

# Writing for an Audience

## Making it matter

The role of relevance, motivation and emotional involvement in learning

### Teaching Objectives: What the learners should be able to do...

- All the scales you need (CEFR levels for writing)
- What the teachers should be able to do...
- EPOSTL: Writing/Written Interaction (EPOSTL: p. 23-24)

### Starting early: Writing about myself and the world around me

- That's Me
- Me-books
- Free homework

## Format matters

- Diaries (Oliver Twist)
- Project booklets (The Middle Ages, Tall Tales)
- Online Databases

## The Writer's Workshop

- peer conferencing
  - feedback
  - revising
  - publishing

## Creative writing:

- Writing stories: What makes a good story?
  - Creating lively characters and convincing settings (Buttons)
  - Continue the story
  - Storybooks
- Short Stories and Narratives
- Poems: writing poems, using poems as an impulse

## Writing for an audience and a purpose

- Developing and using text recipes
- Magazine Projects
- Newspaper articles
  - The Interstellar Times
  - The newspaper clippings editor
  - Article writing workshop
- Travel brochures
- Reports
- Essays
- Letters
- Letters to the editor

## Portfolios

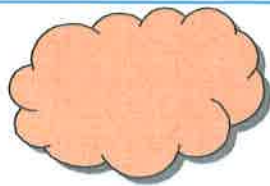
- appreciating the learners' progress and celebrating success

## Assessing Writing

- General considerations: the role of mistakes
- Criteria based assessment
- Using assessment scales

**EPOSTL: Writing**

Descriptors: p. 23 – 24: How can we reach these goals? What has worked well? Where do you see need for improvement and fresh ideas?



I could use some new ideas in these areas...

These ideas have worked well...

**Making it matter:**



Learning is a “global event”, it involves the entire person

What is personally relevant to the learner and what has been richly imagined is more memorable than what has only been understood from words

New knowledge (ideas, concepts, words...) must be constructed by the learner and integrated into his/her existing networks.








Multisensory, multidimensional input will help learning:

ISM: Images + Somatic response + Meaning

How can we create **writing tasks that matter?**



## B. Writing/Written Interaction

1. I can evaluate and select meaningful activities to encourage learners to develop their creative potential. 
2. I can evaluate and select a range of meaningful writing activities to help learners become aware of and use appropriate language for different text types (letters, stories, reports etc). 
3. I can evaluate and select texts in a variety of text types to function as good examples for the learners' writing. 
4. I can evaluate and select a variety of materials to stimulate writing (authentic materials, visual aids etc.). 
5. I can evaluate and select activities which help learners to participate in written exchanges (emails, job applications etc.) and to initiate or respond to texts appropriately. 
6. I can help learners to gather and share information for their writing tasks. 
7. I can help learners to plan and structure written texts (e.g. by using mind maps, outlines etc.). 
8. I can help learners to monitor, reflect on, edit and improve their own writing. 

9. I can use peer-assessment and feedback to assist the writing process. 

10. I can use a variety of techniques to help learners to develop awareness of the structure, coherence and cohesion of a text and produce texts accordingly. 

11. I can evaluate and select a variety of techniques to make learners aware of and use spelling patterns and irregular spelling. 

12. I can evaluate and select writing activities to consolidate learning (grammar, vocabulary, spelling etc.). 



## FIP: Format, Imagination and Pride

Die Didaktik des leeren Blattes.

„Unser wichtigstes Arbeitsmaterial ist das weiße Blatt Papier, unseres Erachtens das kreativste Material, das es gibt. Es stellt "wahrscheinlich die größte Herausforderung an die Imagination der Kinder dar" stellt Peschel (1996, S.38) fest, nachdem er unsere "Pädagogik des weißen Blattes" kennengelernt hatte. Das leere Blatt fordert oder provoziert geradezu die kindliche Phantasie es zu füllen. Wie, das sagt ihm weder das leere Blatt, noch sagen wir's. Das Kind muss selber entscheiden und gestalten. Ein Arbeitsergebnis ist zu dokumentieren, ein Sachthema zusammengefasst darzustellen, um in ein gemeinsames Buch zu kommen. Welche Informationsquellen benutzt werden und wie, überlassen wir vollständig dem Kind. (Zehnpfennig/Zehnpfennig 1992)“



Appreciate students' work and effort

Diaries, Booklets, Databases

Have a look at the examples of students' work and appreciate their effort and motivation to create a perfect product.

Choose one of the booklets and write feedback to the student.

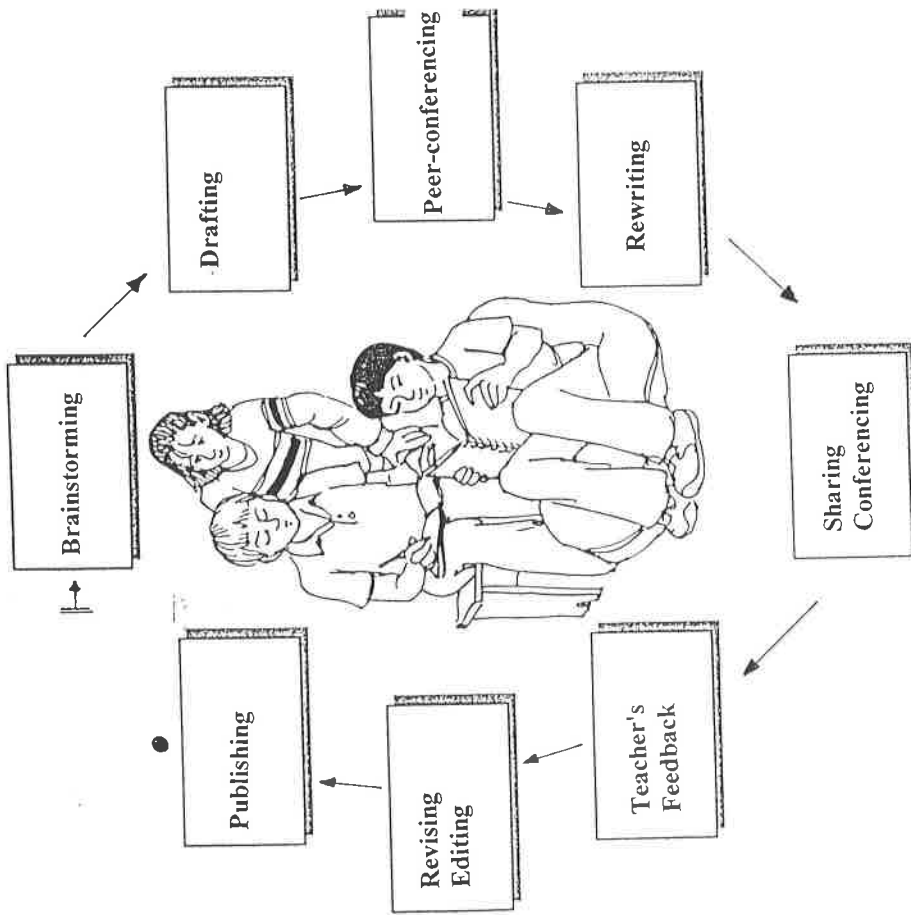
What do you like about the product?

What tips for improvement can you give the student?

Write 3-5 language tips.

Think of a class/topic/theme/unit where you could use this idea.

# THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP



## SAMPLE PEER CONFERENCE RULES

When you need a peer conference:

1. Choose 2 peers to meet with you.
2. Confer quietly.
3. Listen respectfully to all ideas.
4. Thank your peer partners.
5. Summarize and revise by yourself.

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## The horrible skitrip

It was on a very nice Tuesday in winter, and the whole family decided to go skiing to the "Dachstein". The sun was shining and the weather was beautiful too, and so we packed our skis into the car and went there. After one and a half hours we arrived, and bought our tickets for the lift, and now nothing could stop me, and my brother Benedikt to ski down. The snow was wonderful and it was really like in a dream.

My brother wanted to ski on our own, and so we asked our dad. Benedikt asked: "Mom, dad, please could Fabian and me ski alone a little bit? Please, say yes!" Then my mom announced: "Yes, you both can do that but Fabian you have to take care of him, because he is not a brilliant skier. Ok?" I said: "Don't worry about Benedikt, he will survive."

My brother was in front of me and he cried: "Heee, loser why are you so slow, can't you go faster?" I was very angry because I knew that I would be faster than he.

Suddenly he came into a forest and I had to ski after him because I had to take care of him, as my mother said. He was too fast so I thought that he would fall. I followed his tracks into the forest, but what was that? Suddenly there where 2 tracks and I didn't know where to ski.

What shall I do? I was asking myself. I had fear, sweat was running over my face, and I was trembling from head to foot. Where is Benedikt, I thought, is he driving with my parents again, or is he searching around as me?

Then someone was crying my name but I saw nobody. I looked around but could not see anyone. On a track on an other hill I saw my family. Benedikt was also there, and he was giving me a signal, but I didn't know what it should mean.

Either how should I come to my family, I was in trouble, what I had to do. I skied down for a while, but then I only saw trees mountains and snow. I was on an unknown track, and there was wonderful deep snow, but I didn't realise that, I only wanted to go home.

Suddenly heard something and I thought that someone would rescue me, but then I turned around and I saw an avalanche coming. I thought this would be the end, and I will die under the snow. I tried to be faster and I skied my best. I felt how the pieces of ice crashed on my head and there was also cold wind. My whole life was in front of my eyes and I didn't feel my whole body, and it was so cold. The avalanche was coming to me nearer and nearer. Suddenly it swopt over me and I fell down. My left arm and my right foot hurt, they where broken I thought, and I cried because it hurt so much.

"Wake up", cried my brother Benedikt, we are going to ski. I said: "No, no I don't like to go skiing today!!!" My brother could not understand me.

## The skitrip for the dead!

It was on a very nice day in January, and my family decided to go skiing. We went to "Dachstein" a very big skiarea. The sun was shining and everyone wanted to go skiing.

We skied to a downhill and now it could go on. It was a good feeling to ski because the snow was good and also the weather.

But suddenly my brother skied into a forest, and I came after him.

I did not see my brother anymore. Now I tried to find my brother, I looked around me but he was not here. I thought that he is back again on the track, but then I looked around me and did not now where I was. I thought I could come back to the track but after some hours I saw only an unknown downhill. What should I do? I skied down.

When I looked back I saw an avalanche coming straight to me.

I skied the best I could, but then I fell down and the snow was coming over me.

"Wake up", cried my brother we are going to ski. I said: "No, no, no, I don't like to go skiing today!!!"

My brother could not understand me.

→ = fangs

## Reflection on my Writing

If sometimes a avalanche is behind you, you will see that this is not a very nice thing. In this story you can really feel how it is to be under deep snow. When you read it you will have the same fear as the person in the story.

First the story was short and you could not imagine the surrounding so well. Now the story is long and I tried to make it better everytime I wrote it.

**Peer Conferencing:**

Peer conferencing can be very helpful for both parties. The author of the text will get helpful feedback on different levels and the feedback giver will learn to read a text critically. Depending on the specific genre and aims of the writing task, both learners will focus on different aspects of a text such as formal aspects, accuracy, content, organization, register etc.

Peer conferencing is not easy for learners and must be introduced and practiced as a specific skill. The first peer-comments may be very flattering, unspecific or even aggressive. Students who have received helpful feedback from their teacher, will easily learn this skill by imitating their teacher's feedback behavior. It also helps to give students clear feedback rules and to teach an introductory skills-lesson on giving feedback using one text and inviting the class to suggest improvements. The following peer-conference forms may also be helpful in the beginning stages or after introducing a new genre. Each of these forms focuses on a particular text-type and guides the learners through the important features of this genre. After a few rounds of guided feedback, most learners will be able to give helpful, constructive feedback without the help of such forms.

Look at the feedback forms and the free learner comments on the following pages. Then design a short feedback form for an oral book presentation of a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> form. What criteria might be helpful?

**Peer-feedback: Book Presentation**

**Peer Editing Form: Essay**

Give your paper and this form to a classmate. Ask him or her to read through your text. Then tell this person to answer the questions below. Ask your friend to provide you with specific comments that will help you improve your paper.

Peer editor's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of paper: \_\_\_\_\_

	Comments, Suggestions, Tips
1. Is the piece interesting?	
2. Do you get a clear picture of the topic?	
3. Is the introduction strong?	
4. Does the writing make sense or have I confused you?	
5. Is my purpose clear? Is my main point clear?	
6. Does the title fit the piece?	
7. Is the writing smooth, logically sequenced, coherent?	
8. Do you have enough information?	
9. Does the paper stick to the topic or have I included any irrelevant information?	
10. Have I used good arguments/ideas?	
11. Have I used good examples?	
12. Is my conclusion convincing?	
13. Have I used specific vocabulary (descriptive adjectives, vivid verbs, specific nouns) or is my writing wordy?	
14. Have the paragraphs been indented?	
15. Does each paragraph contain one main idea?	
16. Have I quoted my sources properly?	
17. Have I used correct language (grammar and spelling)?	
18. How do you like the layout and presentation of my paper?	

Please use the back of this sheet for additional comments.

Writer's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Peer Editing Form #1

Peer editor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Manuscript title: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Things I like best about this piece of writing are

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2. To make your text better, I suggest that you

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\_\_\_\_\_

## Basic Peer Feedback:

Feedback for: CHILD LEADERS IN BIG COMPANIES! 24.9.2005

Fine detail, I really have to say that's a REALLY good topic to write about, it's come under this tree you really open the reader's eyes!! But I think you could add your own personal thoughts about what these companies like <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ like and what they're doing. You could maybe put your thoughts about at the top, when you were "in planning that is about..." or at the bottom after you wrote about what "happy" is doing for a while! But you can decide yourself. I think the grammar is very good and you wrote a very catchy title.

Feedback for: STARTMANIA NG

I think the text is very good written. You get very much information about the tv-dates and about the candidates. But I would write the names of the candidates, the web-page address and the tv-dates in different colors.

~~Stefo Spöckel~~

Feedback for: Stammaria NG

I think your text is great! I like that you have all the main and details.

Just write it thinner... I give a different font.

Doris

Feedback book for: "The orks!"

I like your text very much! It's a very interesting topic for readers who like fantasy. It's a good idea to write on the end of the text your own comment!

I would put pictures from Orks and the other figures. What also more about trees, like: what they do and what they like and their enemies!

The title isn't catchy enough. I think I would call it something like "Who are the top 10 in Austria?" Read it and you'll know it! I like your small comments, they're great! I also like the layout! I would change the title, just this.

Yours, Stammaria

I think the title is not catchy enough and you can write something like: Do you know the Top 10 in Austria? But your comments are very good. I also like your beautiful layout!

Your friend G

**More advanced feedback samples**

Dear Sarah,

*I have just finished reading your story and I find it really good. It was unpredictable and unexpected. At the parts where Paul is afraid you used short sentences and I think that has a good effect! Also the description in the beginning is very good.*

*Maybe you could describe Paul more and also put more description into the part when the neighbor comes into his room. Like maybe, 'the door creaked and the footsteps got louder...' so there is more suspense. Otherwise I enjoyed reading your story.*

Victoria

Dear Xin,

*I find your story very confusing indeed. It's well written and all, good vocab, but the content is confusing. So are the characters, if you can call them that. Who on earth are Sue and Dan, are they Anthony's parents? What Anthony's father says at the end is totally unexpected, and doesn't seem to fit to the rest of the story. 'Gay people don't go to heaven. Anthony you know that? You can pray for them, but it won't help.' According to that sentence it would seem that a friend of Anthony's is gay, and Anthony is praying for him. You definitely have to explain a little more, the story isn't coherent. And the end is very abrupt as well, and leaves the reader (me anyways) very confused. The scene where he and his brother are running, and Anthony's bible hits the mud seems to be more connected to his promise not to cry rather than being an indication that he's gay. So, you should try and make the whole thing a bit clearer, and if Anthony is supposed to be gay, then make him gay.*

*All in all the story is good, but confusing and incoherent. The language and so on and so forth is great as usual, there are still some small mistakes, but nothing too bad. So work on it a bit, and it'll be great!*

Ben

Dear Christoph,

*I can see very well that the hectic atmosphere of a metropolitan area like New York has inspired you. The main character comes across very good, he is a perfect 'victim' of Wall Street. I also think that the mobile phone as the symbol for his society fits perfectly. What you could add are some street names. You could think of some street or place which stands for his behavior like Times Square or something close to Wall Street. At the end you could describe the fact that he feels irrelevant more indirectly. Instead of letting him scream his situation out you could portray him being lost in the City and feeling out of touch with the rest of the world. Besides this I really have no complaints, well done.*

Arno

**Writer's answer to his friend's tips:**

*I really have to admit, that this sort of correction/first feedback was of great help to me. To be honest it helped more than I had expected. Despite the obvious fact that the reader found some mistakes, this exercise even encouraged me to read through the text again after some while and even to find some mistakes by myself. I guess the reason for this is that if you leave the text for at least 24 hours and afterwards read through it again, you may see some extracts from a different and more objective point of view.*

*All in all I included all the corrections made by my first reader, apart from the word 'opponent' (on the first page), for which I didn't manage to find another similar and more fitting word.*

# Planning a Story

1. Work in groups of three. Together plan the main structure and ingredients of a good story.  
What is your story going to be about? Who are the main characters? Where does it take place? What main events are going to happen? Don't discuss the ending yet!  
What is the title going to be? Fill in the grid below:

Title of the Story	
Introduction First sentence	
Setting: Where does the story play. Collect 5-10 good words that describe the place.	
Main characters (animals or people) Give them fitting names	
What problem do they encounter?	
How does your character feel about the events in the story? Highlight some of the feelings or add your own ideas.	angry, aggressive, bored, curious, disappointed, happy, optimistic, satisfied, envious, frightened, interested, puzzled, relieved, sad, thoughtful, shocked....
Surprise ending:	

2. Then, at home, write your story. Use all the ideas from the box and make it long and colorful. Find a surprise ending. Write very nicely or type your story so your partners can read it easily.  
Bring your story to class on .....

3. **Peer conference:** Work with your story partners. Read your friends' stories and compare them with your own. Write a peer-comment for each of your friends. Copy the following sentences on your peer-comment sheet and complete them.

The best part of your story is:

Something I have learned from you:

My tips: Try this to make your story even better:

Then show your story and your friends' comments to your teacher or co-teacher and ask them for additional tips.

4. **Revise your story at home.** Use all the tips to make your story better and longer. Add at least 5 sentences. Hand in your revised story on .....

5. **Bookmaking:** Choose one of the two book-making techniques that you have learned in class and make a pretty storybook. Write your story into the book as nicely as you can and decorate the book.

6. **Book reading:** We will share our books and celebrate! Enjoy the good stories.

## Recipe for Spooky Stories

Ingredients:

Spooky Background	
Spooky Characters	
New Grammar	
Other ingredients and useful phrases	

## Recipe for Spooky Stories

Ingredients:

Spooky Background	<p><b>Spooky places:</b> cemetery, castle, dark cellars or basements, dark forest, lonely streets, small village, moving shadows...foggy night in October/ November, Halloween...</p> <p><b>spooky sounds :</b>the leaves are rustling, the door is creaking, you hear footsteps, the wind is howling, the owl is hooting, the rain is drumming on the windows, a child is screaming,</p>
Spooky Characters	<p>ghosts, spiders, witches, children, gravedigger, owl is hooting, skull, skeleton, bones, dogs, rats, black cats, mice, ravens, ...</p>
New Grammar	<p>past progressive form: to describe the background (the owl was hooting, the moon was shining, it was raining...)</p>
Other ingredients and useful phrases	<p>Surprise ending, danger, child is afraid (he has goosebumps, his hair stands on end, he screams, he hides, his heart beats like mad, he shivers,</p>

# Story Writing Impulses

## Working with settings

Good, realistic (or fantastic) settings are the backbone of every good story. They help set the atmosphere. Describing settings can be learned fairly easily. You need two main ingredients: specific vocabulary and a basic understanding of the usage of the past progressive form.

## List of Ingredients

The class agrees on a type of setting (e.g.: for a spooky story). Then brainstorm typical elements of this setting on the board. Ss copy the elements (new vocab) on their worksheets and/or on their vocab cards.

example: spooky story: cemetery, dark forest, midnight, full moon, owl is hooting, storm is howling, old building, old castle, ghosts, dead body, leaves are rustling.

## Sorting Ingredients

Prepare a long list of useful story ingredients for different settings. Cut into pieces and mix.

Groups sort the ingredients into different categories/settings and copy them on their worksheets.

## Background + Past Progressive

Practice the use of the past progressive form to describe the background. (Newby, Grammar for Communication)

## Little Bird Dictation

Use short text as an example to show the use of past progressive in describing the setting

## The Taj Mahal exercise

Prepare short core-text of a place. Ss expand, adding lots of adjectives.

Variation: Secretly half the class is told to describe the place in positive terms, the other half describes the place as an awful one. Then they compare their descriptions.

## Drawing the scene

Ss read a story and draw the place (picture or map). They might also label their drawing.

## Pictures of typical story settings:

spooky places: castle, cemetery, dark streets...  
beautiful places: beach, palm trees, landscapes, mountains  
dangerous places: wild ocean, rivers, steep mountains, cliffs, highways...  
cozy places: nice home, cat, romantic garden...

Groups choose a setting and describe it in detail. They could also bring their own pictures or ideas for settings. Ss use dictionaries and teacher for vocab help.

After doing these exercises the Ss will SEE, HEAR, FEEL and SMELL the place of their choice. They are ready to think of characters for their story.

## Story Characters

Describing realistic, plausible characters is not an easy task. Help students by reducing the number of characters in their stories (not more than 2 main characters and a few minor characters if necessary). Characters always need

a name: play with different names and your students' associations with them. Is John any different from Charley or Sammy? Is Susan the same as Rebecca or Martha? What about Harry, Tom, Charlotte, Max, Judith...?

an age and a profession: Ss define their characters' jobs and age  
an outward appearance: Ss describe their characters' looks and clothes, they might also bring pictures of film-stars or ads... that resemble their characters.

personal qualities, likes and dislikes: Ss list some of the likes and dislikes of their main characters and find at least 5 adjectives describing their characters. Ss use their dictionaries for this purpose.

Exercises that help create multidimensional characters:

Tip: Build on students' personal associations and emotions to help them create plausible characters.

- buttons: Buttons have lots of qualities that help define characters. They are old or new, they are large or small, they are made of plastic, glass, wood, metal, they have a smooth or rough texture, they may be shiny or dull, translucent or opaque. They have bright colors or dark colors. All these qualities can be linked to story characters.

Task: Ss choose a button from a large collection and describe it. The button then becomes a character with a name, an age, a profession, likes and dislikes... a whole life of its own. Ss can either choose any button they like, then define a character around it; or they have a certain character in mind and find a matching button to represent their character. Button characters of different students then meet in a story.

- pictures/faces: You need a collection of photos or clippings from magazines. Ss choose an interesting face and create a character portrait as above. Ss then work in groups, their characters meet in a story.

## The problem:

Every good story will develop around some kind of conflict. Ss decide what problem their main characters run into. (Students might suggest a whole list of problems – make them focus on ONE problem only.)

## The main events:

Things will happen to the main characters. Stories tend to fall apart and become implausible if too many things happen. Remind students to focus on one or two main events. What is going to happen to the main characters?

## The effects:

The main events will influence the characters. Realistic characters show real feelings. How do they react to these events?

Are they scared, shocked, happy, sad, excited, curious...?

Use the "faces and feelings" sheet (or a reduced version) to help Ss choose appropriate emotional reactions.

Tip: Laura Cornell, *Today I feel silly*, Harper Collins (a children's book on feelings, available at amazon.de or amazon.com)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Make Scenes More Vivid

All of the events in a story need to be described in detail that will make a clear picture in the reader's mind. Look at the following lines from first drafts. Then examine how they have been revised in second drafts.

### DRAFT ONE

Sally and Jane went to the store.

Add details to make a clearer picture of the store.

### DRAFT TWO

Sally and Jane headed downtown to the city's biggest mall. Right away, they took the glass elevator up to the second floor of the huge steel and glass building. All the clothing stores were on the second floor.

### DRAFT ONE

Once upon a time there was a king.

Add details to make a clearer picture of the time.

### DRAFT TWO

A long time ago, in a faraway land where unicorns still roamed and the fields were filled with wildflowers, there lived a king.

### DRAFT ONE

The Smith family sat at the table ready to eat supper.

Add details to make a clearer picture of the Smith's dinner.

### DRAFT TWO

The Smith family sat down at the big oak table that was filled with plates and plates of food. There were loaves of freshly baked bread, mashed potatoes, crisp fresh green beans, and a golden brown turkey. Delicious smells rose from all over the table.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Make Scenes More Vivid (Part 2)

Now that you have seen how adding details creates a clearer picture, revise the following sentences by adding more details.

### DRAFT ONE

Frank and his friends decided to play in the park because it was such a nice day.

Add details describing what kind of day it was.

### DRAFT ONE

Lisa knew right away she wanted the puppy in the store window. He was so cute.

Add details describing how cute the puppy was.

### DRAFT ONE

George received a bike for his birthday. It was exactly the kind he wanted.

Add details describing the kind of bike George received.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Character Reaction

When we read a book, we are interested in what the characters do. But if all we learn about them is what they do, we become bored very quickly. We also want to know what the characters feel and think. It is through both their actions and their reactions to an event that we learn who they are and how they feel.

**Here is an example of a scene from a story with no character reaction. Notice how the first version is much shorter than the others and not as interesting.**

Marcy was sitting at a restaurant table waiting for her friend, Lee, to join her. The place was crowded and filled with the noise of customers chatting, waiters and cooks calling out, and music playing. Lee had been anxious to try this new restaurant.

Twenty minutes passed and still no Lee. Marcy wondered where she was.

**Here is a version of the story with character reactions included.**

Marcy was sitting at a restaurant table waiting for her friend, Lee, to join her. The place was crowded and filled with the noise of customers chatting, waiters and cooks calling out, and music playing. Marcy felt uncomfortable with so many people around. She would have preferred having a small picnic at the park instead. However, Lee was anxious to try this new restaurant.

Twenty minutes passed and still no Lee. Marcy grew concerned. What could be holding her up? Marcy tried not to think of bad things because she knew she would grow worried. Yet, if nothing bad had happened, then where was Lee? It wasn't like her to be so late.

**Now here is another version with the same character having a different reaction.**

Marcy was sitting at a restaurant table waiting for her friend, Lee, to join her. The place was crowded and filled with the noise of customers chatting, waiters and cooks calling out, and music playing. Marcy loved the excitement and activity all around her. She bopped her head to the steady beat of the music and observed all the people. Lee had been very anxious to try this new restaurant and Marcy was glad she suggested it.

Twenty minutes passed and still no Lee. Marcy was not concerned. She did not mind waiting for her friend. If she wasn't there, then something must have come up. No doubt she would get there as soon as she could. Marcy wondered if Lee would have some exciting story to tell her.

**Marcy is a very different character in each version. Her thoughts and feelings about what is going on around her tell us what she is like.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Character Reaction (Part 2)

Now see if you can create two different versions of the same story, each depending on the character's reactions. Here is the version without reactions.

Billy went for a walk through the park on a Sunday morning. When he got to the playground, he sat down on a bench and read his book. Billy was distracted from his reading by the sounds of two little children arguing in the sandbox.

**Give Billy some thoughts, feelings, and reactions.**

**Version 1**

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**Version 2**

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A story for you to complete...

## The Substitute Teacher

Mrs. Wallace, our teacher, stood in front of us. "I have to go away," she said. "I will be gone for a week. Starting on Monday, you will have a substitute teacher. I hope you will behave yourselves while the substitute is here." The class started giggling.

Mrs. Wallace was a real nice teacher, but we gave her a hard time. Our class was rowdy. We were noisy and rude. We didn't do our homework. We got in trouble on the playground. We weren't even allowed to eat in the cafeteria anymore!

"We're sure going to have fun when that substitute gets here," Jeremiah Hogan said. Jeremiah was the ringleader of our class. He could think of more good ways to cause trouble than anyone else.

A bunch of us lived near school. Together, we spent the whole weekend planning how to drive the poor substitute crazy while Mrs. Wallace was away.

Nobody was absent Monday morning. We all wanted to see who our substitute would be. We didn't want to miss any of the fun we would have. "We're going to get away with murder this week!" Jeremiah said gleefully.

No one sat down when the bell rang. We all ran around the room getting louder and wilder than usual. A teacher looked in the door on her way to her own class. "I feel sorry for the substitute who gets stuck with this class!" she said.

(over)



# The Substitute Teacher (continued)

We were just about to turn all the desks around to face the back wall when a voice boomed, "Sit down!" It was the principal! We all sat down and got about as quiet as our class could get.

"Class," said the principal, "you have quite a reputation! It isn't easy finding a substitute willing to take on a group like you." For some reason, the principal's strange smile made me feel a little nervous.

"After searching most of the weekend, I finally found just the right substitute. This one will see that you behave yourselves and get your schoolwork done!"

Jeremiah and some of the kids laughed. They thought that was impossible! Some of the rest of us squirmed in our seats. We were beginning to worry about just who this new substitute might be.

"Ah," said the principal, looking out the door, "here comes your substitute now." The principal walked over to the door. You could have heard a pin drop; the room was so quiet.

"Class, here is your substitute for the week!" the principal said. He threw the door open. Jeremiah looked as if he would faint. A couple of kids screeched out loud. The principal smiled that strange smile again. As he stepped back, I saw the substitute enter the room.

I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE MY EYES!

## COMPLETE!

Finish the story on a separate sheet of paper.

## EXTEND!

Choose one of the writing activities below.

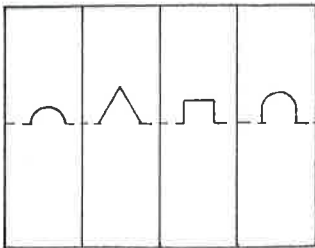
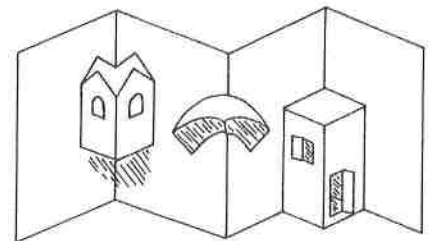
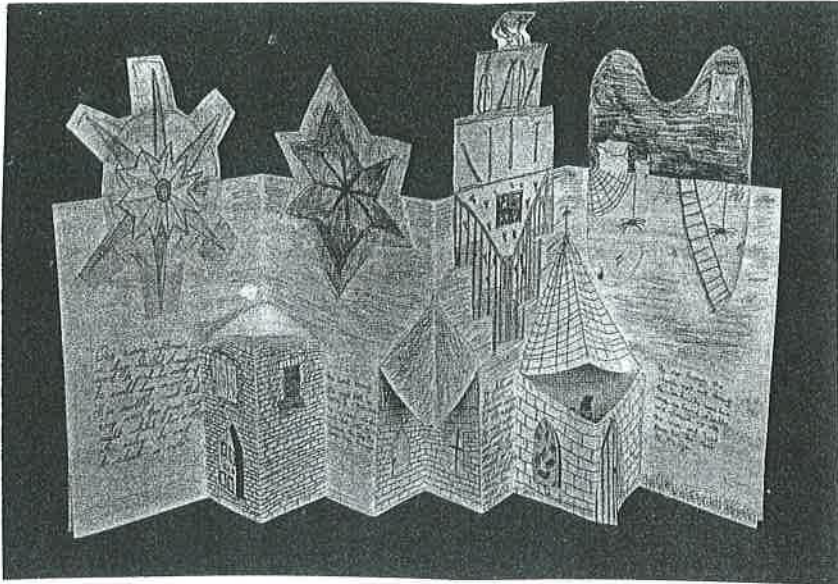
- Write about a time when you (or your class) got into trouble at school. What did you do to get into trouble? What happened?
- Do you enjoy school when a substitute is teaching your class? Why or why not?
- Suppose there was a contest for The Best School in the Country. Tell why you think your school would win.

## EXPLORE!

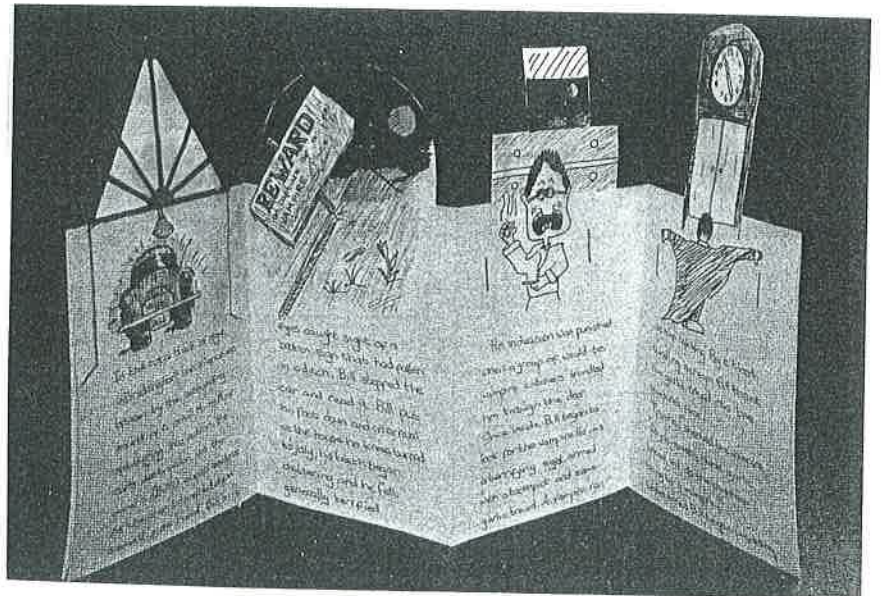
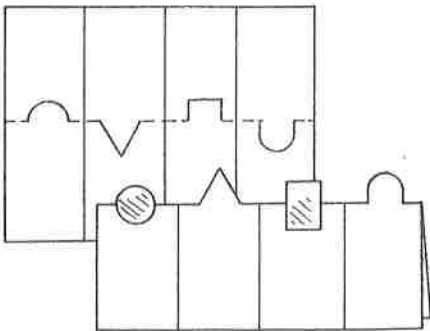
Complete one of these activities:

- Suppose you were the substitute teacher for this rowdy class. You'd have to have some fair but strict rules for the students if you wanted to keep them under control and out of trouble. Make a list: Ten Fair Rules a Teacher Should Ask a Class to Follow.
- This class was so bad the students weren't even allowed to eat in the school cafeteria. Sometimes they may not have minded! Take a survey of your class. Ask each person, "What are the best and worst foods our school cafeteria serves?" On your paper, write the three favorite and three least favorite cafeteria foods.
- Mrs. Wallace is described as "a real nice teacher." On your paper, make a list: Ten Qualities of a Good Teacher.

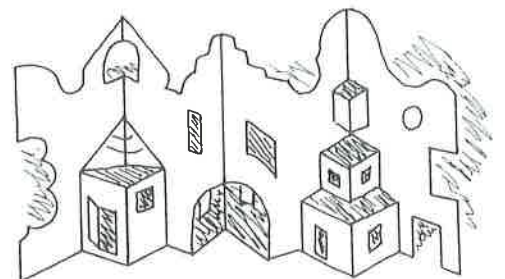
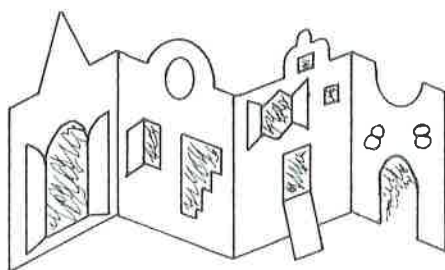
# You can make your own book!!!!



3



from: Paul Johnson, *Literacy through the Book Arts*



# What is a Short Story?

weeks before the dance he spent an hour talking with her about a number of things which didn't matter at all. <sup>15</sup>

"Would you like to go to the dance with me?" he said finally.

She started to talk about something else. Then he felt flustered, and ruffled, and bothered, by this ploy or stratagem or whatever it was. He broke in to say, "What about the dance?" <sup>40</sup>

He wanted an answer.

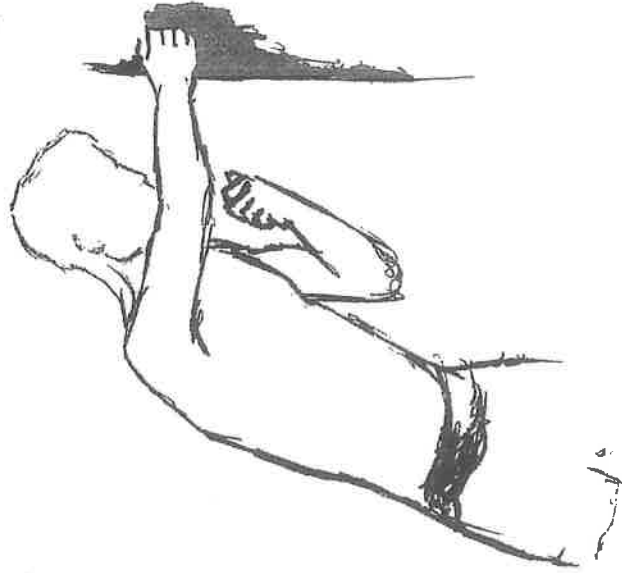
Blushing, as though there were no other way of doing it, she said, "If I go with anyone, it won't be with you."

"I see," he said, and left soon after.

He went to the woodshed to punch his sack of sawdust. <sup>45</sup> He didn't go to the dance, and neither did she. The final exams were very close and she, too, had a lot of work to do.

(498 w)

1974



17

*Fraser Sutherland*

## Patricia

His fists sank thumping into the heavy bag; a sack he'd filled with sawdust and hung up out in the woodshed because he wanted to get into condition. When he finished his workout he looked at himself in the mirror. He liked the look of <sup>5</sup> hard muscles on his body, the shining sweat.

He liked to look at Patricia, too. She was fourteen, and her hair was black, all the blacker for the glints of brown you could sometimes see in the light. She had clear skin and always a slight flush beneath her cheekbones, nothing to do with the <sup>10</sup> Avon lady. Her lips were red and full, but just a little too soft. At fourteen she was an appealing thin, as if she were growing fast while her stomach stayed flat. Her hips were slight and the bones of her wrists and ankles small. She worked hard in school.

He watched Patricia — no one ever called her Pat — as <sup>15</sup> she changed day by day, the whole of her, startling him each time he looked. He was changing, too, and his voice often surprised him. She lived next door and he came to see her quite a lot. They would play cards or play catch with a rubber <sup>20</sup> ball out in the yard. Once, when they were playing Auction 45's in the living room he was in a funny mood and put a card right down on her knee as she sat close to him. "Don't impose," she said, and he took the card away.

One Saturday he came around to her house. Her father <sup>25</sup> let him in. Patricia and her mother would soon be home from the hair-dresser's, though. That was all right. A few minutes later the door opened and Patricia walked in, her hair done up in a high Italian style. He gasped because she was so beautiful, <sup>30</sup> so unassailably beautiful. The sweat beaded on his forehead, and he retreated soon afterwards. She was too beautiful for him to stay.

There was going to be a spring dance down at the school and he thought a lot about asking her to go. One day a few

16

*Joseph Bruchac*  
**The Ship**

I was a small boy. We were on board a steamship on a resort lake. As we went by the shore the captain would announce to the passengers details about the cottages on the banks.

"This is the estate," squawked the loudspeaker, "of the owner of the Algonquin Motor Lodge." A hugely windowed mansion with great pillars.

From the docks and the steps of boathouses people waved as we passed.

"This is the summer home of the President of the Albany Savings Bank."

I lifted my small arm and waved back.

"This is the summer home of . . ."

"You notice they don't tell where the poor people live," said a man wearing a worn blue shirt to the woman and child behind him. I noticed the woman's clothing was out of date and uncomfortable looking. I noticed the woman's hair was thinning and her face seemed to be worn thin like sandstone by wind. Then I noticed she was my mother.

I kept waving at the people on beaches and on floats, in boats and in the water. Then a little girl went by in a huge power boat driven by a man whom I knew must be her father. I waved . . . but she didn't wave back.

I looked up at my mother. "Little girl didn't wave."

"She didn't see you."

"But I wave to her. Why can't she . . ." My mother interrupted my words with a weary wave of her hand.

"Look around you!" she said.

I looked. The boat was full of mothers and children. They leaned over rails and dangled through portholes. All around were children my age, younger, older, in varying degrees of happiness and sorrow, good clothing and bad, clean faces and dirty. And each of them was waving, thinking the returned wave from the shore was for themselves alone.

(303 w)

1972/73

## A Short Story Recipe

What are the typical features of a short-story? Collect your ideas in your group and produce a 'text-recipe' for writing a short story. What ingredients do you need? **How do you use and combine them** to create a successful short story?

# Ace your next Short Story

## No Soaps, Please!

### Tips for writing a short-story

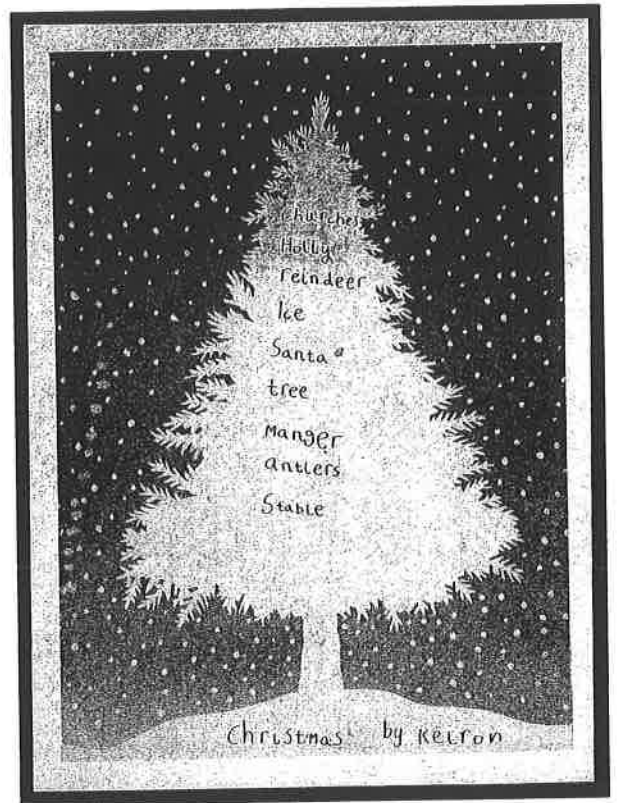
- **Little 'action':** Most of the best short stories include very little 'action'. They concentrate upon what happens in **a few days, hours, or even minutes** and **focus on the experience** of one or two people. Don't tell people's life stories.
- **Be truthful:** The reader must believe what you're telling him/her. Avoid exotic events and dramatic developments. Start with everyday experiences – if possible with an experience you have had yourself. Change little details as you need them.
- **Describe your main character(s) vividly.** Bring them on by showing rather than telling how they feel about certain things. Show how they walk, talk and dress. Think about the way they behave in typical ways (e.g. fidgeting, striding up and down, pacing up and down, chewing gum, humming contently...) Do they speak in full sentences or are they using short, abrupt phrases? Do they use slang or formal language? Give your characters fitting names.
- **Describe the setting:** Create a sense of time and place. Decide on the time of year, the weather and think how these affect your place. Use colors, sounds or even subtle smells to create a multidimensional, plausible background for your story. You can easily add 'color' by using brand-names (e.g. He jumped into his Porsche or on his brand-new KTM mountain-bike...), place-names (towns, streets, shops...).
- **What is the problem:** Before you start writing you **MUST** know the basic problem that your character is going to have. The problem will be more realistic if it is a small, everyday problem that your readers will be able to identify with. (e.g. feeling left out, feeling embarrassed...)
- **Short, sharp, ending: What does your character learn?** This is called the 'epiphany' of the story. The epiphany can be a very small, seemingly unimportant moment of insight. Don't exaggerate-- your character needn't change the world in a day. Don't spoil your story with a cliché or a sensational ending.



## ACROSTIC

The acrostic poem can be read downwards as well as across, the initial letters making up the title of the poem. The strict discipline of this form makes a puzzle which children often enjoy solving. Use the acrostic form to encourage the less confident children to 'have a go'. They can write about themselves, using the letters of their name, trying to describe things they enjoy doing, things they detest, characteristics, how they look, and so on. The acrostic is useful for seasonal poems and poems about each month of the year. Think of CHRISTMAS, for example. On the board, collect ideas for each letter. (For the initial C: children, church, candles, carols, Christchild; H: holly, home, happiness, hymn.) Help the children to collect and expand these ideas about Christmas. The very youngest can make a simple list poem.

*Carols*  
*Holly*  
*Reindeer*  
*Ivy*  
*Stockings*  
*Trees*  
*Mince pies*  
*A baby*  
*Stars.....*  
**CHRISTMAS!**

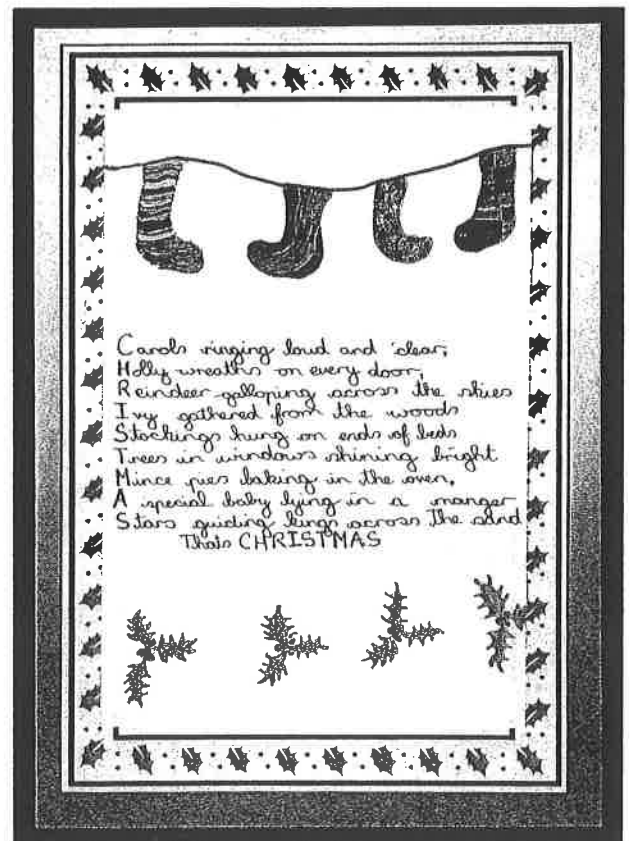


More established writers will be expected to expand these ideas to make each line describe something more about Christmas, perhaps thinking about how it feels and what it means to us.

*Carols ringing loud and clear,*  
*Holly wreaths on every door,*  
*Reindeer galloping across the skies,*  
*Ivy gathered from the woods.*  
*Stockings hung on ends of beds,*  
*Trees in windows shining bright,*  
*Mince pies baking in the oven.*  
*A special baby lying in a manger,*  
*Stars guiding Kings across the sand .....*  
*..... That's CHRISTMAS!*

If children want to experiment with rhyme, the acrostic is ideal. It can be quite humorous, allowing inversions and half-rhymes.

*Carol-singing in the frosty air*  
*Holly wreaths all down the stair.*  
*Reindeer galloping across the night*  
*Ivy looped with tinsel bright.*  
*Stockings hanging on ends of beds*  
*Trees decorated in golds and reds.*  
*Mince pies ready, spicy and hot*  
*A baby in a manger cot.*  
*Stars to guide kings all the way.....*  
*.....And we wake up to Christmas Day!*  
 (Group poem)



# Found Poetry

Found poetry is the rearrangement of words or phrases taken randomly from other sources (example: clipped newspaper headlines, bits of advertising copy, handwritten cards pulled from a hat) in a manner that gives the rearranged words a completely new meaning.

## Letters

### Mumbai: No Vision, No Dream

YOUR ARTICLE "BOMBAY DREAMS" (APRIL 25) presents a shockingly one-sided picture of the people who inhabit Mumbai. The article rides roughshod over the basic human rights of the poor. Since November 2004, more than 400,000 people have been violently rendered homeless as part of the chief minister's Vision Mumbai plan. No one has been made accountable for this crime and, in the hands of the current government, the future for the poor only threatens to get worse. I urge you to present a more holistic picture of urbanization that respects the human rights of all who contribute to the city's economy and culture. Presenting a story biased toward the wealthy residents of Mumbai only reaffirms the trend of urban apartheid that is becoming evident across the world. And Shanghai is not a good example to follow, as it was built into a so-called world-class city on the backs of men, women and children who have been displaced from their traditional homes. Is this the future of urbanization that NEWSWEEK seeks to promote?

MILLOON KOTHARI  
*Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing*  
*U. N. Commission on Human Rights*  
 NEW DELHI, INDIA

## Letters

### London: A Millennial Metropolis

YOU NEARLY GOT IT RIGHT ABOUT LONDON'S moment in history ("London Calling," April 25). Yes, there's the astonishing cultural and social tapestry woven to create a globally unique urban landscape and, yes, there are plans to make change on a heroic scale. But we're still only teetering on the brink of success. London could easily slip back to being just another expensive, overcrowded sprawling muddle if bold decisions on transport, housing and core infrastructure are derailed by lack of direction or, worse still, needless dithering. Shaping the future on an unprecedented scale through the Thames Gateway project, thereby securing London's position as a world city without compare, needs visionary leadership that will inspire the rest of us who still have our moments of doubt.

STAN HORNAGOLD  
 BRENTWOOD, ENGLAND

*Newsweek, 2005*

### Bombay Dreams of Urbanization

on the backs of  
 men  
 women  
 and  
 children  
 displaced  
 and  
 homeless.  
 Who is accountable?

### London

Inspiring world city without compare  
 Globally unique urban landscape  
 Cultural tapestry woven to create  
 Change on a heroic scale

but we are still only teetering on the brink  
 derailed by lack of direction  
 another expensive,  
 overcrowded muddle,  
 full of doubt.

# What's the Story?

John Hardy was a brave little man,  
He carried two guns ev'ry day.  
Killed him a man in the West Virginia land,  
Oughta seen poor Johnny gettin' away, Lord, Lord,  
Oughta seen poor Johnny gettin' away.

John Hardy was standin' at the barroom door,  
He didn't have a hand in the game,  
Up stepped his woman and threw down fifty cents,  
Says, "Deal my man in the game, Lord, Lord...."

John Hardy lost that fifty cents,  
It was all he had in the game,  
He drew the forty-four that he carried by his side  
Blowed out that poor Negro's brains, Lord, Lord....

John Hardy had ten miles to go,  
And half of that he run,  
He run till he come to the broad river bank,  
He fell to his breast and he swum, Lord, Lord....

He swum till he came to his mother's house,  
"My boy, what have you done?"  
"I've killed a man in the West Virginia Land,  
And I know that I have to be hung, Lord, Lord...."

He asked his mother for a fifty-cent piece,  
"My son, I have no change."

"Then hand me down my old forty-four  
And I'll blow out my agurvatin' [sic] brains, Lord, Lord...."

John Hardy was lyin' on the broad river bank,  
As drunk as a man could be;  
Up stepped the police and took him by the hand,  
Sayin' "Johnny, come and go with me, Lord, Lord...."

John Hardy had a pretty little girl,  
The dress she wore was blue.  
She come a-skippin' through the old jail hall  
Sayin', "Poppy, I'll be true to you, Lord, Lord...."

John Hardy had another little girl,  
The dress that she wore was red,  
She came a-skippin' through the old jail hall  
Sayin' "Poppy, I'd rather be dead, Lord, Lord...."

They took John Hardy to the hangin' ground,  
They hung him there to die.  
The very last words that poor boy said,  
"My forty gun never told a lie, Lord, Lord...."

LYRICS AS REPRINTED IN ALAN LOMAX, *FOLK SONGS OF NORTH AMERICA*, GARDEN CITY, 1960

Read the Ballad of John Hardy. What is the story?

Highlight the main facts and write them in the box in note form.

Now read the following **newspaper article** about the same incident and list any differences between the poem and the newspaper article.

Check for the following aspects:

What seems to have interested the writers?

How is the story divided up?

What types of language are used?

How do you feel about the characters?

#### **BAD LOSER HITS ROCK BOTTOM**

*Judge Sentences Hardy to Hang*

John Edward Hardy, aged 35, unemployed former horse-dealer, was yesterday sentenced to hang for the murder of David Campbell, 30, in the Golden Nugget Bar, Dansville. Sentencing him to death, Judge Warren Johnson described Hardy as 'a pathetic waster, who had squandered his opportunities and abused the loyalty and love of his devoted wife and children.'

#### *Loyal Wife In Tears*

His attractive wife, Lucy Hardy, collapsed in tears at the verdict. 'I would have done anything to help him,' she told reporters. As she comforted her children, she admitted that her ten-year marriage to Hardy had been difficult. 'John found it difficult to settle. He'd led such an eventful life before we met.'

#### *Point Blank End To Disastrous Evening*

Hardy shot Campbell at point blank range, following an argument over a game of cards at the Golden Nugget. Some witnesses spoke of a young woman, who lent Hardy some money to continue gambling after he had lost all his. She was not available to give evidence at the trial.

#### *Error Of His Ways*

According to Dean Cartwright, the town jailor, Hardy spoke often of his regret at his wasted life. He had apparently killed before, though he had not been tried for any of these alleged killings, according to State records. The Reverend Wilbur Smith was later summoned to the jail house, where Hardy is to be held until his day of execution, fixed for Friday at noon.

The next piece is the opening paragraph of a **short story** about John Hardy.

#### **Chapter 1:**

He had to get back. His thoughts were racing but, wherever they ran, they ended up at the same point: he had to get back.

The night air was cool on his face as he ran. John was shivering. From fear or cold, it made little difference. After what he'd done, there was only one place to go. Home. If only he could turn back time and make it undone. He shuddered, pictures of the last few minutes in that bar kept flashing in front of his eyes, David Campbell's face, his piercing scream and the dull thud as his body hit the floor...

What difference do you notice between the short story and the newspaper article?

**Homework:** Read the two ballads on the following page and choose one. Then do **one** of the following tasks:

- Write a **newspaper article** based on the poem.

or

- Write a **short story** based on the poem.

Decide which facts seem important for your text. Invent suitable details to make your text more colorful and plausible.

Use the **text writing recipes** to help you plan and structure your article or your short story. Write about 300 words.

**Landlord, landlord,**  
My roof has sprung a leak.  
Don't you 'member I told you about it  
Way last week?

Landlord, landlord,  
These steps is broken down.  
When you come up yourself  
It's a wonder you don't fall down.

Ten Bucks you say I owe you?  
Ten Bucks you say is due?  
Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'll pay you  
Till you fix this house up new.

What? You gonna get eviction orders?  
You gonna cut off my heat?  
You gonna take my furniture and  
Throw it in the street?

Um-huh! You talking high and mighty.  
Talk on-till you get through.  
You ain't gonna be able to say a word  
If I land my fist on you.

Police! Police!  
Come and get this man!  
He's trying to ruin the government  
And overturn the land!

Copper's whistle!  
Patrol bell!  
Arrest.  
Precinct Station.  
Iron cell.  
Headlines in press:

**MAN THREATENS LANDLORD  
TENANT HELD NO BAIL  
JUDGE GIVES NEGRO 90 DAYS IN COUNTY  
JAIL!**  
Langston Hughes

**Choose one of the  
two ballads and  
write a  
newspaper article  
or a short story  
about the events,  
as if they had just  
happened  
yesterday.**

### Ballad of the Triangle Fire

By Ruth Rubin

In the heart of New York City, near Washington Square  
In nineteen eleven, March winds were cold and bare.

A fire broke out in a building ten stories high,  
And a hundred and forty-six young girls in those flames did die.

On the top floor of that building, ten stories in the air  
These young girls were working in an old sweatshop there;  
They were sewing shirtwaists for a very low wage.  
So tired and pale and worm-out! They were at a tender age.

The sweatshop was a stuffy room with but a single door;  
The windows they were gray with dust from off that dirty floor;  
There were no comforts, no fresh air, no light to sew thereby,  
And the girls, they toiled from early morn till darkness filled the sky.

Then on that fateful day — dear God, most terrible of days!  
When that fire broke out, it grew into a mighty blaze.  
In that firetrap way up there with but a single door,  
So many innocent working girls burned, to live no more!

A hundred thousand mourners, they followed those sad biers.  
The streets were filled with people weeping bitter tears.  
Poets, writers everywhere described that awful pyre,  
When those young girls were trapped to die in the Triangle Fire.

© 1968 Ruth Rubin from the *Sing Along Songbook, 1993 UCLEA NE Summer  
Institute for Union Women, New York State School of Industrial and Labor  
Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1993.*

## Writing for an audience and a purpose

### Developing and using text writing recipes

#### Recipe for a good magazine article

### Magazine Projects

Schüler arbeiten in Kleingruppen (ca. 4) an regelmäßigen Ausgaben einer Zeitschrift.

1. Gruppen finden sich und bestimmen Namen des Magazins.

2. Gruppen bestimmen die Arbeitsverteilung und Teamrollen:

editor in chief (zuständig für Inhalt, Inhaltsverzeichnis und "editorial letter")

assistant editor (sammelt alle Beiträge und korrigiert die Sprache)

timekeeper (erinnert die Gruppe an Termine und Zeitplan)

chief layouter (erstellt die Titelseite, "bindet" die Zeitschrift und macht Feinschliff am

Layout)

3. Gruppen erhalten Termine: Endtermin für Fertigstellung sowie 3-4 Termine (à 20-30 Minuten) für peer conferences und erstellen einen Zeitplan. Richtwert: Jeder Schüler schreibt drei Beiträge für eine Monatsausgabe. Die Schüler planen wer welche Beiträge übernehmen wird und bis wann diese fertig sein müssen. Die konkrete Schreibarbeit wird zu Hause (an Stelle von free homework) gemacht.

4. Conferences de pairs: In den peer conferences werden die jeweils fertigen Beiträge in der Gruppe kommentiert. Die Gruppenmitglieder machen Verbesserungs- und Korrekturvorschläge (vor allem auch inhaltlicher und struktureller Art). Die Arbeitsatmosphäre in der Gruppe soll positiv sein, es geht darum ein möglichst gutes, gemeinsames Produkt zu erstellen, nicht den Text des anderen schlecht zu machen. In diesem Rahmen gelingt positives feedback besonders gut. Die Schüler sind offen für Kritik.

Wichtig: Termine für diese conferences müssen klar angesagt werden damit auch wirklich alle Gruppen ihre Beiträge mitbringen! Wenn möglich alle Texte auf Computer!

5. Falls einzelne Gruppen mit den 3-4 conferences nicht auskommen, sind sie selbst dafür verantwortlich weitere Termine in Pausen oder nach der Schule (oder Telefon!) auszumachen...

6. Fertigstellung und Publikation: Die fertigen Magazines (am einfachsten in Plastikschnellheftern geheftet) werden in der Klasse präsentiert. Im Rahmen eines workshops (atelier) können die Schüler in den neuen Ausgaben lesen.

Oder: Lesetisch (nett gestalten) einrichten und Magazines dort auflegen.



# Teachers' D

Friday, November 6th 2009

## New teachers full of ideas

Newly qualified teachers met yesterday at the PH Steiermark to discuss creative ways of teaching writing to students of different ages. It was obvious that writing tasks need not be boring drudgery but can actually be interesting and fun for the students. The secret seems to lie in writing texts for a real audience rather than sloppy homework that will only be read by the teacher. If students

produce texts about topics of their own choice and interest that will actually be read by their peers, they will have a good reason to write high quality, interesting texts that will also be formatted attractively.

The young teachers were astonished by the creative and high quality student texts they saw and were all eager to try out similar projects with their classes.

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## 21 The Interstellar Times

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**Type of activity combination**

**Functions practised**  
narrating past events  
expressing opinions  
persuasion  
promises  
listing entertainment  
describing films and plays

**Useful language**  
past tenses; time clauses; *will*; logical connectors for argument; present continuous/simple

**Lexical areas**  
newsworthy events (robberies, disasters, protest, etc.); entertainment

---

### How to use the activity

Make one copy of each of the Headlines, Letters, Advertisements and What's on pages. You will also need paper, scissors and glue.

Divide your class into four groups and assign each a different area of the classroom. One group should be larger than the others.

Tell them they are the editorial staff of the *Interstellar*

*Times* and they are working to produce the next edition of the paper.

Give the headlines to the largest group (the news desk), the letters to another (letters desk) and so on. (If you have a small class, you could combine classes with a colleague for this activity. If you have a large class, create another desk: give them an example of a personal column from a daily paper, and ask them to create an intergalactic personal column.)

The headline group should write articles for each headline. (If you want to increase the sense of tension, cut the headlines up and feed them to the group one at a time at the rate of one every ten minutes.)

The letters desk should complete the letters (or write their own if they feel inspired).

The advertisements team should write advertisements for the products.

The entertainment team should produce short descriptions of the films together with details of who is starring in them and where they're playing.

When about three quarters of the material has been produced, appoint an editorial committee. You can do this either by withdrawing one representative from each desk or, if one team has finished earlier than the others, you can give them a job transfer.

The editorial committee are responsible for designing the layout of the paper and putting it together. Give them paper, scissors, and glue and let them get on with it.

Charles and Jill Hadfield, Writing Games, (1990),  
Nelson

**MERC · U · SUN**  
*high protection sun cream*

**SPACE  
-O-  
CALM**  
*space travelsickness pills*

**· INTERGALACTIC ·  
· TOURS LTD. ·**

**PLANTMOBILE**  
*vehicles for plants*

**ARCTURUS**  
**TRAVEL ALARM CLOCK**

**RINGS OF  
SATURN**  
*· Jewellery at moderate prices ·*

**HORRORPLANT III**  
**GOES TO MARS**

**The RUNAWAY  
SPACEPOD**

*THE Venus Affair*

**Nightmare on Pluto**

**GAGARIN**

**THE GALACTOPHOB**

**Castor and Pollux**

**GO WEST**

**The White Dwarf  
and the Black Hole**

# ALIEN SPACECRAFT SIGHTED NEAR MARS

## SUNNY MERCURY IS GALAXY'S MOST POPULAR HOLIDAY SPOT

### VENUSIAN LIBERATION FRONT PLANTS BOMB ON MARTIAN SPACECRAFT

## Spacepod hijacked on way to Jupiter

### BANK ROBBERY ON EARTH ROBBERS ESCAPE IN SPACEPOD

## PLUTONIANS RIOT OVER TAX INCREASES

## Intergalactic pop festival to take place on Saturn

### WEATHER: MET. OFFICE ISSUE BLACK HOLE WARNING

Sir,

Out here on the Edge of Time, we have an amazing view. As we're beyond the borders of the Known Universe, I'm not really supposed to contact you down there in the Solar System, but I thought I'd better write and warn you. On my videorecorder I can see everything that's happened in your short history so far, and we looked at your statistical progression for the last million years as part of our 6th grade Galactic History project. I thought you should know that just around the corner, in a few of your earth-years, there's going to be

Sir,

As a member of the Venusian Liberation Front, I would like to protest about the unlawful occupation of our planet by Pluto

Sir,

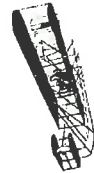
I am writing to protest about the new development scheme proposed by the council in Plutoville

Sir,

I live on Mercury and I am writing to complain about the dreadful behaviour of tourists from other planets when they visit our holiday resorts

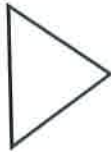
Sir,

I would like to make my feelings known about Plant Oppression. Plants are a minority of the population on our planet and



## “Wright-ing” Prompt: Newspaper Article

Newspaper articles require a different style of writing from what is used when writing a story. When writing a newspaper article, picture a triangle like the one shown.



The newspaper article has all of the important information in the opening paragraph. This information includes **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, **why** and **how**. It is written this way because most people do not read an entire newspaper article all the way through. So newspaper writers put the most important information at the beginning.

A typical newspaper article contains five (5) parts:

**Headline:**

This is a short, attention-getting statement about the event.

**Byline:**

This tells who wrote the story.

**Lead paragraph:**

This has ALL the who, what, when, where, why and how in it. A writer must find the answers to these questions and write them into the opening sentence(s) of the article.

**Explanation:**

After the lead paragraph has been written, the writer must decide what other facts or details the reader might want to know. The writer must make sure that he/she has enough information to answer any important questions a reader might have after reading the headline and the lead paragraph. This section can also include direct quotes from witnesses or bystanders.

**Additional Information:**

This information is the least important. Thus, if the news article is too long for the space it needs to fill, it can be shortened without rewriting any other part. This part can include information about a similar event.



## “Wright-ing” Prompt: Newspaper Article – Example

Below is an example of a newspaper article:

**Headline:**

High flying escape ends in death

**Byline:**

By Robin Sloan

**Lead paragraph:**

Icarus, son of the famous inventor, Daedalus, plunged into the Aegean Sea and drowned while attempting to escape from the island of Crete early yesterday afternoon. His body has yet to be recovered.

**Explanation:**

Icarus and his father had made wings from wax and bird feathers they had collected over the years while imprisoned on the island of Crete. They attached the homemade wings to their arms and, using a flapping motion, lifted off from the island shortly before noon. While making their escape, Icarus flew too close to the sun. As a result, the heat melted the wax on his wings which caused the feathers to drop off. The wings collapsed and Icarus fell into the sea and drowned.

**Additional Information:**

Daedalus, sobbing from the distant shore where he had landed safely, said, "My last words to Icarus before we left the island was to stay close and not fly too high! He just didn't listen! Why didn't he listen to me?" Daedalus and Icarus had been held prisoner by King Minos on the island of Crete, and had been forced to build a labyrinth at the palace of Knossos. It was known to be the most difficult maze in the world to navigate successfully.

## What is an article?

### An article

- is a piece of writing usually intended for publication in a newspaper, magazine or journal
- is written for a wide audience, so it is essential to attract and retain the readers' attention
- can be formal or informal, depending on the target audience
- should be written in an interesting or entertaining manner
- should give opinions and thoughts, as well as facts

### An article can

- describe an experience, event, person or place
- present an opinion or balanced argument
- compare and contrast
- provide information
- offer suggestions
- offer advice

### A realistic article should consist of:

1. an eye-catching title which attracts the readers' attention and suggests the theme of the article. (Think about why you read a magazine or newspaper article recently - what made you read it?)  
Articles can also have subheadings before each paragraph.
2. an introduction which clearly defines the topic to be covered and keeps the reader's attention.
3. the main body of two to five paragraphs in which the topic is further developed in detail.
4. the conclusion - summarising the topic or a final opinion, recommendation or comment.

### REMEMBER:

Before you begin writing it is important to consider:

- where is the article going to appear - in a newspaper or magazine?
- who are the intended readers - a specific group such as students or teenagers, or adults in general?
- what is the aim of the article - to advise, suggest, inform, compare and contrast, describe, etc.?

### The article could be formal, semi-formal or informal, depending on your intended audience.

Use vocabulary and descriptive language appropriate for the article. Linking words and expressions, and a variety of vocabulary will only improve your work and make it more interesting.

**DO NOT** use over-personal or over-emotional language or simplistic vocabulary.

**DO NOT talk about yourself.** You are writing for the general public, not a close circle of friends. Your opinions are only interesting to other people if you can make them amusing, justify them or explain them.

**DO NOT** present opinions, guesses and rumors as if they were facts. Distinguish clearly between fact and rumor by using some of the following phrases:

**the alleged murderer, the suspected amfioso, I've heard it said that...** **there is a rumor that, the minister is said to have/ is rumored to have/ is supposed to have taken bribes.**

## Read the following article. Then do the following tasks.

- Who are the intended readers of this article?
- What is the aim of this article?
- Sum up each paragraph in one sentence.
- Find the following features in the article:
  - the lead
  - the WHO // WHAT // WHERE // WHEN // WHY // HOW
  - the conclusion
  - Collect 10 new phrases that you would like to remember and transfer them on into your vocab file.
  - Look at the use of the tenses carefully. Explain why the writer has used the tenses in the underlined passages.

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/158377>

## How to Fight Binge Drinking

### Would lowering the legal age help colleges curb alcohol abuse?

By Evan Thomas | Newsweek Web Exclusive  
Sep 11, 2008 | Updated: 12:48 p.m. ET Sep 11, 2008

College presidents like to picture happy scholars thinking deep thoughts in seats of higher learning. They don't like to think about students projectile vomiting and occasionally dying. But in the last twenty years, a surge of binge drinking by mostly underage students has spawned a growing number of date rapes and trips to the emergency room. For years, many colleges turned a half-blind eye to underage drinking. But as the casualties pile up, state legislatures are passing tougher liability laws. Colleges have been forced to try to crack

down on drinking in the dorms and frats, but bingeing has hardly gone away. Mostly, it's moved underground--kids secretly gathering to "pre-game," to down shots before going to supposedly "dry" college events, or off campus, where there's even less control. Angry neighbors complain about vomit in the streets and late-night noise, and city cops are generally less indulgent than campus cops.

Increasingly, it seems, frustrated college presidents are trying to fight back. About 150 of them--including the presidents of Duke and Dartmouth--have signed a letter pushing for "public debate" over reducing the drinking age to 18. The theory is that, combined with better education and increased supervision, lower drinking ages will get kids to drink responsibly.

It's true that forbidden fruit tastes better to 19-year-olds, and some of the bingeing is caused by the need to sneak

around and drink fast and hard when you can. But that's only part of the reason for the increase in binge drinking. (A series of studies since the early '90s show that ever-larger numbers of 15- to 21-year-olds are consuming more than five drinks in a single session.) Another reason is sex. Coeducation has brought boys and girls together on elite college campuses in the last thirty years, just as the old formalities of courtship and dating have gone by the wayside. Now it's just awkward boys and girls looking for a way to get together. Liquor helps this no-holds-barred mating ritual. Of course, some of the heaviest drinking occurred at single-sex schools where there was nothing else to do (see Dartmouth, home of the original Animal House, Alpha Delta Phi, in the 1960s). So sex and subversion aren't the only causes. There's the bonding ritual of getting blasted.

Today's students at elite schools are an intense bunch. They study hard, play hard, as the saying goes. With just a few hours set aside for fun, they need to cram it with getting wasted. Drinking games like "Beirut" (charmingly named after the shelling of the capital of Lebanon in the 1980s) have proliferated in part because the kids are competitive and like the intensity of vying to get high. The drinking games don't go on just at elite schools, of course. State universities have just as big a problem with bingeing as the Ivies, if not bigger. Lowering the drinking age might help take the edge off the wildness. But in England and Germany, where the drinking age is already 18, bingeing is also a growing problem. (Young people

in other European countries seem to consume a lot, just not so quickly or violently.) The university presidents who signed the letter calling for a lower drinking age have a good argument: that tougher laws have forced them to try to ban drinking altogether, when reality suggests they should be looking for ways to keep the kids from harming themselves and each other. (In the 1920s, Prohibition didn't work either, except to feed profits to the underworld.) Still, they are running into stiff resistance from Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which successfully lobbied to raise the drinking age to 21 in the early '80s when statistics showed that age-18 drinking led to more highway deaths.

John McCardle, the former president of Middlebury College, who started the "Choose Responsibility" movement a couple years ago, argues that other factors, like wearing seat belts, had more to do with the reduction in highway deaths. The numbers are hard to quantify and subject to interpretation. The likelihood is that binge drinking will not appreciably decrease until more kids realize that drinking leads to sexual liaisons they will regret (with the risk of STDs and pregnancies), and that a kid who is throwing-up drunk looks and acts like a disgusting fool. There was a time when it was manly to be able to "hold your liquor." Now the goal seems to be able to expel it. Women, with lower tolerances, are even quicker to get sick. Maybe the most immediate step the college presidents could take is to exempt dormitory janitors from cleaning up the messes. Make the kids do it. © 2008

## Writing Titles:

If your title isn't catchy and interesting, no one will read your article. Your title should be a concise summary of the information which is going to follow in the article.

**A: Match the topics (1-10) below with the titles (A-K). There is one extra title that you do not need.**

1. A healthy diet. \_\_\_\_\_
2. School Exams. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Eating out inexpensively. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The Internet. \_\_\_\_\_
5. A famous person. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Genetic Engineering. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Drug-taking. \_\_\_\_\_
8. An outdoor activity. \_\_\_\_\_
9. How to attract a man. \_\_\_\_\_
10. A successful career. \_\_\_\_\_

a. How to Reach The Top

b. Do You Need To Be Connected?

c. THE CRACK IN OUR SCHOOLS

d. Mouth-watering Recipes

e. Is Jogging Bad For Our Health?

f. An Apple A Day Keeps The Doctor Away

g. To Flirt or Not to Flirt? - That Is THE Question

h. A Testing Time

i. The Man Behind The Prime Minister

j. Would You Like To Be Cloned?

k. Cheap and Cheerful Grub

adapted from: onestopenglish.com

**B. Match the following first paragraphs with the titles on the opposite page.**

1. It is now official that they are the reason man has AIDS. Scientists agree that although Chimps do not suffer from AIDS themselves, eating them, as is common and considered a delicacy in some countries, is the reason the virus is passed on to humans.
2. It is said that everyone has the ability or potential to write that blockbuster that will ensure our fame and fortune. Now a bus-driver from London has done just that and proved the point by writing a novel that has already been nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize.
3. After a hectic morning shopping, all my friend and I wanted to do was to sit down, drink a cup of tea and have a cigarette. Easy enough you might think, but not so. Every coffee bar, café and fast food restaurant we looked in, did not allow smoking. It seems us smokers truly are the pariahs of society.
4. Eco-friendly vehicles will soon be a fact of life. No more popping into the local garage for £5.00's worth of petrol. Instead, we will be plugging a battery into a spare socket at home, filling up with water from the tap, or using whatever idea the scientists come up with. Great you might think. But is it really possible that no giant corporation will be making money out of us?
5. One of the most unusual places that I have visited on my travels around the globe is Petra in Jordan. Nicknamed 'The Rose City', as the colour of the rock changes throughout the day, depending on the angle of the sun, it is also fascinating because every structure except one is built out of the rock of the mountains. The exception is a temple built by the Romans, who obviously did not have the instincts of the Nabataeans.
6. They are two famous film stars in their own right, who between them have been married seven times. After starring together in "Elizabeth", they are now divorcing their respective partners to marry each other. They say it was an instant attraction that is much deeper and more intense than either have ever experienced before. So what makes this time different? I went along to see them both at the Hilton Hotel to discover their secret.
7. The British are said to be the most watched people in the world. Video cameras on nearly every set of traffic lights, on motorways, on street corners, car parks, football grounds and shopping centres - to name but a few - they cannot make a move without being seen. For a country of people that refuses to have Identity Cards as they consider them an invasion of privacy, why do they tolerate this?
8. They say there is nothing like a woman scorned, and after the exploits of Polly Metcalfe, they might just be right. Her partner left her not just for another woman, but a woman half Polly's age and Polly was miffed, to say the least. What did she do in reply? Cut all his clothes in half and destroyed one of each pair of his shoes.

**a SOCIAL OUTCASTS**

a

**Revenge Was So Sweet**

b.

**Love At First Sight**

c.

**They ARE carriers of HIV**

d.

*The Future Of Oil Companies*

e.

**BUILDING SIGHTS**

f.

**We All Have A Best Seller In Us**

g.

**Are They Intrusive?**

h.

**C. Read the following first paragraphs and think of an appropriate title for each one.**

**Useful words and expressions for text writing**

- the question arises** *Many young people consider smoking to be a harmless social pastime.*
- as to whether** *The question arises as to whether they are justified in this assumption.*
- the issue at stake** *This is precisely the issue at stake.*
- hold water (argument)** *At first sight this appears to be a valid point but on closer inspection the argument doesn't hold water.*
- above all** *It is wonderful to have knowledge at one's finger tips but it is above all important to know how to access information.*
- thanks to** *Thanks to vaccinations some illnesses have been all but eliminated.*
- the former...** *Emeline Pankhurst and Germaine Greer are two renowned feminists.*
- the latter** *The former was English while the latter is Australian.*
- the root of the problem** *Typhoid claims many lives in the third world. The root of the problem lies in contaminated water supplies.*
- counteract** *What can be done to counteract the effects of global warming?*
- put into practice** *It is all very well to have plans and projects but the question is, can they be put into practice?*
- the man in the street** *The man in the street isn't interested in the ins and outs of genetic engineering but he is worried about the implications of cloning.*
- the ins and outs** *Alcohol can aggravate/exacerbate the problem of domestic violence.*
- aggravate/exacerbate** *Alcohol can aggravate/exacerbate the problem of domestic violence.*
- unbiased / impartial** *It's hard to remain impartial when it comes to child abuse.*
- foreseeable future** *There can be no hope of improvement in the foreseeable future.*
- overcome** *The older generation can overcome their fear of / doubts about / reservations about the new technology by learning how to use it properly.*
- mutual understanding** *Many couples today come to a mutual understanding concerning housework.*
- in former times** *In former times women had little say in public as well as private life.*
- clear conscience** *Only vegetarians can have a clear conscience with regard to factory farming.*
- benefit** *One of the benefits of vegetarianism is that it is a low-fat diet.*
- drawback** *One of the drawbacks is that not all restaurants cater for vegetarians.*
- human nature** *It is human nature to fear the new.*

1. **TITLE:** It's that time of year again! Lots of expense, your patience tried to its utmost limits thanks to being in such close proximity to your family, over-eating and over-drinking - perhaps over-indulging generally - receiving presents you don't really want and seeing relatives you don't really want to see. They get wheeled out every year for a free meal and a sherry and drive you mad with their complaints. How to avoid all this? Do something different - go on holiday and let someone else take the strain.
2. **TITLE:** The oldest known disease to man, and the first to be identified, is on the increase. It is now prevalent in twenty-four countries, and still doctors are unsure what causes leprosy. There is a general consensus that it could be contracted through the respiratory system, but as yet there is no solid evidence. On the other hand, it could be spread by touch. Leprosy is curable if detected in the early stages, but what are the symptoms?
3. **TITLE:** The joy of writing a long, newsy letter to a friend, a short thank-you note or even a letter of complaint, seems to have disappeared nowadays. People just pick up the phone, fax or send an e-mail instead of composing something in their own handwriting, which is much more appreciated by the person receiving it. It shows thought, care and consideration but people, or their way of life, are changing.
4. **TITLE:** Dieting seems to have become a way of life for many people, particularly women. It is said that at any one time three out of four people are on a diet, convinced that this is the magic formula, and that they will finally look like that model on the television they so envy. What they do not seem to realise is that they might well lose weight but will inevitably put it all back on - often more weight than they lost in the first place. The whole exercise is futile, and people never seem to realise that to lose weight permanently, one needs to change one's entire eating lifestyle.
5. **TITLE:** Learning another language is not an easy process - different word order, irregular verbs, those tricky prepositions and difficult to pronounce, strange looking vocabulary. There are also many methods on offer to accomplish this feat - so many in fact, that it can become confusing and hard to decide which is the best way for you. Courses on cassette, evening classes, private lessons, a language school, move to the country of the target language (an extreme method, perhaps), a correspondence course or a pen friend - the list is endless and it is like a jungle trying to decide what to try.

## Writing Topic Sentences:

As you already know from our units on paragraph writing and essay writing, TOPIC SENTENCES are the signposts or navi-systems that guide your reader through your essay or article.

**Remember:** In most cases the topic sentence is the first sentence of a paragraph. In some cases it may come later. The topic sentence informs the reader exactly what the whole paragraph is going to be about.

**D. In the following paragraphs, only the supporting ideas are given. The paragraphs are followed by three possible topic sentences. Circle the letter of the sentence that would best introduce the paragraph.**

1. Today, it is a science fact that technology has advanced to the point where anything is possible. Used as a means of increasing productivity, many factories are switching to automation - R2D2 does not require holidays, a bigger office, sick pay, a pension, and, most importantly, he does not go on strike.
  - a. Star Wars is alive and well and living in our factories.
  - b. At one time, robots were only found in science fiction books and films.
  - c. Robots, once a fantasy and every housewife's dream, have become a part of our lives.
2. Although initially building a subterranean home is more expensive than a conventional home, in the long run it can save the owner a great deal of money in heating and air-conditioning costs. These homes require much less energy, as the temperature of soil is relatively stable and concrete walls store the sun's heat, but keep the place warm at night.
  - a. Underground homes are not a new idea.
  - b. Underground homes are increasing in popularity.
  - c. Underground homes can be cost effective and energy efficient.
3. Two million microscopic bugs live in our beds, making a meal of our bed linen and anything else they find on the sheets. Our wardrobes support a breed of moth that not only eats through our clothes, but disguises itself by weaving a 'coat' from whatever it is eating at the time. This system breaks down when it moves from one garment to another, but is still extremely successful. Our eyelashes support a whole ecosystem, and these three are just the tip of the iceberg!
  - a. If you think you are clean, think again.
  - b. Most of the time we only worry about the insects we can see.
  - c. Wherever we sit, stand, sleep or walk, we are engulfed by invisible to the naked eye mites.

4. We set so much store by it, and rush around to be in different places at the precise time we are meant to be there. Deprive people of a watch or clock, and most of them have no conception of what the time really is. It is man made and man imposed. People used to go to bed when the sun set, and rise when the sun came up. In antiquity, man had no timepieces but worked with the seasons - the flooding of the Nile meant irrigation of the crops and therefore the populace could be fed. The rural Egyptian did not care if this happened at eight o'clock in the morning or four in the afternoon; of paramount importance was the season.
  - a. Have you ever wondered about time?
  - b. Is time two or three-dimensional?
  - c. Whether it is a Rolex or a Timex, is it really significant?

5. We all want pearly white, even, straight teeth, but all eat the wrong foods and drink liquids full of sugar. How many people do you know who have actually wanted to become dentists? Yet they are everywhere and we all at some point in our lives need them, however long we put off that visit. It is usually when the pain becomes so bad that we finally venture into their surgery, quivering at the knees and shaking like a jelly. Have you ever noticed too, how that pain miraculously disappears once you are there?
  - a. How many people are suffering from mercury or lead poisoning from all those fillings?
  - b. They are a necessary evil but nine out of ten people are frightened to death of them.
  - c. Don't you just dread the sound of that drill?

**When you have checked your answers, write a title for each of the paragraphs.**

## Writing your own article:

Do a **brainstorming** about interesting topics for an article. Your topic should be of **current interest** (nobody wants to read old news), **important and relevant** to your readers. Decide **who your readers will be** and in what **type of magazine or newspaper** your article will be published. This will effect the style and register of your text.

My topic:

My readers:

My text will be published in:

### Collecting facts:

To make sure you have the basic information to write your article, create a **5W's chart** on an A4 sheet. Collect your facts in note form.

Who?	What?	When?	Where?	Why?
Who is involved?	What happened? What is the problem?			

### My goal in writing this article is to ....

convince, show, analyze, inform, entertain, compare, offer suggestions on, offer advice, present an opinion, describe an experience/ event/ person/ place/product...

**Outline:** On an A4 sheet make an outline of your article.

### Your outline must include:

- **Title/Headline:**
- **Lead paragraph:**
- **Topic sentence \$1:**
- **Topic sentence \$2:**
- **Topic sentence \$3 (if necessary)**
- **Conclusion:**

Then all you need to do is add details (arguments, examples, information...) to each paragraph, reread your text to smooth the transitions by adding some linkwords, and proofread for language and spelling mistakes. Your article should be between 250 and 300 words long.



## Guidelines for a perfect tour brochure

Always keep in mind: the intention of your text is to convince tourists to book a trip with you. It is therefore important to present tour highlights, sights, landmarks, stops, transfers, accommodation, etc in an attractive and appealing way. An eye-catching layout is almost as important as the written content.



### Important aspects:

- Choose an interesting destination and sights for stops. It is not necessary to have many stops, about 2 or 3 detailed ones are enough.
- Think of a good name for your tour, make it sound special.
- Famous places: focus on the positive and special aspects of your destination and give examples for what the place is famous for.
- Colorful details: Make your reader curious by using colorful, flowery descriptions of the places.
- Give information about
  - the destination
  - itinerary and stops
  - times (meeting time and place, length of trip, schedule)
  - accommodation if necessary
  - means of transport (bus, train, plane, cruise-ship...)
  - cost
  - any requirements or preconditions
  - contact and booking information
- Illustrate your brochure (pictures, map,...) and choose a clearly structured layout.



## Chicago Segway Tour

### **Quick Tour Facts:**

Times: 10am, 2pm and 6pm

Price: \$70 (Day), \$60 (Evening)

Duration: Day tour are 3 hours, Evening tour is 2 hours



Our Segway Tour is perfect for both those new to the city and Chicago veterans. For the beginners, this tour will offer you a fantastic orientation and give you an opportunity to see virtually all of the sites you know from movies, postcards and history. For the veterans, we're positive you'll learn new facts and stories about Chicago that you've never heard. And we're sure you'll both agree that Segway-ing is the best way to see the 'Windy City'!

### **Highlights of the tour include:**

- **The Field Museum** – Founded to house the biological and anthropological collections assembled for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Current home to Sue, the famous T-Rex and the Lions of Tsavo.
- **Shedd Aquarium and Oceanarium** – Opened to the public in December 1929, at the time it was the world's largest indoor aquarium. One of the first and currently its oldest resident: a Lungfish acquired in 1933.
- **Adler Planetarium** – The first planetarium built in the Western hemisphere. Contains astronomical artifacts and instruments dating back to 12th century Persia. Provides one of the best panoramic views of Chicago's fabulous skyline!
- **Millennium Park** – Chicago's newest gem, featuring the Pritzker Pavillion, the cascading waters of the Crown Fountain towers, and the famous Cloud Gate sculpture affectionately known as "The Bean".
- **The Lakefront/Monroe Harbor** – Cruise along the edge of Lake Michigan speckled with sailboats, with Navy Pier as its backdrop.
- **Chicago's Skyscrapers** - See the architectural wonders that comprise one of the most recognizable skylines in the world.

### **Meeting Point**

Our office at:

400 East Randolph Street

Chicago, IL 60601

### **Important Notes**

Each of our tours begins with a 30 minute orientation session. We will practice on the Segways until everyone feels comfortable and is ready to conquer Chicago. The Segway is appropriate for virtually anyone 12 and older. Anyone suspected of being under the influence of alcohol will not be permitted to ride. Unfortunately, pregnant women will not be permitted to participate. Got questions? Email us at

[Chicago@CitySegwayTours.com](mailto:Chicago@CitySegwayTours.com).

## Writing a REPORT

### What is the purpose of a report?

Usually a report

- gives information
- evaluates something
- or makes suggestions and recommendations

### Who will read it?

In most cases the report will be requested by somebody in authority, like a boss or a principal. Often they will want to read the report to gain information in order to make a decision based on facts.

### What style should you use?

Be very clear. Give essential information and recommendations.

Use an impersonal style, avoid the personal pronouns 'I' and 'you'.

A report is NOT a letter. Do not use letter openings and endings.

Be concise and precise: do not repeat yourself; make every word work for you.

Do not lift whole chunks of language from the rubric: reword it.

### How should I structure a report?

Heading: clear, factual and precise

Introduction: purpose of the report, who is it intended for?

Body: sections with sub-headings dealing with the separate aspects of the subject

Recommendations and Conclusion: This can be one or two paragraphs, depending on the overall length of the report.

### Important Points when Writing Reports:

When writing a report as a school assignment

- read the task very carefully
- highlight all the given information which has to be included
- decide what you have to add to make your report as authentic as possible
- be creative, specific, plausible and coherent when making up details. Think yourself into the situation. Give specific evidence to explain and exemplify your main points. You might for example talk about a survey or interviews that have been conducted.
- Use the bullet points given to structure your report (headings!) and include a brief introduction and conclusion

### Declaration of Independence for Writers of Reports

I, \_\_\_\_\_, solemnly promise that when I venture out into the big wide \_\_\_\_\_ and am asked to write a \_\_\_\_\_, I shall write \_\_\_\_\_ what I have been \_\_\_\_\_ to write. I understand that when I write a \_\_\_\_\_, I shall be \_\_\_\_\_ an important service at somebody's \_\_\_\_\_, almost certainly a person in a higher \_\_\_\_\_ or a position of \_\_\_\_\_.

Furthermore, should I be writing \_\_\_\_\_ of a person or persons who are depending on me to represent them, I shall do my \_\_\_\_\_ to present their case in an accurate and \_\_\_\_\_ report. Then, and only then, shall I reveal that I \_\_\_\_\_ GIBS and had \_\_\_\_\_ as my English teacher.

### Useful phrases for writing reports

#### Introduction and stating aims:

The aim of this report is to ...  
This report is intended to...  
This report intends to / aims at...  
This report will consider /examine/ compare....  
This report looks at .....  
In order to prepare this report, ...was/were visited/ interviewed/ studied... (Use passives here.)  
on behalf of...  
at the request of...

#### Reporting impressions and findings:

It seems / appears that...  
Most people / the majority of people seem to /tend to ...  
It is interesting/ surprising / strange that...  
Interestingly, Surprisingly, Strangely,  
A survey/ study conducted by... has shown that...

#### Quoting:

According to X, Y said / felt/ mentioned that ... + reporting tenses!!

#### Giving reasons:

Since /As (our city is well-known,...-  
For this reason / these reasons.  
Consequently,

#### Generalizing

In general,...  
On the whole,...

#### Summing up:

In conclusion,...  
To sum up,...  
In short,...  
To summarize,...

#### Making suggestions or recommendations

In my opinion /view  
I would recommend (doing sth)  
In view of this, I (would) recommend / suggest (that)  
We/ I (would) suggest (that)...  
They / We could  
It is recommended that...  
Our recommendation /suggestion is to...

## Practice Activities:

### 1. Organizing a recommendation report

The first paragraph of this recommendation report is missing. Read the report, then choose the most appropriate first paragraph from the three given.

Proposed Subscription to a British Newspaper

1<sup>st</sup> paragraph is missing. Choose a, b or c below.

### Practice Activities:

#### 1. Organizing a recommendation report

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### Proposed Subscription to a British Newspaper

1<sup>st</sup> paragraph is missing:  
Choose a, b or c below

#### Tabloids

There was general agreement that, despite their low price, none of the tabloid newspapers (also known as the 'popular press') could be recommended, for the following reasons:

- 1 the inappropriateness of the prose as a model of written English,
- 2 the limited coverage of international news, the arts, business, etc.
- 3 a tendency towards sexism, racism and insularity.

#### Quality press

It was unanimously agreed that only the *Independent* and the *Guardian* merited close scrutiny, the other quality papers holding too little appeal for a readership of students and young professional people.

#### The *Independent*

(Monday–Saturday, 893,47 for 13 weeks)

- All agreed to comment
- the quality of the writing,
  - the proportion of international news,
  - the broad spectrum of arts coverage,
  - the independence of the political stance.

The air mail price appeared to be good value, but there was some disappointment that the Saturday colour supplement was not included.

#### The *Guardian*

(Monday–Saturday, 1217 for 13 weeks)

It was felt that the *Guardian*, although comparable to the *Independent* in most other respects, had a significant advantage in the strength of its Tuesday supplement, *Guardian Education*. This supplement is written in tabloid form and includes excellent articles written to be of interest to secondary school students; there are also articles addressing matters of interest to teachers. The *Guardian's* other advantage was the inclusion on Saturday of a supplement entitled *Guardian Weekend*, more than eighty pages long and illustrated in colour.

#### Recommendation

Both the *Guardian* and the *Independent* contain a wealth of reading matter that would be a most valuable resource for teachers and students alike. The question was raised whether they would in fact contain too much: would the students and teachers find time to read them? Should this be seen to be a problem, the cheaper and apparently thinner *Independent* may be preferred. If, however, the students and teachers have a large appetite for quality journalism, and if the price of the *Guardian* is within a school's budget, then a subscription to the *Guardian* is recommended.

<sup>a</sup> There are many newspapers in Britain, but not all of them would be useful for foreign students. Some of them contain little other than scandal and football, while others are only read by stockbrokers or the landed gentry. We're going to look at the different papers and see which would be best for your school.

<sup>b</sup> This report is the product of a working party of five members of the ELT Department of Wexes University whose brief was to identify which British daily newspaper would be the most appropriate as a resource for CAE students at language schools in Aliva. After a week of individual research, a meeting was held in order to share findings and reach a conclusion.

<sup>c</sup> A working party led by James Brigglesworth (myself) was requested, on 3 February 1983, to undertake a survey of the current daily press in Britain and to report their findings to the English Language Teaching Association of Aliva. After a long and fascinating week's work during which we ploughed through an enormous quantity of newspaper, here is what we decided.

## Report on Need for Financial Support for Victoria Village School

Use the plan and vocabulary given to write a report for Ms Price of Price Right Electronics.

You are spending a gap year in Lesotho, working as a voluntary English teacher in a village school. On behalf of the school, you have applied to Ms Price, as manager, for sponsorship. Before she decides to donate, Ms Price wants to know how her money will be used.

Write a report for Ms Price explaining

- what conditions are like in the school
- what the school most urgently needs money for
- how she/ner firm can benefit from becoming a sponsor

Write 220 words (+/- 10%)

## Report on Need for Financial Support for Victoria Village School

### Introduction

\_\_\_\_\_ Ms Price, executive director of Price Right Electronics, this report \_\_\_\_\_ the conditions in Victoria Village School, Lesotho, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ donations made to the school might be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ sponsors could benefit from supporting Victoria Village School.

### Conditions in Victoria Village School

(faulty toilets, overcrowded classrooms, outdated teaching materials)

### Proposed use of donations

(repair to sanitary facilities, extension: extra classroom, new textbooks for English)

### Benefits for sponsors

(BBC documentary on Victoria County planned > media attention)

### Conclusion:

As the main center of elementary education in Victoria County, a developing area in Lesotho, Victoria Village School must \_\_\_\_\_ adequate schooling for all children. Funds are \_\_\_\_\_ to provide basic \_\_\_\_\_ for learning, health and well-being as the state allowance for village schools is \_\_\_\_\_. Sponsorship will be \_\_\_\_\_ and acknowledged.

## Useful Vocabulary:

currently/ at present / at the moment  
in poor /bad condition  
in a critical/ dangerous condition  
in a poor /bad /critical state of repair  
in urgent need of renovation /refurbishment  
a severe lack /shortage of (adequate) facilities / teaching materials / equipment/ furniture  
sanitary facilities / roof repairs are urgently required  
additional space is needed to accommodate the growing numbers of students  
to attend school  
improvements / repairs / and extension TO (e.g. the school building / the premises)  
financial aid / support is (most) urgently needed to / for (e.g. repairs of the roof)  
donation would be used to / for  
At the request of Ms Price / the town council / the principal, this report ...  
In return for sponsorship / the valued support of Price Right Electronics, we can offer / we would be pleased to / we would be happy to ...  
advertising space can be made available  
media presence / interest / attention / coverage is guaranteed

## The 5 Paragraph Essay



### Introduction

§1 introduces the topic and provides a road map of the rest of the essay. It defines the main idea. This paragraph usually ends with the **thesis statement**. It encapsulates the essay's argument; it is your essay boiled down to one sentence.

### §2: Argument A:

The second paragraph provides information and supporting points. Use your second strongest argument here.

### §3: Argument B:

More info and thoughts that your thesis statement. Use your weakest argument here in the middle.

### §4: Argument C:

Use your strongest argument, the “kicker” that the reader will remember.

### §5: Conclusion

Summarize the arguments that were discussed in the body paragraphs and reassert the thesis statement in other words.

### What is the heart of your essay?

An essay is a form of writing that defends a **thesis statement**. This statement typically appears at the end of the first paragraph. Poor thesis statements suffer from vagueness; the more precise you can be, the stronger the essay. A strong thesis statement is not only a guide for the reader, it is also a guide for the writer. If you become stuck or find yourself writing in circles, a good thesis can remind you exactly what you are after.

What is the purpose of your thesis? What do you want to convince the reader of?

What are the main arguments of defense that you can develop into coherent argument paragraphs?

Remember: Each paragraph is a mini-essay in itself and needs

a topic sentence

a body (your argument, examples, details)

a concluding sentence, often leading on to the next paragraph

Make sure each paragraph deals with only ONE argument or aspect of the problem.

How can you wrap up your essay and sum up all your arguments most convincingly? Rephrase your thesis statement and show to your reader that your arguments really lead to a very clear conclusion and evaluation of the problem.

### Before you finish go through your essay one more time and check:

- Has your intent remained clear and consistent throughout the arguments and conclusion of the essay?
- Does your essay contain ONE MAIN IDEA that is supported by examples, explanations, comparisons, and/or definitions?
- Has each paragraph been constructed around one idea or argument?
- Have you linked your ideas and paragraphs logically? Have you used appropriate linking words and phrases to guide your reader through your essay.

## AN ESSAY WRITER'S MANTRA

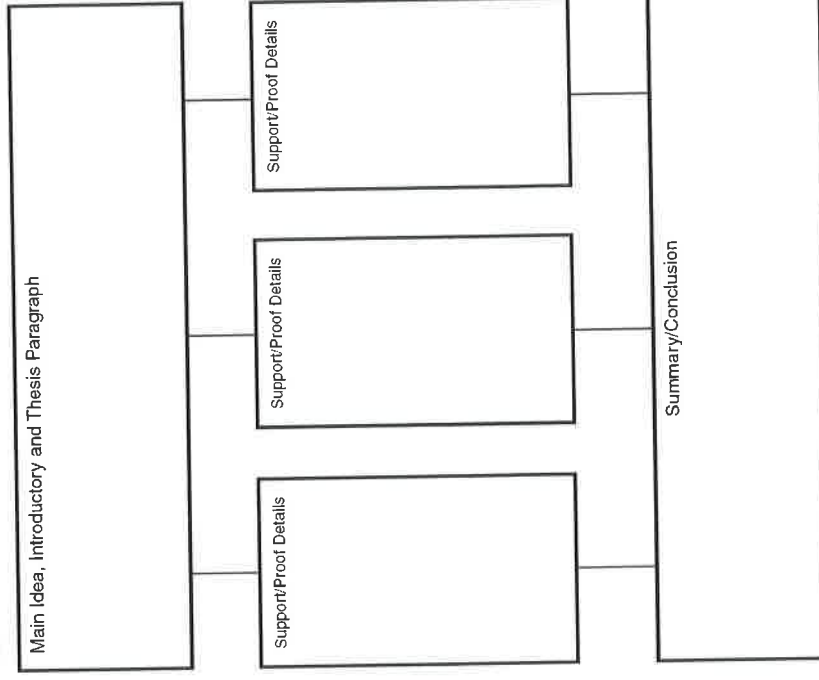
I will not be aimless, confused or self-contradictory. I will be coherent and logical. I will use lots of effective transition sentences. In the end, no one will oppose my thesis statement.

Before writing an essay always make an outline like this:

*In My Opinion . . . (Main Topics and Supporting Points)*



### Five-Paragraph Essay



Before passing your essay on to your peers or teacher, check if your arguments are clearly and logically linked. Use some of the following linkwords to make your reasoning crystal clear.

#### **Adding more to a point already made**

moreover; furthermore; again; further; what is more; in addition besides; above all; as well (as) either; neither...nor; not only...but also; similarly; correspondingly; in the same way; indeed in fact; really; in reality, it is found that... as for; as to; with respect to; regarding

#### **Writing in lists**

first(y); second(y); third(y) another; yet another; in addition; finally to begin with; in the second place moreover; additionally; also next; then; and to conclude; lastly; finally

#### **Putting the same idea in a different way**

in other words; rather; or; better; in that case to put it (more) simply in view of this; with this in mind to look at this another way

#### **Introducing examples**

that is to say; in other words for example; for instance; namely; an example of this is and; as follows; as in the following examples; such as; including especially; particularly; in particular; notably; chiefly; mainly; mostly

#### **Introducing an alternative viewpoint**

by contrast; another way of viewing this is; alternatively; again; rather; one alternative is; another possibility is on the one hand...on the other hand conversely; in comparison; on the contrary; in fact; though; although



#### **Returning to emphasise your earlier viewpoint**

however; nonetheless; in the final analysis; despite x; notwithstanding x; in spite of x while x may be true, nonetheless although; though; after all; at the same time; on the other hand; all the same; even if x is true; although x may have a good point

#### **Showing the results of something**

therefore; accordingly; as a result so, (then,) it can be seen that the result is; the consequence is resulting from this; consequently; now we can see, then, that; it is evident that because of this; thus; hence; for this reason; owing to x; this suggests that; it follows that in other words; otherwise; in that case; that implies

#### **Summing up or concluding**

therefore; so, my conclusion is in short; in conclusion; to conclude; in all; on the whole to summarise; to sum up briefly; in brief; altogether; overall; thus; thus we can see that

#### **Useful phrases to introduce quotations**

- as X points out,...
- According to X,...
- To quote from X, ...
- X states/suggests that...
- X tells/shows us that...
- In an article entitled 'Name of Text', X makes the point that...
- Referring to ..., X argues that
- As X stated/wrote/argued/discussed/expressed the concern, ...
- In Name of Text, X primarily suggests ...
- Whilst acknowledging ... X makes the significant claim that ...
- Writing in 1926, X argued that ...

#### **Useful phrases to follow quotations**

- However, Y suggests that
- Yet this does not go far enough
- This seems untenable because
- This theory best fits the known facts, since...

References: adapted from Stella Cottrell *The Study Skills Handbook* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003)

### Correspondence: Writing Letters

#### 1. Layout

Have a good look at the sample letters in the blue pages of your Collins Cobuild Dictionary to see how to write a letter properly.

#### 2. Standard opening and closing lines

##### a) formal

Writing to a firm or institution or a person who is not known to you	
<b>Opening line</b> Dear Sir Dear Madam Dear Sir or Madam	<b>Closing line</b> Yours faithfully

Writing to a person who is known to you

<b>Opening line</b> Dear Professor Brown Dear Dr Jones Dear Ms Newman Dear Mrs Smith Dear Miss Clark Dear Mr Williams Dear Mr and Mrs Watt (A.E.: Dr., Ms., Mrs. Mr.)	<b>Closing line</b> Yours sincerely (B.E.) Sincerely (A.E.)
---	---

##### b) semi-formal

<b>Opening line</b> Dear Professor Brown etc. (as above)	<b>Closing line</b> Kind regards With kindest regards
---	---

##### c) informal

<b>Opening line</b> Dear Alison Hi Dave	<b>Closing line</b> Best wishes All the best See you Bye (for now) Cheers (B.E.) Love (very familiar)
---	---

### 3. Useful expressions

Formal	Informal
I am writing to you concerning / regarding / with regard to...	Just a quick note / a few lines to let you know that...
I am writing on behalf of ... e.g. my fellow students / my classmates	I'm writing for everyone in my class.
Thank you for your letter of 5th May...	Thanks for your letter. It was great / lovely to hear from you.
I regret to have to inform you that...	I'm sorry to say that...
I am delighted to inform you that... It gives me great pleasure to inform you that...	I'm really pleased to say that... (I've got some) great news! Wait till you hear this!
I would like to / I wish to... (NOT "want") e.g. take this opportunity to... e.g. ask you whether... / thank you for...	I was wondering whether... I really must say a big thank you...
I should / would be extremely grateful if you could provide me with some details / information. Would you be so kind as to... Could I (please) ask you to...	I'd be really grateful if you could give me some details / info. Could you please send me some info on... It would be great / brilliant if you could let me have some info.
Due to unforeseen circumstances I'm afraid / I regret I shall have to postpone our meeting.	I'm afraid I'll have to put off our meeting / date / get-together as something has cropped up...
I very much regret that I shall not be able to attend the function...	I'm really sorry but I can't come / make it to the function.
Unfortunately Monday 5th is no longer suitable for me.	I'm sorry I can't make (it on) Monday 5th.
Perhaps we can arrange another appointment. May I suggest that we meet on Tuesday 6th?	Maybe we can fix another time / date... How about meeting on Tuesday 6th?
Please inform me of your decision as soon as possible.	Let me know what you think a.s.a.p. / as soon as you can.
Please accept my apologies for the inconvenience / damage / trouble I caused.	I'm so sorry I put you out / caused all that trouble / inconvenience.
I would like to (take this opportunity to) apologize for causing so much trouble. Give my regards to your colleagues.	I'm really sorry about the damage / trouble I caused.
I look forward to hearing from you / meeting you soon.	Say hi to everyone at work. Looking forward to hearing from you / seeing you soon. Write back soon. See you soon.
I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. I look forward to receiving a cheque for \$50.	Get back to me as soon as you can. Get the \$50 to me as soon as you can.

# How To Write A Letter To The Editor

## Arguing your position

1. **Be polite.** Even if you are really angry or feel insulted by someone's opinion or actions, don't sink to their level. Respect the people you're talking about, even if you disagree with their position. Comment on actions more than personalities.

*Bad Example:* "FPÖ politicians are dangerous Nazis and should be deported themselves."  
*Good Example:* "I strongly disagree with the FPÖ suggestion of deporting asylum-seekers..."

2. **Be specific.** If you're commenting on an article in the paper, mention the day and page number of the article. If you're commenting on a specific political position or speech, restate it briefly. Don't assume the reader knows what you're talking about. Tell them.

*Example:* "I disagree with Minister Schmidt's position on comprehensive schools, as reported in the Kleine Zeitung last Sunday."

3. **Stick to one topic.** Deal with one issue, article or speech in one letter.

4. **Use facts and figures to back up your arguments.** Quote other experts who commented on the same subject, especially if the news article did not mention them.

5. **State your qualifications,** if useful to the letter.

*Example:* "I've been a teacher for 15 years, and Mrs. Schmidt's plan to invest in early-childhood education is good because in my experience..."

6. **When possible, compare and contrast.** State why your solution or idea is better and why the other one is poor.

7. **Be concise.** Short letters are more likely to be printed and won't be cut short by the editors.

Limit your letter to two or three paragraphs. Try sticking to the following format:

- In your first paragraph, **introduce your problem** and sum up your objection.
- In the second paragraph, include a few sentences to **support your view**.
- End with a **great summary** and a **clever, punchy line**.
- 8. **Be original.** Don't sound like everyone else. Use your own voice.
- 9. **Be positive when appropriate.** Don't hesitate to send a complimentary letter to the newspaper for a good editorial or story. Congratulate politicians you agree with.
- 10. **Read your letter out loud.** Does it sound good? Does it make sense?
- 11. **Proofread your letter** for spelling and grammar mistakes.
- 12. **Include all the necessary information about yourself that the newspaper asks for.** When sending e-mail, this means your city and telephone number. When sending a letter by mail, make sure it's typed (or legible) with your full return address as well as phone number and signature.

13. **There are many places to express your opinion, not just letters to the newspaper.** There are weekly and monthly magazines. There are internet web sites, blogs, newsgroups and chatrooms. Express yourself, in friendly terms, in conversations with friends or in social situations.

**Speak up! Your comment might make a difference!**



## Dear Editor:

It was with a heavy heart I saw in the ST the article concerning the sentencing yet once again of a father who strongly abused his ELEVEN WEEK OLD SON and was sentenced to an 11 week PROBATION.

This should be front page news and is a disgrace to the city and Fort Worth District Court No. 4 Judge Mike Thomas.

Don't you love that someone determined that this tiny baby had no PERMANENT DAMAGES....how on earth can that be determined at this point in this child's life. X-rays showed previous breaks of 22 bones in various stages of healing and in this event he landed on his head.

And to heap disgrace upon disgrace, there will be NO RECORD of this horrific event on this person's record. So one year from now, no one will remember or care and even worse, if it happens again, it will not even be a "repeat" performance. I can only hope that Bill O'Reilly will get wind of this one and bring this to our nation's attention....not that it can be stopped at this point, but how on earth can this keep happening across this great nation?

MARILYN ACUFF Letter to the Editor Sent to : Abilene Reporter-News Country : United States Date: SEP-17-2009 Subject: Protecting Our Children

## Dear Editor:

Am I the only person that is getting a little tired of all the Medical shows on TV? I see where there is going to be another one called Mercy Hospital. I really used to enjoy the medical shows, as they showed how many patients were cured, or helped by a concerned Doctor or Nurse. Now they feature more sex between the doctors and nurses. You hardly see a patient, and their problems. I don't think that I would like to be in the hospital and have any of them operate on me!

Their relationships have to interfere with their performance! I don't think this is going on in our hospitals. I know that we have good hospitals here in Iowa. However, as far as TV is concerned....Let's bring back medical shows like Marcus Welby!!!!!!

Florence Lee Letter to the Editor Sent to : Des Moines Register Country : United States Date: SEP-10-2009 Subject: Medical Shows on Television

## Examples of Letters to the Editor:

### Dear Editor:

If the ongoing fish kills are a natural phenomenon, why are these massive kills not present in the other rivers in Eastern North Carolina. Can it be because the Neuse is so contaminated by pollution because of runoff from homes, farms, construction, and waste water? If so, we all need to do our part to report and confront those who are causing our beautiful river to die.

Joanne Someday Letter to the Editor Sent to : Sun Journal (New Bern) Country : United States Date: SEP-20-2009 Subject: Fish Kill in North Carolina

### Dear Editor:

I do not have health insurance, I don't want health insurance, and I don't need health insurance.

The conclusion that people jump to (including the President) is that I am irresponsible - that I don't pay my bills. Not so. I pay my bills - including my hospital/doctor bills. Insurance is not a right nor a necessity. Nor is it needed for those of us who have sacrificed and saved up to pay our own expenses. Privacy, liberty, freedom to pay my own bills. What is so wrong with that? "Irresponsible" are those who fail to obey the Constitution, lose focus as to governments real responsibilities, and get 'cloudy-eyed' as we were before 9-11...

Louis Gander Letter to the Editor Sent to : NEW YORK TIMES Country : United States Date: SEP-18-2009 Subject: I don't want or need Health Insurance

# Portfolio Work and Portfolio Assessment

Working with portfolios has changed my role as a teacher dramatically in the last few years. I have finally managed to involve the students actively in the learning process. My students have become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and have learned to set their own goals. At the end of the semester they are proud of their progress and achievements. Let me explain the basic principles of portfolio work, and make you interested in this multi-dimensional form of assessment.

## What is a portfolio?

A reading-writing portfolio is an organized and purposefully selected collection of work that shows a student's achievements, effort, growth and attitudes in the area of reading and writing. The portfolio includes a statement of the portfolio purpose (Letter to the Reader), a variety of writing samples, reasons or criteria for the selection of each piece and examples of self-reflections on the student's work.

What does this mean in everyday school-life?

When looking at a student portfolio you will typically find the following contents:

- a personally designed title page and folder
- a letter to the reader
- a table of contents
- a variety of samples showing different achievements and skills
- reflections and reasons for choosing each of these samples
- assessment and feedback (self-assessment, peer-assessment, teacher-assessment and feedback)

Let us look at each of these in turn.

## Folders and Title Pages

When looking at student portfolios you will first notice the wide variety of title pages that the students produce. Students must understand that "a Portfolio is a window into the writer's mind"<sup>1</sup> In their portfolios they try to present themselves, their personalities, their interests, thoughts and attitudes. This can already be seen in the title pages and folders that they design.

## Table of Contents

Good organizational and structuring skills are very important, especially in open teaching environments. Students must learn to organize their materials clearly for themselves as well as for others. In portfolio work students have to collect their work in the course of the semester and eventually present samples of their work in the portfolio. Students choose these samples to prove that they have acquired certain skills and mastered specific teaching objectives. In the portfolio they present these samples in a clearly organized way. This obviously includes a table of contents. Very often students also choose to use additional structuring techniques, such as colored paper for reflections, headings, dividing sheets etc. to help the readers find their way through the portfolio.

## Letter to the Reader

The heart and soul of every portfolio is the letter to the reader, which usually follows the table of contents. In this letter the student states the portfolio purpose and reflects upon her development and learning process in the course of the semester or year. The letter to the reader is the first item we read, but it is the last item that the student writes. It can only be written after choosing the samples of work that exemplify the student's progress and achievements. In the letter to the reader the students reflect upon their special strengths and interests, the different teaching objectives of the class and their level of achievement, their growth and improvement in certain areas, factors that have contributed to this growth or have hindered them, their effort and motivation, their reading and writing preferences or

problems... These letters focus on the students' meta-cognitive awareness of their own working strategies, habits and progress.

I have experienced that students who take time to reflect upon these aspects of their work develop a much stronger goal orientation and will be much more focused in the next semester. They see what has helped or hindered their development, they feel proud of their achievements or see the reasons for their bad results in certain areas. This awareness is the best starting point for future improvements.

## Text Samples and Reasons for Choice

At the end of the semester or after a period of about 2-3 months students collect and discuss all the teaching objectives that the class has so far dealt with. We usually collect these goals in a brainstorming session and also discuss the criteria that a student has mastered a certain goal. Students have practiced self- and peer-evaluation in the course of the semester and should at this point have a clear understanding of quality criteria in different areas. This knowledge enables them to choose samples from their work that prove that they have reached certain goals.

In these portfolio sessions students are asked to bring all their past work to class.

In the course of the semester students have collected samples of their work such as stories, essays, letters, projects, poems, reading diaries, grammar work, error work, vocabulary work...

Using their lists of goals and objectives they go through their work and choose relevant examples. To make this process even more tangible let us look at a short list of objectives that my students came up with in their second year of English. We first brainstormed the objectives and topics and then discussed the criteria and ways to show these skills.

Topics and teaching objectives	Criteria and ways to show that I have reached this goal
writing a spooky story	spooky setting where you can see, hear, feel with the characters, use lots of spooky words
spooky words	good motivation for the characters' actions (they must have a good reason to act as they do) surprise ending
using the present perfect tense for experiences and achievements and the past tense for past events	I could include some grammar exercises to show that I have learned the correct forms I could include my text "What grade I have earned" or "My favorite star" to show that I can use the forms independently.
summarizing and paraphrasing information	I could include one of my magazine texts and copy a page from the sources that I have used. I can show how I have used my own words and how I have picked out the most important information.
giving constructive feedback	critiana: have my comments helped my friend improve his/her text? I could include a feedback sheet that I wrote for a friend and ask her whether this was helpful
time-management	I cannot prove this in my portfolio but I can write a reflection about our magazine work. Did we always have our texts ready at the deadlines, how did we cope with time problems?...

This is only a short extract of possible goals and criteria. The list will always depend on the age and level of the students and the main focus of the teacher.

Usually it is fairly difficult for students to narrow down the number of samples. Especially eager, highly motivated students want to include too many pieces. I usually limit the samples to about five and explain that students can use one and the same sample to showcase different qualities. They can, for example, include a story and show different story writing skills such as good vocabulary, good description of the setting, lively characters, correct use of the past tense (simple and progressive), good revising and text improvement strategies (by including the drafts, peer-comments and final version)... I do not recommend to use one text for too many purposes, however. Students usually focus on one to three skills or teaching objectives in one sample.

<sup>1</sup> Marjorie Frank, *Using Writing Portfolios to Enhance Instruction and Assessment*  
© Pöbkleimer

## Reflections about each piece

After choosing a sample students write a "Reason for choice" or "Reflection" explaining why they have chosen the piece and what they want to show with it. These reflections (including the letter to the reader) are the key and most essential "ingredients" of a portfolio. They distinguish a portfolio from a writing folder or a collection of the best pieces of a year. It is these reflections that make portfolio work so effective in fostering motivation, pride and awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses.

Let me warn you of two very common mistakes of teachers who begin to introduce portfolios in their classes: One common error is to leave out or reduce the importance of reflections. Meta-cognitive skills are usually not very well developed in classes and need some practice and training to develop. It will usually take one or two portfolio rounds until the majority of students have mastered this skill at an appropriate level. It will also depend on the teacher's experience in this area. I have noticed that my present students pick up these skills much faster than the students I taught four years ago. My own understanding and awareness in this area has grown and I have learned to communicate these more effectively. Even very simple and basic reflections can be very helpful for the students. Their awareness will grow rapidly with a little experience.

The second very common error is to define the portfolio contents for the students in too much detail. (e.g.: Your portfolio must include... ) Students will repeatedly ask you what they should include. Answering this question for them is taking away their chance to become active and aware of their goals and learning process. It is another trap that would reduce portfolios to mere inventories or writing folders. The process of selecting the right samples is one of the most important parts of portfolio work.

## Portfolio Assessment

There are several ways of assessing portfolios. One common way is to evaluate the portfolio as such and include this evaluation in the calculation of the final grade (next to test grades, class participation, homework etc). This is a safe way for teachers who are starting to work with portfolios.

After several years of portfolio experience I started to experiment with a more comprehensive, goal-oriented form of assessment. If the student's aim in the portfolio is to prove her level of achievement with respect to certain teaching objectives, then this information should be used more directly for final assessment. The assessment table below includes both, the portfolio and other information I have collected about a student's performance. Let me explain the assessment process in more detail:

### 1. Peer evaluation

At the end of the semester students bring their finished portfolios to class. We spend two hours (one double period) reviewing and assessing portfolios in groups. Students work in groups of three (they choose classmates they trust but are encouraged not to work with their best friends) and quietly read each other's portfolios. Younger students are given peer reflection forms with the following cues:

- My favorite part of your portfolio is... because...
- I notice you are good at...
- I suggest you...
- Moreover I'd like to tell you...

As mentioned before, giving feedback is an art that students have to learn. Cues like these help the students to give constructive feedback rather than negative comments or meaningless praise. We discuss that feedback is meant to help the writer to improve her performance. Most students pick up this notion very quickly and give very helpful tips for improvement.

If I see that students find many little flaws in each other's portfolios and are highly motivated to correct them I give them an extra day to revise their work before handing in the portfolios.

Students who have had more experience in giving feedback and assessing portfolios do not need any peer reflection forms. They write long letters to their friends discussing the different aspects of the portfolios. These feedback letters very often cover exactly the same areas the teacher would have commented upon. Due to the fact that fellow students do not give grades, these comments are usually accepted more easily than the teacher's comments that are inevitably linked to the idea of marks.

## 2. Self evaluation

Finally students fill in a copy of the assessment sheet for the semester. This sheet includes both the portfolio and other work they have done during the semester. Students have received a copy of the assessment criteria at the beginning of the year and have been reminded of the different categories and goals at several times during the semester. Tests do not appear as an extra category on this sheet, they are seen as examples of written work where students prove that they have reached certain goals. Oral and listening skills make up a fairly small part of the final grade. This is typical of our bilingual school where oral skills are obviously very good and do not need as much structured practice as in regular language classes.

Students include their self-assessment in the back of the portfolios. They color the number of columns on the right and thus get a very clear profile of their strengths and weaknesses. Many students also write short comments (reasons for good or bad performance, likes, dislikes, resolutions for next term...) in the content boxes on the left.

## 3. Assessment by the teacher

In my final assessment I look at each of the categories on the assessment sheet, keeping in mind the specific teaching objectives and goals of the class. I also include my notes on the students' performance during the semester (including tests, homework, project work, presentations, etc.) In order to make assessment transparent and understandable for the students I write short verbal comments for each category. After marking the level of achievement in the respective columns I compare my assessment with the student's self-assessment. Interestingly most students tend to be stricter on themselves than I am. In case of major disagreements I would discuss the matter and explain my view. Assessment will always have a washback effect on teaching and learning. If it is not fully understood and accepted by the students they will feel like victims rather than active partners in their own learning process.

## Summary: Advantages of Portfolio-work

Let me conclude by summing up the major advantages of portfolio work:

- Students see their progress and take over responsibility for their learning
- Students are proud of their work (intrinsic motivation)
- Portfolios foster self-confidence
- By choosing relevant pieces and reflecting on their work students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This awareness makes further growth possible.
- Personal growth counts (not only the class norm)
- Correcting and revising become meaningful
- Parents and future employers learn more about the students strengths and abilities
- Portfolios make assessment transparent and encourage communication between student and teacher
- Dynamic skills can be shown and evaluated in portfolios
- Teachers become coaches in the learning process
- Portfolios encourage goal-oriented teaching
- Portfolios are very well suited for open teaching methods (independent study, project work...)

## Portfolio Literature I can recommend: (All books are available at Amazon.com)

- Robert J. Tierney, *Portfolio Assessment in the Reading-Writing Classroom*, Christopher Gordon Publishers, 1991
- Allan A. De Fina, *Portfolio Assessment, Getting Started*, Scholastic Professional Books, 1992
- Marjorie Frank, *Using Writing Portfolios to Enhance Instruction and Assessment*, Incentive Publications, 1994
- Ilse Brunner, Eilfriede Schmiedinger (Hg.), *Portfolio: die Alternative für die Grundschulpraxis*, Veritas
- Ilse Brunner, Thomas Häcker, Felix Winter (Hg.), *Das Handbuch Portfolioarbeit*, Kallmeyer, 2006
- Ilse Brunner, Eilfriede Schmiedinger, *Leistungsbeurteilung in der Praxis, Der Einsatz von Portfolios im Unterricht der Sekundarstufe I*, Veritas