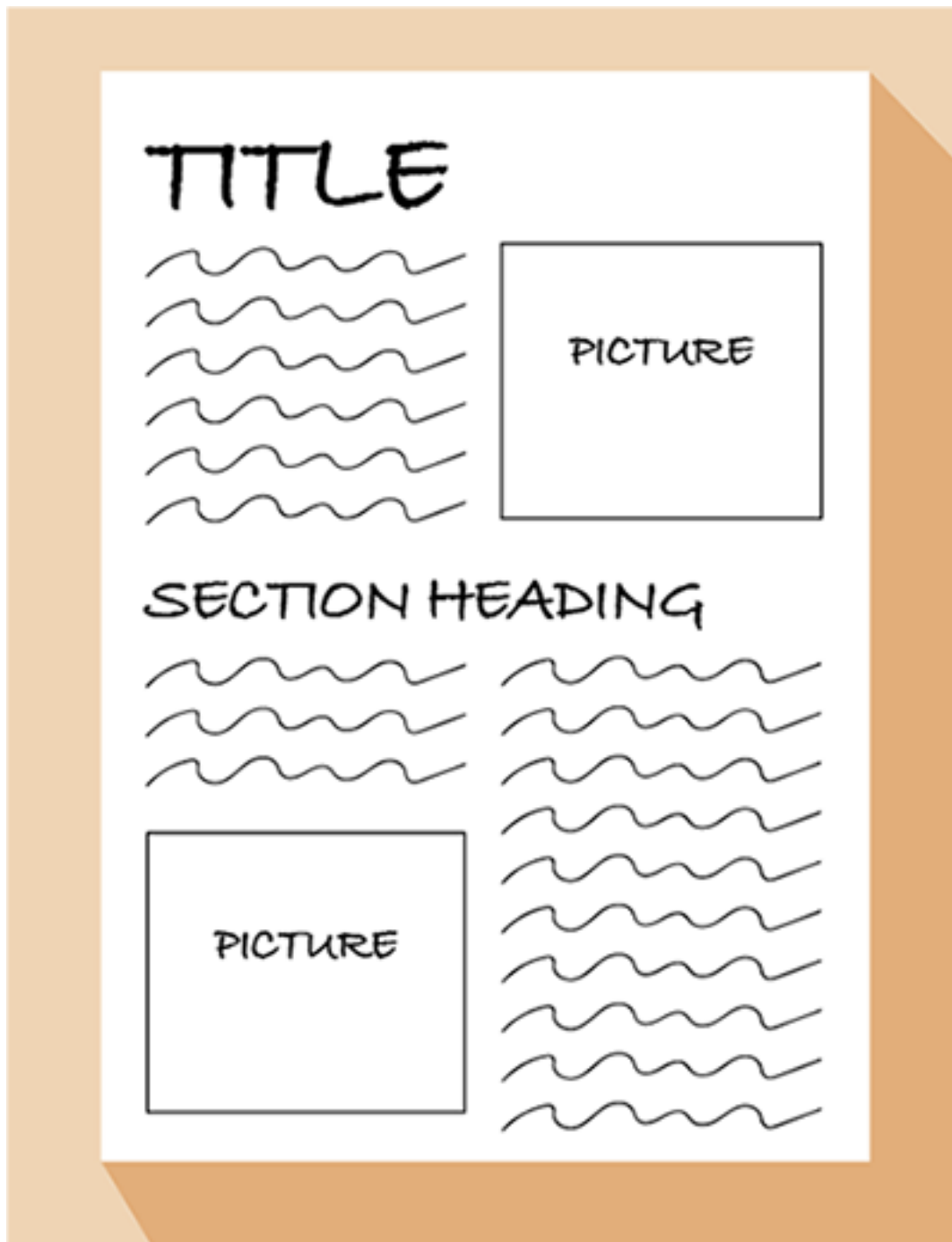## 2.1 Skimming



Figure 4 What to look for when skimming

Skimming can help you to decide if something is going to be worth reading. Skimming involves reading the title, headings and subheadings, and looking at the pictures, to decide if the text is worth reading. This saves time if you want or need to read a lot of texts.

Skimming helps you to decide:

- Should I open it?
- Should I read it?

- How much time should I spend reading it?

For example, for a newspaper article you could look at the headline, which summarises what the article is about, and at the first and last paragraphs, which might sum up the whole article. Photographs with captions also give clues.

Skimming is not just for information texts. You can also skim to decide if a novel is worth buying from a bookshop or borrowing from a library.

---

### Activity 5 Why choose that one?
Allow about 5 minutes

Think of the last time you bought or borrowed a book to read for pleasure. Why did you choose that one?

> *Provide your answer...*

Have you bought any magazines or newspapers in the last few months or read any online? What do you think made you choose the ones you did?

> *Provide your answer...*

#### Discussion
Here are the reasons why I chose the books, magazines and newspapers I've read over the past couple of months. You may have had other reasons.

**Books**

- The description of the book on the back cover.
- I had already read and liked something by the same writer.
- The illustrations on the front cover.
- It was recommended by a friend.
- I read a good review of the book.
- I read the first paragraph of the first chapter and liked what I read.
- I had seen the film of the book.

**Magazines and newspapers**

- One magazine covers my special interest, mountain biking.
- The newspaper I bought has a motoring section and I wanted to find out prices for second-hand cars.
- I read a magazine in the hairdressers.
- I like doing the newspaper crossword.

What you have written will depend on your own tastes and habits. I buy both newspapers and magazines without really looking at what is inside. I may scan the contents page of a magazine, but I rarely look at a newspaper before buying it. What you decide to read for pleasure often depends on your own interests and needs, but skimming can help!
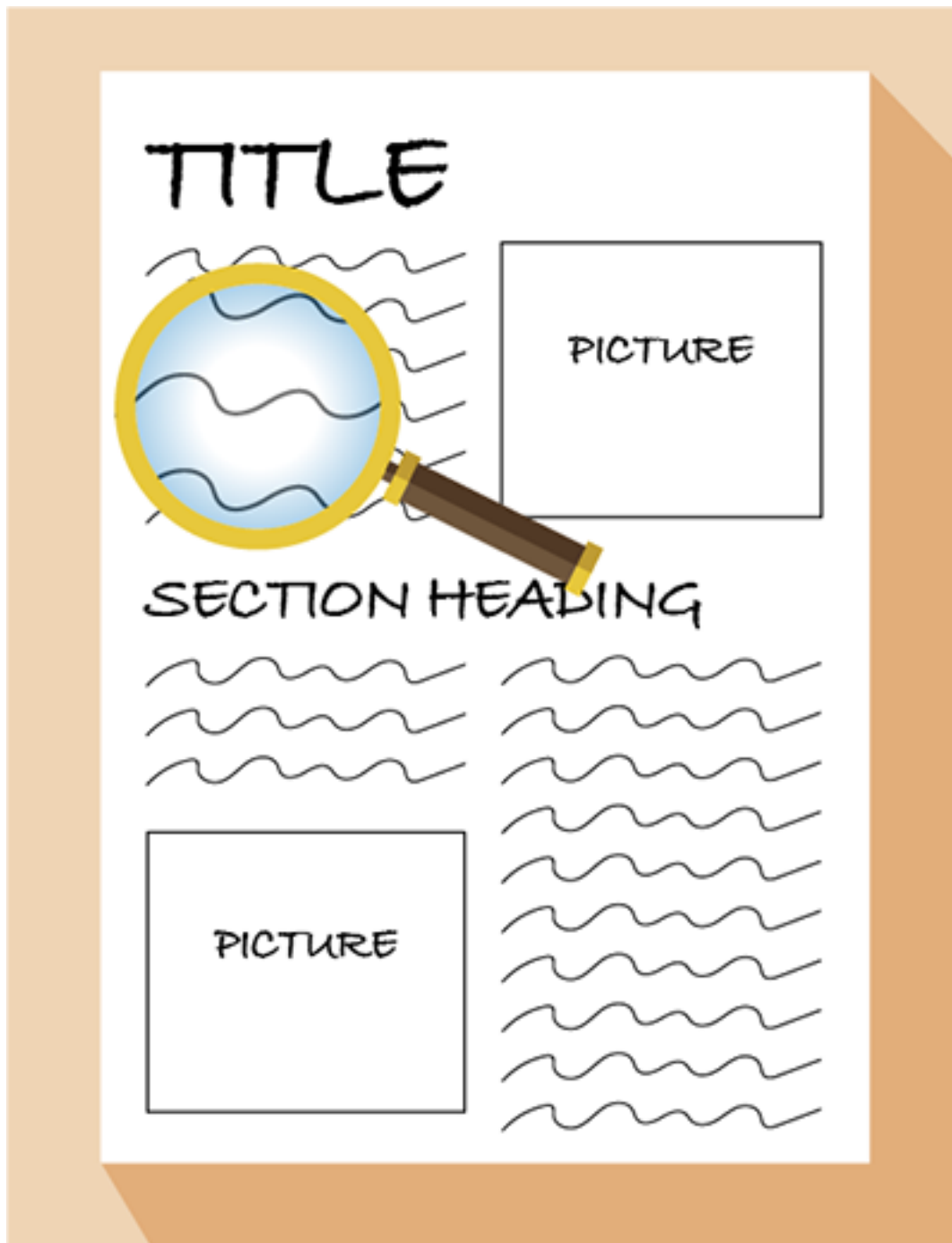
## 2.2 Scanning



Figure 5 Scanning

Scanning means reading a text quickly to get the main points. Scanning helps you to:

- find a specific piece of information
- preview material before you read it in detail
- check if you understand something after you have read it carefully.

The next two activities will help you to practise your scanning skills.

Activity 6 Practice with scanning (1)
Allow about 10 minutes

This activity involves reading something in a limited time.

1. Click anywhere on the image below and read as much as you can in 15 seconds. After this time, the advert will disappear. Then have a go at answering the questions.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

a. How much do Functional Skills courses cost?

Provide your answer...

b. Who should you contact?

Provide your answer...

c. Note down three things that 'Help with English and Maths' can improve.

Provide your answer...

d. What is Aisha's phone number?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

a. They are free.
b. Aisha.
c. Any of:
   Confidence with money
   Booking holidays
   Reading to children
   Learning to drive
   Using reference books
   Completing forms
   Social skills
   Using the internet.
d. 01234 567890.

2. How easy did you find this activity? What things about the advert made it hard or easy to read?

Provide your answer...

## Discussion

If you found this activity easy, it may be because the leaflet is laid out well. There are clear headings, bold titles and plenty of space between the lines. You were probably able to pick out the main points.

## Activity 7 Practice with scanning (2)

Try the same activity again, now that you know the questions. Click anywhere on the image below and read as much as you can in 15 seconds. After this time, the advert will disappear. Then have a go at answering the questions.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

a. How much do Functional Skills courses cost?

*Provide your answer...*

b. Who should you contact?

*Provide your answer...*

c. Write three things that 'Help with English and Maths' can improve.

*Provide your answer...*

d. What is Aisha's phone number?

*Provide your answer...*

## Discussion

The first time you read the advert, you will only have managed to pick out the main ideas. You may have done better the second time, because you knew what the questions were going to be; you were reading for a purpose. This should have helped you to concentrate and come up with your answers more quickly.

## Activity 8 Practice with scanning (3)
### Allow about 15 minutes

The text below is taken from careers guidance for parents returning to work. As with the previous two activities, you will read this in a limited time.

Click anywhere on the text and read as much as you can in five minutes. After this time, the text will disappear. Then have a go at answering the questions.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

a. Where are courses available?

*Provide your answer...*

b. How is confidential advice available?

*Provide your answer...*

c. What kind of work might people want?

*Provide your answer...*

d. At whom is the guidance aimed?

*Provide your answer...*

e. How do you know whom the guidance is aimed at?

*Provide your answer...*

2. Do you think the guidance is well written? Can you think of ways of improving it?

*Provide your answer...*

3. Now that you know the questions you need to answer, re-read the guidance again and time yourself as you do so – see how long it takes to read it the second time. Then scroll down the page so the text is hidden and try to answer the same questions. Use a pen and paper if you don't want to write over your previous answers.

Discussion

Check your answers against these. Yours may have been slightly different.

1.

    a.

        local further education colleges

    b.

        through a personal interview

    c.

        voluntary or paid, part time or in a job share

    d.

> The guidance is aimed at parents who gave up work to have children and are thinking of returning to education or work, and are not confident about doing so.
>
> e.
>
> Because it says it in the first paragraph. Also, the heading 'DOES YOUR CONFIDENCE NEED A BOOST?' gives a clue.
>
> 2. You may have thought that the guidance is easy to read because it has clear, simple words and is divided into sections with headings.
>
> 3. It could have been improved because:
>
>    o
>
>    there is too much writing
>
>    o
>
>    the headings would have been easier to read if they had been in bold or italics rather than capitals
>
>    o
>
>    there is no title, so you have to read the first paragraph to find out what it is about.
>
> It should have been easier to read the second time because you knew what you were looking for. You probably read it more quickly and answered more questions correctly. This is because you were **reading for a purpose**.

After doing these activities on skimming and scanning, you should have a good understanding of how to pick a relevant text and identify key points or pieces of information in it. This skill is a useful one in everyday life and in any exam that involves answering questions on a text.

## 2.3 Detailed reading



Figure 6 Detailed reading

Detailed reading means reading something carefully to get accurate information. You would do this if you had to read long or complicated material in a book or a report.

You have seen how skimming and scanning can help you to decide:

- how useful a text is going to be
- how much time you need to spend on it.

To understand a text fully, however, you have to read it a lot more carefully. This does not mean that you have to read every word or that you have to read slowly. The secret is to read efficiently.

People who are not used to reading for a purpose often read phrases or passages several times because they have not fully understood them the first time. But re-reading a passage several times will not make you a good reader.

It is more important that you set up a rhythm of reading that lets you read smoothly. If you come across a difficult phrase or passage, carry on, but make a note that you may have to come back to it later.

The same applies to difficult or unfamiliar words – always stopping to use a dictionary will not make you an efficient reader. In some cases, you may be able to predict the meaning of a word from the rest of the sentence. When you come across an unfamiliar word, try reading the rest of the sentence to see if it provides any clues as to what the word might mean. If this doesn't work, keep a note, which you can come back to later, of where the word was and go back to it after you have finished reading the whole document.

---

### Activity 9 Practice with reading
Allow about 10 minutes

1.  Read the passage below. As you are reading, **don't stop** if you come across a word or phrase that you don't understand, but make a note of it so that you can go back after you have finished the whole thing.

2.  When you have finished, look in a dictionary and write down the meanings of the words or phrases that you didn't understand.

3.  Then read the passage again and see if it makes sense to you. Use the box below to summarise the main points.

    There is no official requirement as to the number of first aiders to workers so employers tend to have no fixed policy about the number of first aiders they need in their company.

    The reluctance of employers to have a fixed policy is financial. Companies are reluctant to take on something that could cost them a great deal of money in the long run. The number of persons who need to be trained as first aiders should depend on the size of the company and what it produces. A small office will only need one first aider, while a large factory will need more.

    Employees also need to realise that they have a duty to keep the workplace safe. They must all work together to keep the work environment safe and be constantly reminding their colleagues that they need to know about health and safety.

    > *Provide your answer...*

---

Discussion
You will have gained some idea of the meaning of the passage from the first reading, but at first glance there were not many clues as to what it was about. This was

because it didn't have any titles, subheadings or words or phrases in bold to give you guidance and show you which parts of the passage were most important.

Now check your summary points against these. Yours will probably be slightly different.

- Employers tend to have no fixed policy on the number of first aiders they need.
- Employers are reluctant to have a fixed policy due to cost implications.
- Employees also have a duty to keep the workplace safe.

## Activity 10 Recap on scanning, skimming and detailed reading
Allow about 5 minutes

Write down what you understand by scanning, skimming and detailed reading and give one or two ideas of when you would use each.

**Skimming**

*Provide your answer...*

**Scanning**

*Provide your answer...*

**Detailed reading**

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion
Here's a summary of what each term means and when you might use it.

| Way of reading | What it means | When you would use it |
|---|---|---|
| Skimming | Looking at the title, section headings and subheadings and pictures to get an idea of what the text is about. | When looking at a book and deciding if it is going to be worth reading. |
| Scanning | Looking through a text very quickly to find specific information or key words that you are looking for. | To find a particular piece of information; to preview material before reading it in detail; or to check that you understand something after reading it. |
| Detailed reading | Reading something carefully to get accurate information. | When reading long or complicated material such as books or reports. |

## Activity 11 Skimming, scanning or detailed reading?

Allow about 5 minutes

For each example below, decide whether the method of reading you would be most likely to use would be skimming, scanning or detailed reading. Then drag it to the appropriate column.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

### Discussion

You will have noticed that right and wrong answers were not given for this activity. This is because for all of these examples, skimming, scanning or detailed reading may all be appropriate, depending on the context. However, here are the methods of reading that I would most likely use for each:

| Skimming | Scanning | Detailed reading |
|---|---|---|
| Deciding whether to buy a book | Checking a bus timetable | Summarising a report at work |
| Reading a newspaper | Reading a gas bill | Reading a hire purchase agreement |
| | Finding a holiday in a travel brochure | Reading a novel |
| | Finding an underground station on a map | |

**In this section** you looked at:

- skimming, scanning and detailed reading
- reading techniques to help reading for meaning.

# 3 Fact, opinion and bias



Figure 7 Fact, opinion and bias

The next step to being a good reader is to be able to recognise arguments in texts. In this section you look at how to do this, so that you can judge whether a text is biased or prejudiced, and whether it is based on fact or on opinion. You also look at how punctuation and grammar can affect the meaning of texts.

## 3.1 Prejudice and bias

It is important to be able to recognise prejudice and bias in what you read. So what do these words mean?

---

### Activity 12 Defining prejudice and bias
Allow about 5 minutes

Look up the words 'prejudice' and 'bias' in a dictionary or search engine. Write the definitions in the box below.

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion
Here are some example definitions:

- **Prejudice** – an opinion against a group or an individual based on insufficient facts and usually unfavourable and/or intolerant.
- **Bias** – very similar to but not as extreme as prejudice. Someone who is biased usually refuses to accept that there are other views than their own.

---

Here are two examples of prejudice and bias.

The report blames most crime in the town on teenagers, without any evidence, as the writer is prejudiced against young people.

My aunt is biased towards dogs that are black, like her own, and she is always more friendly to them than to other dogs.

---

### Activity 13 Examples of prejudice and bias
Allow about 10 minutes

Write a sentence for each word showing how it could be used. For example:

'He is definitely prejudiced against women – he never promotes them at work.'

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion
Here are two more examples.

- **Prejudice**: He was prejudiced against foreign people and wanted to stop all immigration into this country.
- **Bias**: All the football reports in the local newspaper are biased against visiting teams because the editor is a Manchester City supporter.

---

The next activity will help you to recognise bias and prejudice.

---

### Activity 14 Recognising bias and prejudice
Allow about 10 minutes

Read the following letters and answer the questions. Both texts have been adapted from letters to a national newspaper.

#### Letter 1

Dear Sir/Madam

The decision to build a new terminal at Stansted Airport is a clear indication that this Government has finally abandoned any pretence of listening to local opinion and are determined to discredit and dismantle any of the remaining rights that local people have to a say in the future of their environment.

No sensible argument has been put forward for the extension. The real losers in this argument are local people. It seems that if you choose to live by an airport you then give up the right to have a say in local matters.

The private sector is the only opinion the Government seems to want to listen to. The wishes of local people are now totally ignored in the planning process.

We all want to see a decent, well-planned travel system but this is not the way to go about it. Everybody should be involved, not just big business.

---

Yours faithfully

## Letter 2

Dear Sir/Madam

The announcement that the Stansted extension will go ahead will mean a noise pollution and traffic nightmare for tens of thousands of people living near and around the airport. It must be stopped before it is too late.

The new terminal will bring a horrendous increase in traffic. It is estimated that there will be an increase of over 30 million passengers every year. This is totally unacceptable and we must fight to the death to oppose it. It is simply dreadful that the people of North Essex be made to suffer for the greed of the rest of the country.

It is disgraceful and totally unnecessary that noise and air pollution should be allowed to grow to what will be a deadly level.

Yours faithfully

1. Is the writer of Letter 1 for or against the extension to the airport? How do you know?

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion
The writer of Letter 1 is against the extension, as shown when they say, 'No sensible argument has been put forward for the extension.' But the letter is really about the way in which the decision was taken, without consulting local people.

2. What would you say are the main arguments the writer uses in Letter 1 to support their point of view?

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion
The writer says that the planning process has been ignored and that local people should have been involved in the decision.

3. Is the writer of Letter 2 for or against the extension to the airport? How do you know?

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion
The writer of Letter 2 is obviously against the extension. The letter refers to the increase in noise and air pollution for people living near the airport.

4. What type of words does each writer use to try to get their point of view across?

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

The words used in Letter 1 are not as strong as in Letter 2. The language used in Letter 2 is sensationalist and emotional, and is aimed at convincing people that the extension is a bad thing.

5. Which letter do you think is the most biased? Explain your reasons.

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Letter 2 is more biased because the writer puts forward only one view: that the extension is a bad thing.

If you can quickly recognise a writer's point of view or see language that is unfair, you can make better decisions about the value of the text. As an active reader you need to keep the writer's position in mind and always be ready to think of other arguments that might give balance.

# 3.2 Fact and opinion

It is very important, as an active reader, to recognise the difference between fact and opinion in texts. Facts are true and cannot be argued with, because they can be proven and are supported by evidence, while opinions vary according to the attitudes of the writer. Remember, however, that facts can be twisted to fit the opinions of the writer.

Activity 15 What is fact and what is opinion?

Allow about 5 minutes

Without using a dictionary or a search engine, write down what you think is meant by 'fact' and 'opinion'.

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Here's what I wrote. Yours might not be exactly the same but should be similar.

- **Fact**: Something that is true and can be proved.
- **Opinion**: A person's view. It may or may not be backed up by facts.

When people write articles, they often select facts that support their opinion.

When you read this kind of text, you need to be able to tell the difference between facts that can be backed up by evidence and 'facts' that have been made up by the writer. You can do this by:

- checking that any reports that are quoted actually exist and refer to the fact in question
- finding other sources that give opposing points of view
- thinking of the reason the text has been written and its audience (for example, an article in a popular newspaper may have been written to sell the newspaper rather than to give a true or fair account of an incident)
- looking for sensationalist words, such as 'horror' or 'disgraceful', which might influence readers' opinions.

An objective piece of writing is based on facts and can be backed up with evidence. Subjective writing expresses opinions and feelings rather than facts.

## Activity 16 Recognising fact and opinion (1)
Allow about 10 minutes

Read the following two extracts from newspaper reports of the same accident and answer the questions that follow.

**Article 1**



# 5 SURVIVE HORROR CAR PLUNGE OFF DEACON HEAD

Five teenagers had a miraculous escape when their car plunged 150 feet off a cliff.

Horrified witnesses were convinced that the three boys and two girls were dead after their car shot backwards over Deacon Head. Incredibly the pals all survived the death crash but two of the teenagers are critically ill in hospital.

The driver aged 17 had just passed his test. There is no suspicion that any of the teenagers had been taking drugs before the crash although the driver was too ill to take a breathalyser test.

Figure 8 Article 1

**Article 2**

**FIVE IN CAR SURVIVE FALL OFF DEACON HEAD CLIFF**

Five teenagers fell more than 150 feet in their car when they crashed off a cliff near Deacon Head yesterday. Their Ford Fiesta landed on its bonnet on boulders at the bottom of the cliff. The three boys and two girls were taken by helicopter to Northbeck General Hospital and two girls and one boy were in a critical condition last night. The police said the teenagers had had a remarkable escape and they did not face prosecution.

Figure 9 Article 2

1. Which article is the most objective?

○ Article 1

○ Article 2

2. Which contains more facts?

○ Article 1

○ Article 2

3. Which article contains more opinions?

○ Article 1

○ Article 2

Discussion

Article 1 is more sensationalist than Article 2 and probably appeared in a popular newspaper. The clues that Article 1 is based on opinion rather than on facts alone include the following:

- It uses emotional language such as 'horror', 'miraculous' and 'incredibly'.

- It mentions drugs and alcohol although there was no direct evidence of either – if the driver had not been a teenager, would they have mentioned drugs or alcohol at all?

- It contains bias and prejudice, for example through the repeated use of the word teenager and the mention of drugs, which may not have been included if the people involved had been older.

It is interesting how the use of words changed what was a terrible accident into an opinion on teenage drivers, drugs and alcohol.

Article 2 is fairer and simply gives the facts of the crash. It does not try to place the blame on anyone or sensationalise the event.

Now try the next activity, which gives you more practice in recognising the difference between facts and opinions.

## Activity 17 Recognising fact and opinion (2)
Allow about 10 minutes

The following extract is adapted from an article in a national newspaper. Highlight facts in yellow and opinions in green.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

### Discussion

These are facts, as you may have seen them on first reading:

- lighting up just one cigarette knocks 11 minutes off a life span
- over a lifetime the average male smoker consumes 311,003 cigarettes
- smoking a packet of 200 cigarettes knocks a day and a half off your life.

The only opinion is offered by Clive Bates, when he described smoking as 'a disgusting habit'.

Reading all the statistics about smoking affecting length of life, I took the article to be a fair description of the impact of smoking on health. On second reading, however, it seems that the figures themselves cannot be trusted. According to the doctor, they are 'crude' – which could mean inaccurate.

This is a good example of where you can be misled by what appears to be the truth. On first reading it may appear that you are reading facts in the form of statistics, but these statistics may have been picked to reflect someone's opinion.

## Activity 18 Same story, different reports
Allow about 10 minutes

Read the two texts below.

- What similarities and differences can you spot?
- Which contains the most bias?

### Text A

As part of a healthy, balanced diet, you should consume fewer foods and drinks that are high in sugars. Sugary foods and drinks can cause tooth decay, especially if you have them between meals.

Many foods that contain added sugars also contain lots of calories but often have few other nutrients. Eating these foods frequently can contribute to becoming overweight.

Being overweight can increase your risk of health conditions such as:

- heart disease
- type 2 diabetes
- stroke.

NHS (2018) *How much sugar is good for me?* [Online]. Available at www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/food-and-diet/how-much-sugar-is-good-for-me/ (Accessed 20 February 2019).

## Text B

As I bite into a fresh apple, I stop to think about what I am eating. I am consuming a fruit, which means I am absorbing fructose. And what is fructose? A SUGAR (cue scary music)!

In a world where the consumption of sugar is being slammed (for good reason), **it concerns me that all sugar is being treated equally, and it shouldn't be.**

While some sugary foods should be avoided like the plague, others, if consumed appropriately, can be your friend.

Colquhoun, J. (2014) *How much sugar is really OK?* [Online]. Available at www.foodmatters.com/article/how-much-sugar-is-really-ok (Accessed 20 February 2019).

---

### Discussion

The texts are similar in that they are on the same topic and they can both be found online. However, they express different opinions on the subject and do so using different styles of writing.

- Text A uses more factual language, whereas Text B uses sensationalist language with words such as slammed, concerns and plague.
- Text A uses facts to support the argument, whereas Text B uses opinion.
- Text A uses formal language and has a professional tone, whereas Text B is much more informal and speaks directly to the reader.

Text B contains the most bias as it argues and highlights the writer's opinion using the techniques identified above. Text A contains less bias and uses facts to support the writer's case.

Remember, journalists write for the people who buy their newspaper, so stories are slanted towards keeping them interested.

**In this section** you have looked at:

- identifying fact, opinion, bias and prejudice
- how a writer's point of view can affect the way they write a text
- telling the difference between what is true and what is opinion.

Being able to do these things makes you a critical reader – a crucial step in becoming a good reader.

# 4 Audience and purpose



Figure 10 Purposes of different texts

It is important to be able to recognise that people write things for different reasons. For example, someone writing for a newspaper might be trying to entertain or inform people and encourage them to buy that newspaper. Someone writing a do-it-yourself manual will want to write as clearly and simply as possible so that people can easily follow the instructions.

If you can recognise what a piece of writing is trying to say and why, you can make quick decisions on how you are going to approach it. If a do-it-yourself manual, for example, has too much writing and no pictures, it is not likely to be of much use, so you can decide quickly to look for a better version.

## 4.1 What is it for?

Many of us see text in a newspaper, either printed or online, every day. The text in a newspaper is made up of sections, stories, headlines and pictures.

Newspapers may include:

- articles of different length
- advertisements
- regular features such as the weather, television programmes and horoscopes
- one-off articles.

Another kind of text is a novel, which is longer and usually has chapters.

Texts can also be very short. A text message and an email can give information and/or send greetings.

To decide which kind of text you are dealing with, you have to look for clues. Here are some ideas.

- Who is the text aimed at (who is the audience)? For example, is the writing aimed at people who might have similar ideas to the author? Or is the author (or writer) trying to get people to change their way of thinking?
- How is the text written? Is it long? Is it short? Does it have paragraphs? Does it have pictures?
- Is the text laid out in a formal way with headings, bullet points, etc. or is it written just to be attractive to the reader?
- What type of language is used? Is it formal or informal? Are long or complicated words used?
- What is the writer trying to do? Is it to inform, instruct, persuade or amuse?

---

### Activity 19 What's the purpose?
Allow about 10 minutes

Think of six different kinds of text. This might include things like a recipe, a bus timetable, a holiday website or an estate agent's advert. For each, write down:

- its audience: who the text is aimed at
- its purpose: why it has been written
- its language and layout: the key features of how the text is written and set out.

For example, for a birthday card you might write:

- **Audience**: Person whose birthday it is.
- **Purpose**: To show you have remembered their birthday and wish them well.
- **Language and layout**: Informal, short message.

Some texts have more than one purpose and more than one audience.

Text 1:

> *Provide your answer...*

Text 2:

> *Provide your answer...*

Text 3:

> *Provide your answer...*

Text 4:

> *Provide your answer...*

---

Text 5:

> *Provide your answer...*

Text 6:

> *Provide your answer...*

Discussion
Take a look at some of these ideas.

| Type of text | Audience | Purpose | Language and layout |
|---|---|---|---|
| Birthday card | Person whose birthday it is | To show you have remembered their birthday and wish them well | Short message, informal |
| News article on house prices and mortgages | General public | To give information about different kinds of mortgage scheme | Headline, picture, short paragraphs |
| Text message | Receiver of text message | To give information or a greeting | Very short with abbreviations |
| Children's bedtime story | Children | To entertain | Short sentences, pictures, bright colours |
| Health and safety email | Company employees | To give up-to-date information on health and safety regulations | Short, simple with headings and pictures |
| Slimming magazine | Readers interested in weight loss | To inform, advise and entertain | Contents, articles, letters, pictures, adverts |

Written material can aim to explain, persuade, inform, entertain or describe. Some texts fall into more than one category. You look now in particular at texts that instruct, describe and persuade.
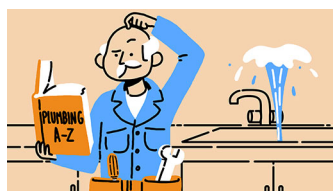
## 4.2 Instructive texts



Figure 11 Texts that instruct

Instructive texts instruct or tell you how to do something. Good instructive texts are written in a simple, logical style and include helpful features such as diagrams, graphs, charts,

bullet points and numbered headings. An example of an instructive text is an instruction manual.

---

### Activity 20 Improving an instructive text
Allow about 5 minutes

Read the following passage.

1. What features make it an instructive text?
2. What changes could be made, such as to the layout, to make it more effective as an instructive text?

   INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF A TRIANGULAR BANDAGE

   Ask the casualty to sit down and support the injured limb. Place the forearm across the chest with the fingertips resting on the opposite shoulder. Place an open bandage over the forearm and hand with its point along the elbow. Still supporting the forearm ease the base of the bandage around the hand, forearm and elbow. Carry the end across the back and over to the front of the uninjured shoulder. Gently adjust the height of the sling if necessary and using a reef knot tie the two ends together in front of the hollow above the collarbone.

---

Discussion

1. This is an instructive text because it tells you how to do something. It gives instructions.
2. You may not have found this very effective. It could be improved by:
   using pictures to illustrate the points

   separating the points and listing them with numbers or bullets.

---

# 4.3 Descriptive texts

Descriptive texts describe people or events without passing judgement on them or offering an explanation.

---

### Activity 21 What makes a descriptive text?
Allow about 5 minutes

Try to identify why the following article could be called a descriptive text.

---

**ROVERS FIND A NEW HOME AT LAST**

Doncastle Rovers have finally been given the green light for their new £8 million stadium.

The often bitter battle with local councillors ended last night when Doncastle Council earmarked £1 million for a study on a 10,000-capacity complex in the town's prestigious Lakeside area.

Rovers hope the stadium will be ready by 2024 and plan to share with Doncastle Dragons and Doncastle Women's Football Club.

Figure 12 A descriptive text

> *Provide your answer...*

Discussion

The article just gives an account of an event that has taken place. The language tries to give facts, rather than an argument or instructions.

# 4.4 Persuasive texts

Persuasive texts are texts that try to persuade the reader. They normally have:

- a point of view
- arguments and evidence to support that point of view.

A persuasive text such as an advertisement may use the following:

- simple words and bright pictures
- rhetorical questions, i.e. questions that are asked without expecting an answer ('What are you waiting for?' 'Have you ever seen such a bargain?')
- exclamation marks and capital letters ('EVERYTHING MUST GO!!')
- emotive language ('abandoned, abused, unloved, these animals need your help').

## Activity 22 How do persuasive texts work?
Allow about 10 minutes

Study the following three texts. How would you say each of them tries to persuade the reader?

**Text 1**



Figure 13 Text 1

> *Provide your answer...*

Discussion

- Words like 'madness', 'amazing' and 'mad' grab your attention and make you read the advertisement. Words like these are called emotive words. Although they are attention grabbing, they do not really give any information and often exaggerate.
- Bold type and capitals are used for emphasis.
- The phrase 'Must end Wednesday' suggests you have to hurry to take advantage of the offer.

**Text 2**

Figure 14 Text 2

> *Provide your answer...*

Discussion

This advert:

- appeals to parents by using the ideas of children and safety together
- refers to 'our own children'
- uses the word 'smiles' instead of 'miles' to add humour
- plays on the idea that good parents would buy only safe toys for their children
- suggests that only their toys will make children smile.

### Text 3

To the Editor

Dear Sir/Madam

The number of cars dumped in the city is now beyond a joke. It is absolutely horrendous that no one is taking an interest in something which is causing such a danger to our children.

The situation needs to be tackled NOW, not tomorrow. If nothing is done quickly someone will be killed and our Town Councillors will have blood on their hands.

Yours not very faithfully

Anne Angry

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

This letter:

- uses extreme and emotive language: 'horrendous', 'killed', 'blood on their hands'
- highlights the safety of children
- plays on words at the end – 'Yours not very faithfully' rather than 'Yours faithfully' makes you read it twice
- makes no attempt to be fair or quote opposite points of view.

**In this section** you have looked at:

- how texts have different audiences and purposes
- the different features of texts that instruct, describe or persuade.

# 5 Structure and layout of texts

Different kinds of text have different kinds of layout and style.

For example, a **formal report** usually contains:

- headings and subheadings
- bullet points
- bold and italicised writing.

A report may also contain:

- appendices (or an appendix, if only one): these contain additional information and are at the end of a book or a document
- references: these give details of the sources of information, i.e. where the information comes from, and are also usually at the end of a book or a document.

**A Valentine's card**, however, usually contains a short, caring or amusing message with pictures on the theme of love, as it is sent to show affection.

**An advertising poster** usually contains:

- lots of colour
- as few words as possible
- attention-grabbing words such as FREE or NEW.

**Text messages** are short and may contain abbreviations.

---

### Activity 23 Which texts have which features?
Allow about 10 minutes

Try answering the questions below on different types of text and their features.

1. Which features of language and layout would you expect to see in an article in a tabloid newspaper about obesity? Select all those that apply.

- ☐ Biased language
- ☐ Appendices
- ☐ Short paragraphs
- ☐ Tables
- ☐ Short words
- ☐ Quotes
- ☐ Conclusion
- ☐ References
- ☐ Photographs

2. Why do you think an article in a tabloid newspaper has these features? Select the main reason.

- ○ Because it has to provide information to experts
- ○ Because it has to provide information to the general public quickly and efficiently
- ○ Because it has to provide information to its readers while keeping up their interest

---

3. Which features of language and layout would you expect to see in a government report on obesity? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Formal language
- ☐ Biased language
- ☐ Graphs
- ☐ A summary
- ☐ Sensational language
- ☐ Headings
- ☐ Appendices
- ☐ Conclusion

4. Why do you think a government report has these features? Select the main reason.

- ○ Because it has to provide information to experts
- ○ Because it has to provide information to the general public quickly and efficiently
- ○ Because it has to provide information to its readers while keeping up their interest

5. Which features of language and layout would you expect to see in a government poster informing people about the health risks of obesity? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Simple language
- ☐ Colour
- ☐ Formal language
- ☐ Tables
- ☐ Conclusion
- ☐ Key words

6. Why do you think a government poster informing people about the health risks of obesity has these features? Select the main reason.

- ○ Because it has to provide information to experts
- ○ Because it has to provide information to the general public quickly and efficiently
- ○ Because it has to provide information to its readers while keeping up their interest

Discussion

Here's a summary of the features you would find in each type of text and why.

| Type of text | Features of language or layout | Why it has these features |
|---|---|---|
| Article from a tabloid newspaper on obesity | Simple language<br><br>Sensationalist language<br><br>Short paragraphs<br><br>Short words<br><br>Biased language<br><br>Photographs<br><br>Quotes | This kind of text has to provide information to its readers, but at the same time keep their interest, as the tabloid's target is to increase the number of people buying the newspaper. |
| A government report on obesity | Summary<br><br>Longer words | This kind of text is aimed at experts in the subject who are able to judge the truth or otherwise of the information that is included. However, the |

| | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | More formal language | information included may only support the Government's case. Information that is not included could also be significant. |
| | Headings | |
| | No pictures but probably other images such as graphs or tables | |
| | References | |
| | Appendices | |
| | Separate conclusions | |
| A poster informing people about the health risks of obesity | Simple language | This text has one job – to pass on a message to the general public quickly and efficiently. It needs to attract people's attention though not necessarily for any length of time. Colour, pictures and key words are used to make the poster attractive and easy to understand. |
| | Limited number of words | |
| | Key words | |
| | Colour | |
| | Pictures | |

**In this section** you have looked at:

- the layout and structure of a range of different texts
- how the way a text is written can give clues to its audience and purpose.

# 6 Reports



Figure 15 Reports

Examples of reports include:

- newspaper reports, for example on an accident or a soccer match
- reports written by an employee for their boss
- government reports
- traffic accident reports written by a police officer
- reports of damage written for an insurance company.

## 6.1 What are reports for?

Reports are written for a number of reasons:

- To record information, such as on a road accident.
- To influence people who are making decisions, such as to report on an investigation into plans to build a large estate of houses in a rural area.
- To start action, such as to suggest that a stretch of road should have speed cameras installed.
- To persuade people, such as a local government report persuading people to recycle.

- To help people reflect on how successful something has been, for example on how funding has been spent and the impact it has had.

As reports are aimed at different audiences, they vary in length, style and layout.

---

### Activity 24 Reports you have read
Allow about 5 minutes

Start by thinking about the different kinds of reports you have read.

1. Make a list of some of the reports you have read over the past few years. Look again at the types of report listed above to jog your memory.

*Provide your answer...*

2. Which report do you remember most clearly?

*Provide your answer...*

3. Why do you think the report you remember has stayed in your memory?

*Provide your answer...*

---

#### Discussion

Here is an example of a response:

1. Some of the reports I remember reading are reports on meetings at work, a government report on schools, a report of a court case and children's school reports.

2. The report I remember most clearly is one on teachers' pay!

3. I remember that one because it was most relevant to what I needed. These reports are usually well laid out and signposted so that it is easy to find and remember the key points.

---

## 6.2 Formal reports

Formal reports tend to be official reports about a specific subject. They tend to be factual and contain detailed information, research and data.

They are often written by people who are expert in their subject area, so the language may be more specialist and difficult to understand for non-experts. The language may sound more complicated. A good formal report usually contains a number of signposts, such as:

- headings
- subheadings

- bullet points.

Formal reports are divided into sections, with signposts to what is contained within each section.

Formal reports usually have the following sections:

- a Contents page
- Terms of reference
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- Appendices.

A definition of each of these is given below. (If you have already completed Session 3 on Writing, you may want to skip this part and go on to section 6.3.)

# Contents page

This is a list of the topics covered and their page numbers, sometimes with a short summary of each topic.

# Terms of reference

These explain why the report was written, its background and the audience it is aimed at.

# Introduction

This gives a short explanation of what the report is about. It is useful if all you need is a quick overview. You can read the introduction and conclusion if time is short and you do not need to challenge or build on the report's findings.

# Methodology

This is a very important part of more academic reports, as the writer explains how they arrived at their findings, i.e. what methods they used. If you are reading a report that you disagree with, it is important to read this section. Without this information it is difficult to put forward opposing arguments.

# Findings

In this section the writer presents their findings and arguments. Findings may also include recommendations, but normally these appear after the conclusion (see below).

The findings often use signposts to direct you to what the author feels is important. These may include headings, underlining, capitals, italics and bold font.

The headings are like chapter headings in a book and you can scan these before you start to read the full report. Headings normally have subheadings that are a further guide.

# Conclusion

This is a brief summary of the main points and any conclusions the writer has come to.

# Recommendations

These are the suggestions for action that arise from the findings of the report. This section needs to be read carefully by anyone who has asked for the report to be written or has a direct interest in the matter, as it will form the basis for future actions. Recommendations should be written in a way that is easy to read, with bullet points and other signposts.

# Appendices

This is where additional information relating to the report is placed. For example, graphs, charts, tables and figures may be placed here rather than in the main body of the report.

In more academic reports, references to other sources are listed in a bibliography. Reading a bibliography is not necessary unless you are thinking of researching the topic yourself and writing your own report.

# 6.3 How to read a report

Keep the following guidelines in mind when you read a long or complicated report:

- **question** – think carefully about the questions you want the report to answer
- **skim or scan** – see section 2 to remind yourself of these skills
- **read in detail** – see section 2 to remind yourself of how to read in detail.

## Steps in reading a report

1. **Read the title:** ask yourself, 'Is this the right report for me to read?'
2. **Read the contents page:** 'Does the report contain what I need?'
3. **Read the introduction:** 'Does the report contain what I need?'
4. **Read the conclusion:** 'Does the report contain what I need?'
5. **Skim through the headings:** use a highlighter pen to pick out the main points.
6. **Look for signposts** that show what the author thinks is important – italics, bold, capital letters.
7. **Read the important sections**.
8. **Review** what you have read: 'Have I got what I need? If not, what should I read again?'

**Hint** If you are really pressed for time, skip the shortest sections as these may be less important than longer ones.

## Activity 25 Identifying a report's structure

Allow about 10 minutes

Read the following report.

> This report has been written to document an accident that occurred on Monday 15 July 2018 in the wood store at Maverick Workshops.
>
> The driver involved in the accident was Jon Collins.
>
> Jon was driving the forklift truck and appears to have lost control when it skidded. It is suspected that this was due to a patch of oil on the floor, which had been left by one of the company's fleet lorries.
>
> In the event Jon was quite badly hurt, so an ambulance was called and he was taken to hospital. He has a broken his arm and will be off work for the next five weeks.
>
> It is suggested that the company investigate where the oil came from and inspect the steering on the forklift truck, as this is the third accident this week.

Make a note in the text boxes below of what the report contains under each of the headings.

1. Terms of reference

*Provide your answer...*

2. Findings

*Provide your answer...*

3. Conclusions

*Provide your answer...*

4. Recommendations

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

How did you do? You should have picked out the key features shown below. If you didn't, have another look at the report after reading these answers.

1. Terms of reference: to document an accident.
2. Findings: accident caused by a patch of oil on the floor.
3. Conclusions: accident was due to oil and possibly steering of the forklift truck.
4. Recommendations: investigate source of oil patch and check steering on the forklift truck.

## Activity 26 Structuring a report

Allow about 20 minutes

The next activity is based on a report commissioned by Dumblederry Country Council into crime in Southland, an area of Dumblederry. It is longer than any of the material you have been reading up to now, so it will be more challenging, but it is a chance to practise everything you have learned so far. It is in two parts. Take your time and enjoy it!

**Part 1**

In the following report, the headings and paragraphs have been mixed up and are in the wrong order. Drag both the headings and paragraphs into the correct order so that the report makes sense.

To help you, here are the number of paragraphs that should fit under each heading:

Terms of reference: 1

Methodology: 1

Findings: 7

Recommendations: 1

If you find it hard to decide how to order the paragraphs under Findings, try arranging them like this:

Number of crimes (1 paragraph)

Types of crime (1 paragraph)

The national picture (1 paragraph)

Types of offender (1 paragraph)

Other types of crime (2 paragraphs)

The town centre (1 paragraph)

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**Part 2**

Below are two paragraphs that could be presented more effectively by using bullet points. Have a go at editing them using bullet points.

A breakdown of the information illustrates that 77% of these were male, most offences were committed by offenders aged between 13 and 27, 67% of all motor vehicle crime was committed by offenders under the age of 16, the most common offence committed by offenders aged 18 to 20 was burglary.

The Report makes the following recommendations: an increased police presence in the town centre, the introduction of CCTV cameras in the town centre, the provision of better facilities for younger people, and an increase in car park security systems.The figures show that during the two years in question there were a total of 4,500 known offenders in Southland.

Discussion

**Part 1**

Here is the report with all the paragraphs arranged in the right order, and with headings and subheadings added.

Terms of reference

The Town Council had expressed concern that there seems to be a growing problem with crime and general disorder in the town and they asked for recommendations as to how the situation could be improved. They requested this account of crime in Southland.

Methodology

The information that follows is based on a survey of three wards in the town over the past two years. The survey was carried out by a local market research company and cost £75,000.

Findings

The total number of recorded crimes in Southland in 2018 was 14,777. This represents a crime rate of about 123 per 1,000 residents; that is considerably higher than the rates for both Southland and Northamptonshire as a whole. It is also a quarter higher than for England and Wales as a whole.

The most frequently recorded crimes in the area were burglary and crime against motor vehicles. A comparison of recorded crime in the following year paints a similar picture. There was a slight improvement over the previous year but the percentages remains higher than both the county and the national average.

The most common crimes nationally are assault and offences against cars. National assault rates include grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm and a range of offences against the person. Burglary is the third most common crime nationally with aggravated burglary being the least common offence.

The figures show that during the two years in question there were a total of 4,500 known offenders in Southland. A breakdown of the information illustrates that 77% of these were male, most offences were committed by offenders aged between 13 and 27, 67% of all motor vehicle crime was committed by offenders under the age of 16, the most common offence committed by offenders aged 18 to 20 was burglary.

In addition to recorded crime, Southland Police have also kept records of other incidents reported to them. These are not actual crimes in the sense the perpetrators have committed a criminal offence, but they have given rise to complaints from local residents. These can be divided into juvenile nuisances and breach of the peace. Local vandalism is included in this, as are breaches of the peace such as drunkenness and obstruction.

Residents suggested that juvenile nuisance and breach of the peace were the biggest causes for concern. There was a widespread feeling that facilities for young people were totally inadequate and the main complaints

were about teenagers 'hanging around', noisy neighbours and gangs, bad street lighting and young people drinking in public places.

The majority of all age groups felt safe in the town centre but this fell at night. This appears to be in line with the experiences of towns and cities on a national scale, where the character of the town centre is often different to that of the rest of the town.

Recommendations

The Report makes the following recommendations: an increased police presence in the town centre, the introduction of CCTV cameras in the town centre, the provision of better facilities for younger people, and an increase in car park security systems.

You probably found the Findings section very long. If you look at the version below, you'll see that dividing it into subsections, with headings, makes it easier to read:

Findings

*Number of crimes*

The total number of recorded crimes in Southland in 2018 was 14,777. This represents a crime rate of about 123 per 1,000 residents; that is considerably higher than the rates for both Southland and Northamptonshire as a whole. It is also a quarter higher than for England and Wales as a whole.

*Types of crime*

The most frequently recorded crimes in the area were burglary and crime against motor vehicles. A comparison of recorded crime in the following year paints a similar picture. There was a slight improvement over the previous year but the percentages remains higher than both the county and the national average.

*The national picture*

The most common crimes nationally are assault and offences against cars. National assault rates include grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm and a range of offences against the person. Burglary is the third most common crime nationally with aggravated burglary being the least common offence.

*Types of offenders*

The figures show that during the two years in question there were a total of 4,500 known offenders in Southland. A breakdown of the information illustrates that 77% of these were male, most offences were committed by offenders aged between 13 and 27, 67% of all motor vehicle crime was committed by offenders under the age of 16, the most common offence committed by offenders aged 18 to 20 was burglary.A breakdown of the information illustrates that:

*Other types of crime*

In addition to recorded crime, Southland Police have also kept records of other incidents reported to them. These are not actual crimes in the sense the perpetrators have committed a criminal offence, but they have given rise

to complaints from local residents. These can be divided into juvenile nuisances and breach of the peace. Local vandalism is included in this, as are breaches of the peace such as drunkenness and obstruction.

Residents suggested that juvenile nuisance and breach of the peace were the biggest causes for concern. There was a widespread feeling that facilities for young people were totally inadequate and the main complaints were about teenagers 'hanging around', noisy neighbours and gangs, bad street lighting and young people drinking in public places.

*The town centre*

The majority of all age groups felt safe in the town centre but this fell at night. This appears to be in line with the experiences of towns and cities on a national scale, where the character of the town centre is often different to that of the rest of the town.

**Part 2**

The two selected paragraphs, presented using bullet points, are shown below.

Here's the first one:

The figures show that during the two years in question there were a total of 4,500 known offenders in Southland. A breakdown of the information illustrates that:

- 77% of these were male
- most offences were committed by offenders aged between 13 and 27
- 67% of all motor vehicle crime was committed by offenders under the age of 16
- the most common offence committed by offenders aged 18 to 20 was burglary.

Here's the second:

The Report makes the following recommendations:

- an increased police presence in the town centre
- the introduction of CCTV cameras in the town centre
- the provision of better facilities for younger people
- an increase in car park security systems.

**In this section** you have practised:

- recognising and reading different types of report
- identifying the main points in a report
- different reading techniques.

# 7 This session's quiz

Check what you've learned this session by taking the end-of-session quiz. This quiz doesn't count towards your badge.

Session 2 quiz

Open the quiz in a new window or tab then return here once you've finished it.

# 8 Summary of Session 2

Well done for completing the reading session of the course! In it, you have covered reading techniques such as skimming, scanning and detailed reading, which are useful for identifying the main points and highlighting key information. You have also explored the difference between fact and opinion and how to spot opinions disguised as facts.

Here are the key learning points from this session.

- It is likely that you **do a lot of reading every day** without realising it.
- It is easier to read and extract information from **texts that are laid out well**, for example with headings, short paragraphs and bullet points.
- **Skimming** is useful when you are deciding whether to read something; it involves reading the title and headings and looking at the pictures to get an idea of what it is about.
- **Scanning** is useful when you are looking for specific information; it involves looking through the text to find key words and phrases.
- When reading a text in detail, it is more important to set up a **rhythm of reading** than to understand every word or phrase; go back to words you don't understand later rather than rereading or looking up their meaning there and then.
- Recognising **prejudice and bias**, and the difference between **fact and opinion**, is very important when reading, as prejudice, bias and opinion are likely to exclude other points of view.
- Identifying **why something has been written** helps you decide quickly how you are going to approach it.
- Texts that have **different purposes** – for example, to explain, describe or persuade – use **different features** in order to provide information in the most effective way for that purpose.
- Similarly, different kinds of text – a report, a poster, a greetings card – have **different layouts and styles**.
- **Reports** are usually divided into sections which can include Contents, Terms of Reference, Introduction, Methodology, Findings, Conclusion, Recommendations and Appendices.

Hopefully by completing this session your confidence with reading has improved. Continue to practise these skills and you will move from being a good reader to a great reader!

You can now go to Session 3.

# Session 3: Writing

## Introduction

Writing tasks come in many different forms, from straightforward notes and messages to complicated reports, study assignments and job applications. Each has its own rules of language and layout, but they all involve writing.

It's a bit like preparing food. Boiling an egg is different from making pizza, but both are cooking tasks.

Recipes reflect this. Fish curry tastes quite different to chocolate mousse but recipes for the two dishes are structured in similar ways:

- Both start with a list of ingredients.
- Both note the equipment needed.
- Both break the method down into a series of steps.
- Both allow you to create a successful dish.

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If you are doing this course to prepare you for either the **Functional Skills English Level 2** qualification or the **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** qualification, remember that writing is an important part of both programmes.

- For the **Functional Skills English Level 2** qualification, the writing assessment consists of two writing tasks, which involve writing a formal letter, email, report or

blog. You get marks for your ability to write in the correct style and format, as well as for the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- For the **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** qualification, you are asked in the controlled task to write two documents that communicate different information to different audiences using language that is appropriate to purpose and audience. You are asked to write in different styles and produce different types of text. This could include, but is not limited to, a formal letter, email, report, article or blog.

  You need to have evidence that you can plan, draft and proofread your work. Your final pieces of writing should reflect your ability to write in the correct style and format, using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar for the level.

# 1 The six steps to writing success



Figure 1 The six steps in writing

Writing tasks can be broken down into six basic steps.

1. Preparing
2. Planning
3. Drafting
4. Editing
5. Redrafting
6. Proofreading

Follow these six steps carefully and you will produce effective writing.

# 1.1 Preparing



Figure 2 The first step: preparing

**Preparing** is about setting yourself up to succeed, not fail. It means making sure you have:

- **what you need** to be able to write (a computer or paper and pen)
- a suitable **place** to write (where you won't be continually interrupted or distracted)
- enough **time** to tackle the task properly, without feeling rushed and pressured.

---

### Activity 1 Different approaches for different tasks
Allow about 5 minutes

In light of the points above, make a list of the things you might do to prepare for each of the writing tasks.

Letter to a friend

*Provide your answer...*

Long report for work

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Your answer may have included some of the following.

**Letter to a friend**

- Find a piece of paper and something to write with.
- Find somewhere to sit down and a surface on which to write.

**Long report for work**

- Think about how much time the task will take and when it must be handed in.
- Set aside that time in your schedule.
- Gather together any other pieces of information you may need (such as statistics or other reports).
- Make sure you have access to a computer or a pen and paper.
- Find a place to work where you won't be disturbed.

---

## 1.2 Planning



Figure 3 The second step: planning

In the **Functional Skills English Level 2** writing assessment, you gain marks for presenting your information and ideas in a logical sequence. It is therefore important that you always create a plan before you start to write.

In the **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** writing assessment, you gain marks for producing a plan. The more detailed the plan, the more marks you get. Planning is therefore a really important aspect of the assessment

**Planning** is about organising your thoughts so that what you write is clear and to the point. It is also an excellent way of breaking through any initial block or hesitation. (For many people – myself included – a sheet of white paper or a blank computer screen is quite off-putting.)

One of the best ways to plan is to ask yourself key questions. The first question you ask yourself might be:

Why am I writing?

### Activity 2 Questions to ask yourself when planning
Allow about 5 minutes

Write down three useful planning questions.

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Any question that helps you organise your thoughts will be useful. Here are eight helpful planning questions:

- Why am I writing? (Who am I writing to?)
- What sort of format do I need (e.g. message, letter, report)?
- What do I want to happen as a result of my writing?
- What points must go in?
- What are my other main points?
- What is the most logical order to put my points in?
- What sort of language will my reader expect?
- What sort of language will my reader understand?

Here are some useful planning guidelines.

## Tips for planning your writing

- **Start in rough** Use a pencil and paper; it's easy to change your mind and it helps to remind you you're working in rough. (If you work on a computer, you may be used to jumping straight into a task and then improving your work on screen. Experiment by starting on paper first. If you do not like working this way, you can always go back to working on-screen. However, you may find starting on paper helps you organise your thoughts.)
- **Jot your ideas down** Take time to think – jot down all your ideas (no matter how crazy) in note form and see where they take you. One idea may lead to another!
- **Talk your ideas through with someone else** Explain why you're writing and then get some feedback. Two heads are better than one! (It's not usually possible to do this in a formal writing assessment, however.)
- **Forget about perfection** Worry about spelling and neatness later.

When you have planned what you want to say and how you want to say it, you are ready to start producing a first draft – a first attempt at the task.

# 1.3 Drafting



Figure 4 The third step: drafting

The purpose of drafting is to see how your ideas work.

Base your first draft closely on your planning notes. At this early stage it is important to put your effort into *what* you are saying, not *how* you are saying it.

First drafts are also called rough drafts. As the name suggests, a rough draft does not have to be neat, set out exactly right or free of all mistakes.

## Activity 3 Pros and cons of drafting
Allow about 5 minutes

Note down some advantages and disadvantages of writing a rough draft.

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
| --- | --- |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |

Discussion

Here are some pros and cons. You may have thought of others.

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|
| Helps you get to grips with the task. | The task takes longer. |
| Allows you to concentrate on your ideas without worrying about spelling and presentation. | Tires you out! |
| Gives you time to really think about how best to express yourself. | |
| Gives you a chance to change your mind. | |

# 1.4 Editing



Figure 5 The fourth step: editing

Once you have produced a rough draft, you are well on the way to an effective piece of writing. The remaining steps are all about polishing and refining. **Editing** is the first of those steps.

Editing means reviewing what you have written with a critical eye to see what improvements you can make. It's a good idea to allow a little time to pass between finishing your rough draft and reviewing it.

To make improvements – and not just changes – you need to have a clear idea of what you are aiming for. It might be worth glancing back at your planning notes to check you are still thinking along the same lines as you were when you began. (Of course, your ideas may have developed while working and this is fine – just make sure you are aware of the development.)

Focus first on the content – on your ideas and their organisation – and then on the expression and presentation. Don't be afraid to scribble in corrections and new ideas: your draft is still a work-in-progress.

**Hint** If you are editing on a computer, copy your first draft and paste it into a new document. You now have two copies of your work. Leave the original for reference. Edit the other. Later you can compare the edited version with your untouched original draft. You may decide that some of your original ideas are better and you can then reinstate them. Sometimes first ideas are best!

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### Activity 4 Questions to ask yourself when editing
Allow about 5 minutes

Write down three useful editing questions that would help you to focus on:

- the content of your writing
- the language you are using
- the way you have laid it out on the page.

> *Provide your answer...*

#### Discussion

Any question that helps you review your work is a useful question. Here are some of the questions I thought of:

- Does my writing say what I want it to?
- Have I arranged my points in the most logical order?
- Will my reader understand what I am saying?
- Have I used precise, accurate terms and clear sentences?
- Have I got the format right?
- Does it look easy to read?

---

Once you have gone through your first draft with a critical eye, noting where you feel changes should be made, you are ready to start your second draft.

## 1.5 Redrafting



Figure 6 The fifth step: redrafting

**Redrafting** helps you get your ideas into a shape that you are happy with.

Editing should have highlighted any changes to the structure and organisation that you need to make. When you redraft, you focus on the way you express your ideas. The box below contains some tips on how to do this clearly.

### Tips for expressing yourself clearly

- **Use precise language**, i.e. words that say exactly what you mean. For example:
    *Don't write* 'Most people are turning up after lunch.'
    *Do write* 'Twenty delegates will arrive at 2.00 p.m.'

- Write sentences that communicate a **single, main idea** clearly.

- Use **grammar** that links your ideas in a way that leaves **no room for confusion**. For example:
    *Don't write* 'He said he wanted to talk about it to him because he had asked him to let them know about side-effects as soon as possible.'
    *Do write* 'The patient told me he wanted to speak to the doctor as soon as possible to report a side effect he was experiencing from the medicine.'

- Use **punctuation** that links your ideas **accurately and logically**. For example:
    *Don't write* 'Mrs Carter's 7-year-old daughter Eileen, slipped in the playground and cut her knee I took her inside and washed the cut then I disinfected it, I put a bandage on to stop dirt getting into the cut, Eileen said her knee did not hurt anymore. She wanted to go out and play so I let her, she said her knee was better when I asked her how her it was at 11.00 a.m.'
    *Do write* 'Mrs Carter's 7-year-old daughter, Eileen, slipped in the playground and cut her knee. I took her inside and washed the cut. Then I disinfected it. I put a bandage on Eileen's knee to stop dirt getting into the cut. Eileen said her knee did not hurt anymore. She wanted to go out and play so I let her. I asked her how her knee was at 11.00 a.m. She said it was better.'

- Use **correct spelling**; incorrect spelling might distract the reader and doesn't impress.
- Write in a way that is **easy to read**, whether on a computer or by hand.

---

### Activity 5 Expressing your ideas clearly
Allow about 5 minutes

Which of the points above do you think would make your own writing more clear? Make a note in the text box below of the three most important ones for you. Keep those in mind when you next come to write something.

*Provide your answer...*

#### Discussion
Here is an example:

When I write, I often make my sentences too long and complicated, so the following tip is very relevant to me:

- Write sentences that communicate a single, main idea clearly.

---

## 1.6 Proofreading



Figure 7 The sixth step: proofreading

In the **Functional Skills English Level 2** writing assessment, you gain marks for ensuring that your spelling, punctuation and grammar is accurate. Proofreading your work is therefore an important part of the writing assessment.

In both the **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** writing assessment, you gain marks for a draft which has been checked to identify and correct any mistakes. Proofreading your draft is therefore an important part of the writing task.

**Proofreading** means checking for mistakes. The aim of proofreading is to ensure that what you have written is what you mean to say.

Proofreading is the careful reading of your final draft. You should allow as much time as possible between finishing your final draft and proofreading it. It is very important to bring a fresh eye to your work at this stage. If you try to proofread too soon after finishing writing, you are likely to see only what you *think* you have written and you may miss mistakes.

---

## Activity 6 What to look for when proofreading
Allow about 5 minutes

What should you look for when proofreading? Note down your ideas.

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion
You may have thought of some of the following:

- spelling
- punctuation
- grammar
- choice of words
- layout
- readable handwriting/accurate word processing.

You will be looking at spelling and some aspects of punctuation and grammar in the next section.

When you have proofread your final draft, try using the spell check on your word processor to help you. Remember to check suggested spellings before you press accept as they may not be the most appropriate for your context!

## Activity 7 Spot the errors
Allow about 10 minutes

Have a look at the text below. There are three spelling mistakes and three punctuation mistakes.

Highlight the incorrect words and punctuation errors and then correct them in the text box.

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If you ask someone to read what you have written and point out any problems, be prepared for critism. You may not like being told that your writing doesn't make sense (or is poorly punctuated or full of spelling errors), but you did ask for feedback, the best policy is just to accept the other person's obversations and say 'thank you' (they have taken the time to read your work, after all). You can ignore everything they said of course, but normally it is worth looking carefulley at anything they had a problem with?

### Discussion
The words that are spelt incorrectly are:

- critism (criticism)
- obversations (observations)
- carefulley (carefully).

The words that were punctuated incorrectly are:

- … but you did ask for feedback, the best policy is …
  (Needs a full stop rather than a comma.)

- … and say 'thank you' (They have taken the time …
  (Needs a lower-case 't' in 'They'.)

- … normally it is worth looking carefulley at anything they had a problem with?
  (Needs a full stop rather than a question mark.)

Here's the corrected text:

> If you ask someone to read what you have written and point out any problems, be prepared for criticism. You may not like being told that your writing doesn't make sense (or is poorly punctuated or full of spelling errors), but you did ask for feedback. The best policy is just to accept the other person's observations and say 'thank you' (they have taken the time to read your work, after all). You can ignore everything they said, of course, but normally it is worth looking carefully at anything they had a problem with.

**In this section** you have looked at:

- how to prepare for and plan your writing and write a first draft
- how to redraft and proofread your work so that it is accurate and says what you mean.

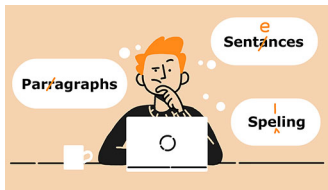# 2 Spelling, sentences and paragraphs



Figure 8 Spelling, sentences and paragraphs

In the **Functional Skills English Level 2** writing assessment, you gain marks for the correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and for using a range of sentence structures, including complex sentences, and paragraphs to organise written communication effectively.

In the **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** writing assessment, you gain marks for the correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar and for appropriate use of paragraphs, and you will be expected to use complex sentence structures appropriately.

From complex sentences to semi-colons and synonyms, even the most experienced of writers can find spelling, punctuation and grammar tricky. However, ensuring that your writing is clear and accurate can make you appear more professional and get your message heard. In this section you look at how to improve your spelling and at creating sentences and paragraphs, which will help you to write with good punctuation and grammar. Employers are more likely to employ candidates who have good written communication skills. Improving your spelling, punctuation and grammar is a wise investment of your time and will set you ahead of the crowd!

## 2.1 Spelling

Spelling is a key aspect of writing. It helps to express our ideas clearly and makes a good impression when people read what we have written:

- If you want people to understand your ideas and what you express in writing, you need to be able to spell the words you want to use.
- For better or worse, we are judged on the quality of our spelling. People who spell well are respected.

Don't panic if you struggle with your spelling. Spelling well is very different from spelling perfectly. Perfection is not a realistic aim. Good spelling is spelling that allows you to express yourself freely in the first place and then to correct any errors later.

It is worth remembering that although there are many words in English – about half a million – you do not need to be able to spell them all. Focus on learning to spell the words you need. If you find yourself struggling to spell the same word on several different occasions, make a note of it. Keep a list of the words you want to learn. Try targeting five a week.

**Syllables**

Every word has at least one syllable. Many have more than one. Some have as many as five or six.

What are they? Syllables are vowel sounds, with or without consonants. Syllables are useful for spelling as they help you to decode words by chunking sounds together. Here are a few examples:

- 'eye' has a single syllable made up of a vowel sound alone
- 'my' also has a single syllable made up of the same vowel sound, but with the consonant sound 'mmm' attached
- 'ago' has two syllables: a-go
- 'photograph' has three: pho-to-graph
- 'independent' has four: in-de-pen-dent.

---

### Activity 8 How many syllables?
Allow about 5 minutes

How many syllables do the words below have? Select the correct answer.

**Hint:** Try saying the words out loud to yourself. Say them slowly and count each syllable as you go, either on your fingers or by making a note on a piece of paper.

1. after

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

2. careful

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

3. benefit

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

4. among

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

5. concentrate

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5

6. authoritatively

○ 5

○ 6

○ 7

7. management

○ 3

---

○ 4

○ 5

Once you can hear syllables, you will also be able to hear **word stress**. Word stress is important as it helps to identify how to pronounce and spell a word correctly by highlighting the key letters within the word. Look at these examples of shifting stress. The stressed syllable is underlined.

a<u>d</u>vertise – adver<u>ti</u>sement

el<u>ec</u>tric – electr<u>ic</u>ity

<u>ph</u>otograph – phot<u>og</u>rapher – photo<u>gra</u>phic

---

### Activity 9 Where is the stressed syllable?
Allow about 5 minutes

Highlight the stressed syllables in the words below.

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---

Discussion
Working out where you place the stress in a word helps you to break it up into smaller chunks and spell out each chunk.

---

Here are three things you can do that may help to improve your spelling.

---

### Top three spelling tips!

- **Notice** how words are spelt, wherever you are. Written language is around us all the time.
- **Practise**: read and write regularly.
- **Review the words that matter** to you and **test** yourself.

---

## 2.2 Sentences

Sentences are the basic building blocks of writing and in this section you look at what a sentence is. This will help you use grammar and punctuation correctly. Confidence with grammar and punctuation will allow you to create different kinds of sentences and make your writing interesting to read.

A sentence needs to make sense on its own. In order to do so, it must include a subject (who or what the sentence is about) and a verb (what the person or thing is doing). The subject and the verb must make sense together. Have a look at some of the examples below.

The cat sat on the mat.

In this sentence, 'the cat' is the subject and 'sat' is the verb. It is a full sentence as the subject and verb agree and make sense together.

What is the problem?

In this sentence, 'is' is the verb and 'the problem' is the subject. It is a full sentence.

The information on the website.

This is not a full sentence. It does not include a verb and is therefore incomplete.

---

## Activity 10 Spot the sentences

Allow about 5 minutes

Look at the four short texts below. Select the ones you think are proper sentences.

- ☐ The question is one of some complexity, especially regarding.
- ☐ What's that?
- ☐ Then there is.
- ☐ I don't know.

### Discussion

Two of these statements are sentences:

What's that?
I don't know.

Each has a subject and a verb, and each makes sense on its own.

The other two are not sentences. They are incomplete and do not make sense on their own.

The question is one of some complexity, especially regarding.
Then there is.

---

There are three different types of sentence:

- simple
- compound
- complex.

**Simple sentences**

These contain only one idea. Here are some examples:

Sammy is 36 years old.
He works at a hospital.
He works in the Housekeeping Department.
He is a supervisor.
He enjoys his work.
Sometimes he finds it stressful.

**Compound sentences**

These are simple sentences joined together. For example:

Sammy is 36 years old and he works at a hospital.

He works in the Housekeeping Department where he is a supervisor.

He enjoys his work but sometimes he finds it stressful.

The words used to join the sentences are called **conjunctions**. Here are some examples of conjunctions:

and

where

but

when

so

because

since

while.

---

### Activity 11 Making compound sentences

Allow about 5 minutes

Use conjunctions to combine these simple sentences into compound sentences.

> Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth. He lived most of his life in London.

> Dickens also lived in France. He wrote one of his most popular books in France.

> Dickens died in 1870. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

#### Discussion

Your answers may be slightly different depending on which conjunctions you chose, but each of your compound sentences should have a conjunction and the sentences should make sense.

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, but he lived most of his life in London.

Dickens also lived in France where he wrote one of his most popular books.

Dickens died in 1870 and he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

---

**Complex sentences**

These combine a number of ideas, not all of equal weight. Look at the following sentence.

I enjoy gardening although it can be quite hard work.

This sentence has one main idea and one additional (or extra) idea.

'I enjoy gardening' is the main idea; 'it can be quite hard work' is an extra idea.

Now look at another example of a complex sentence.

Sammy, who is 36 years old, enjoys his work as a supervisor in the Housekeeping Department at a hospital but sometimes finds it stressful.

'Sammy enjoys his work' and 'sometimes finds it stressful' are the main ideas. The other ideas – that he is 36 and works as a supervisor in the Housekeeping Department at a hospital – are extra, less important ideas.

Note that the commas are used here to separate the less important ideas from the more important ideas. For more information on this and some other uses of commas, go to the OpenLearn course Everyday English 1.

---

### Activity 12 Making complex sentences
Allow about 10 minutes

Combine the simple sentences below into complex sentences. Treat the idea in bold as the main idea. You may also want to add some words, leave some words out or change the order of words.

**Hint** Be careful to keep the meaning the same as the original.

**Peter's father was a very good public speaker.** He was rather quiet in private life.

*Provide your answer...*

On the first day they set out late. Then they lost their way briefly. **Even so they covered a lot of ground.**

*Provide your answer...*

Charles Babbage wrote a consumer guide to life assurance. **He invented an early form of the computer.**

*Provide your answer...*

---

Discussion

Compare your answers with the ones below. The main ideas are in bold. You may have slightly different answers depending on how you combined the simple sentences, but each of your complex sentences should have a main idea that can be separated from the other, less important ideas.

**Peter's father**, although rather quiet in private live, **was a very good public speaker**.

Despite setting out late and briefly losing their way, **they covered a lot of ground on that first day**.

**Charles Babbage**, who also wrote a consumer guide to life assurance, **invented an early form of the computer**.

# 2.3 Paragraphs

In both the **Functional Skill English Level 2** and **Essential Skills Wales Communication Level 2** writing assessments, you gain marks for the correct use of paragraphs.

Paragraphs are important in writing. They help your audience to understand and enjoy your writing and are useful in helping you organise your ideas.

A paragraph may contain the following elements:

*   a **topic sentence** expresses the idea of the topic in general terms
*   an **explanation** explains the idea in more detail
*   an **illustration** gives a concrete example.

### Activity 13 What's in a paragraph?
Allow about 10 minutes

Identify the three elements – the topic sentence, explanation and illustration – in the paragraph below. Highlight each using a different colour.

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#### Discussion
The **topic sentence** is:

Food is important in all societies.

It tells us what the paragraph is about in general terms: the importance of food.

The **explanation** is:

A great deal of effort goes into producing food, involving both agriculture and industry. The food that is produced must then be either stored or distributed and sold. In recognition of this effort and of the importance of food, many cultures have evolved elaborate rituals around the final preparation and eating of food.

It explains the idea expressed in the topic sentence.

The **illustration** is:

A traditional French meal, for example, might take several days to prepare and as long as four hours to eat.

It gives a concrete example to illustrate the idea and the explanation.

**In this section** you have looked at:

*   syllables and word stress and how they can help with spelling
*   simple, compound and complex sentences
*   an example of how to structure a paragraph.

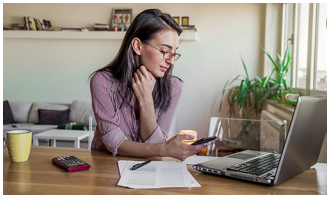# 3 Writing to inform, persuade and advise



Figure 9 The many forms of writing

Texts that are written for different purposes and audiences have different layout features and writing styles. Identifying *why* you are writing something will enable you to use techniques that work for that purpose and to write more effectively.

## 3.1 Writing to inform

Writing to inform is about communicating information to your audience. Your information should be factual, relevant and clear.

One example of when you 'write to inform' is in a job application. You may be asked to write a personal statement providing information on:

- your qualifications
- experience that makes you suitable for the role
- reasons why you would like the position.

### Activity 14 Texts that inform
Allow about 5 minutes

How many different texts to inform can you think of? Write down as many as you can.

> *Provide your answer...*

#### Discussion
Here are some suggestions:

- newspapers and magazines that contain information
- a letter to confirm a doctor's appointment
- informative websites, for example Citizens Advice
- a party invitation from a family member or friend
- a textbook
- recipes
- instructions
- manuals.

Below is an example of a text that informs. It is a formal letter from a rental agency, informing the recipient of changes to their rent. It shows the kind of language that is used in a text that informs.

> 41 Elm Walk
> Newport
> LM1 8HU
>
> Newport Rentals
> PO Box 71
> Newport
>
> 29 March 2019
>
> Dear Ms Edwardes
>
> **Re: Monthly rental for 41 Elm Walk**
>
> We are writing to tell you that we are changing the amount of rent you pay for number 41 Elm Walk. This will take effect from 1st May 2019.
>
> The new amount and the way we have calculated it are shown on the next page.
>
> Please read the notes we have sent with this letter. They tell you what changes you must tell us about. You can tell us about any changes online.
>
> Yours sincerely
>
> Mr Matthew Meadows

## Activity 15 Features of texts that inform
Allow about 5 minutes

Tick the writing techniques that apply to the letter above.

> Interactive content is not available in this format.

### Discussion
The letter uses most of these techniques, apart from diagrams and illustrations.

It's useful to keep these features in mind when you write to inform. In other words, you need to:

- use language that is clear and to the point
- include facts
- write in an impersonal way
- use short, clear sentences
- break up your text with subheadings, diagrams and illustrations
- write in an unbiased way.

One of the golden rules of writing to inform is contained in the acronym KISS (Keep It Short and Simple). That means deciding what *must* go in and what *might* go in.

Two questions can help you decide whether any piece of information is a 'must-go-in' or a 'might-go-in'.

- What am I trying to tell my reader?

  This question gets you to focus on why you are writing in the first place.

- Will my reader understand what I am trying to say without this piece of information?

  If the answer to this question is 'no', the information must go in. If the answer is 'yes', you may or may not choose to include it.

In the next two activities, you plan and write an email. Before you do so, take a look at the example below, so that you're familiar with the main elements and the kind of wording that is appropriate.

## Email example

**From**: a.daniels@goodsgalore.com

**To**: d.saint@goodsgalore.com

**cc**: t.boss@goodsgalore.com

**Date**: 23 April 2019

**Subject**: March invoices

Dear Dave

I've just noticed we still haven't received the invoices for March. The cut-off date is tomorrow and if we haven't received them by then, they will not be paid until next month.

I'd be grateful if you could put them in the internal post before the end of the day.

Kind regards

Amy

## Activity 16 Constructing an email that informs
Allow about 10 minutes

Imagine you are a supervisor in a care home. You have found that some of your cleaning staff are clocking on before they change into their uniforms. You know one team member in particular (Catrin Rogers) resents arriving five or ten minutes early to change into uniform. You suspect she has been encouraging others. This is against company regulations – in fact, it is a disciplinary matter.

Safta Iqbal, the Hygiene Manager, has asked you to deal with the problem. Safta also mentioned that the company has finally agreed to replace the existing lockers with bigger ones within the next six months.

You have been asked to write an email to inform the staff of this matter. Below are a number of statements that could go into the email. Decide which you *must* include (essential) and which you *might* include (optional) and drag and drop into the correct category.

**Hint:** Put yourself in your reader's shoes. Look at the writing task and ask yourself: 'What would I want from this if I were the reader?' Remember, the more you question what you are doing, the better you will do it.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

## Discussion

Here is one way of sorting the elements into 'essential' and 'optional':

**Must include (essential):**

- Date: [today's date]
- To: All cleaning staff
- From: [your name]
- RE: Clocking on before changing into uniform
- CC: Safta Iqbal, Hygiene Manager
- Against company policy – must stop
- Disciplinary issue – this is a warning
- Kind regards [your name]

**Might include (optional):**

- They all know it's against company policy (told at induction).
- They may not understand the reasons why – hours lost to department (5/10 minutes per person x 60 staff = 5/10 hours per day!).
- Decision to order new lockers.
- Anybody with any problems see me.

For this email it is essential to:

- include the Date, To, From, Re and cc information
- state the issue clearly
- say what you want staff to do (and what will happen if they do not do it).

## Activity 17 Writing an email that informs
Allow about 10 minutes

Now try writing the email that you planned in the previous activity. Use the 'must include' and 'might include' lists to help you.

*Provide your answer...*

## Discussion

One possible version of the email is provided below. See how it compares to yours.

**Date**: 12.04.19

**To**: All cleaning staff

**From**: Head of Service

**Re**: Clocking on before changing into uniform

**cc**: Safta Iqbal, Hygiene Manager

It has come to my attention that some staff have been clocking on before changing into uniform. I wish to remind you that this is strictly against company policy and must stop.

I understand the time involved amounts only to five or ten minutes per person. Please note, however, that the Hygiene department employs over 60 staff. Five or ten minutes per person for 60 people costs the company five or ten hours per day. We cannot afford this loss of time.

From now on, disciplinary action will be taken against any member of staff found clocking on before they have changed.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Kind regards

[Your name]

# 3.2 Writing to persuade

From charity leaflets that come through our door to newspaper articles that try to sway our point of view, texts to persuade are all around us.

When you write to persuade, you usually need to be more forceful than when you write to advise.

### Activity 18 Your own experience of persuading
Allow about 5 minutes

Think about the last time you tried to persuade someone to do something (not necessarily in writing). Who did you try to persuade and to do what?

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

You may not realise it but we often use persuasion in everyday life! For example, you may have tried to:

- persuade your friends to go on a night out
- persuade your work colleagues to join a charity event
- persuade your children to get ready to go to school.

Of course, you may have thought of a completely different example.

Writing to persuade is about trying to get your audience to do something. When you write to persuade, you usually need to be more forceful than when you write to advise.

Writers use a number of different techniques to do this as shown in the box below.

## Persuasive writing techniques

- **Direct address** Speaking directly to the audience using 'we' or 'you'
- **Alliteration** A group of words beginning with the same letter or sound
- **Facts** Something that can be proven as true
- **Opinion** A belief that can't be proven
- **Rhetorical question** A question that does not need an answer
- **Emotive language** Words that 'tug on the heart strings' and create a strong response in the reader
- **Statistics** Numerical facts and data to support a point
- **Triples** List of three things in a sentence

### Activity 19 Persuasive techniques (1)
Allow about 5 minutes

Have a look at the advert below. Drag and drop the techniques used by the writer into the appropriate slot.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

#### Discussion
Even a simple advert such as this involves several persuasive writing techniques. See if you can spot these techniques in other adverts.

### Activity 20 Persuasive techniques (2)
Allow about 10 minutes

Match the persuasive technique with the example.

Six, sizzling sausages

How could you resist this deal?

89% of adults in Great Britain used the internet weekly in 2018.

You need to stop, look and listen before crossing the road.

Match each of the items above to an item below.

Alliteration

Rhetorical question

Statistics

Triple

Now try a few more.

We need **you**

A snail can sleep for three years.

Getting the bus to work is far better than walking.

An innocent girl was knocked over by the huge car when the drunken idiot lost control.

Match each of the items above to an item below.

Direct address

Fact

Opinion

Emotive language

## Activity 21 Persuasive techniques (3)
Allow about 5 minutes

You may remember the advert below from Session 2. See if you can remember the persuasive techniques used to try to influence the audience.



Figure 10 Total car madness!

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

- Words like 'madness', 'amazing' and 'mad' grab your attention and make you read the advertisement. Words like these are called emotive words. Although they are attention grabbing, they do not really give any information and often exaggerate.
- Bold type and capitals are used to emphasise words.
- The phrase 'Must end Wednesday' suggests you have to hurry to take advantage of the offer.

## Activity 22 Planning a persuasive email
Allow about 10 minutes

Imagine that you have organised a sponsored run for a local charity that provides support to older people in your area. Try to plan an email persuading your friends to

take part. Make a list of the points that you must include and the points you might include.

> *Provide your answer...*

---

Discussion

See how your ideas compare to these.

**Must include**:

- Event information: when and where it will take place.
- Reason: background on the charity and where the money will go.
- Why your friends should take part.
- The benefits for them of taking part.
- How to apply to take part.

**Might include**:

- Other local events organised in aid of the charity.

---

### Activity 23 Writing a persuasive email
Allow about 10 minutes

Now, using the plan from the previous activity, write an email to your friends persuading them to take part in the sponsored run.

**Hint:** Use at least three of the techniques learned earlier to help you persuade your audience.

> *Provide your answer...*

---

Discussion

You may have used a number of different techniques to persuade your friend. Here are a few examples:

- **Emotive language**: 'The event is for charity and will help to support hundreds of lonely and vulnerable older people.'
- **Rhetorical question**: 'Who wouldn't want to get fit and have fun?'
- **Opinion**: 'Running is the best form of exercise.'
- **Fact**: 'The sponsored run is 5 km.'

# 3.3 Writing to advise

Writing to advise is all about giving advice to your audience. Some people find this easier than others. When writing to advise, you are expected to *suggest* what someone should do.

Writing to advise is informative and helpful. It is a little like giving instructions, except you must adapt your tone of voice to suit the needs of your audience. For example, if you were providing your friend with advice on which dress to wear, you might use a very relaxed and informal tone, whereas if you were advising a work colleague on how to deal with a difficult customer, you would use a much more formal and serious tone.

When you write to advise, you should use words like 'should', 'could' or 'maybe', which change a command into a suggestion. This prevents your advice from sounding too harsh. Verbs like 'could' and 'should' are called modal verbs.

In contrast, when you give instructions, you should use imperative verbs, which are verbs, or action words, that tell a person what to do. They are usually used at the beginning of a sentence, for example 'Slice the carrots' rather than 'You should slice the carrots.'

---

### Activity 24 How to make a cup of tea
Allow about 10 minutes

Write instructions for making a cup of tea. Use imperative verbs such as 'pour' rather than 'you should pour', and use short, concise sentences.

> *Provide your answer...*

#### Discussion
Here are some examples of instructions using imperatives and short, concise sentences:

> Fill the kettle.
>
> Pour the milk.
>
> Remove the teabag.

---

### Activity 25 Rewriting advice
Allow about 10 minutes

Below is a note written to a friend offering advice. It is written like a set of instructions using imperative verbs which makes it sound harsh and not advisory. Rewrite the advice using words like 'could' and 'should' to modify the tone.

> Dear Julie,
>
> Dump him. Tell him that he is being foolish. Say firmly that you don't want to see him anymore. Walk away quickly. Look straight ahead, avoid turning around.
>
> Your friend,
>
> Louise

---

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

Your revised letter may look something like this.

> Dear Julie,
>
> I'm sorry to hear you are having problems. You should think about dumping him. You could tell him that you don't want to see him again. It might be easier to walk away. If you do decide to do that, it would be best to look straight ahead and avoid turning around.
>
> Your friend
>
> Louise

**In this section** you have:

- practised writing to inform
- practised writing to persuade
- practised writing to advise.

# 4 Formal or informal?
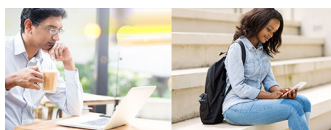


Figure 11 Formal and informal writing

There are many types of writing style but only two that you need to recognise now: **formal and informal**.

> **Formal**: a style of writing in which standard English is used because you are writing to someone you don't know or to whom you want to give a good impression.
>
> **Informal**: a style of writing where choice of words and grammar tends to be familiar rather than formal. This is used when you know, or want to get to know, the person you are writing to.

---

### Activity 26 Which is formal and which informal?
Allow about 5 minutes

Which sentence would be found in a formal report and which in an informal discussion?

1. They did a brilliant job, particularly considering what a mess things were in before.
2. The work was completed two days ahead of schedule and achieved a Quality Control score of 95%.

Discussion

Sentence 1 is the sort of sentence you might expect to hear in a corridor. It is written in an informal, 'spoken' style.

Sentence 2 is the sort of sentence you might expect to read in a report. It is written in a formal, business-like style.

---

### Activity 27 When to use formal language
Allow about 10 minutes

Consider the following situations. Five involve spoken language and five involve written language. For each, select the style of language you think it would be best to use: formal, informal or semi-formal, i.e. somewhere between the two.

> Interactive content is not available in this format.

Discussion

Here is a summary of the answers.

| Situation | |
| --- | --- |
| Pub discussion about football. | Informal |
| Short presentation to a group of teenagers about sexual health. | Semi-formal |
| Conversation with a friend about a party you went to. | Informal |
| Description in a job interview of how you handle difficult situations. | Formal |
| Email to a friend about arrangements for a holiday. | Semi-formal |
| Incident report at work. | Formal |
| Discussion with friends about music. | Informal |
| Letter to train operator complaining about cancelled services. | Formal |
| Telephone message from a client to your manager. | Formal |
| Text message to your partner to meet you after work. | Informal |

If you disagreed with some of the answers, reconsider your understanding of formality and informality. Remember that communicating information clearly requires at least a degree of formality.

Some people think formal language is full of long, unfamiliar words and complicated grammar and is generally – and often unnecessarily – hard to understand. This is not the case. Good formal English is English that conveys information in clear, simple language.

## Activity 28 Formal and informal sentences
Allow about 5 minutes

Look at the following sentences and for each, decide whether it is in a formal or informal style.

**Hint:** Remember, formal English gives precise and generally factual information.

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### Discussion
In summary, formal and informal styles of writing are very different and serve two different purposes. Formal writing should be used in a professional setting, for example at work, and contains formal language. Informal writing is more likely to be used when writing to friends or relatives and contains informal language.

Once you have decided if your writing will be formal or informal, you need to think about the **tone** of your writing. Tone refers to the attitude that your language conveys and applies to both speaking and writing.

Imagine you bought an item from an online retailer and it has stopped working. You want to return it and you email customer services, asking what you should do. Compare the attitudes expressed in the following two responses.

- 'Thank you for contacting us. We apologise for the faulty item and the inconvenience it has caused. Please return it with proof of purchase to the address below.'
- 'Hiya, that's too bad but no time to help at the mo. Boss is giving me too much to do. Wish I didn't work here. Try next week. Soz!'

The first response is respectful and helpful. The tone is quite formal and polite. The second is disrespectful and unhelpful. The tone is informal and not appropriate for a customer service department.

The second response also expresses personal dissatisfaction. It is unprofessional. How the staff member feels about their job is nothing to do with the customer. Being professional means putting personal feelings to one side when they have no direct bearing on an interaction.

Formal writing generally requires a polite, respectful tone – especially when you are expressing dissatisfaction. People will always pay more favourable attention to a message that is polite and respectful.

**In this section** you have looked at:

- the differences between formal and informal writing
- identifying different contexts in which formal writing is needed.
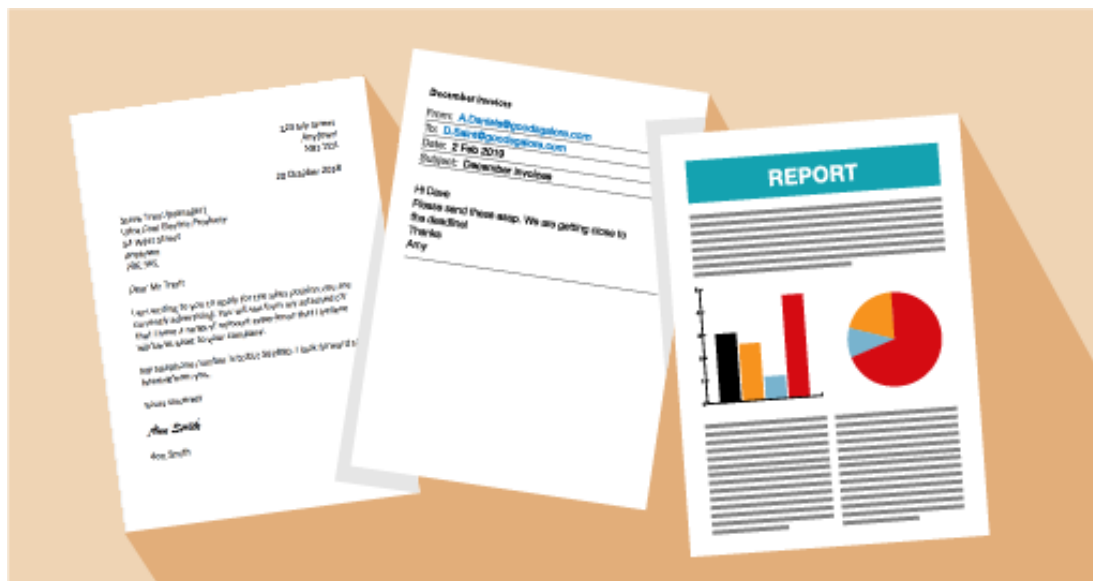
# 5 Types of writing



Figure 12 A letter, an email and a report

What you write and how you write it also depends on the type or format of writing, for example whether it's a party invitation, an email, an article or a job application. Each format has a broad structure and layout that you can follow and doing so will help you to get your message across clearly and accurately.

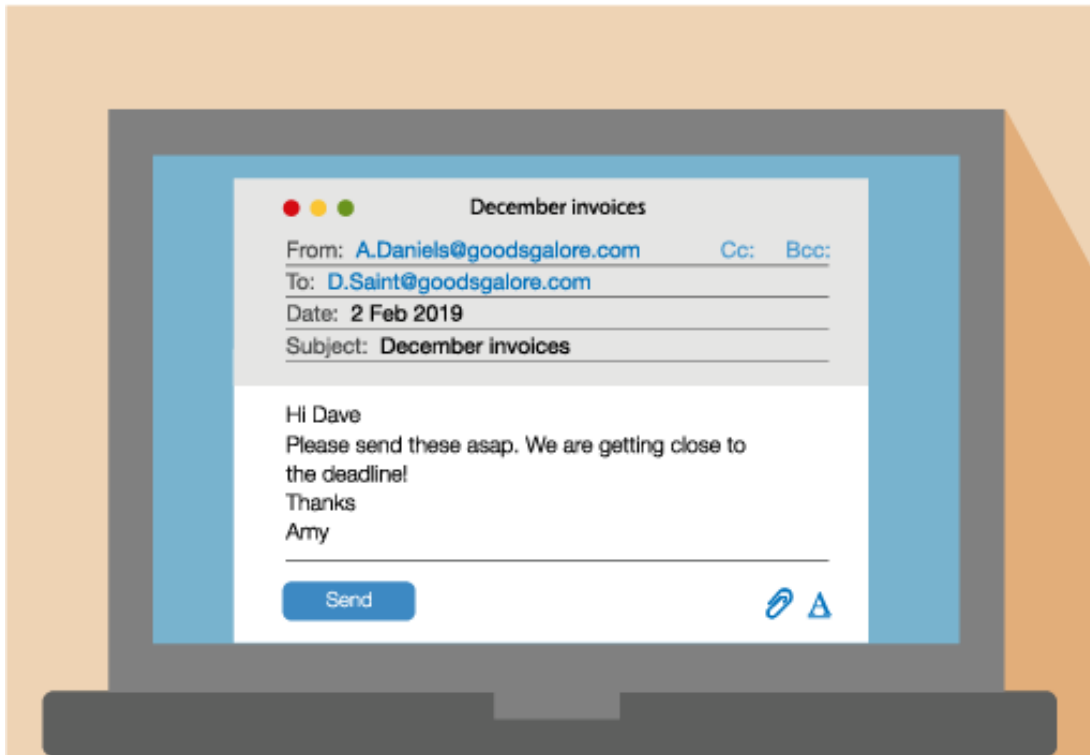You look here at three types of writing: emails, letters and reports.

# 5.1 Writing emails



Figure 13 Typical email layout

Emails are used for both formal and informal communication. In the workplace, they are used internally (within an organisation) and externally (from one organisation to another). At home, they are used for social and business purposes, from arranging to meet friends to contacting a solicitor. They can be as formal as a business letter or as informal as a scribbled note to a friend; it all depends on the context.

When you write an email, there are usually **From**, **To**, **cc** and **Subject** (or **Re**) sections above the message section.

Your own email address is automatically shown in the **From** box.
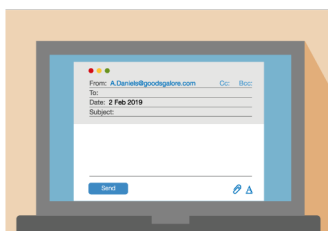


Figure 14 Composing an email

Email is quick and easy to use. Messages reach the person they are addressed to almost instantly. Because email is so quick and easy, there are some special points to bear in mind when planning an email message:

- Give your message a clear, informative title as many people receive dozens of emails each day.
- Keep your message short and to the point.

- At work, use a polite, formal style (chatty shorthand isn't acceptable).
- Be careful what you say; never assume an email is confidential.

This is the usual structure of an email, although not all will be exactly the same:

- the recipient's address
- the subject of the email
- the greeting
- the body of the email
- the closing/sign-off.

**Greetings and closings**

Greetings and closings in an email are more flexible than in a letter.

If you are writing a formal email (for a job application, for example), you can still use the formal 'Dear Sir/Madam' used in a letter. However, you are more likely to know the name of the person you are writing to, so to set a friendly tone you can address the person by name.

If the email is formal and you don't know the person you are emailing well, use 'Dear'. If you know the person, 'Hi' is often fine.

You can use 'Yours faithfully' to close an email, but 'Kind regards' or 'Best regards' are more common.

---

## Activity 29 Planning an email
Allow about 10 minutes

Imagine your manager, Winston Davis, has asked you to book a room at a local hotel for a meeting on 6 January. Winston is expecting ten people to attend including someone in a wheelchair who will be giving a PowerPoint presentation. Winston said the meeting will last all day so you need to organise lunch and refreshments. He also mentioned that the last time the company used the hotel there was a very noisy private party going on that interfered with the meeting.

When you contact the hotel's conference manager, Ms Dhami, she asks you to confirm your requirements by email.

Try planning an email to Ms Dhami. Make a list of the essential information that you must include and optional information that you *might* include.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

See how your points compare with the following:

**Must include**:

- To: Ms Dhami's email address.
- Subject: Meeting.
- Cc: Winston Davis' email address.
- Purpose of email.
- Date and time of meeting.

---

- Number of people attending.

- Requirements of food and refreshments.

- Wheelchair access.

- Powerpoint presentation facilities.

**Might include**:

- Problem with noise at the last meeting.

The information in the first list is all essential. The only point that is not essential, as shown in the second list, is the fact that last time there was too much noise nearby.

# 5.2 Writing letters



Figure 15 Typical layout of a letter

Despite the widespread use of email, the letter remains an important form of communication. We tend to use letters when it seems important to say something in writing. That might be:

- for legal or official reasons, e.g. communicating with a solicitor or bank

- to put a case more strongly and to have a written record, e.g. complaining about a faulty product

- to deal clearly with a complicated issue, e.g. arrangements while someone is on holiday

- just because it is hard to reach the person otherwise, e.g. the head teacher of a school.

Always keep formal letters short and to the point. Use a polite, formal style and clear, simple language. Where possible, use a heading to identify the topic of your letter. Use a separate paragraph for each main point.

Formal (or business) letters have a clear, three-part structure:

- Why you are writing.
- What the other person needs to know.
- What action you want the other person to take.

Below is the usual format of a formal letter:

- The writer's address is in the top right-hand corner.
- The date is underneath that address.
- The address of the person/company being written to is lower down on the left-hand side.
- The greeting is underneath that address.
- The body of the letter follows the greeting.
- The closing or sign-off is on the left-hand side, underneath main text.
- Your signature (if hand-written) is underneath.
- Your name is underneath that.

The usual greetings used in a formal letter are 'Dear Sir/Madam'. If you know the person's name, it's 'Dear' and then their name.

If you use Sir/Madam, the closing should be 'Yours faithfully'. If you use their name, the closing should be 'Yours sincerely'. It is becoming more acceptable to break these rules and it is quite common to end even formal letters with 'Kind regards' or 'Yours truly'. However, when asked to write a formal letter it is sensible to follow the traditional rules.

---

### Activity 30 Identifying the features of a letter
Allow about 5 minutes

Below is a letter with pointers to various features. Drag and drop each label to the appropriate slot.

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Discussion

Another example of a letter – this time with a heading – is given in the discussion of Activity 32.

---

### Activity 31 Planning a letter
Allow about 10 minutes

Imagine you have signed a contract to work on a cruise ship for 18 months. The job starts in six weeks and you are excited about seeing places like the Greek islands, the Caribbean, Hong Kong and the Far East!

To help pay the mortgage (£450 a month), you plan to let your house while you are away. Several estate agents say it will be easy to find a tenant among staff at the

nearby hospital or university. They think you can get at least £550 a month, perhaps more from a group of students.

Your only worry is whether the terms of your mortgage allow you to let your house. When you contact your bank, the manager, Mrs Knightsbridge, asks you to make a formal request in writing.

Try planning a letter to your bank, to inform them of your plans and to check that they have no objection to you letting your house. Make a list of the essential information that you must include and optional information that you might include.

> *Provide your answer...*

### Discussion

Here are points you may have wanted to include.

**Must include**:

- your address
- Mrs Knightsbridge's name and job title
- the name and address of the bank
- the date
- why you are writing – you want to let your house
- what the bank needs to know:
  - you have signed an 18-month contract to work on the cruise ship
  - your salary is able to cover the mortgage of £450
  - you would like to let the house
  - you have been advised the likely rental value is £550 or more
- what action you want the bank to take:
  - to confirm that this arrangement is acceptable.

**Might include**:

- strong rental demand locally due to the hospital and university
- your plans in 18 months' time, after the contract ends (what happens if you renew the contract?).

### Activity 32 Writing a letter
Allow about 10 minutes

Now try writing a letter to Mrs Knightsbridge formally requesting permission to let your house while you are away. Use your plan from the previous activity to help you.

**Hint:** When you are writing the letter, try to imagine the dialogue (or conversation) you are having with Mrs Knightsbridge, especially the questions she might want answered.

*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Below you will see one version of the letter to Mrs Knightsbridge. Yours will be a little different. Take a look at it in relation to the following points.

First, examine the **layout**:

• Have you placed names and addresses in the correct places? The sender's name and address is shown on the left below but is usually positioned on the right.

• Is your letter properly paragraphed?

Second, look at the **content**:

• Does your letter follow the structure for a formal letter?

• Does it first explain why you are writing, then give the reader (in this case Mrs Knightsbridge) the information they need to understand the situation?

Finally, have you explained what action you want your reader, Mrs Knightsbridge, to take?

Here's the letter.

Pat Smith
14 Acacia Avenue
Trumpton Medley
Herts TM2 4SD

[Today's date]

Mrs Knightsbridge
Branch Manager
Oxford and Cambridge Bank
14 The Crescent
London NW1 3RR


Dear Mrs Knightsbridge

**Re: account number H122345EE request to let property**

I am writing further to my telephone call yesterday to request permission to let 14 Acacia Avenue.

I have recently accepted an appointment as On-board Entertainment Co-ordinator with Deluxe Cruise Lines. My contract is for 18 months (I enclose a copy for your information) and I am due to take up my new post at the end of next month. The job requires me to live on board ship and I will be away from 14 Acacia Avenue for the length of the contract. During this period, I propose to let the property.

I have already spoken to several local estate agents who assure me it will be easy to find suitable tenants from the university or nearby hospital. To

protect the property in my absence I would use the services of a managing agent.

I understand that, in the current market, the property will command a monthly rental of £550. Please note that whether I let the property or not, I shall continue making mortgage payments (£450 a month) by direct debit.

I would be grateful if you could confirm that you have no objection to my letting 14 Acacia Avenue while I am abroad.

Yours sincerely

Pat Smith

# 5.3 Writing reports



Figure 16 Typical report layout

Reports are formal documents presenting information based on facts. They are structured as follows:

- The **title** should be short and informative, e.g. 'New Product Sales, October–December'.
- In the **Introduction**, explain why the report has been written and what it covers (and, if appropriate, what it does not). For example, 'This report has been written at the request of the marketing department and looks at sales of new products between October and December. The report does not cover sales of other products.'
- In the **main body**, present the information you want to pass on.

- In the **Conclusions**, summarise what you believe the information shows, e.g. 'The figures indicate that products promoted online have enjoyed higher sales than products promoted through trade journals.'
- In the **Recommendations**, make any recommendations for action (based on your conclusions), e.g. 'This report recommends increasing online promotion of new products.'

Reports should:

- use formal language
- be brief and to the point
- use short paragraphs
- make use of headings, bullet points, numbered lists, charts and graphs where appropriate
- avoid technical jargon if possible
- explain any technical terms that must be used but that readers may not understand.

Report writing tends to focus on 'what' not 'who'. You might say to a colleague:

'I told my supervisor what happened.'

In a report, however, it would be better to write:

The incident was reported to a supervisor.

Note that in addition to using a passive verb form, other words have been changed *without altering the sense.*

**Active and passive verbs:** Many verbs can be active or passive. Take 'bite', for example:

The dog bit Ben. (Active)

Ben was bitten by the dog. (Passive)

In the active sentence, the subject (the dog) performs the action. In the passive sentence, the subject (Ben) is on the receiving end of the action.

Here are two more examples.

What you might *say*:

They all find the machines on the new line difficult to operate.

What you would *write*:

Operating difficulties are being experienced with the machines on the new line.

What you might *say*:

No one I spoke to could tell me anything about it.

What you would *write*:

No information was available.

Here is an example of a paragraph in the active and passive voice:

Active voice

For my end-of-year project, I prepared a poll of public transport use in my street. I interviewed my neighbours in their homes and created a spreadsheet to record and analyse the data. I completed the project by the due date and achieved a pass.

Passive voice

A poll on public transport use in my street was prepared by me for my end-of-year project. My neighbours were interviewed in their homes and a spreadsheet was created to record and analyse the data. The project was completed by the due date and a pass was achieved.

---

### Activity 33 Focusing on the 'what', not the 'who'
Allow about 10 minutes

Use the text boxes to rephrase the sentences below to focus attention on the 'what', not the 'who'. The first has been done as an example.

1. I told the team what the new arrangements are.
   Rephrased: The new arrangements have been explained to the team.

   *Provide your answer...*

2. I've had several customers complaining about the new system.

   *Provide your answer...*

3. I found a number of problems with the machine.

   *Provide your answer...*

4. I keep telling the line manager but she has not done anything. No action has been taken although the issue has been reported.

   *Provide your answer...*

5. Everyone agrees the new canteen is a big improvement.

   *Provide your answer...*

---

Discussion

Compare your sentences with the ones below. Examine any differences carefully and note anything you learn from them. Where there are differences, look back at the original sentences and identify the words that tell you what the sentence is about.

1. The new arrangements have been explained to the team.

---

2. Complaints about the new system have been received.

3. Problems with the machine were experienced.

4. The line manager has been informed but no action has yet been taken.

5. The new canteen has been welcomed.

## Activity 34 Planning a report
Allow about 15 minutes

Imagine you work for a company that wants to start a staff award scheme to support recruitment and retention. Your manager has asked you to produce a report for senior management on the available options. You have obtained details from the Chamber of Commerce of schemes run by other local employers. You have spoken to some of the managers involved in those schemes and asked them what impact the schemes have had on recruitment and retention of staff, and whether the managers believe the schemes represent good value for money to the organisation.

Two schemes in particular sound promising. One of these schemes would link in with local shops and restaurants. If local businesses were co-operative, this would offer good value. When you contacted local shops and restaurants they expressed interest, but wanted more details.

When you interviewed staff in your own company to find out what they would like, they expressed little interest in the idea of staff awards. Several people, however, said they were sick of the drinks machine breaking down and two others complained that the staff canteen was disgustingly dirty.

Try planning your report, which will describe what you have done and make recommendations. Use the following headings:

Title

Introduction

Findings

Conclusion

Recommendations

### Discussion
Your plan may look something like this.

**Title**: Staff Award Scheme

**Introduction**

- Report on staff award scheme to support recruitment and retention

**Findings**

- Details of other schemes in use locally
- Cost of schemes
- Effect of schemes on recruitment and retention
- Response of own staff to scheme idea

**Conclusion**

- Two schemes offer good value but staff not enthusiastic about concept of awards.

**Recommendations**

- Trial scheme involving local businesses

# 5.4 Writing articles

Articles are commonly found in newspapers and magazines. They can be formal or informal and often include elements of the writer's own opinion. Articles are structured as follows:

- The **headline or heading** tells the reader what the article is about. It often includes emotive language, alliteration (words that start with the same letter) or rhetorical questions (questions that are asked to make a point rather than get an answer) to grab the reader's attention and set the tone of the article.
- The **opening paragraph** should identify the main points of the article and include who and what the article is about. The opening should be brief but should ensure that the topic of the article is explained.
- The **main body of the article** should expand on the information already provided in the opening paragraph. It should provide the most important information first.
- The **closing paragraph** should conclude the article and summarise the key points.

# The headline

Article headlines often use techniques such as emotive language, alliteration, puns and rhymes to attract the reader's attention.

The tone of the headline can also give you an idea of the tone or mood of the article. For example:

'**Four Die in Brighton House Fire**' is serious. It tells you what the article is about.

'**Electric Cars Spark Sales**' is humorous. The writer has used a pun (a play on words) to engage the audience. 'Spark' could mean a spark of electricity or something that starts off the sales.

---

### Activity 35 What's in a headline?

Match the technique used to the article headline.

Rhetorical question

Emotive language

Alliteration

Pun

Rhyme

---

Match each of the items above to an item below.

    How much more can we take?

    Pure terror in her eyes

    Peter the plucky penguin

    Kentucky Freed Chicken

    St Helen's glass has the class

# Opening paragraph

The opening paragraph should identify the main points of the article. It should include information on:

- **What** has happened? What is the situation?
- **Who** is or was involved?
- **When** did it or will it take place?
- **Where** did it or will it take place?

## Activity 36 Who, what, where and when?
Allow about 10 minutes

Read the news article below and write down who did what, where and when.

### BENEFIT FRAUDSTER IS FINED

Walkland District Council issued a warning this week after a mail order clerk was fined for fraudulently obtaining benefits.

Thomas Wilkinson, aged 64 of south London, admitted three charges at the Magistrates Court of fraudulently obtaining benefits amounting to £7,500.

He admitted failing to disclose income from distributing mail order goods during part-time employment.

Wilkinson was sentenced to 200 hours Community Service and is currently repaying the money.

John Stevens of the Walkland District Council Finance Office said 'genuine' claimants have nothing to fear, but the Council takes a very serious view of housing benefit fraud. Any changes in circumstances should be referred to the District Council immediately.

*Provide your answer...*

### Discussion
Check your answers against these:

    Who: Walkland District Council

    What: issued a warning over fraudulent benefits claims

Where: Walkland

When: this week

You may also have answered the questions in relation to the man who was fined:

Who: Thomas Wilkinson

What: was fined for fraudulently obtaining benefits

Where: Walkland

When: this week

# The main body

The main body of the text should expand on the information provided in the opening paragraph. It should explain in detail what the article is about.

When writing the main body of the article, you should provide the most important information first:

1. Crucial information
2. Supporting information
3. Background information

You should use language that suits the audience and tone or mood of the piece. You may include quotes from people involved, such as experts and witnesses, to back up the story. When you include quotes, you should use quotation marks.

Using quotation marks

Quotation marks (also known as speech marks and inverted commas) look like this ' ' or this: " ". They are used to separate one group of words from another. Here are two examples:

The book is called 'Silver Poets of the Seventeenth Century'.

My exact words to him were, 'If I were you, I would watch out.'

In sentence 1, the quotation marks show exactly what the book's title is.

In sentence 2, the quotation marks show exactly what was said.

Activity 37 Where do the quotation marks go?
Allow about 10 minnutes

In the sentences below, insert quotation marks where needed.

a) Steve turned with a look of annoyance. Oh, honestly, he said. Don't be so ridiculous.

b) To which Paula replied, I don't know what you are talking about. Then a moment later she added, And don't take that tone with me.

c) In the words of the Immortal Bard, If music be the food of love, play on!

d) The title of the group's new release is Yummy! Yummy! Yummy!

e) You swine! You unspeakable swine! he said. Fletcher only laughed.

f) Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, from Keats' Ode to Autumn, must be one of the most famous lines in English literature.

---

Discussion

Compare your answers with these. If your answers are different, look again at the explanation. Remember, when used to show direct speech, quotation marks enclose the words actually spoken. When used to show a title or quotation, they enclose just the title or quotation.

a. Steve turned with a look of annoyance. 'Oh, honestly,' he said. 'Don't be so ridiculous.'

b. To which Paula replied, 'I don't know what you are talking about.' Then a moment later she added, 'And don't take that tone with me.'

c. In the words of the Immortal Bard, 'If music be the food of love, play on!'

d. The title of the group's new release is 'Yummy! Yummy! Yummy!'

e. 'You swine! You unspeakable swine!' he said. Fletcher only laughed.

f. 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness', from Keats' 'Ode to Autumn', must be one of the most famous lines in English literature.

# The closing paragraph

You should not end the article too suddenly. The best endings finish with a closing sentence or quote that provides a conclusion.

# Checking and layout

Once the article is finished, it is crucial that you check that it is factually correct and does not contain spelling or grammatical errors.

You also need to decide on an appropriate layout for text and pictures.

This session has covered a number of different structured writing tasks: emails, formal letters and reports. There are, of course, many other writing tasks, such as lists, notices, messages, informal letters, faxes, CVs, and all sorts of official forms.

Part of planning is choosing the right **format** for a writing task. Format means the way in which something is arranged or set out.

---

Activity 38 Which format?

Allow about 5 minutes

Which format would you choose for the following writing tasks?

Read the examples below and pick the correct format from the examples below.

1. Ask a colleague in another department for some information.

○ Email

---

- ○ Letter
- ○ Report
- ○ Newspaper article

2. Send another company a copy of a missing invoice.

- ○ Email
- ○ Letter
- ○ Report
- ○ Newspaper article

3. Tell colleagues about a Christmas party.

- ○ Email
- ○ Letter
- ○ Report
- ○ Newspaper article

4. Ask your bank for an overdraft.

- ○ Email
- ○ Letter
- ○ Report
- ○ Newspaper article

5. Provide feedback on how well a new staff rota is working.

- ○ Email
- ○ Letter
- ○ Report
- ○ Newspaper article

6. Tell the general public in your local area about a new affordable housing scheme.

- ○ Email
- ○ Letter
- ○ Report
- ○ Newspaper article

Discussion

When you choose a format in which to write something, make sure it represents a good use of time and effort and that your reader(s) will consider it appropriate. It is always important to take your readers' expectations into account.

**In this section** you have looked at:

- how to structure emails, letters and reports
- when to use these three different formats.

# 6 End-of-course quiz

It's now time to try the end-of-course quiz and earn yourself a digital badge.

End-of-course quiz

Remember this quiz counts towards your badge. If you are not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window and come back here when you are done.

# 7 Summary of Session 3

Well done for completing the third and final session of the course. Here are the key learning points from this session.

- Following the **six steps** of writing – preparing, planning, drafting, editing, redrafting and proofreading – for longer or more important texts will help you to write more effectively.

- Understanding when your writing needs to be **formal** and when it can be **informal** enables you to communicate well.

- Following some basic principles of **grammar, punctuation and spelling** helps you to express yourself in writing clearly and accurately.

- Emails, letters and reports need **different structures and layouts**.

- Knowing how to build compound and complex **sentences** helps you to develop your writing beyond simple sentences.

- **Paragraphs** are a useful way of organising your ideas and making sure your readers don't get lost.

- Recognising the **syllables** in a word and where the **word stress** falls can help with spelling.

- When you write for **different purposes and audiences** – such as writing to inform, persuade or advise – you should use different techniques and styles of writing.

- When you write a **report**, you should use the standard structure and headings, for example Introduction, Methodology, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations.

# End-of-course summary

## Bringing it all together

Congratulations on completing *Everyday English 2*. Hopefully you have enjoyed the experience and now feel inspired to develop your English skills further.

Through this course you have developed your skills in the following areas:

- speaking clearly and confidently, at a pace and volume appropriate to the situation
- adapting your language style to formal and informal situations, and understanding when to use standard and non-standard English in both speaking and writing
- understanding the role body language plays in effective communication
- preparing for a discussion and moving it on with constructive contributions when it gets stuck or goes wrong
- structuring and delivering a talk, and checking your audience is listening and understands what you say
- identifying the purpose and intended audience of a range of texts
- skimming, scanning and detailed reading, and knowing when to use one or the other
- recognising prejudice and bias in texts and understanding the difference between fact and opinion
- recognising the writing styles and layout features associated with different kinds of text
- understanding the different structures of emails, letters and reports
- following the steps in the writing process that enable you to produce a clear and accurate piece of writing
- using aspects of spelling, punctuation and grammar to express yourself clearly and accurately in writing
- constructing simple, compound and complex sentences
- counting the syllables in a word and using word stress to support accurate spelling
- understanding the techniques that can be used when writing a text that informs, persuades or advises.

## Next steps

If you would like to achieve a more formal qualification, please contact one of the centres listed below and explain that you have done this course and gained an OpenLearn badge. They'll help you to find the best way to achieve the Level 2 Functional Skills English qualification or the Level 2 Essential Skills Wales Communication qualification, which will enhance your CV.

## England

**Middlesbrough College**, Dock St, Middlesbrough, TS2 1AD

https://www.mbro.ac.uk/

01642 333333

**Tresham College** (Part of The Bedford College Group), Windmill Avenue, Kettering, Northants NN15 6ER

https://www.tresham.ac.uk

01536 413123

**West Herts College**, Watford Campus, Hempstead Rd, Watford, WD17 3EZ

https://www.westherts.ac.uk/

01923 812345

# Wales

**Coleg Cambria**

https://www.cambria.ac.uk/

**Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales**

https://www.adultlearning.wales/

**Coleg Gwent**

https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/

**NPTC Group of Colleges**

https://www.nptcgroup.ac.uk/

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