



General Literacy Help for Parents and Carers

How do I?

The following slides will help you support your child in different aspects of their writing and in developing their accuracy :

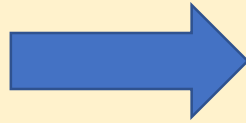
- Slide 4 – writing checklist
- Slide 5 – How do I write a simple and complex sentence ?
- Slide 6 - How do I vary sentences ?
- Slide 7 - How do I avoid comma splicing ?
- Slide 8 - How to use the apostrophe of omission and possession ?
- Slide 9 - How do I choose the right homophone ?
- Slide 10 - How do I learn my spellings ?
- Slide 11 - How do I improve essay writing vocabulary ?
- Slide 12 - How do I write a formal letter ?
- Slide 13 - How do I write a personal letter ?

The following slides will help you support your child in different aspects of their writing and in developing their accuracy :

- Slide 14 - How do I write a formal report ?
- Slide 15 - How do I write a diary ?
- Slide 16 - How do I write a leaflet ?
- Slide 17 - How do I write a speech?
- Slide 18 - How do I write a discussion essay ?
- Slide 19 - How do I write an evaluation ?
- Slide 20 - How do I write instructions?
- Slide 21 - How do I write a newspaper report?
- Slide 22 – How do I plan my work?

Use this writing checklist to check the accuracy of your child.

You may wish to make your own depending on what errors are frequently made.



- ✓ spelling
- ✓ punctuation (, ! " " ? - : ;)
- ✓ paragraphs
- ✓ tense
- ✓ was were
- ✓ to two too
- ✓ their there they're
- ✓ an or a
- ✓ your you're
- ✓ aim to write 15 to 20 words per sentence
- ✓ connectives
- ✓ interesting opener
- ✓ literary devices if applicable
- ✓ capital letters / MINTS
- ✓ y+s= ies
- ✓ new speaker= new line

Stop after every third line and check



How do I write...

a simple sentence?

A simple sentence is the most straightforward type of sentence you can write. It contains just one **main clause** (idea or piece of information).

Simple sentences always contain a **subject** (main noun) and a **verb** (a doing or being word).

For example,

- The girl smiled.
- The dog barked.
- He was hungry.

Remember: 'is', 'am', 'are', 'was' and 'were' are all 'being words', so they are all verbs!

Simple sentences can also have an **object**, which is the noun that the subject is acting on. For example:

- The bird soared through the air.
- The dog barked at the postman.
- His food was on the table.

We can also add **adjectives** and **adverbs** to simple sentences to make them more detailed or interesting:

- The delicate and graceful bird soared through the air effortlessly.
- The fierce dog barked viciously at the frightened postman.



How do I write...

a compound sentence?

A compound sentence is a sentence that joins two or more **main clauses** (ideas or pieces of information) together using a **conjunction**.

These **conjunctions** are:

for

and

nor

but

or

yet

so

because

though

For example:

- I don't have any homework tonight **for** I completed it all in school.
- The clouds turned grey **and** rain began to pour from the sky.
- I didn't know who he was **nor** why he was looking for me.
- It was unlikely that they would win **but** they were determined to try.
- You must finish your work by the end of the lesson **or** you will need to finish it for homework.
- She had revised thoroughly for her exam **yet** she still felt nervous.
- It was cold outside **so** I put my coat on.
- The cat was stuck in the tree **because** the dog chased it.
- I love chocolate **though** I know fruit is better for me.



How do I write a complex sentence?



Complex sentences are made up of a **main clause** that makes sense on its own, and one or more **subordinate clauses** that do not make sense without the main clause.

The **main** and **subordinate** clauses should always be separated by a **comma** in the sentence.

There are three different ways that a complex sentence can be structured and you should be able to use them all in your writing.

1: *Main clause* first:

- The dog barked at the postman , baring his sharp teeth in warning.
- I ran towards the lift , hoping desperately I would make it before the doors closed.
- I entered the exam room , nervous and filled with dread.
- Exercise is important , although a healthy diet is equally vital to your health.

2: *Subordinate clause* first:

- Baring his sharp teeth in warning , the dog barked at the postman.
- Hoping desperately I would make it before the doors closed , I ran towards the lift.
- Nervous and filled with dread , I entered the exam room.
- Although exercise is important , a healthy diet is equally vital to your health.

3: *Subordinate clause* embedded in the *main clause* with a pair of *commas*:

- His hands , which were normally steady , began to shake uncontrollably.
- The sky , that had been blue and clear , suddenly turned dark and stormy.
- Ysgol Cwm Brombil School , which opened in 2019 , is in the town of Port Talbot.



How do I vary my sentences?

Just roll the dice!



Start with an adverb:

Sadly, many beautiful animal species are facing extinction.
Cautiously, I crept along the dark corridor.



Start with adjectives:

Excited for their first day, the children lined up in the yard.
Embarrassed and ashamed, I turned and walked away.



Start with an -ing verb:

Finding time for hobbies isn't always easy, but it's definitely worth it.
Baring his teeth in warning, the dog barked at the post man.



Start with a time phrase:

One rainy afternoon in Spring, her life changed forever.
As the sun dipped below the horizon, I felt peaceful and serene.



Start with a simile:

Like a beacon of hope, the sun blazed down on us.
Like screen-time zombies, too many teens are addicted to technology.



Use a short sentence:

30% of teenagers are obese. That is shameful.
My heart pounded rapidly. This was it. Now or never. Win or Lose.



How do I avoid comma splicing?



Commas should only ever be used for three reasons:

1. To separate items in a list. For example: Today I have English, Maths, History, French and Art.
2. To separate a main and subordinate clause. For example: Today is Friday, my favourite day of the week.
3. To separate a connective or tag phrase from the main sentence. For example: James, are you listening? or First, take out the ingredients.

Commas should **never** be used to separate two main clauses. This is called **comma splicing**. For example: I like her, she's funny. is a comma splice. I like her and she's funny are both main clauses because they make sense on their own, so they cannot be joined with a comma.

Luckily, there are three easy ways to correct a comma splice:

1: Use a full stop

Comma splice: I like her, she's funny.

Correction: I like her. She's funny.

Comma splice: It's hot outside, make sure you drink plenty of water.

Correction: It's hot outside. Make sure you drink plenty of water.

2: Use a conjunction

Comma splice: I like her, she's funny.

Correction: I like her **because** she's funny.

Comma splice: It's hot outside, make sure you drink plenty of water.

Correction: It's hot outside **so** make sure you drink plenty of water.

3: Use a semi-colon

Comma splice: I like her, she's funny.

Correction: I like her; she's funny.

Comma splice: It's hot outside, make sure you drink plenty of water.

Correction: It's hot outside; make sure you drink plenty of water.



Remember: Commas can **never** be used to join two sentences together. Instead, you should **always** use a full stop, conjunction or a semi-colon.





How do I use apostrophes...

for omission?

One reason that we use apostrophes is when we remove (or **omit**) letters from a word. This is called using apostrophes for **omission**.

When we use apostrophes to show omission, **we take out the letters that we don't need, and put an apostrophe where those letters were**. For example:

cannot	→	can't
you are	→	you're
he is	→	he's
could have	→	could've

for possession?

The only other reason we use an apostrophe is to show that something belongs to something or someone. This is called an apostrophe for **possession**.

When we use an apostrophe to show possession, we usually **add an apostrophe and an s to the word**. For example:

Harry's book or Lily's pen


When there is more than one of something, or the word already ends with an s, **we just need to add the apostrophe**. For example:

James' book or Mrs Jones' pen
the boys' toilets or the girls' football team



WARNING!

The most common mistake made with apostrophes is using them where they **shouldn't be**. You should **never** use an apostrophe to show a plural (more than one of something) or for a verb that ends in s.

the boy's ran away 

For example:

or

the girl walk's down the street 





How do I choose the right homophone?

There, their, there

'**There**' shows a place or position.

'**Their**' means belonging to them.

'**They're**' is the shortened form of 'they are'.

Remember the zombies!



To, two, too

'**To**' is can be either a preposition or start a verb, e.g. 'I am going **to** school.' (preposition) 'I'll have **to** think about that' (verb start)

'**Two**' is the number 2, e.g. 'I have **two** cats and one dog.'

'**Too**' means also, or as well, e.g. 'I have a hamster **too**.'



Your and you're

'**Your**' means something belongs to you, e.g. 'You should always check **your** work carefully.'

'**You're**' is the shortened form of 'you are', e.g.

'**You're** going to miss silly mistakes if you don't.'

Its and it's

'**Its**' shows something belongs to something, e.g. 'The cat licked **its** paws.'

'**It's**' is the shortened form of 'it is', e.g.

'**It's** going to rain today.'

Affect and effect

'**Affect**' is a verb. It is an action, e.g. 'Not revising will **affect** your education.'

'**Effect**' is a noun. It is the result of the action. 'Revising will have a positive **effect** on my learning.'

Top tip: If you are using the words the, a or an, then it's always **effect** not affect!



Weather and whether

'**Weather**' describes the conditions around us, e.g. 'The **weather** is beautiful today.'

'**Whether**' shows a choice between two or more things, e.g. 'I don't know **whether** I should eat crisps or an apple at break time.'

Here and hear

'**Here**' shows where something is, e.g. 'My book is **here** on the shelf'

'**Hear**' means that your ear is picking up a sound, e.g.

'You don't need to shout, I can **hear** you just fine.'

Lose and loose

'**Lose**' is the opposite of winning., e.g. 'They are going to **lose**.'

'**Loose**' is the opposite of tight, e.g. 'My laces are **loose**.'

Allowed and aloud

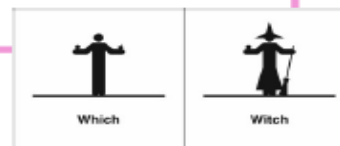
'**Allowed**' is something you are permitted to do e.g. 'I am **allowed** to play on my computer for one hour a day.'

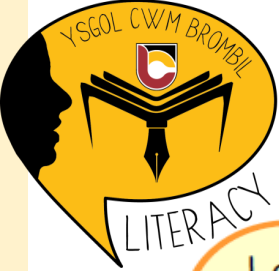
'**Aloud**' means 'out loud' e.g. 'I like to read **aloud** to my younger sister.'

Which and witch

'**Which**' shows a choice between two or more things.

'**Witch**' is a female wizard— someone with magical powers





How do I learn my spellings?



Look, say, cover, write, check:

- **Look** closely at the word. Which part of the word is the tricky part?
- **Say** the word out loud. Visualise the spelling as you say it.
- **Cover** the word.
- **Write** the word down.
- **Check** if you've got it right!

Pyramid writing:

Turn the word into a pyramid, by building it up on letter at a time:

p
p y
p y r
p y r a
p y r a m
p y r a m i
p y r a m i d



Learning by repetition:

Practise writing the word out five times, and then check if you've got it right!

Rainbow writing:

Practise writing the word seven times, using a different colour every time you write it.



Think tricky!

Make the tricky part of the word stand out by writing, circling or underlining it in a different colour.



Chunking:

Break the word down into syllables (like beats in a rhythm) and learn it one syllable at a time.

Practise writing the word out using a different colour for each syllable.

cat / er / pil / lar

cat	er	pil	lar
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Memory joggers:

Create your own memory joggers to help you remember tricky words, e.g:

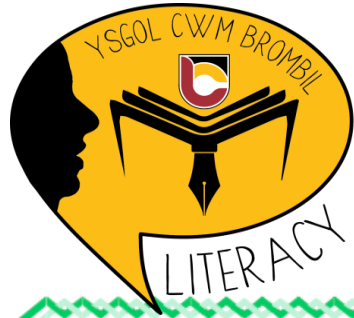
- **Big** elephants can always understand **small** elephants = **because**
- We have one **collar** and two **sleeves** = **necessary**
- An **island** is **land** in water.



Spelling squiggles:

Draw a large squiggle on a piece of paper. Practise writing your spellings inside the spaces in your squiggle.

How do I improve my essay writing vocabulary?



Topic sentences:

- One of the most important themes...
- One of the most significant ideas...
- Another crucial way atmosphere is created...



Cool Connectives

- Firstly,
- Secondly,
- Thirdly,
- Furthermore,
- In addition to this,
- Also,
- Indeed,
- Moreover,
- Besides,
- As a result,
- For that reason,
- Consequently,
- Therefore,
- Thus,
- Finally,

Writing about writers:

The poet/writer/author:

- shows
- demonstrates
- explores
- explains
- investigates
- reveals
- indicates
- implies
- surveys
- hints
- extends
- refutes
- challenges

- contests
- suggests
- believes
- underlines
- uses
- notes that
- conveys
- creates
- establishes
- illustrates
- highlights
- emphasises
- exemplifies
- illuminates
- encapsulates
- clarifies
- connotes

- portrays
- depicts
- alludes to
- highlights
- defines
- displays
- proves
- points to
- reveals
- explains
- validates
- confirms
- presents
- exhibits
- outlines
- defines
- intensifies

Analysing evidence:

- This shows that
- This creates
- This highlights
- This implies
- This indicates



- This/which gives the impression
- This gives an insight
- This immediately adds
- This quotation shows
- This relates to the idea
- This evokes images of



Comparing and contrasting:

- Similarly,
- Like,
- As with,
- Equally,
- Likewise,
- Correspondingly,

- On the other hand,
- Unlike,
- Contrastingly,
- Alternatively,
- Meanwhile,
- However,
- Whereas,



Using tentative language:

- It could be
- This/it suggests
- This is as though
- It seems
- It may be
- This may also refer to
- It is almost as if
- The writer could
- Perhaps the author
- Could this suggest?
- Might this mean?



Evaluating effects:

- effective
- engaging
- interesting
- compelling
- convincing
- direct
- poignant
- reminiscent of
- emotive
- moving
- impressive
- powerful
- skilful
- expert
- expertly
- artful

- accomplished
- interesting
- evocative
- resonates
- has a particular resonance with
- confronting
- challenges
- sophisticated
- an intelligent use of
- this elicits an emotional response
- an interesting example of
- thought provoking
- confronts the reader



How do I write a formal letter?

Purpose: To argue, persuade, or give your views about an issue. You would also write a formal letter to apply for a job.

Audience: Someone that you respect, but do not know well, for example your head teacher, the editor of a newspaper, or a politician.

Language: Your language and tone need to be formal and respectful. If you are trying to argue or persuade, you will also need to be convincing.

Layout: Formal letters have **two addresses**: your address and the date in the top right corner, followed by the address of the person you're writing to underneath on the left hand side. Begin with either the addressee's name (e.g. Mr Grimes, Miss Thomas) or Dear Sir or Madam. If you know the name of the person you're writing to, you end the letter with 'Yours sincerely', and if you don't it's 'Yours faithfully'. (Remember: 'F' for 'forgot the name')

I am writing... ❌

A letter should **never** begin with 'I am writing'. Instead you could use one of the following:

- I would like to express my views...
- I would like to share my concerns...
- I would like to apply for...

Or, try opening your letter in a more original way, for example with a rhetorical question or a shocking statistic.

Stressing a strong opinion: 🧩

- I passionately believe...
- It is obvious that...
- It is vital that...
- I truly believe that...
- I was outraged to hear...
- Some people believe that... They are wrong.

Introduction:

Idea 1

Idea 2

Idea 3

Conclusion:

Formal letter top tips: 🧩

- Make your opinion and reason for writing clear in each paragraph.
- Have a strong opinion. If you didn't have a strong opinion either way, you wouldn't bother writing a letter.
- Give as many different reasons to support your opinions as you can.
- Use AFORREST techniques to bring your letter to life.

Remember Mr CHAPS





How do I write a personal letter?



Purpose: to **communicate** with someone you know well. You may write a letter to **recount** events that have happened, or to give your opinion.

Audience: usually a friend or relative; personal letters are always written to someone you know well.

Language: always write in **first person**. The tone of a personal letter needs to be **friendly and informal**, but in **standard English!**

Layout: personal letters begin with **your address** and **the date** in the top right hand corner. Start with 'Dear' followed by the first name of the person you're writing to. End with an **informal** closure such as 'love' or 'best wishes' and then your first name.

Recounting events:

- You'll never believe what happened to me today...
- First...
- Next...
- After that...
- Finally...



Giving opinions and advice:

- Knowing you as I do...
- I know what you're going to think...
- I think we've known each other long enough...
- Here's some advice...



Introduction:

Idea 1

Idea 2

Idea 3

Conclusion:

Personal letter top tips:

- Show that there's a relationship between you and your audience.
- Don't just recount **what** has happened to you— share your **reactions, thoughts and feelings** too.
- Use the occasional rhetorical question or exclamation mark to create a friendly tone.

Remember
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How do I write a formal report?

Purpose: to **give information** about or **evaluate** a particular topic, e.g. a science experiment, facilities in school.

Audience: usually an **adult audience**, for example you might write a report on the school facilities for Mr Grimes, or the local council.

Language: **very formal** and **impersonal**; written in **third person** and **present tense** (but historical reports are written in **past tense**.)

Layout: begin with a **heading** to explain the content of the report. Each paragraph that you write will need a **subheading**. You could use a list of **bullet points** to give information quickly that does not need to be explained— e.g. a list of equipment in a science experiment.

Your headings will usually be specific to your task, but some general headings you could use are:

- Main findings
- Advantages of...
- Disadvantages of...
- Recommendations...
- Suggested improvements...

Useful sentence starters:

- The purpose of this report is...
- It is clear that...
- It has been found that...
- One of the main features/problems/issues/ strengths...
- This is because/ due to...
- To improve, ...
- One recommendation is...



WARNING!

There are some words that you should never use in a formal report:

- I
- me
- my
- we
- our



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How do I write a diary?



Purpose: to **recount** and **keep a record** of events that have happened in the writer's life.

Audience: usually for the writer's eyes only. Diaries are private documents and often contain personal information and secrets!

Language: always write in **first person**. The tone of a diary needs to be **friendly and informal**, like writing for your best friend– but in **standard English!**

Layout: diaries usually start with '**Dear diary**', then continue with a series of **paragraphs**. Your **introduction** should summarise the event you're writing about, then the following paragraphs should retell events in **chronological order**.

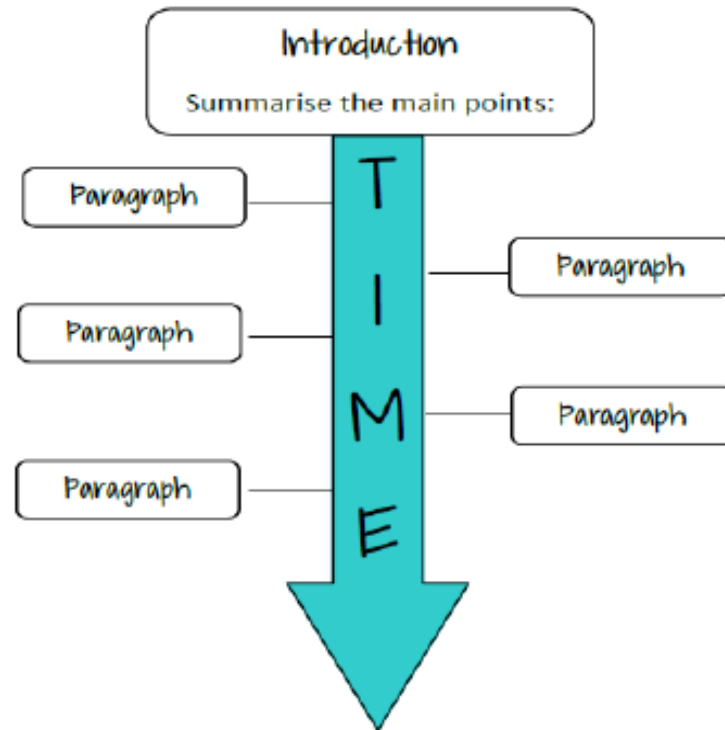
Organising ideas:



- First, ...
- Next, ...
- After that, ...
- A few days later, ...
- From that point on, ...
- Later on, ...
- Finally, ...

Creating an informal tone:

- You'll never believe what happened to me...
- How could I have known what was about to happen?
- Today was a day I'll never forget!
- What a day!



Diary writing top tips:



- Imagine you're writing to your best friend.
- Don't just recount **what** has happened to you– share your **reactions, thoughts and feelings** too.
- Use the occasional rhetorical question or exclamation mark to create a friendly tone.

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How do I write a leaflet?

Purpose: to give **information** or **persuade** someone to do something.

Audience: you could write a leaflet for any specific audience, e.g. schoolchildren, a group of parents, a group of elderly people. It will depend on the task you are given.

Language: You will need to write in **third person**, but you might also use some second person by referring to your audience using the word 'you'. If you're trying to persuade, you could include some of the **AFORREST** persuasive techniques.

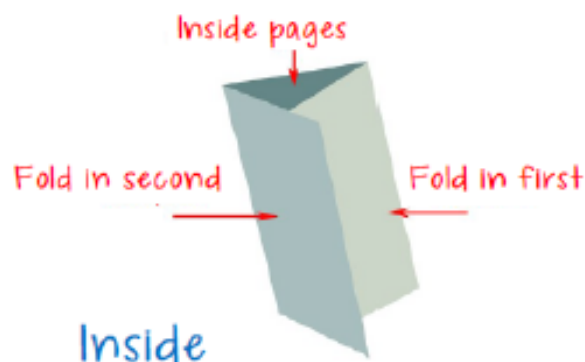
Layout: Leaflets are usually one page of A4 folded into a booklet of six pages. You will need to include headings and subheadings to organise your ideas. You can also use photographs, bullet points and text boxes, but you will also need plenty of text in full sentences too.

Outside



Remember:

- Leaflets need to be attractively presented.
- You can use headings, subheadings, images, text boxes and bullet points.
- Don't forget to include plenty of text too— that means full sentences and paragraphs!



Inside



Persuasive techniques:

- **A:** Tell a personal anecdote
- **F:** Use facts
- **O:** Give your opinion
- **R:** Ask a thought-provoking rhetorical questions
- **R:** Use repetition
- **E:** Use emotive language
- **S:** Support your opinion with statistics
- **T:** Use tripling



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How do I write a speech?



Purpose: to **argue** your views or **persuade** your audience to do something.

Audience: you could give a speech for any specific audience, e.g. schoolchildren, a group of parents, a group of elderly people. It will depend on the task you are given.

Language: You will need to write in **first person** because you are giving **your opinions**. You will need to use **persuasive techniques** to support your opinion.

Layout: You need to organise your ideas into a range of **paragraphs**. Remember to start with an **introduction** and end with a **conclusion**!

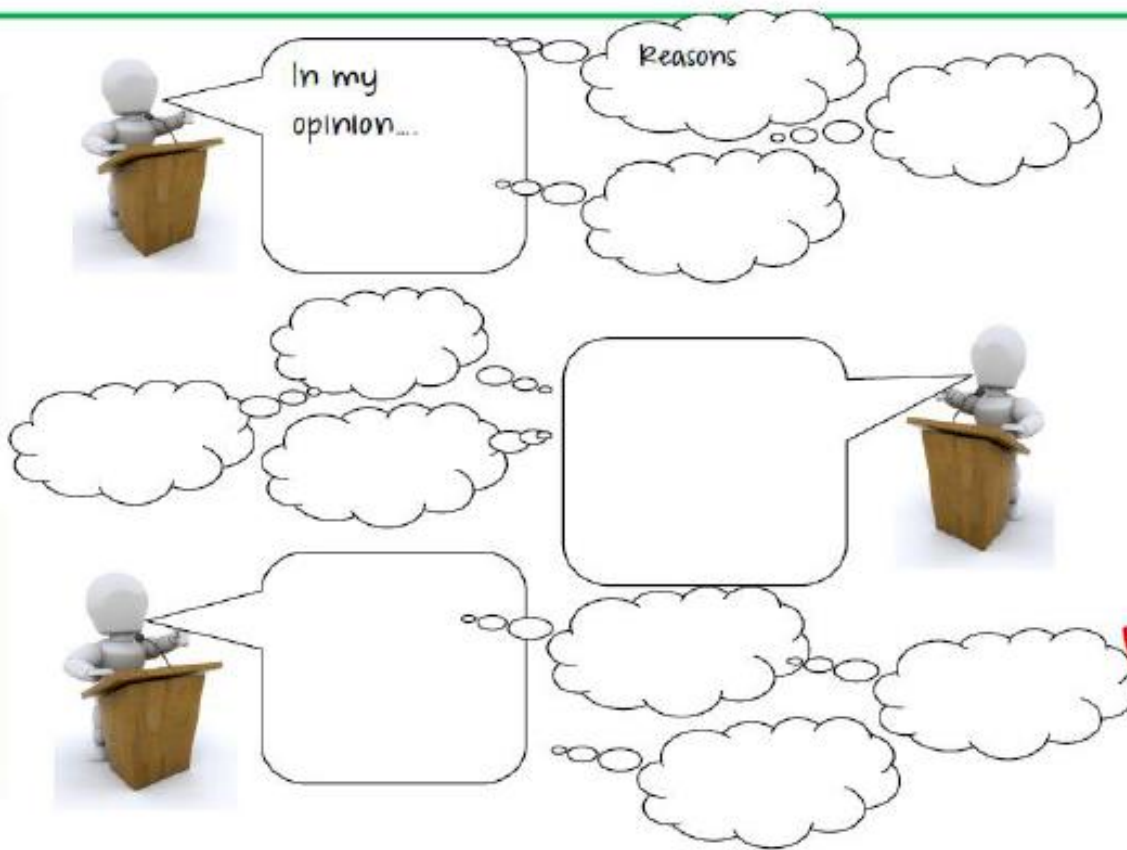
Organising ideas:



- Overall,
- To summarise,
- Firstly,
- Secondly,
- Furthermore,
- Moreover,
- Finally,
- To conclude,

To show a strong opinion:

- It is very clear that...
- There can be no doubt...
- Isn't it obvious?
- Some may argue that...
They are wrong.
- I passionately believe...
- Obviously,



Persuasive techniques:

- **A:** Tell a personal anecdote
- **F:** Use facts
- **O:** Give your opinion
- **R:** Ask a thought-provoking rhetorical questions
- **R:** Use repetition
- **E:** Use emotive language
- **S:** Support your opinion with statistics
- **T:** Use tripling



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How do I write a discussion or essay?



Purpose: To **discuss, analyse, or evaluate** a topic in detail.

Audience: An **expert** in that issue (usually a teacher) who wants to **hear** your views.

Language: You need to use formal language and third person. Do not use words like I or me.

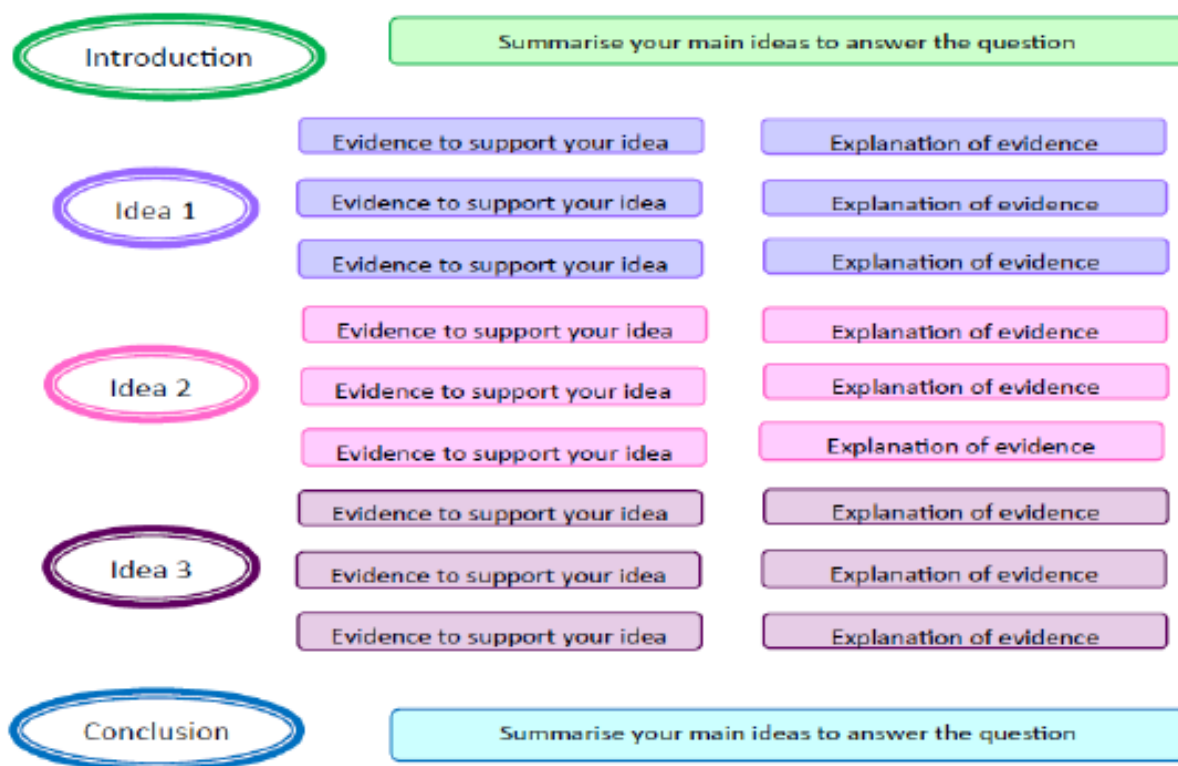
Layout: You will need a heading, and a series of paragraphs. Always start with an introduction and end with a conclusion.

Introducing ideas:

- One of the most important ways/factors/issues is...
- A significant way that...
- Another important factor is...
- Another crucial way...

Including evidence:

- This can be supported by the evidence that...
- This is proven in...
- This is clear when...
- Evidence of this is...
- When the text/writer states that...



Explaining and analysing evidence:

- This suggests that...
- This implies that...
- This is important because...

Using tentative language:

- This **could** imply
- This **might** suggest
- **Perhaps**
- **Maybe**
- **However**
- **Alternatively**

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How do I write an evaluation?

Purpose: to evaluate: that means to describe the strengths and weaknesses of your given topic. You can evaluate your own work, or other things such as a performance or local facilities.

Audience: Evaluations are often for an official audience, perhaps your teacher, or the leader of the local council.

Language: Your language and tone need to be professional and formal. If you're evaluating your own work then you will write in first person. Otherwise, you should write in third person.

Layout: You need to set your work out with a heading and a series of paragraphs. You could also divide your work into sections with subheadings.

Strengths:

- One successful feature was...
- One of the greatest strengths was...
- A further effective aspect of...

Weaknesses:

- One of the less successful features...
- An area that needs improvement is...
- A further weakness that was identified was...

Introduction:

Idea 1

Idea 2

Idea 3

Conclusion:

Improvements

- One way to improve... would be...
- A recommendation to improve... is...
- ... could be improved by....
- In future, the group/local council should...

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How do I write instructions?



Purpose: to tell somebody how a task can be done in a series of steps, for example complete a science experiment or make a cake.

Audience: somebody who wants to learn how to complete the task– they are beginners, not experts!

Language: simple, clear language. Use imperatives (commands) and time connectives to organise your instructions.

Layout: Start with a **heading** which explains the task, then write a series of easy to follow points (usually numbered.) Give every 'step' a line of its own.

Useful connectives:

- First,
- Second,
- Next,
- After that,
- While
- Meanwhile,
- During,
- As,
- Before,



Start every step with a connective, then an imperative. E.g. First, chop the tomatoes...

Title: How to...

1



2



3



4



Imagine giving a different order on every step!



Remember Mr CHAPS





How do I write a newspaper report?



Purpose: to **recount**, or **inform** readers about, a specific event.

Audience: newspaper readers; generally an **adult audience** interested in the news and current affairs.

Language: **formal** and **impersonal**; written in **past tense** and **third person**.

Layout: newspaper articles need a **headline** to catch the reader's eye, and a **by-line** to summarise the story. They usually include an **image** with a **caption**. The article is made up of a series of **paragraphs** and usually organised in **columns**.

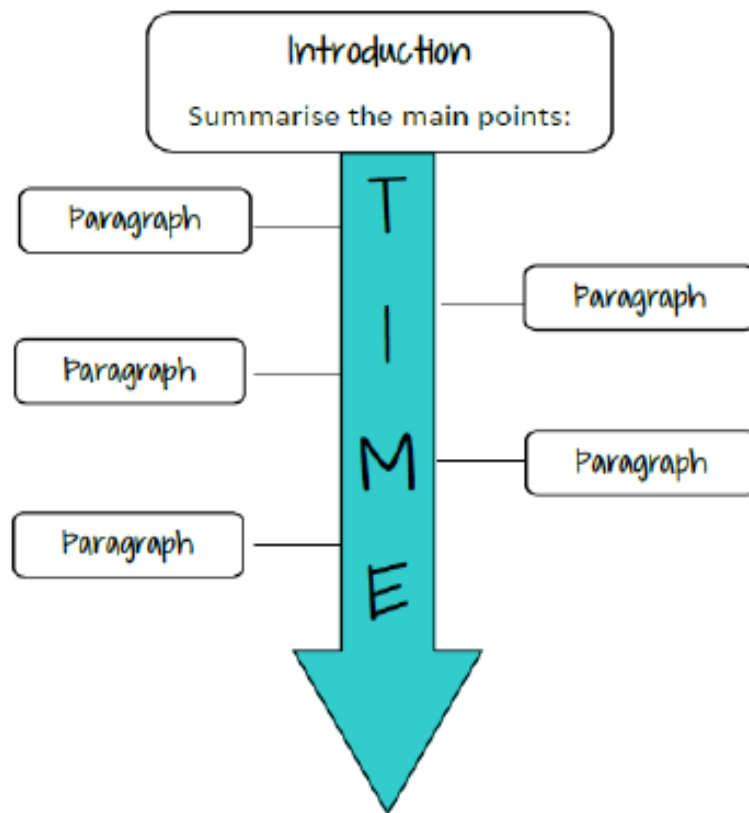
Organising Ideas:



- First, ...
- Next, ...
- After that, ...
- A few days later, ...
- From that point on, ...
- Later on, ...
- Following this, ...
- Finally, ...

Impersonal language:

- Reports **have** emerged...
- It **has** been claimed...
- Rumours **have** surfaced...
- Witnesses **have** claimed...
- It **is** believed that...
- A spokesman **said**...
- A source **has** confirmed...



Showing uncertainty:

- It is possible that...
- It has been suggested...
- It could be argued that...
- Perhaps the answer is...
- Another possible explanation is...
- One suggestion is...
- Perhaps...



Remember Mr CHAPS





Planning Sheet:



Task:

Purpose:
Audience:
Language:
Layout:

Introduction:

Idea 1

Idea 2

Idea 3

Conclusion: