

English Level 10

Chapter 4 — Literacy: speaking, listening, words, context

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Interaction skills: discussing opinions about texts, their structures and features

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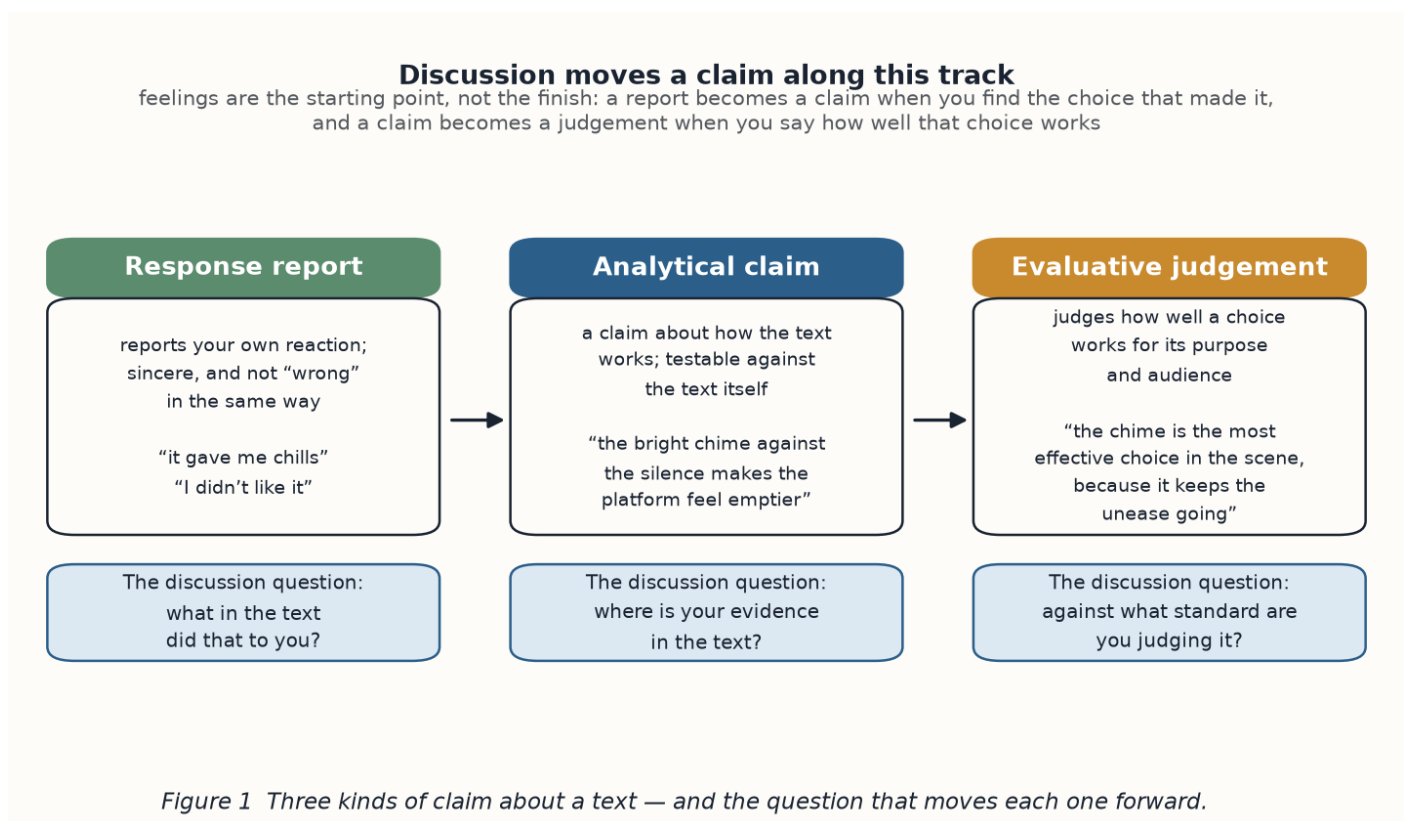
Theory

In Level 9 you used discussion to share opinions about texts made for different purposes and audiences. Level 10 raises the demand: the discussion itself must carry analysis. Your opinion about a text is the entry ticket; what you do with it in the room is the subject. That means naming the **structures** and **features** behind your opinion — the way a text is built, and the particular choices inside it — and arguing about their **purposes** (what each choice is there to do) and their **effects** (what it actually does to the listener, viewer or reader), with other people who have met the same text.

The term this section works with: interaction skills. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *interaction skills* but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: **interaction skills** are the language and listening habits that keep a discussion working — the moves you use to put a view on the table, to test every view against evidence, to build on and challenge classmates, and to pull a discussion together so it ends further along than it began. Every task in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

What an opinion about a text is — and the three kinds

The curriculum asks you to bring *an opinion* about texts into the discussion. In practice, an opinion about a text comes in three kinds, and they are not the same kind of statement. A **response report** tells the group your reaction. An **analytical claim** says how the text works. An **evaluative judgement** says how well a choice works for its purpose and audience. Only the last two can be tested against the text, and testing them is the whole point of the discussion.



Three cards in a row — response report, analytical claim and evaluative judgement — each showing what the claim does, one example taken from the audio scene used in this section, and the question that moves it forward: what in the text did that to you; where is your evidence in the text; against what standard are you judging it.

Notice what the track does. Feelings are not banned from a Level 10 discussion — they are the raw material. But a response report is the start of a claim, never the end of one. The discussion moves it forward by asking the question under each card.

The moves that keep a discussion working

On that definition, a discussion is not eight people saying turns at each other. It is a group testing views against a shared text, and it runs on a small set of moves.

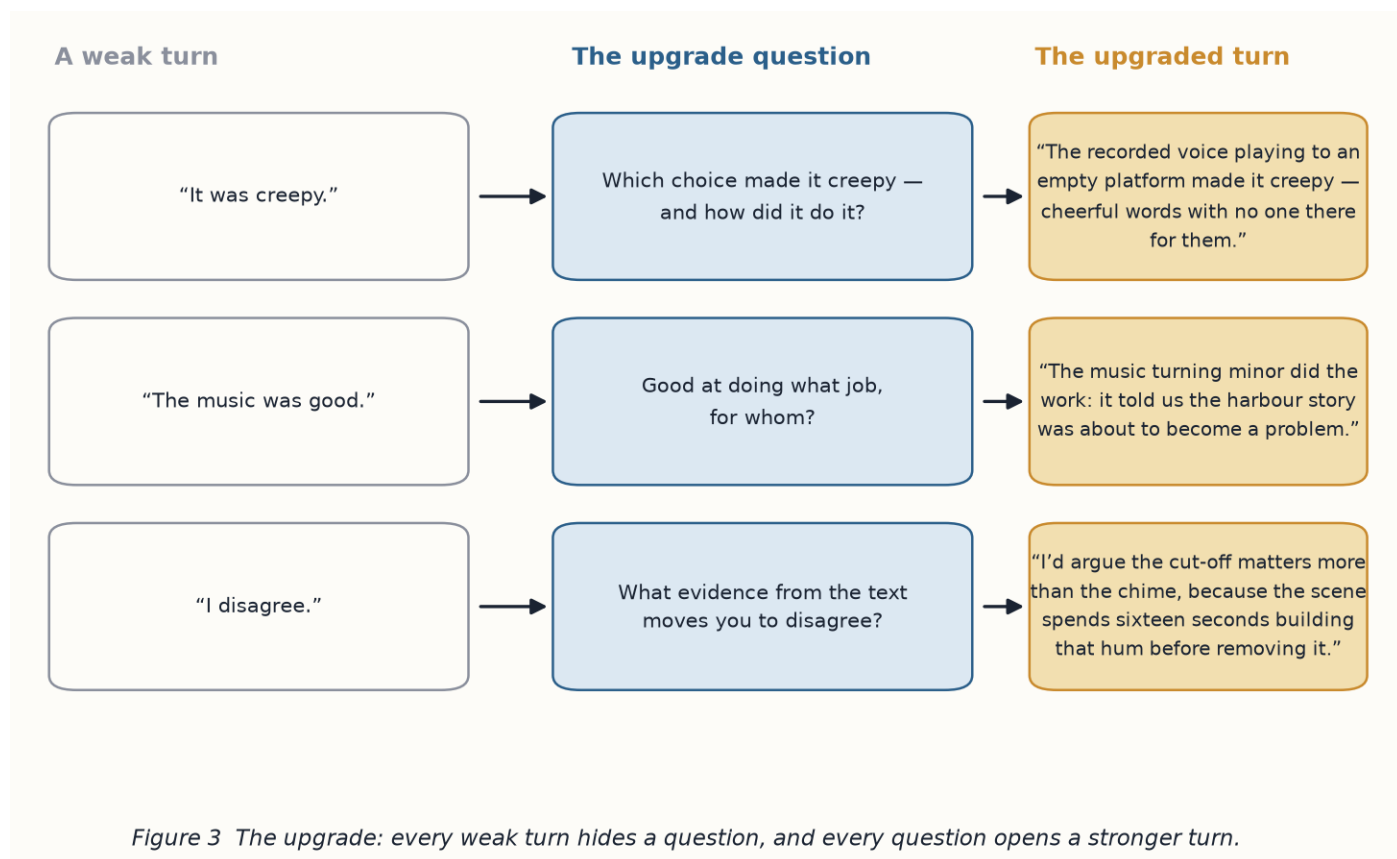
Move	What it does in the discussion	Ways to say it
Express a view	puts your opinion on the table, clearly and in your own words	"I think the chime is the key choice, because ..."
Invite evidence	asks a speaker to point to the part of the text behind a claim	"Where do you see that? What part made you say so?"
Build	adds to a classmate's point with a new reason or new evidence	"Can I build on that? The words do it too: ..."
Challenge	questions a point respectfully, with your own evidence	"I'd argue the cut-off matters more, because ..."
Concede	admits honestly where a point against you is right	"That's fair — I'll grant that part."
Redirect	returns to your own point after conceding, with the reason it still stands	"But the chime is still what keeps the unease going."
Check a claim	restates a classmate's view to confirm you heard it right	"So you're saying the voice is meant for no one — is that it?"
Summarise	pulls the discussion together; names what was agreed and what still differs	"So we agree the scene works by removing sound; we differ on which removal matters more."

Figure 2 The interaction moves kit: eight moves that keep a discussion about texts working.

A table of eight interaction moves — *express a view, invite evidence, build, challenge, concede, redirect, check a claim, summarise* — with what each move does in the discussion and example phrases for saying it.

Most weak discussions fail for want of three of these: **build**, **challenge** and **invite evidence**. Without them, a discussion is a list of separate opinions that never touch. With them, each turn answers the turn before it, and the group's thinking moves.

Weak turns can always be upgraded, because every weak turn hides a question.



Three rows, each showing a weak discussion turn, the upgrade question that improves it, and the upgraded turn it becomes: "It was creepy" becomes a claim about a recorded voice playing to an empty platform; "The music was good" becomes a claim about music turning minor to flag a problem; "I disagree" becomes a challenge with evidence about which sound the scene spends its time building.

The ground rules

Four rules keep the moves honest. They come as a set: break one and the discussion slides back into a list of separate feelings.

Ground rules of a text discussion

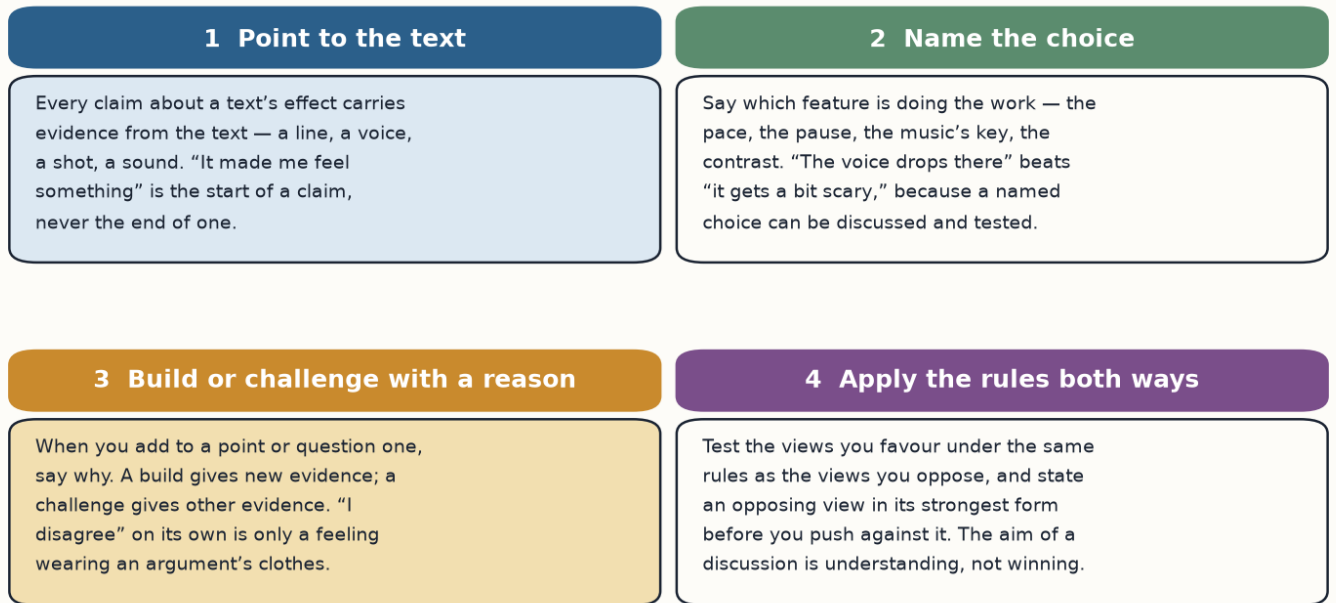


Figure 4 Four ground rules. Apply them to your own points as strictly as to everyone else's.

Four cards: point to the text — every claim carries evidence from the text; name the choice — say which feature is doing the work; build or challenge with a reason — a build gives new evidence, a challenge gives other evidence; apply the rules both ways — test the views you favour under the same rules as the views you oppose, and state an opposing view in its strongest form before pushing against it.

The fourth rule is the one students most often drop, and it is the one that matters most. Testing only the views you oppose is not fair testing — it is taking sides in disguise. And a view you have stated in its weakest form has not been tested at all. Mark your discussion on the quality of the reasoning in the room, never on who ended up agreeing with whom.

What this section discusses: how media texts use voice, images and sound

A **media text** is a text made to reach an audience through a medium — a radio segment, a television package, an online video, an advertisement. A media text is almost always **multimodal**: it carries meaning in more than one mode at once — words, images and sound working together. The curriculum's example for this section (VC2E10LY01.E01) is exactly that kind of talk: saying what the voice, images and sound of a media text do, and giving an opinion on **how words and sound combine to create a mood**.

To discuss a voice, you need names for what a voice does.

Spoken feature	What it is	Effects it commonly creates
Pace	how fast or slow the speech moves	slow pace gives weight, calm or menace; fast pace gives energy, urgency or nerves
Pitch	how high or low the voice sits	a low voice often reads as serious or threatening; a rising pitch can mark a question or doubt
Volume	how loud or soft the voice is	soft speech pulls the listener in close; loud speech commands the room
Pause	a deliberate stop before, after or inside speech	builds expectation, or lets a word land before moving on
Emphasis	stress placed on a particular word	marks what matters most; can quietly change a sentence's point
Tone	the feeling carried in the voice	warm, flat, bright, grim — tone tells the listener how to take the words

Figure 5 The spoken features kit: six features you can name in any speaking voice.

A table of six spoken features — pace, pitch, volume, pause, emphasis and tone — with what each is and the effects it commonly creates, such as a slow pace giving weight or menace, a pause building expectation, and stress on one word marking what matters most.

And to discuss words and sound together, you need the three ways they combine, plus the fourth that is really the removal of one of them.

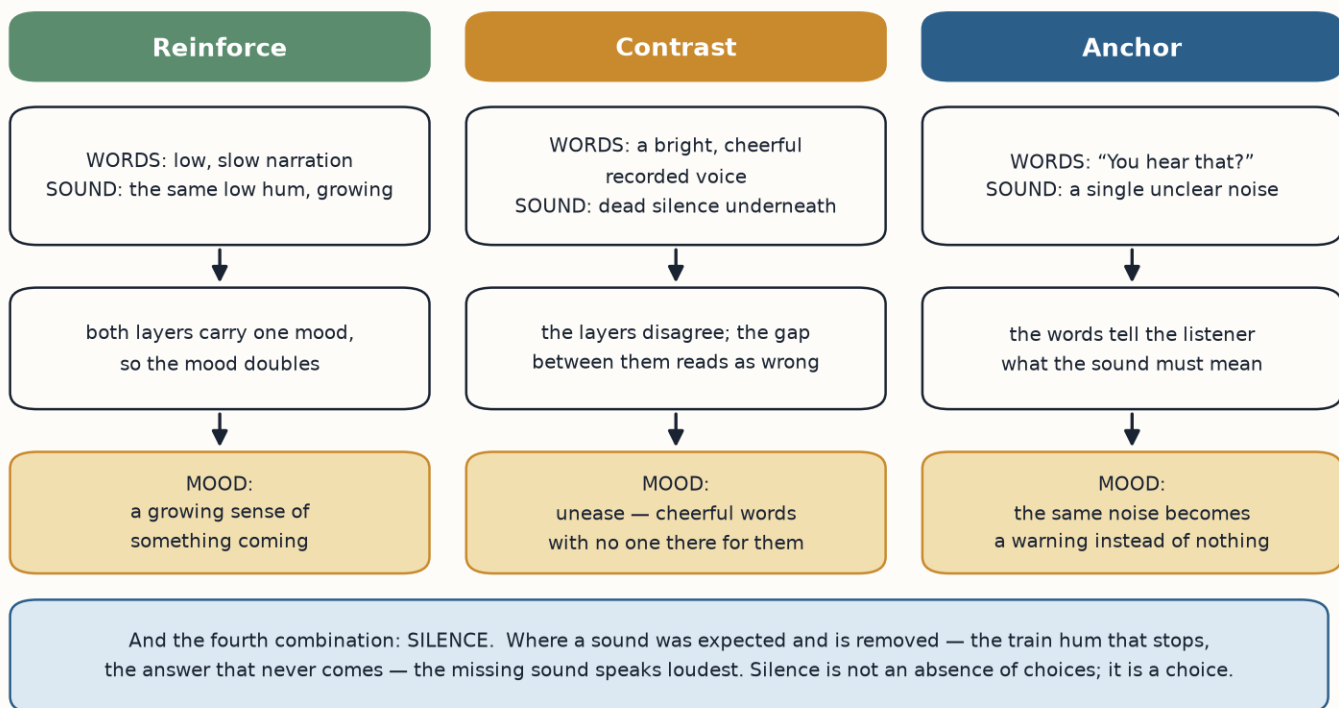


Figure 6 How words and sound combine to make mood: reinforce, contrast, anchor — and silence.

Three panels — reinforce, contrast and anchor — each showing a words layer and a sound layer, the work the combination does, and the mood it creates; beneath them a strip on silence, the removal of an expected sound, as a choice in its own right.

Reinforce is words and sound carrying one mood, so the mood doubles. **Contrast** is the layers disagreeing, and the gap between them reads as wrong: cheerful words over silence do not soften the silence, they sharpen it. **Anchor** is the words telling the listener what an unclear sound must mean. And **silence** — a sound expected and removed — is not an absence of choices; it is a choice, and often the loudest one in the text. (Section 2C of this book names sound that the characters can hear *diegetic* and sound added for the audience *non-diegetic*; both kinds appear in the stimuli below.)

The two media texts this section discusses

Both texts below are original, written for this book. Read each track, then read them together — the meaning lives in the combination.

THE LAST TRAIN — an original audio scene (40 seconds), written for this book

Time	SOUND track	WORDS track
0:00	Low wind. Far off, a rail hum, very quiet, growing.	—
0:06	the hum keeps growing	NARRATOR (low, unhurried): “The last train out of Marula stopped running in 1987. Some nights, people in town still hear it coming.”
0:16	the hum grows loud — then cuts off. Two beats of nothing.	—
0:18	quiet wind only	GIRL (quiet, close): “You hear that?”
0:20	a train door slides open. No footsteps.	—
0:23	held quiet	BOY (whisper): “Nobody’s getting off.”
0:26	one low note, held	—
0:30	the platform chime — bright, recorded, cheerful	ANNOUNCER (bright recording): “Marula station. Mind the gap.”
0:35	the door slides shut. The wind comes back. Nothing else.	—

Figure 7 Stimulus A: The Last Train, set out as a cue sheet. Read the two tracks, then read them together.

Stimulus A, The Last Train: a 40-second original audio scene set out as a cue sheet with a SOUND track and a WORDS track — a low growing rail hum, a narrator’s low unhurried line about a train that stopped running in 1987, the hum cutting off, a whispered exchange, one low held note, and a bright recorded station announcement playing over an empty platform.

HARBOUR WATCH — an original 60-second television community segment, written for this book

Time	VISION	VOICE	SOUND / MUSIC
0:00-0:10	Sunrise over a still harbour; one slow drone shot.	PRESENTER (voiceover, warm, unhurried): “Every morning, this harbour feeds a town.”	Soft major-key music.
0:10-0:25	Cut to: plastic floating against a pier; a dirty net; rubbish at the boat ramp.	PRESENTER (voiceover, slower, lower): “And every morning, the town feeds it back — bottle by bottle, bag by bag.”	The music turns minor. A gull cries.
0:25-0:40	Handheld camera: a volunteer on the rocks with gloves; then a fisher beside his boat.	VOLUNTEER (fast, fired up): “We fill forty bags before lunch. Forty. Every Saturday.” FISHER (slow, flat): “My dad fished this water. I don’t know what I’d do if it went.”	Music sits low under the voices.
0:40-1:00	Presenter to camera at the boat ramp; volunteers walking behind her.	PRESENTER (steady, direct): “Saturday, eight o’clock. Bring gloves. This is our harbour.”	The music returns to major and lifts.

Figure 8 Stimulus B: Harbour Watch. Its purpose: to move locals to come to a Saturday clean-up.

Stimulus B, Harbour Watch: a 60-second original television community segment set out as a timeline with VISION, VOICE and SOUND/MUSIC tracks — sunrise over a still harbour with warm voiceover and major-key music, a turn at ten seconds to rubbish and minor-key music with a slower lower voiceover, a fast fired-up volunteer and a slow flat fisher, then a steady direct call to camera: “Saturday, eight o’clock. Bring gloves. This is our harbour.”

Harbour Watch has a clear purpose: to move locals to come to a Saturday clean-up. As you discuss it, hold purpose in one hand and effect in the other — the package is not asking you to notice its choices; it is asking you to turn up on Saturday. Whether it earns that is precisely what a Level 10 discussion tests.

The discussion routine

For every task in this section, use the same four-step routine, and keep the moves and the ground rules running underneath it.

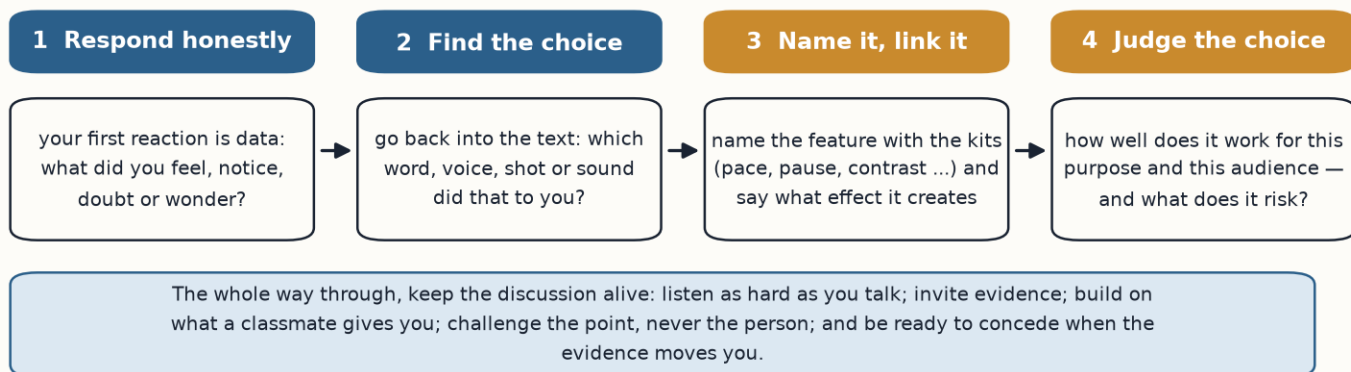


Figure 9 The discussion routine: respond, find the choice, name it and link it, judge it.

A four-step flow: respond honestly — your first reaction is data; find the choice — go back into the text for the word, voice, shot or sound that did it; name it, link it — name the feature with the kits and say what effect it creates; judge the choice — how well it works for this purpose and audience, and what it risks. A rail beneath: listen as hard as you talk, invite evidence, build, challenge the point never the person, and concede when the evidence moves you.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded (words and sound in *The Last Train*)

Say how the words and the sound work together to create the mood of *The Last Train*.

Analysis	Comment
The narrator's voice is low and unhurried, and underneath it the rail hum grows.	Steps 1–2: name the features — pace and pitch from the spoken kit, plus the growing hum.
Voice and sound carry the same mood, so the mood doubles: something is coming, slowly.	Step 3: the combination is reinforce .
At 0:16 the hum cuts off, and the scene takes two beats of nothing before any voice returns.	Step 2: the first silence — the expected sound removed.
The whispers are quiet and close, so we lean in; “Nobody’s getting off” turns the open door from ordinary to wrong.	Steps 2–3: volume as a feature; the words anchor the sound — the door sliding open becomes a threat because the boy’s line tells us what to make of it.
At 0:30 the bright recorded chime plays over the low held note and the silence, cheerful words with no passenger there for them.	Step 3: the combination is contrast , and it is the scene’s sharpest choice — cheerfulness over emptiness reads as wrong.
The mood is a growing unease that never gets a name, and the scene builds it almost entirely from the two tracks working together.	Step 4: judge — highly effective for its purpose; its one risk is that a listener who misses the chime misses the point, because nothing in the scene explains itself.

Example 2 — scaffolded (naming the moves in a discussion of *Harbour Watch*)

Below are five turns from a discussion of *Harbour Watch*. Name the interaction move each turn makes; then state what the turn adds to the group’s thinking.

Turn	Move	What it adds
1 — “The biggest choice is the music turning minor at 0:10 — that is when the harbour becomes a problem.”	Express a view	Puts a testable claim on the table and points to a precise moment.
2 — “Can I build on that? The voiceover slows and lowers at the same second, so voice and music change gear together.”	Build	Adds a second feature at the same timestamp — the turn answers the turn before it.
3 — “I’d argue the volunteer’s fast, fired-up speech matters more, because she is the first real person we hear, and her energy is the first human thing in the package.”	Challenge	Questions turns 1–2 with other evidence, and gives a reason.
4 — “So you’re saying a real voice carries more weight with the audience than the music does — is that your point?”	Check a claim	Restates the challenge fairly before anyone answers it; the group confirms it is arguing about the right thing.
5 — “Yes — and the fisher’s slow flat voice straight after her doubles it: two real people, two speeds, both worried. So we agree the package changes gear at 0:10, and we differ on whether the music or the voices do more work there.”	Build, then summarise	Extends the challenged point with new evidence, then pulls the room together and names the disagreement the group now owns.

Example 3 — unscaffolded (presenting an opinion on *The Last Train*, in discussion voice)

Model response.

Thanks, and can I start from what hit me first, because I want to test it against the cue sheet. My opinion is that the recorded chime at 0:30 is the choice the whole scene is built around, and the reason is the contrast. Every voice before it is live and human — the narrator, the girl, the boy — and they are all quiet, which pulls us in close. Then the chime arrives: bright, cheerful, recorded, a voice made for crowds, playing to a platform where nobody is standing. Cheerful words with no one there for them — the two tracks disagree, and the gap reads as wrong, so the unease we were already feeling gets a reason we cannot quite name. I’d argue that is more effective than the cut-off at 0:16, and here is my evidence for preferring it: the cut-off removes a sound, but the chime adds a voice that behaves as if nothing is wrong, and a voice that behaves as if nothing is wrong is scarier than silence. I’ll grant the cut-off opens the door — the scene needs those two empty beats first. But the chime is what walks through it. One risk to be honest about: the point depends on the listener noticing that the chime is recorded, not live. Miss that, and the scene’s best choice goes unheard.

Example 4 — unscaffolded (spoken features and purpose in *Harbour Watch*)

Model response.

The presenter’s voice carries the package’s whole argument: it changes gear twice, and each change tells the audience what to feel and when. Over the sunrise the voiceover is warm and unhurried — a slow pace and a comfortable pitch that say the harbour is a gift, and invite the audience to feel ownership before they have been asked for anything. At 0:10 the same voice slows further and drops, and the drop is the point: a lower, slower tone over the rubbish shots tells us this part is the bill for the gift, and the minor key under it confirms what the voice has already said. Then at 0:40 the presenter appears on camera and the voice shifts into its third gear — steady and direct, speaking to us rather than over us — and the short sentences land like instructions, which is exactly the job of the closing call: “Saturday, eight o’clock. Bring gloves.” Two details of emphasis finish the work. The volunteer’s fast, fired-up “Forty. Every Saturday.” gives the package its energy and its proof that action is already happening, while the fisher’s slow flat line gives it weight, so the audience is offered both urgency and loss as reasons to come. Read against the purpose, the

spoken choices are highly effective: they move the audience from comfort to debt to duty without a single shouted word. The package's risk sits inside its smoothness: once a viewer notices the gear changes, they may feel steered rather than persuaded, and an audience that feels steered stops trusting.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Match each turn (a–f) to the interaction move it makes (i–vi).

- (a) “The scene is about a train that never comes.”
- (b) “Where in the cue sheet do you see that?”
- (c) “Add my point to yours: the whisper makes us lean in.”
- (d) “I’d argue the pause after ‘You hear that?’ matters more than the whisper.”
- (e) “I’ll grant the chime is bright — but brightness over silence is exactly what makes it strange.”
- (f) “So we both think sound does more work than words here, but for different reasons.”
- (i) express a view
- (ii) invite evidence
- (iii) build
- (iv) challenge
- (v) concede
- (vi) summarise

Q2. Sort each claim about *The Last Train* into **response report**, **analytical claim** or **evaluative judgement**.

- (a) “It gave me goosebumps.”
- (b) “The narrator’s slow low voice makes the story feel like a secret being told.”
- (c) “The chime is the best choice in the scene, because it keeps working after the sound stops.”
- (d) “I wouldn’t listen to it at night.”
- (e) “The whisper ‘Nobody’s getting off’ turns an ordinary station sound into a warning.”
- (f) “The scene works well for a horror trailer, though it might be too quiet for a loud ad break.”

Q3. Match each description (a–f) to the spoken feature it names (i–vi).

- (a) “She drops her voice almost to a whisper for the last line.”
- (b) “He races through the list of names as if short of time.”
- (c) “Her voice lifts at the end of every sentence, like a question.”
- (d) “He stops for two full seconds before the word ‘guilty’.”
- (e) “She leans on the word ‘our’ so it carries the whole sentence.”
- (f) “The same words come out flat and cold the second time.”
- (i) pace
- (ii) pitch
- (iii) volume
- (iv) pause
- (v) emphasis
- (vi) tone

Q4. For each combination below, name the way words and sound are working (**reinforce**, **contrast** or **anchor**) and state the mood the combination creates.

- (a) A cheerful radio voice reads a competition winner’s name over a bright, bouncy jingle.
- (b) A calm weather voiceover describes a “perfect day ahead” over footage of a storm hitting the coast.
- (c) A low creak in an old house, then a whisper: “Did you hear that too?”

Q5. Each turn below breaks one or more of the ground rules (Figure 4). Name the rule it breaks, and rewrite the turn so it follows the rules.

- (a) “That scene was boring, and anyone who liked it has no taste.”
- (b) “The music made it scary.”
- (c) “I disagree with everything you just said.”

Q6. Complete each stem about *The Last Train* or *Harbour Watch* with one full sentence of your own, then label the move you made.

- - (a) “Can I build on that? ...” (build)
- - (b) “I’d argue ... matters more, because ...” (challenge)
- - (c) “I’ll grant ... — but ...” (concede, then redirect)

Unscaffolded

Q7. (*Writing.*) Give your opinion on how the words and the sound work together to create the mood of *The Last Train*, in 6–8 sentences written in discussion voice (you may write as if speaking to the group). Use at least two features from the spoken features kit (Figure 5), and name at least one of the three combinations (Figure 6). Finish with one honest limitation of the scene.

Q8. (*Creating.*) Plan a 30-second audio scene of your own with one chosen mood (for example: safety, threat, pride, loss). Write a cue plan of 6–8 lines, each line giving a WORDS choice and a SOUND choice; for each line, note in a phrase which combination it uses (reinforce, contrast, anchor or silence). Then write two sentences evaluating your own plan: its strongest choice, and its riskiest one.

Q9. (*Speaking and listening.*) In pairs, discuss *Harbour Watch*. Speaker: in 60–90 seconds, present your opinion on which single feature of the package does the most work in moving locals to the clean-up, using the four-step routine out loud (Figure 9). Listener: respond with **one** build and **one** respectful challenge, using the kit’s own words (“Can I build on that? ...”, “I’d argue ... because ...”). Swap roles. Afterwards, write three sentences: the challenge you received, your answer to it, and one thing your partner’s turn changed in your thinking.

Q10. Using the four-step routine, write one paragraph (6–8 sentences) evaluating how the presenter’s spoken features — pace, pitch and tone — change across *Harbour Watch*, and what those changes do to the audience. Include one honest limitation of the package.

Q11. Below are two readings of the same announcement — identical words, different voices. Identify **three** spoken features that differ between the versions, and evaluate which version more effectively creates (i) a friendly welcome, and (ii) a serious warning.

The words: “North Beach patrol starts tomorrow at seven. Swim between the flags, and have a great summer.”

Version A. Bright tone, fast pace, no pauses; an upbeat jingle under the voice.

Version B. Low pitch, slow pace, a long pause after “seven”; no music — only waves.

Q12. Evaluate this claim: “*A good discussion about a text ends with everyone agreeing.*” First state the claim in its strongest form — when is it right? — then test it against the model discussion moves in this section (Examples 2 and 3) and reach a reasoned conclusion.

Answers

Q1. (a)–(i); (b)–(ii); (c)–(iii); (d)–(iv); (e)–(v); (f)–(vi).

Q2. Response reports: (a), (d). Analytical claims: (b), (e). Evaluative judgements: (c), (f).

Q3. (a)–(iii); (b)–(i); (c)–(ii); (d)–(iv); (e)–(v); (f)–(vi).

Q4. (a) reinforce — an open, cheerful, celebratory mood, doubled by the jingle. (b) contrast — the calm voice and the storm footage disagree, creating wrongness and unease. (c) anchor — the whisper tells the listener the creak is a threat, creating fear.

Q5. (a) Breaks rule 4 (and 3): it tests the people, not the view. Rewrite, e.g.: “I’d argue the scene is slow to get going, because nothing changes in the first twenty seconds — what did you hear changing?” (b) Breaks rule 2 (and 1): it does not name the choice or point to the text. Rewrite, e.g.: “The one low held note after the whispers made it scary, because it never lets go.” (c) Breaks rule 3 (and 4): a challenge with no reason, and no fair restatement. Rewrite, e.g.: “So you’re saying the chime does the most work. I’d argue the cut-off does, because the scene spends sixteen seconds building that hum before removing it.”

Q6. Any completion that makes a real move with evidence from one of the two texts. Example set: (a) “Can I build on that? The fisher’s flat tone doubles the volunteer’s energy — the package gives us both speed and weight as reasons to come.” (build) (b) “I’d argue the pause after ‘You hear that?’ matters more than the whisper, because the pause makes the listener supply the fear.” (challenge) (c) “I’ll grant the sunrise shot is beautiful — but beauty is not the point; the minor key at 0:10 tells us the beauty is about to be billed.” (concede, then redirect)

Q7–Q12. See the fully-worked solutions below.

Fully-worked solutions

Q7. Model response. Can I start from the two whispers, because they are where the scene caught me. The girl’s “You hear that?” is quiet and close, a low volume that pulls the listener in until we are standing on the platform with them, and the boy’s answer — “Nobody’s getting off” — is quieter still, so the volume alone makes the moment feel like a secret. What those whispers anchor is the open door: a sliding door is the most ordinary sound a station owns, and the words turn it into the scene’s strangest one, because a door that opens for nobody is a question the scene refuses to answer. Against that, the narrator’s slow pace and low pitch lay the mood underneath — not fear yet, only the sense of something coming — and the growing hum reinforces it until the cut-off at 0:16 removes the very sound we were leaning on. So the mood is unease built in layers: reinforce to grow it, silence to open it, anchor to point it at the door. My one honest limitation is the same one I’d name in the room: the scene asks the listener to do a lot of the joining, and a listener who hears only separate sounds, not the combination, hears only a quiet platform.

Q8. Sample cue plan (mood: pride, for a school assembly opening). 1 — WORDS: announcer, steady and warm: “Twelve years ago this hall was a shed.” SOUND: a single low drum, once → anchor: the words tell us what the drum’s one beat means — the moment the hall’s story starts. 2 — WORDS: same voice, a little faster: “You built the stage. You painted the walls.” SOUND: handclaps enter, steady → reinforce: the claps carry the same pride as the words. 3 — WORDS: pause, then: “Look at it now.” SOUND: all sound out for two beats → silence: the removal makes the audience look. 4 — WORDS: brighter: “This is your hall.” SOUND: the whole room’s voices enter, cheering → reinforce: the crowd doubles the claim. 5 — WORDS: one quiet line over the cheer: “Even the kids who nearly stayed home.” SOUND: the cheer stays full under it → contrast: the big bright sound and the small honest line disagree, so the pride makes room for both. 6 — WORDS: quiet again: “Welcome home.” SOUND: one warm chord, held → anchor: the words “Welcome home” tell us what the held chord means — love, not just noise. Self-evaluation: the strongest choice is line 3’s silence, because a room only notices its own noise when it is removed. The riskiest is line 4, because a cheer that is told to arrive can land as fake if the real room does not join in.

Q9. Sample listening note. My partner argued the fisher’s slow flat voice does the most work, because it is the only line in the package with no energy in it, and after the volunteer’s speed it lands like a weight. I challenged with the music: the package turns minor at 0:10, a full fifteen seconds before any person speaks, so the audience is told the harbour is a problem before it is shown a single worried face. My partner answered that the minor key tells us *something* is wrong but not that we are the ones who must act — only a person can hand the audience a job. I concede

that point: the music sets up the debt, but the people send the bill. My thinking changed from “the music does the work” to “the music sets up the work the voices finish.”

Q10. Model paragraph. The presenter of *Harbour Watch* uses pace, pitch and tone as a three-gear argument. Over the sunrise the voiceover is warm and unhurried, a slow comfortable gear that says the harbour is a gift and the audience are its lucky owners. At 0:10 the gear drops: the voice slows further and the pitch falls, and that drop — more than the rubbish shots themselves — tells the audience the gift has a bill, with the minor key signing underneath. At 0:40 the third gear arrives: steady and direct to camera, the tone of a person speaking *to* you rather than *over* you, and the short clipped sentences (“Saturday, eight o’clock. Bring gloves.”) land as instructions, which is the purpose of a call. The changes are effective because they move the audience through comfort, debt and duty without raising the volume once; the package never shouts, so it never sounds like an ad. Its limitation is that the smoothness is visible on a second viewing: once you notice the gears, you notice the steering, and a steered audience trusts less.

Q11. Model comparative response. Three features differ clearly: tone (Version A bright, Version B low and flat), pace and pause (A fast with no pauses, B slow with a long pause after “seven”), and the sound bed (A an upbeat jingle, B waves only). For a **friendly welcome**, Version A is the more effective: the bright tone and fast pace read as good news delivered by someone glad to deliver it, and the jingle reinforces the cheer so the announcement feels like part of the summer it promises. For a **serious warning**, Version B is the more effective: the slow pace and low pitch give every word weight, the pause after “seven” makes the start time land as a rule rather than a suggestion, and the waves under the voice anchor the message in the place it concerns — the sea itself sounds present in the room. Version B’s pause is its sharpest choice: “starts tomorrow at seven ...” with the breath held turns a time into a deadline. Version A’s weakness is that its cheerfulness spends the warning — “swim between the flags” said brightly is a tip, not a rule.

Q12. Model evaluation. Stated in its strongest form, the claim has real force: agreement can be evidence that a view has been tested and found standing, and a discussion that ends in agreement around the best-evidenced reading has plainly gone well; endless disagreement, where no point ever answers the point before it, can mean nobody is listening. The claim fails, however, as a *test* of a good discussion, and the model turns in this section show why. In Example 2 the group ends by agreeing on one thing (the package changes gear at 0:10) and agreeing to keep one disagreement open (music or voices), and that open disagreement is not a failure — it is the group’s shared understanding, precisely stated, of where the evidence runs out. Agreement can also arrive without any testing at all, from tiredness or from wanting an easy life, and that agreement is the empty kind. So agreement is one possible by-product of a good discussion, never its mark. The mark is in the ground rules: every view pointed at the text, named choices, builds and challenges with reasons, views tested both ways. A discussion that does that and ends in two well-held positions has succeeded; a discussion that skips it and ends in one tired agreement has not.

Structured spoken texts: formality, audience, voice, multimodal and digital elements

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 10 · Literacy strand · sub-strand *Interacting with others* · **VC2E10LY02** · Draws on: VC2E10LY02.E01 · Builds on Level 9 VC2E9LY02 · Step-up: Level 9 *demonstrated* different degrees of formality; Level 10 *experiments* with formality while keeping an audience deliberately in mind, and plans the architecture of a structured argument — preview, one point per part, summary conclusion.

Five terms, defined up front

The curriculum uses *formality*, *audience*, *voice* and *multimodal* without defining them, and each of those words is used differently outside this book. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with the ones used here, so this section states its own. In this section:

- **structured spoken text** means a spoken text planned with a recognisable shape: an opening that states the issue and previews the route, a body that develops one main point at a time, briefly supported, and a closing that pulls the key issues together or makes a recommendation;
- **formality** means how far the language is shaped by the occasion and the distance between speaker and audience. It is a dial, not a switch, and it is not a measure of good or bad English — a casual text is not a failed formal text;
- **audience** means the people a spoken text is planned for, including what they know, what they need, what they worry about, and the part they can play in making the speaker's purpose happen;
- **voice** means what the speaker does with sound — pace, pause, pitch, stress and volume — and the **tone** those five add up to. (Not the other sense of *voice*, “a writer's personality on the page”; that sense is not used here.);
- **multimodal element** means any part of a spoken text that carries meaning through more than one mode — an image, slide, clip or sound heard as well as the voice — and **digital element** means any of those delivered by screen or speaker.

Two more terms are defined where they first appear: a **hedge** is a softening word or phrase (*kind of, sort of, I guess*) that lowers the force of a claim, and the **split-attention rule** is the fact that an audience cannot read a screen and listen to a voice at the same time — the two compete. Every task in this section is answerable on these definitions alone.

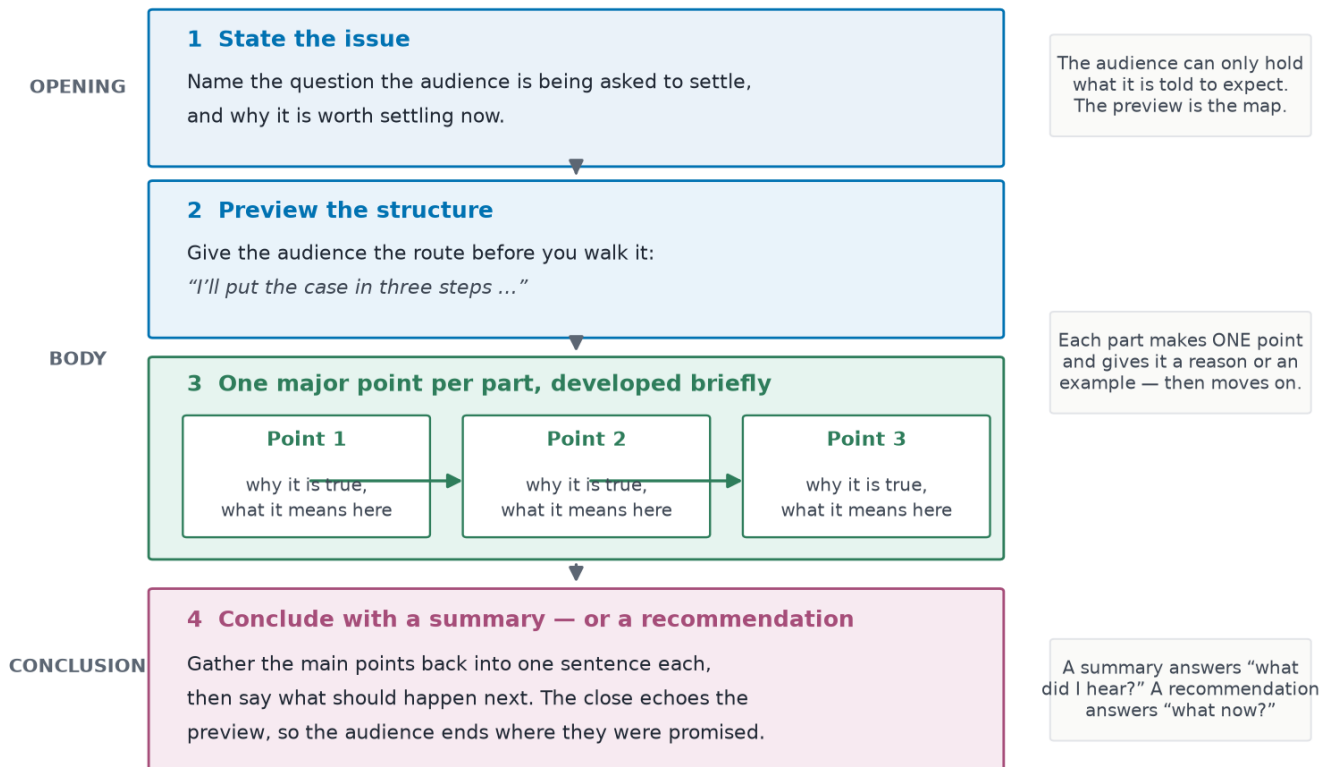
Theory

1. The shape of a structured argument

A structured spoken text is planned like a building: the opening, the body and the conclusion each have a job, and the audience can feel the plan. The curriculum's elaboration (VC2E10LY02.E01) names four moves: put the issue's central arguments and concerns on the table; show the structure you will travel; give every part one main point with succinct support — *succinct* is the elaboration's own word, and a good one: development long enough for the point to land, not long enough to start a second argument; and close by drawing the key issues or recommendations together.

The anatomy of a structured spoken text

The four moves of a structured argument, from first sentence to last



A structured spoken text is planned like a building: opening, body and conclusion each have a job, and the audience can feel the plan.

A diagram of the anatomy of a structured spoken text in three bands: an opening with "state the issue" and "preview the structure", a body of three point boxes labelled "one major point per part, developed briefly", and a conclusion labelled "conclude with a summary — or a recommendation", each with a margin note

The preview is the move students most often skip, and it is the one the audience most needs. A listener cannot re-read a sentence that has flown past; the preview is the map that lets them place each point as it arrives. And the conclusion has a job beyond stopping: it gathers the points back into one sentence each, then says what should happen next — a summary answers *what did I hear?*, a recommendation answers *what now?* — and it echoes the preview, so the audience ends exactly where they were promised. In a script, one major point per paragraph; spoken aloud, one major point per part.

Figure 2 is this section's model text, an original speech written for this book: a student at a school community meeting arguing for a later start to the school day. Read it once for the argument, and a second time watching the colour coding: every band does one job, and the pink close repeats the route the blue preview promised.

A model structured spoken text, colour-coded

“The Nine-Thirty Question” — a student speaking at a school community meeting about a later start to the school day (original text; spoken in about three minutes)

OPENING — state the issue

Thank you for the chance to speak. Tonight’s question is simple to state and hard to settle: should our school start lessons at nine-thirty instead of eight-forty-five?

PREVIEW — the route of the argument

I’ll put the case in three steps. First, the evidence about teenage sleep and what it means for a first-period classroom. Second, what a later start would do to attendance and learning. And third, the real costs and concerns — because they are real — and how they could be met.

POINT 1 + development

My first point is about sleep itself. Health researchers who study teenage body clocks report that most teenagers naturally fall asleep later and wake later than adults or young children. That is not laziness; it is biology. On an eight-forty-five start, many students are in a first-period classroom at a time their bodies are still built for sleep — and a tired brain is slow to focus, slow to store what it learns, and quick to give up.

POINT 2 + development

My second point is about what follows from that. Schools that have moved to later starts report stronger attendance in morning periods, fewer late arrivals, and students who stay on task longer. I’m not promising a miracle. I am saying that when the timetable works with students’ bodies instead of against them, the teaching that already happens in this school lands better.

POINT 3 — the concerns, met

My third point is the one that matters most in a room like this, because it concerns the costs. A later start touches bus routes, family drop-offs, after-school sport, and the working hours of every staff member. Those concerns deserve answers, not slogans. One workable path is a staged trial: shift the start by thirty minutes for two terms, measure attendance and feedback, and let the evidence decide the next step. A trial costs little, and it turns an opinion into a testable claim.

CONCLUSION — summary and recommendation

So let me close where I began. The biology of teenage sleep is well enough understood; the benefits reported by later-starting schools are real; and the costs can be managed by trial rather than by leap. On that basis, I recommend the school trial a nine-thirty start next year and judge it on the evidence. Thank you.

Every part has one job: state → preview → one point per part → summary and recommendation. The close echoes the preview.

The full original model speech “The Nine-Thirty Question” in six colour-coded bands: opening in blue stating the issue, preview in lighter blue promising three steps, two green body bands each making one point about sleep biology and attendance, an amber band meeting the costs and concerns with a staged trial, and a pink conclusion summarising and recommending

Notice what the speech does *not* do. Point 3 does not hide the costs — it names them (bus routes, drop-offs, sport, staff hours) and meets them with a staged trial. A structured argument is strongest when it carries its own objections, because the audience in the room was going to carry them anyway.

2. The formality dial

Level 9 work demonstrated different levels of formality — a formal text here, a casual one there. Level 10 (VC2E10LY02) asks for more: *experimenting* with formality *in deliberate consideration of an audience*. The dial is set by asking two questions — who is in the room, and what does the moment require — and “experimenting” means the dial can be moved on purpose, even inside a single text.

One message, three levels of formality

The same request — more recycling bins for the school courtyard — aimed at three different audiences

CASUAL

Speaking to students at an assembly; an audio show for student listeners

“Here’s the deal: we need two more bins out the front, because the ones we’ve got are done by lunch. We’ve counted — trust us, we’ve counted.”

What sets the level: contractions · everyday words (“done”, “got”) · a shared joke with the room

MEASURED

Presenting to the student council at a scheduled meeting

“We are asking the council to fund two additional recycling bins for the courtyard. Our count shows the current three are full by recess on most days.”

What sets the level: no contractions · precise nouns (“our count”) · the request is named, not hinted

FORMAL

Writing or speaking to the school board at a formal meeting

“We respectfully ask the board to approve funding for two additional recycling stations. A count taken on Tuesday found the existing bins reach capacity before lunch on most days.”

What sets the level: measured address (“respectfully ask”) · dated evidence · no humour at the audience’s expense

Formality is a dial, not a switch — and it is set by the audience and the purpose, not by “good” or “bad” English.

All three versions make the same case. The dial moves the words, the address and the evidence style — not the argument.

Three versions of the same request for more recycling bins aimed at three audiences: a casual version for a student assembly with contractions and everyday words, a measured version for the student council with precise nouns, and a formal version for the school board with measured address and dated evidence, under the line “formality is a dial, not a switch”

All three versions make the same case; the dial moves the words, the address and the evidence style, not the argument. Six features do most of the moving:

The features that move the formality dial

Six choices a speaker can place anywhere along the dial — each one signals something to the audience

Feature	Pulls the dial toward CASUAL	Pulls the dial toward FORMAL
Word choice	everyday words, short and concrete: get, grab, done, cooked	precise, fuller words: request, approve, reach capacity
Contractions	kept: we're, they're, can't	avoided: we are, they are, cannot
Address	first names, mates, you guys, the room as friends	titles and roles: members of the board, principal, staff
Sentence shape	short, loose sentences; ideas added as they occur	fuller, planned sentences; one idea carried through
Feelings in view	the speaker's feelings named: I reckon, honestly, I love it	evidence first; feelings earn their place when they arrive
Hedges and fillers	kind of, sort of, basically, um	removed — or replaced by measured hedges: the evidence suggests

Moving the dial is not acting. It is choosing, feature by feature, how close or how official the moment should sound.

A six-row table of the features that move the formality dial — word choice, contractions, address, sentence shape, feelings in view, hedges and fillers — each with what pulls toward casual and what pulls toward formal

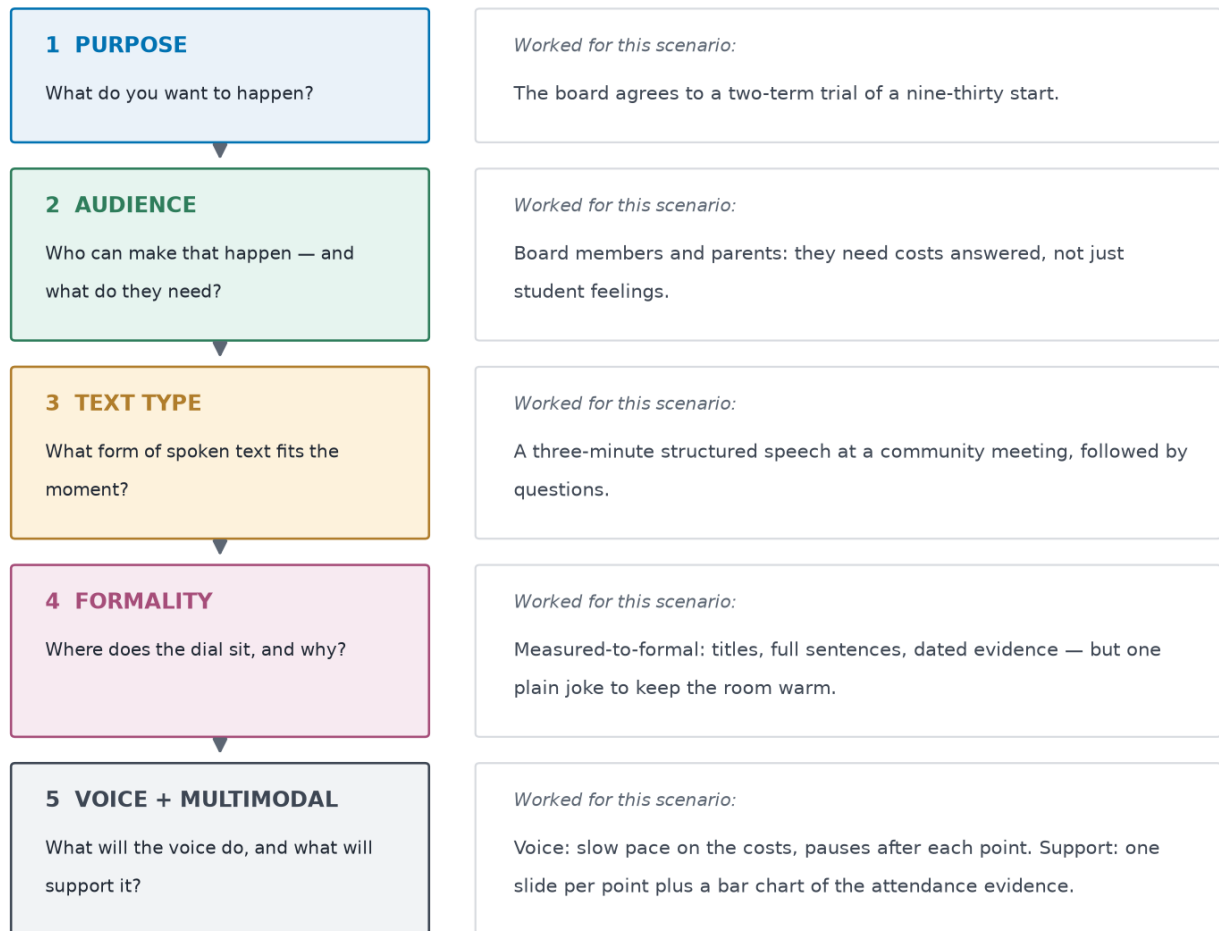
Two cautions. First, the dial is not sincerity: a formal text is not a fake text, and a casual text is not an honest one — the dial is chosen for the audience, the way a host chooses how to set a table for the guests. Second, a deliberate move of the dial is a move with a reason. A mostly formal speech that drops one plain, casual line to warm the room is experimenting; a speech that slips between levels without noticing is not. The difference is whether the speaker could say, afterwards, why the dial moved.

3. Planning from the outside in

Everything in §1 and §2 answers to one earlier question: who is this for, and what must happen? The plan runs from the outside in — purpose first, then audience, then every other choice.

Plan from the outside in: purpose → audience → every other choice

Worked for one scenario: you want the school board to trial a later start to the school day



Read the map backwards and it explains a speech you have heard: each choice points back to the audience it was made for.

A five-row planning map, each row a question box on the left and a worked answer on the right: purpose (what do you want to happen?), audience (who can make that happen, and what do they need?), text type (what form of spoken text fits the moment?), formality (where does the dial sit, and why?), and voice plus multimodal (what will the voice do, and what will support it?), worked for the scenario of asking a school board to trial a later start

Read the map backwards and it is an analysis tool: in any spoken text you hear, each choice points back to the audience it was made for. The formal board speech uses dated evidence because a board is the kind of audience that moves on dated evidence; the assembly version jokes because an assembly of your peers is the kind of room a joke works in. Where a choice does not point back to any audience — a slide nobody needed, a formal address to friends — you have found a choice made for the speaker's habit rather than for the room.

4. The voice kit

The features of voice in this kit are six, and all six can be planned on the page before the speaker stands up. Tone is not a sixth separate trick: it is what the other five add up to.

The voice kit: six features you can plan and name

The curriculum's "features of voice", with what each does and how to mark it on a script

Feature	What it is	What it can do	Script cue
Pace	how fast the words arrive	faster builds energy or urgency; slower marks what matters	(slow down) / (pick up)
Pause	silence placed on purpose	lets a point land; gives the audience time to weigh it	[pause]
Pitch	how high or low the voice sits	a falling pitch lands a statement; a rising pitch opens a question	↓ lands · ↑ opens
Stress	pushing one word harder than its neighbours	marks the word the whole point turns on	CAPITALS
Volume	how loud or soft	a drop can pull the room in; a rise can wake it up	(quieter) / (full voice)
Tone	the feeling all of the above add up to	warmth, concern, resolve, humour — what the audience names afterwards	a note at the top of the passage

Tone is the sum of the other five. Plan the five and the tone takes care of itself; leave all six to chance and the voice flattens to one note.

A six-row table of the voice kit — pace, pause, pitch, stress, volume, tone — each with what it is, what it can do, and the script cue that marks it, such as “(slow down)”, “[pause]”, down-arrow for a falling pitch, CAPITALS for stress and “(quieter)” for volume

The practical move is to treat the marks as part of the writing. A script is finished when the voice has its instructions too:

A script marked for the voice

The close of “The Nine-Thirty Question” with performance cues added — the marks are part of the writing

Those concerns deserve ANSWERS — [pause] — not slogans.	①
(slow down) One workable path is a STAGED TRIAL.	②
A trial costs little — [pause] — and it turns an OPINION	③
into a TESTABLE CLAIM. (↓ pitch falls to land it)	④
[look up from notes] I recommend the school trial a nine-thirty	⑤
start next year — and JUDGE it on the evidence.	⑤

The cues, named:

①	STRESS answers · PAUSE after it answers is the word the point turns on; the pause makes “slogans” wait
②	PACE slows · STRESS staged trial slowing flags the recommendation before it is officially made
③	PAUSE inside the sentence splits cost from benefit so the audience hears each one separately
④	PITCH falls at the end a falling pitch lands a statement; a rising one would sound unsure
⑤	EYES up · STRESS judge meeting the room hands the decision to the audience — respectful, not pushy

Cue vocabulary: [pause] · (slow down) · CAPITALS for stress · ↓/↑ for pitch · (look up) for eyes. A script is finished when the voice has its instructions too.

The closing lines of the model speech marked up as a performance script — CAPITALS for stress, [pause], (slow down), a falling-pitch arrow and [look up from notes] — above five numbered cue cards naming each cue and its job, such as “a falling pitch lands a statement; a rising one would sound unsure”

Read the marked script aloud once and the cues do their work: ANSWERS stressed and pause makes “slogans” wait; the falling pitch lands “testable claim” as a statement rather than a question; [look up] at the recommendation hands the decision to the room. None of that is in the words alone. This is the Level 10 step in voice as well as formality: not using features of voice, but choosing them in deliberate consideration of what the audience should feel at each moment.

5. Multimodal and digital elements

A slide, an image, a clip, a sound: each is hired for one of four jobs, and sacked if it does another.

Four jobs for slides, images, clips and sound

Every multimodal element in a spoken text should be hired for one of these jobs — and sacked if it does another

Job	What the element does	Strong use	Common failure
Reinforce	says the same thing as the voice in a second form	a photo of the overflowing bins while the speaker describes them	a slide repeating every word — the audience reads and stops listening
Evidence	shows what the voice claims	the bottle count drawn as a simple bar chart	a chart with no labels, or too many numbers to read
Summarise	gathers the argument into one view	one final slide listing the three points of the speech	a summary slide so dense it starts a new argument
Shift mood	changes the feeling in the room	a short theme tune opening a show; one strong image to open a topic	decoration that fights the message or talks over the speaker

The split-attention rule: an audience cannot read a screen and listen to a voice at the same time — the two compete.

So the voice carries the argument, and the screen carries its shape: headings, numbers, images.

Digital elements are team members, not the team. The speaker is the text; the screen is support.

A four-row table of the jobs a multimodal element can do — reinforce, evidence, summarise, shift mood — each with what the element does, a strong use, and a common failure, above the split-attention rule: an audience cannot read a screen and listen to a voice at the same time

The split-attention rule decides most of the table's right-hand column. A slide that repeats the speaker's words sets the audience reading and stops them listening; the voice and the screen fight for one channel. So the division of labour is: the voice carries the argument, and the screen carries its shape — headings, numbers, one strong image. The four jobs also give you an analysis question for any multimodal text: *which job is this element doing, and is it doing it well?*

6. Four ways to deliver

The same structured text can be delivered in four modes, and each mode trades something different.

Four ways to deliver: choose the mode, know its risk

The same structured text can be read, memorised, carded or mixed — each mode trades something different

Mode	What it is	Strength	Risk to manage
Scripted and read	the full written text at the front, read aloud	exact words, nothing lost; good for formal occasions and precise claims	eyes down; the voice can flatten; the audience loses the speaker's face
Cue cards	small cards carrying key words and cues, in order	eyes up; room to adapt to the audience; natural voice	losing the thread; filler sounds (um, like) creep into the gaps
Memorised	no notes at all	smooth; full eye contact; nothing to hold	one slip can stall the whole text; delivery can sound rehearsed-flat
Hybrid	scripted opening and close; cue cards for the body	the hard parts are locked in; the middle stays alive	the joins need rehearsal so the shifts in mode are not felt

Whichever mode you choose, the structure does not change: preview, one point per part, summary.

Mode is a delivery choice, not a planning shortcut — the speech is still planned in full before any card is written.

A four-row table of delivery modes — scripted and read, cue cards, memorised, hybrid — each with what it is, its strength, and its risk to manage, above the line “whichever mode you choose, the structure does not change: preview, one point per part, summary”

The line under the table is the one that matters for this section: mode is a delivery choice, not a planning shortcut. A cue-card speech still needs the full argument planned — preview, one point per part, summary — before any card is written; the cards then carry key words and cues, not the structure. The hybrid mode (scripted opening and close, cards for the body) is popular for a reason: the hard parts — the preview, the recommendation — are locked in word-perfect, and the middle stays alive to the room.

7. Two positions, both worth their strongest form

Two positions, both worth their strongest form.

Position 1 — the speaker's craft case. In his *Rhetoric*, written in the fourth century BCE, Aristotle treated delivery as a proper part of the art of speaking: the part concerned with the voice — how loud it is, how high or low it sits, how fast it moves — and he held that an argument reaches a live audience only through a voice and a manner suited to them. In its strongest form, this position says: a spoken text is an event, not a document; the voice, the formality and the moment are part of what it means, so planning them is not decoration but part of the argument.

Position 2 — the plain-style case. In his 1946 essay *Politics and the English Language*, George Orwell argued that ornament and performance can blur an argument or distract from it, and that a speaker who is visibly performing asks the audience to admire the performance instead of weighing the case. In its strongest form, this position says: plainness is a courtesy — the audience's attention belongs to the argument, so every voice choice and every slide should survive the question *would the argument stand without this?*

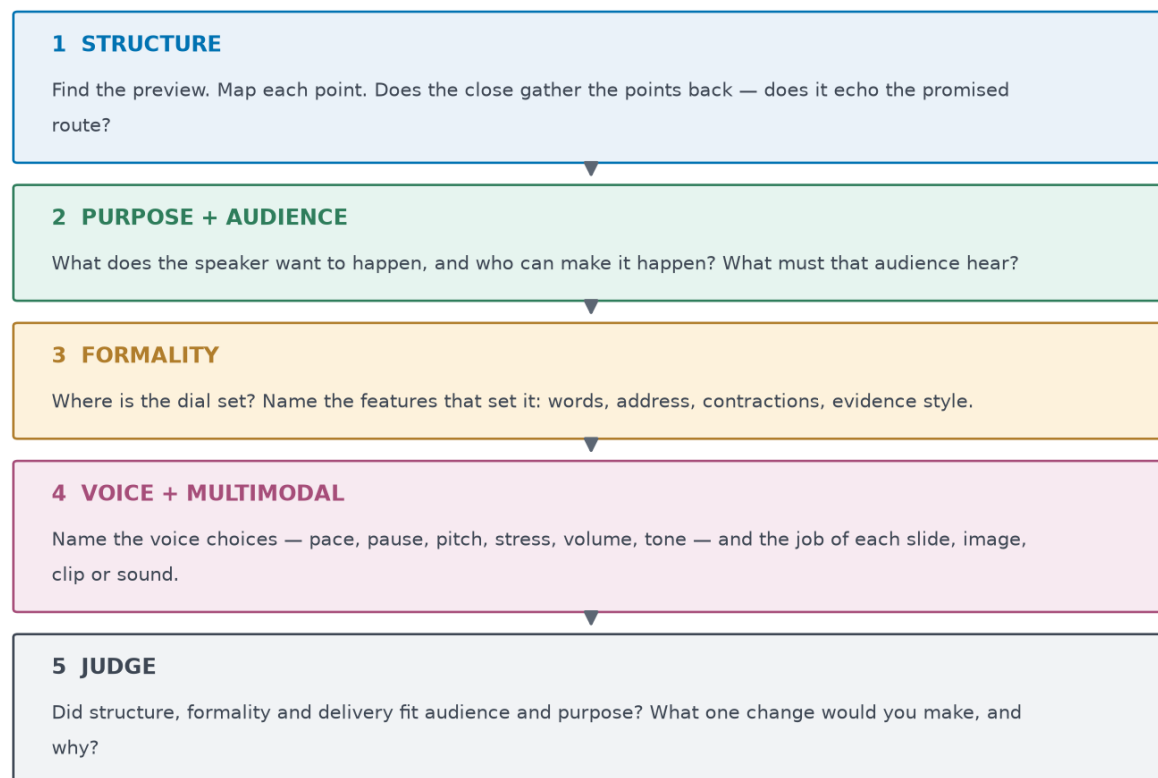
Both positions are right about a real resource and a real risk. Position 1 catches that a spoken text lands through a voice in a room; Position 2 catches that the voice and the slides are servants, not masters, of the case. The analyst's job is not to pick a side but to test both on the same speech — and to notice which one a given text invites. (No text is quoted from either source; the positions are summarised and attributed.)

8. A routine for listening analytically

Five steps, in order, every time you analyse a spoken text — live, from a recording, or from a transcript:

A routine for listening analytically

Five steps, in order, every time you analyse a spoken text — from a recording, a transcript, or the live room



Step 5 is where analysis becomes evaluation — and where your own next speech is already being planned.

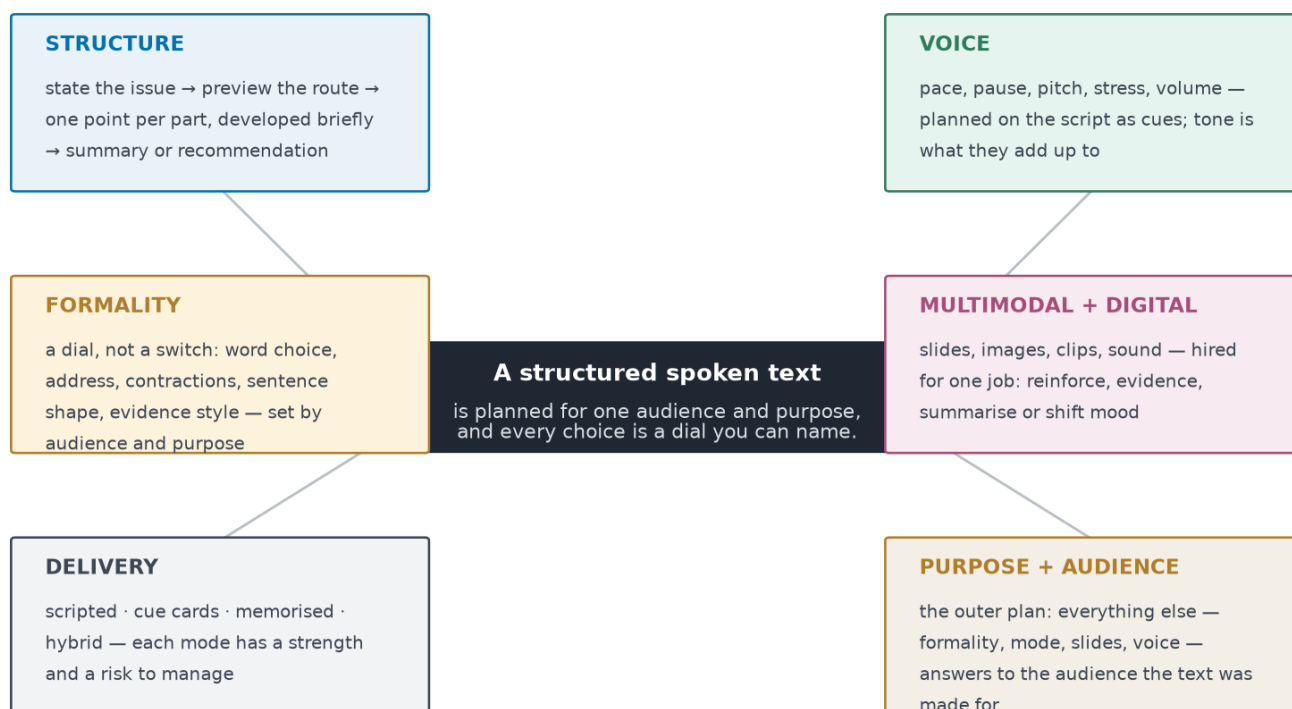
A five-step routine in order — structure (find the preview, map each point, check the close echoes the route), purpose and audience, formality (where is the dial set and which features set it), voice and multimodal (name the voice choices and the job of each element), judge (did the choices fit the audience and purpose, and what one change would you make)

Step 5 is where analysis becomes evaluation, and it is also where your own next speech is planned: every text you judge well gives you one move to borrow and one risk to avoid.

9. The section map

Section map: structured spoken texts

How the five ideas of this section fit together



One audience, one purpose — and five sets of choices that answer to them.

A concept map with “a structured spoken text is planned for one audience and purpose, and every choice is a dial you can name” at the centre, joined to six boxes: structure, formality, delivery, voice, multimodal plus digital, and purpose plus audience as the outer plan

Worked analyses

Worked analysis 1 — scaffolded (mapping the model speech)

Map *The Nine-Thirty Question* (Figure 2) onto the anatomy (Figure 1).

Move	Where in the speech	Job done	What the audience holds
State the issue	“Tonight’s question is simple to state and hard to settle ...”	Names the question the room is being asked to settle.	One question, plainly put.
Preview	“I’ll put the case in three steps ...”	Gives the route before the walk: sleep, benefits, costs.	A map — three places to put what follows.
Point 1	“My first point is about sleep itself ...”	One major point (teenage body clocks run late), developed briefly (not laziness, biology; a tired brain learns slowly).	A cause, and what it means for a first-period room.
Point 2	“My second point is about what follows ...”	One major point (later starts, stronger attendance), developed	A benefit, not overstated.

Move	Where in the speech	Job done	What the audience holds
		briefly, with a hedge honestly used — “I’m not promising a miracle”.	
Point 3	“My third point ... concerns the costs.”	Carries the audience’s own objections (buses, sport, staff hours) and meets them with a staged trial.	The costs are known, and there is a path.
Conclusion	“So let me close where I began ...”	Summarises each point in one sentence, then recommends: trial it, judge it on the evidence. Echoes the preview.	<i>What did I hear?</i> and <i>what now?</i> , answered.

The last row of the preview (“the real costs and concerns — because they are real”) is the move to borrow: promising the objections in the preview means the audience hears Point 3 as a promise kept, not as a surprise.

Worked analysis 2 — scaffolded (moving the formality dial)

The same request from Figure 3, feature by feature:

Feature	CASUAL (assembly)	MEASURED (student council)	FORMAL (school board)
Word choice	<i>bins out the front, done by lunch</i>	<i>additional recycling bins, full by recess</i>	<i>recycling stations, reach capacity</i>
Contractions	kept: <i>we’ve, here’s</i>	dropped: <i>we are asking</i>	dropped: <i>we respectfully ask</i>
Address	the room as friends: <i>here’s the deal</i>	the role: <i>the council</i>	the role, respectfully: <i>the board</i>
Evidence style	“trust us, we’ve counted” — a joke	“our count shows” — a fact offered plainly	“a count taken on Tuesday” — dated, checkable

Now watch the dial move on purpose. The *Bin It Right* audio show (Worked analysis 4) sits at the casual end for its whole run — except one line: “Two hundred and nineteen bottles. In one day.” The hosts drop the joke, slow the pace, and let the number land plain. That single measured moment inside a casual text is experimenting with formality while keeping the audience deliberately in mind: the hosts know their listeners will forgive anything except the number being played for laughs. The dial moved, and the speaker could say why.

Worked analysis 3 — scaffolded (reading the voice cues)

The marked close of the model speech (Figure 7), cue by cue:

Cue	Feature	What it makes the audience feel or notice
STRESS on <i>answers</i> , [pause] after	stress, pause	The point turns on <i>answers</i> ; the pause makes <i>slogans</i> wait, so the contrast lands.
(slow down) before <i>staged trial</i>	pace	Slowing flags the recommendation before it is officially made — the room leans in.
[pause] inside “costs little — [pause] — and it turns ...”	pause	Splits cost from benefit so the audience weighs each one separately.
↓ pitch falling on <i>testable claim</i>	pitch	A falling pitch lands a statement; a

Cue	Feature	What it makes the audience feel or notice
		rising one would have made it a question.
[look up] + STRESS on <i>judge</i>	eyes, stress	Meeting the room hands the decision to the audience — respectful, not pushy.

Every cue serves the argument: the voice choices are the argument's emphasis made audible. Read the passage twice — once flat, once with the cues — and the difference you hear is exactly what Level 10 asks you to plan.

Worked analysis 4 — unscaffolded (analysing an audio-show excerpt)

Stimulus — *Bin It Right*, episode 4. An original transcript written for this section: an audio show made by three Year 10 students, for students — short episodes, released to the year level.

[theme music, five seconds, fades under the voice] **Host 1:** Welcome back to *Bin It Right*. Here's the deal: the recycling bins out the front are a mess by lunch, every day. **Host 2:** So on Tuesday we counted. *[pause]* Two hundred and nineteen bottles. In one day. **Host 1:** Two hundred and nineteen. *[music sting]* **Host 2:** We're asking the student council — then the real one — for two more bins, one clear sign per bin, and a roster so the bins get swapped before lunch. **Host 1:** Message us your ideas before Friday. The good ones go in episode five. *[theme music out]*

Structure. The excerpt runs the argument's shape in miniature: the issue is stated in the first line, the evidence lands as its own beat, the request is listed (two bins, one sign, a roster), and the close turns the audience into part of the plan — *message us your ideas* — which is this text's version of a recommendation. What it leaves out is a spoken preview; the hosts trust the ninety-second format to carry the map. That is a choice an audio show can make and a three-minute board speech cannot: the shorter the text, the more structure the format may carry for free. **Formality.** The dial sits at casual for peers — *here's the deal*, contractions throughout, the joke about “the real one” — and then moves, on purpose, for the count (Worked analysis 2). **Voice.** The pause after “we counted” makes the number an arrival; the repetition of “two hundred and nineteen” by the first host is stress by echo; the pace is conversational everywhere except the count. **Multimodal.** The theme music opens and closes the text (shift mood, and mark the text's edges), and the sting under the repeated number reinforces it — sound doing the job a pause and a stressed word do in the voice. **Judge.** Every choice fits the audience: peers would switch off a board register, and the one measured moment gives the number the weight the joke must not. The change I would make is one line of preview — “one number, one ask, one job for you” — because even ninety seconds can hand the listener a map.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1 (Reading and viewing). Below, in the wrong order, are the five moves of a short original speech about starting the day with ten quiet minutes in every classroom. Name the move each sentence is doing: *state the issue*, *preview*, *point*, or *conclusion*.

(a) “Second, teachers get a room that is already settled when the first task goes up.” (b) “I’ll give two reasons, then answer the time question.” (c) “So: a calmer start for students, a fairer start for teachers — I recommend we trial ten quiet minutes next term.” (d) “Today’s question is whether every classroom should start the day with ten quiet minutes.” (e) “First, ten quiet minutes give every student a soft landing after the bus, the bike, or the argument at home.”

Q2 (Reading and viewing). A student’s draft speech on phone-free lunches has this preview: “I’ll give one reason — what lunchtime is for — and answer the two objections I keep hearing: boredom, and freedom.” But the draft’s conclusion runs: “So those are my three reasons for phone-free lunches; thanks for listening.” Name the two mismatches between the promised route and the close, then rewrite the conclusion (two or three sentences) so it summarises the promised argument and ends with a recommendation.

Q3 (Writing). These three points are planned for a speech arguing that the canteen menu should be published a week ahead: (1) students with dietary needs can plan; (2) families can pack a backup when they need to; (3) the canteen gets fewer surprise orders. Write an opening of two or three sentences that states the issue and previews exactly these three points, in this order.

Q4 (Writing). Here is a casual request: “*Hey — can the canteen do a veggie option every day? Lots of us would actually buy it, promise.*” Rewrite it **(a)** at a measured level, for the student council, and **(b)** at a formal level, for the principal and the canteen manager at a scheduled meeting. Keep the same request and the same reason in all three versions.

Q5 (Speaking and listening). With a partner, say your three versions from Q4 aloud — casual, measured, formal — in that order. Your partner names two features that moved between each pair (word choice, contractions, address, evidence style). Then swap roles and repeat. Finish by agreeing on one sentence stating which version would fail if delivered to the wrong room, and why.

Q6 (Reading and viewing). Name the feature of voice (pace, pause, pitch, stress, volume, tone) at work in each description.

(a) The speaker drops almost to a whisper, and the room leans in. **(b)** Two seconds of silence after the statistic, before the next sentence. **(c)** The word *safety* is hit harder than every word around it. **(d)** The voice falls at the end of the sentence, so it sounds decided. **(e)** The story is told fast, and the room’s energy rises with it. **(f)** Listeners afterwards describe the whole talk as warm.

Q7 (Writing). Mark up this original script line with at least four cues from the cue vocabulary (CAPITALS for stress, [pause], (slow down)/(pick up), ↓/↑ for pitch, (look up)): “*The canteen throws away eleven trays of food a week. Eleven. We could halve that by term’s end if we plan the menu a week ahead.*” Under each cue, write one line saying what it makes the audience feel or notice.

Q8 (Reading and viewing). Name the job each element is hired for — *reinforce, evidence, summarise, shift mood* — and for (e), name the failure instead.

(a) A photo of the overflowing bins on screen while the speaker describes them. **(b)** The bottle count drawn as a simple bar chart. **(c)** One final slide listing the three points of the speech. **(d)** A short theme tune opening the show. **(e)** A slide showing every word of the speaker’s opening paragraph, as the speaker reads it aloud.

Unscaffolded

Q9 (Reading and viewing). Use the five-step routine (Figure 10) to analyse Point 3 of *The Nine-Thirty Question* (“My third point is the one that matters most ... turns an opinion into a testable claim”) in one paragraph of roughly 120–160 words. End with the step-5 judgement: one thing the point does well for this audience, and one change you would consider.

Q10 (Writing). Write the full script of a three-minute structured speech for a real school audience you name (a board, a council, an assembly, a class), arguing one recommendation on an issue you choose. The script must: state the issue and preview the route; make three points, one per paragraph, each developed briefly; conclude with a summary and a recommendation that echoes the preview; and include at least five voice cues marked in the script and one multimodal element per point with its job named (*reinforce, evidence, summarise or shift mood*). In a margin note, name two formality choices and the audience consideration behind each.

Q11 (Writing). Take the second point of your Q10 speech and write it twice: once at the formality level your speech uses, and once one full step further toward casual or formal. Then write two or three sentences stating what the moved dial would change for the audience, and which setting suits this room.

Q12 (Speaking and listening). Deliver your Q10 speech to a partner in the delivery mode you choose (scripted, cue cards, memorised or hybrid). Your partner listens with steps 1, 4 and 5 of the routine and feeds back on exactly three things: whether the preview mapped the points, one voice or multimodal choice that worked, and one change. Swap. You may re-plan and re-deliver before your final attempt.

Q13 (Speaking and listening). In pairs, take Position 1 and Position 2 from the box in §7 and test both on the *Bin It Right* excerpt. Each partner first presents the *other* partner’s position in its strongest form on this text (say what it sees

that your own position misses); then the pair writes one agreed sentence stating what each position catches here that the other does not.

Q14 (Speaking and listening). Panel discussion: “*The best speeches sound like a conversation, not a reading.*”

Argue for and against the motion with equal care, testing each side on at least one text from this section (the model speech, the audio show, or the three bins versions). Marks reward the quality of the reasoning on each side — terms defined, claims tested on an example, limits admitted — not the conclusion you reach.

Answers

Q1. (a) point (the second one). (b) preview. (c) conclusion — summary plus recommendation. (d) state the issue. (e) point (the first one).

Q2. Mismatch one: the preview promised *one reason and two objections answered*, but the close says *three reasons* — the route was not kept. Mismatch two: the close thanks the audience but makes no recommendation, so *what now?* is unanswered. Sample rewrite: *So: lunchtime is for people, not screens — that is the reason; and both objections have answers, because nobody is promising a silent yard, and freedom includes the freedom to opt out. I recommend the council trial phone-free lunches for one term and survey the year levels after.*

Q3. Sample: *Thank you for the time. Today's question is whether the canteen menu should be published a week ahead, and I'll put three reasons: students with dietary needs could plan, families could pack a backup when they need to, and the canteen would get fewer surprise orders.*

Q4. Sample. (a) *We are asking the council to put one vegetarian option on the canteen menu every day. A survey of our year level suggests many students would buy it regularly.* (b) *We respectfully ask the principal and the canteen manager to consider adding a daily vegetarian option to the menu. Our informal count suggests a steady number of students would purchase it.* In (a) the request is named plainly and the evidence is a survey; in (b) the address is by role, the ask is softened to *consider*, and the evidence is offered as a checkable count.

Q5. Answers will vary; a strong pair names real features — for example, the contractions drop and the address moves from *hey* to *the principal and the canteen manager* — and the agreed sentence points to a real failure, such as the formal version read to the yard sounding like a parody, or the casual version put to a board sounding unprepared.

Q6. (a) volume. (b) pause. (c) stress. (d) pitch. (e) pace. (f) tone.

Q7. Sample: *The canteen throws away ELEVEN trays of food a week. [pause] Eleven. (slow down) We could HALVE that by term's end — (look up) — if we plan the menu a week ahead.* ↓ The stress on *eleven* marks the number as the point; the pause lets it land a second time; the slow-down flags the recommendation; the look-up hands it to the room; the falling pitch closes it as a statement.

Q8. (a) reinforce. (b) evidence. (c) summarise. (d) shift mood. (e) failure: the slide repeats the voice word for word, so the audience reads and stops listening — the split-attention rule.

Q9–Q14. Open tasks — see the model responses below.

Model responses

Q9. Sample. *Identify:* Point 3 opens with its own signpost (“My third point ...”) and makes one major point — the costs are real — developed briefly into a staged trial. *Purpose and audience:* the board and parents can approve or block the trial, and their objection is cost and chaos, so the point is aimed at exactly them. *Formality:* the dial stays measured-to-formal (“Those concerns deserve answers, not slogans”), with one plain contrast doing the persuading. *Voice and multimodal:* the marked script slows at *staged trial* and pauses inside the cost–benefit split, so the audience weighs each side separately. *Judge:* the point does what a third point should — it carries the audience’s objections before the audience has to raise them, which is what makes the recommendation sound careful rather than pushy. One change I would consider: naming one concrete cost figure (buses, sport) so the claim of knowing the costs is itself evidenced.

Q10. A strong script keeps every promise of the task: the preview names the exact number of points the body delivers; each paragraph makes one point and develops it in two or three sentences, then moves on; the conclusion gathers the points back in one sentence each and ends with a recommendation that echoes the preview’s words. The five voice cues are marks a performer could use — not decoration — and each multimodal element is hired for one named job, with the screen carrying shape (headings, numbers, one image) while the voice carries the argument. The margin note is the heart of the task: two formality choices, each with its audience reason — for example, “no contractions in the recommendation, because the board will quote it back”, or “one casual line after Point 2, because this assembly switches off if it feels lectured”.

Q11. A strong answer moves the dial a full step, not a nudge — the measured version’s “our survey suggests” becoming “trust us, we asked around”, or the formal version’s “we respectfully ask” becoming “we are asking” — and the two or three sentences say what the move does to the audience’s trust: a step toward casual buys closeness and spends authority; a step toward formal buys authority and spends closeness. The setting that suits the room is the one whose trade the audience can afford.

Q12. A strong pair keeps the feedback to the agreed three things and to the routine’s own words: *the preview promised two points and a cost answer, and the close returned all three; the pause after your number worked — I could feel it land; one change: your slides carried full sentences, so I was reading instead of listening.* The re-delivery should show the change, and the mode choice should be defended in one line — for example, hybrid, because the preview and recommendation are the sentences that must not slip.

Q13. A strong pair answer names what each position catches in the same excerpt. Position 1 catches the craft: the pause after “we counted”, the echo of the number, the theme music marking the text’s edges — the argument reaches its listeners *through* those choices, and a transcript without them is a weaker text. Position 2 catches the servant-test: every choice in the excerpt survives *would the argument stand without this?* — the music marks, the sting reinforces, and nothing performs over the number. The agreed sentence might run: *the excerpt shows delivery doing the argument’s work when, and only when, every choice serves the case.*

Q14. A strong panel opens each side in its strongest form, tested on a text. For the motion: the show’s casual dial and conversational pace are exactly why its number lands with peers — a board register read to the same room would be switched off; and the model speech, though formal, keeps a conversational line (“I’m not promising a miracle”) that lets the room trust the speaker. Against the motion: the model speech’s most persuasive moments are its most *planned* — the preview, the dated trial, the falling pitch on “testable claim” — and a reading that is structured is not the same as a reading that is dead; what kills a speech is not formality but a voice left unplanned. Marks reward each side for testing its case on an example and admitting its limit; two speakers reaching opposite conclusions can both deserve full marks.

Looking back. A structured spoken text is planned like a building: an opening that states the issue and previews the route, a body that develops one main point at a time, briefly supported, and a closing that pulls the key issues together — or makes a recommendation — and echoes the preview. Formality is a dial set by audience and purpose — word choice, contractions, address, sentence shape, evidence style — and at Level 10 the dial can be moved on purpose, even mid-text. The voice kit (pace, pause, pitch, stress, volume, and the tone they add up to) and the four multimodal jobs (reinforce, evidence, summarise, shift mood) are planned on the page, under the split-attention rule that the voice carries the argument and the screen carries its shape. All of it answers to the outside plan: purpose first, then audience. That is the skill — not to perform, but to choose, choice by named choice, for the people in the room.

Spelling: know the system, then bend it

Pick up a milk carton and read it twice: LITE MILK. You know exactly what it means. You also notice, in the same instant, that something is off — *light* has lost its *gh*. The carton was not set by someone who forgot how to spell. The spelling was bent on purpose, because *lite* does a job that *light* does not: it says the product, and the cleverness, in one glance. That is this section in miniature. Spelling is a system you can rely on — and, once you know how it works, a system you can bend by choice.

This section has two halves, and they depend on each other. The first half is **accuracy**: how the English spelling system actually works, and how knowing the system beats memorising lists. The second half is **manipulation**: how writers bend spelling — standard and non-standard alike — for particular effects — in names and ads, in characters' voices, in digital texts — and how to judge when the bend works and when it simply breaks.

Curriculum focus	VC2E10LY03 (Literacy — Word knowledge)
Draws on	VC2E10LY03.E01
Builds on (Level 9)	VC2E9LY03
Modes in this section	Reading and viewing · Writing · Speaking and listening

What we mean by *standard* spelling. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *standard* and *non-standard* spelling but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as **stipulated terms** — terms defined by an authority rather than by nature. In this section, **standard spelling** means the spelling recorded in major Australian English dictionaries and used in edited public writing; **non-standard spelling** means any deliberate departure from it. The stipulation matters because authorities sometimes differ: British, American and Australian dictionaries disagree about *colour* and *color*, *analyse* and *analyze* — each spelling is standard inside its own frame. Every judgement in this section is answerable on the Australian frame alone, and on one further idea: whether a spelling is *appropriate* depends on the purpose and the audience, not on the spelling itself.

Theory

1. The spelling system: four layers, not a lucky dip

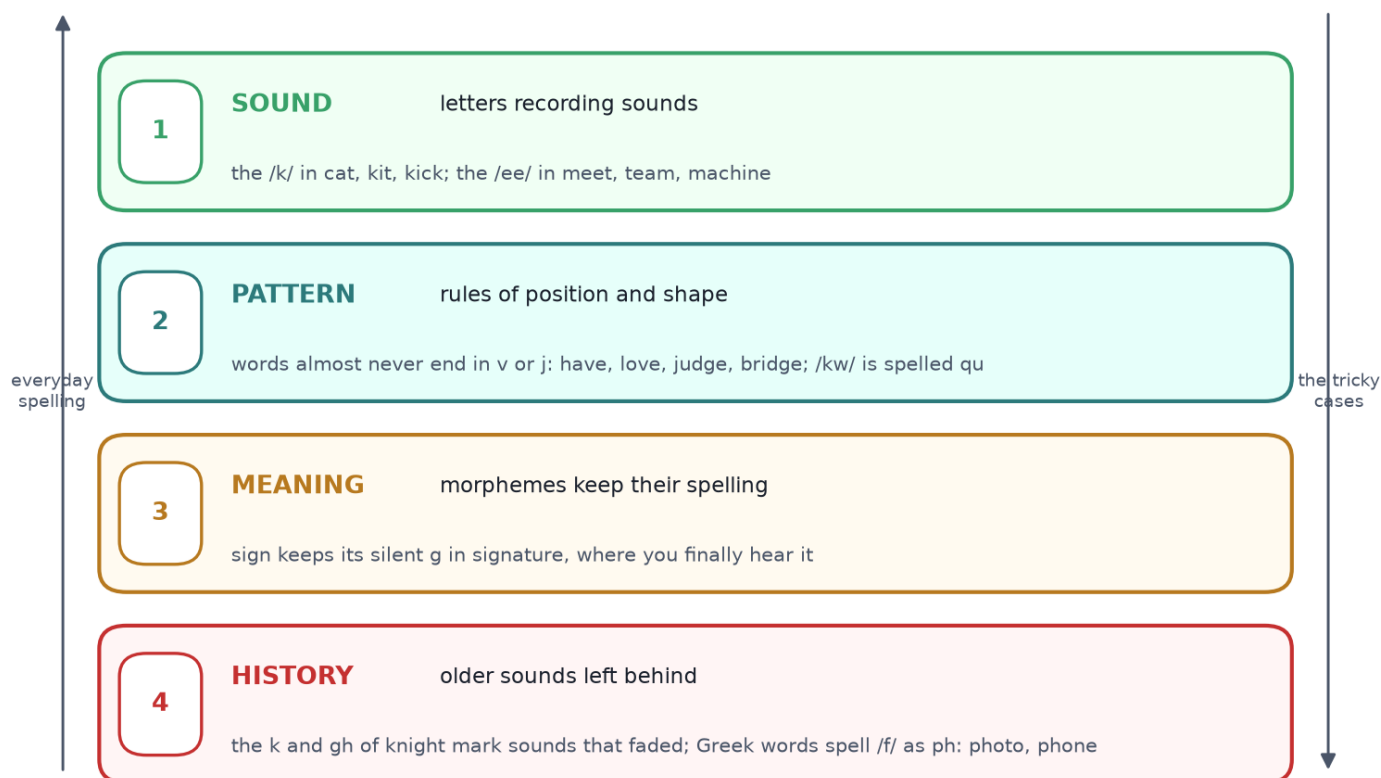
In Level 9 you used what you knew about spelling to write accurately, and you explored how writers bend spelling for characterisation and humour. This year the verbs of the content description are the step up: **spell accurately** using *what you have already learnt about how spelling works* — and **manipulate** that system for particular effects. To *manipulate* something here means to handle it with control and intention: you choose where and how to bend spelling, and you can say why.

That is only possible if spelling really is a system — and it is. English spelling is often mocked as chaotic, but most of it is orderly once you see the four layers it is built from:

1. **The sound layer** — letters and letter groups recording sounds: the /k/ sound in *cat*, *kit* and *kick*; the /ee/ sound in *meet*, *team* and *machine*. This layer covers most of everyday spelling.
2. **The pattern layer** — rules of position and shape. English words almost never end in *v* or *j*, which is why *have* and *love* grow a silent *e*, and *judge* and *bridge* grow one too. The sound /kw/ is conventionally spelled *qu*. These patterns explain spellings that sound “wrong” letter for letter.
3. **The meaning layer** — units of meaning spelled steadily even when their sounds shift. A **morpheme** is the smallest unit of meaning in a word: *sign*, *un-*, *-ed*. The spelling of a morpheme tends to stay fixed across a whole word family — *sign* keeps its silent *g* in *signature*, where you can finally hear it — because spelling is recording the meaning, not only the sound.
4. **The history layer** — old sounds left behind in modern words. The *k* and the *gh* in *knight* mark pronunciations that faded centuries ago. Words taken from Greek spell /f/ as *ph*: *photo*, *phone*, *physics*. History explains the spellings no sound rule can.

The English spelling system: four layers

Most words are explained by the lower layers. The tricky ones usually need the ones above.



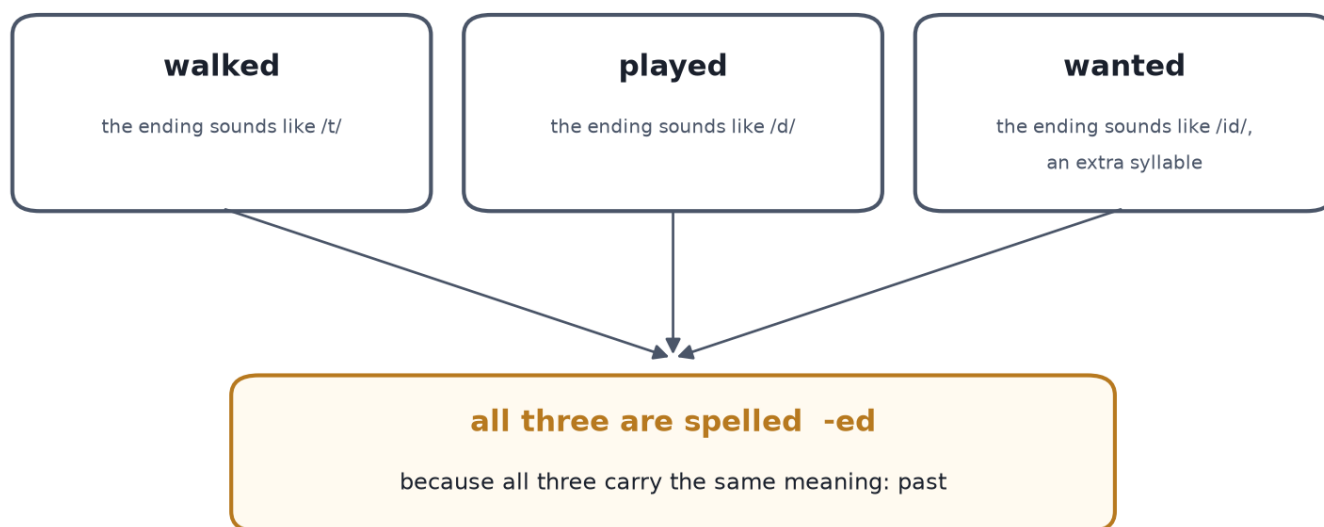
Spelling is a system. Once you can see the layers, you can rely on it — and bend it on purpose.

Labelled diagram of the four layers of the English spelling system — sound, pattern, meaning and history — each with an original example

The single clearest proof that spelling records meaning rather than sound is the past-tense ending *-ed*. Say these three words aloud: *walked*, *played*, *wanted*. The ending sounds three different ways — a /t/, a /d/, and a whole extra syllable. But the spelling is *-ed* all three times, because the meaning is the same each time: past. The voice is allowed to change the sound; the spelling stays loyal to the meaning.

One spelling, three sounds, one meaning

Say the three words aloud. The ending sounds different every time — the spelling never changes.



The voice is allowed to change the sound.

The spelling stays loyal to the meaning.

Spelling records meaning — not only sound.

Table showing one past-tense spelling, -ed, carrying three different sounds across walked, played and wanted, with the point that spelling records meaning

2. Accuracy: working the system, not memorising lists

The four layers are also your accuracy kit. Most spelling mistakes at this level are not random; they happen where two layers pull against each other. Two trouble spots deserve their own strategy.

Trouble spot one: the morpheme boundary — and the blur inside the base. Long words go wrong where one morpheme joins another: people write *arguement* because they keep the base's final *e* at the join with *-ment*, when the real word drops it. Long words also go wrong inside the base, where an unstressed vowel blurs: *definatly* for *definitely* (the *i* of *finite* heard as *a*) and *seperate* for *separate* (an *a* inside the base heard as *e*). The fix for both is to find the family. If you can hear *heal* inside *health*, *nation* inside *national* and *finite* inside *definitely*, you can spell the longer word from the shorter one. When you meet a long word, ask: *which smaller word is hiding inside it?*

Trouble spot two: homophones. A **homophone** is a word that sounds the same as another word but is spelled differently and means something different — *pair*, *pear* and *pare*. Homophones are the one place where listening is useless: the two candidates sound identical, so the ear cannot choose between them. Only the meaning can. This is why homophone errors are the classic mark of a writer who is spelling by sound alone. Two of the pairs in Figure 3 are not true homophones: *quiet* and *quite*, *lose* and *loose* only sound close. They still trap the ear in much the same way, and the same meaning test clears them.

Figure 3 sets out the pairs that cause most damage, each with a meaning test you can run in the middle of a sentence.

Homophones: the ear cannot choose — the meaning must

Five pairs sound identical; quiet/quite and lose/loose only sound close. Run the meaning test before you commit.

	candidates	meaning	test in a sentence
their		belonging to them	<i>their bikes</i>
there		a place, or the fact that	<i>over there · there is</i>
they're		they are	<i>they're riding</i>
its		belonging to it	<i>the bike lost its wheel</i>
it's		it is	<i>it's raining</i>
affect		to act on (a doing word)	<i>the rain affected the match</i>
effect		the result (a thing)	<i>the effect was clear</i>
accept		to take, to agree to	<i>accept the prize</i>
except		to leave out	<i>everyone except me</i>
principal		first in rank: the person in charge	<i>the school principal</i>
principle		a rule or a belief	<i>a matter of principle</i>
quiet		making little noise	<i>please be quiet</i>
quite		fairly, completely	<i>quite sure</i>
lose		to misplace, or fail to win	<i>don't lose the key</i>
loose		not tight	<i>a loose spoke</i>

The test is always the same shape: what must this word **MEAN** here? Pick the spelling that owns that meaning.

Table of commonly confused pairs — the homophones their, there and they're; its and it's; affect and effect; accept and except; principal and principle; plus the near sound-alikes quiet and quite, lose and loose — each with a meaning test

The test is always the same shape: stop, ask what the word must *mean* here, then pick the spelling that belongs to that meaning. *They're* can always be unpacked into *they are* — if the unpacking breaks the sentence, you need *their* or *there*. *Its* unpacks like *his* or *hers* (belonging); *it's* unpacks into *it is*. Run the unpacking before you commit, especially under exam conditions, where the ear has no vote at all.

A final accuracy habit follows from all this: give homophones their own proofreading pass. Read a draft once for sense, and once more hunting only for sound-alikes — *their, there, to, two* — because those are the errors your eye skips when it is busy following the meaning.

3. Standard, non-standard, and the deal between them

Now the second half of the section, and the definition from the box above is doing real work. Standard spelling is a stipulated, shared code. Its value is exactly that it is shared: a reader never has to stop and decode it, so all of their attention stays on your ideas. Standard spelling buys **fluency** (the reader moves without stumbling) and **trust** (the

reader assumes the writer is in control). Depart from the standard and you spend those currencies — which is precisely why writers only spend them when they are buying something back.

Which texts demand the standard, and which invite the play? Figure 4 sorts the purposes you actually write for.

the text type	what the spelling does	why
job applications, formal letters	the standard is expected	the reader judges trust
reports, school assessments	the standard is expected	accuracy keeps attention on the ideas
news items	the standard is expected	trust in the facts
product, store and event names	play is welcome	memorable wordplay
advertising and slogans	play is welcome	grabs attention, sticks
fiction voices (dialogue)	play is welcome	character the reader can hear
digital posts and chats	play is expected	tone, speed, belonging
poetry	play is welcome	sound and visual patterns

Where the reader's TRUST is the point, the standard holds.

Where the reader's ATTENTION is the point, the play begins.

Table of purposes and text types sorted by spelling expectation — formal letters, reports and assessments hold the standard, while names, advertising, fiction voices, digital posts and poetry invite deliberate play — each with the reason why

Notice the pattern in the table: where the reader's **trust** is the point (a report, an application, a news item), the standard holds; where the reader's **attention** is the point (a name, an ad, a character's voice), the play begins. The judgement is never “is this spelling correct?” — it is “is this spelling appropriate for this purpose and this audience?”

4. Manipulating spelling: three moves

Writers bend the system in three recurring ways. Learn to name them and you can analyse them; learn the judgement in part 5 and you can use them yourself.

Move one: homophone play and respelling in public texts. This is the curriculum's own example, *lite milk*: take a familiar word, swap in a homophone or a sound-alike spelling, and the name becomes a small puzzle the reader solves in half a second — and solving it is what makes the name stick. The same move builds product names, store names, event titles and slogans. Figure 5 shows the move in the curriculum's own example and four invented names, with the mechanism at work in each.

Respelling for effect: one curriculum example, four invented names

Take a familiar word, bend the spelling, and the reader solves a small puzzle in half a second.

name	mechanism	what it does
LITE MILK <i>the curriculum's own example</i>	homophone swap: light -> lite	reads light and clever; the carton promises what it sells
GR8 ESCAPES <i>travel agency</i>	sound-for-letter shortcut: great -> gr8	youthful, instant energy; the number is solved at a glance
KWIK FIX <i>phone-repair stall</i>	sound-for-letter shortcut: quick -> kwik	brisk and hands-on; the name works like a promise
SEA YOU SATURDAY <i>fish shop sign</i>	homophone swap: see -> sea	a warm invitation, with the sea as both theme and place
KNIGHT MOVES <i>chess club</i>	homophone swap: night -> knight	the swapped word belongs to the game; the play has a reason

Two cautions: the reader must solve the puzzle instantly, and the swap needs a reason to exist.

Table of five respellings — the curriculum's LITE MILK plus the invented GR8 ESCAPES, KWIK FIX, SEA YOU SATURDAY and KNIGHT MOVES — each labelled with its mechanism, either a homophone swap or a sound-for-letter shortcut, and the effect it creates

Two cautions belong to this move. First, the reader must solve the puzzle instantly: if the respelling makes the reader work, the name fails. Second, the play needs a reason to exist — *KNIGHT MOVES* works for a chess club because the swapped word belongs to chess; a homophone plucked at random is noise, not wit.

Move two: spelling as character voice. In fiction, non-standard spelling can record how a character actually speaks — dropped letters, stretched vowels, clipped words — so the reader hears the voice instead of being told about it. This is the Level 9 move (characterisation), and at Level 10 you take it further: you judge how much bend the reader can carry.

A related trick is worth naming. **Eye dialect** is the respelling of a word that would sound exactly the same however it was spelled — writing *wuz* for *was* or *luv* for *love*. Nothing about the sound has changed; the spelling alone signals that the speaker is casual, rough or warm. Because eye dialect adds no sound information, it is doing social work, not sound work — and that makes it a choice to examine closely, not a default.

The risks are real. Heavy respelling slows the reader down and can flatten a character into a joke; when the bent spelling belongs to one kind of speaker and not another, it can quietly mock the speaker it is meant to characterise. The strongest uses are spare — a handful of marks per page — and consistent: once a voice is spelled a certain way, it stays that way. Figure 6 is an original scene built to show the move working under control.

One voice bent, one voice standard

An original scene: Pop helps fix a bike chain. Every bent spelling and dialect choice is in his spoken lines.

"Pass **us** the spanner, **love**" Pop said, without looking up.

I passed it over. "Is it fixable?"

"She'll be **sweet** in a **sec**" he said. "Nut's worn, that's all. **Nuthin'** some wire can't sort."

I watched his hands work. Ten minutes later the chain ran true,

and Pop wiped them on a rag already ruined.

the narration keeps the standard spelling throughout

What each choice does

- 1 "us" for "me" — familiar, working ease, no explanation needed
- 2 "love" — warmth of address in a single word
- 3 "sweet", "sec" — casual, clipped; a man in no hurry
- 4 Nuthin' — the dropped letter records the actual sound of his voice
- 5 the standard narration frames the bent spellings and dialect choices as Pop's, never a slip

Placement is the signal: the play sits inside the quotation marks, so the reader knows it is deliberate.

Annotated original dialogue between a grandfather and a grandchild fixing a bicycle, with the character's voice choices labelled — us for me, love, sweet and sec as dialect and clipping, nuthin' as bent spelling — and the standard-spelled narration marked as the frame that signals the play is deliberate

Look at the frame as much as the play. Every bent spelling and every dialect choice sits inside the grandfather's spoken lines; the narration around them stays perfectly standard. That placement is the writer telling the reader, without words, *these spellings are the character's, not my mistake*.

Move three: digital spelling. Online and in messages, spelling bends to carry tone and belonging: stretched letters for emphasis (*soooo good*), sound shortcuts for speed, playful usernames and hashtags. Nothing here is new in kind — it is the same system-bending as moves one and two — but digital texts add one sharp skill: **switching register**. The same person who stretches letters in a group chat must be able to write the application, the formal email and the assessment response in the standard. Control is measured by the switch, not by the style.

5. Deliberate or careless? How a reader decides

Here is the fact that makes this section tick. A reader who meets *nite* on a poster and *nite* in a formal letter reacts in two completely different ways — yet the spelling is identical. What the reader is judging is not the word but the signal around it. Readers decide a spelling is deliberate when they can see:

- **placement** — the bend sits somewhere play is expected: a title, a brand name, one character's voice;

- **consistency** — once chosen, the spelling holds;
- **economy** — the text mostly keeps the standard, so the bend stands out rather than drowning;
- **payoff** — the bend gives something back: sound, humour, memorability, voice.

If those signals are missing, the same spelling lands as an error — and errors cost trust. Figure 7 shows the whole judgement in two panels: the spelling does not change between the two settings; the setting changes, so the judgement flips.

Same spelling. Two settings. Two judgements.

SETTING 1 — a school poster

DANCE NITE!

Friday · 7 pm · school hall

Bring your friends.

the reader's take:

"Playful. It fits a poster."

attention is the point here

SETTING 2 — a formal letter

Dear Principal,

I would like to apply to host
the school dance nite.

Yours sincerely,

the reader's take:

"An error? It costs trust."

trust is the point here

The word is identical in both texts.

What changes is the deal the text makes with its reader.

Appropriateness lives in the purpose and the audience — not in the spelling.

Two panels showing the same respelling, nite, in two settings — a school poster, where the reader takes it as playful, and a formal letter, where the reader takes it as an error

Two views of non-standard spelling — both defensible.

The strongest case against it: spelling is a shared contract, and uncontrolled bending breaks it. Readers judge credibility in seconds, and a text full of bent spellings looks careless long before it looks clever. Critics are right that habits formed in casual writing leak into formal writing, and right that when a reader cannot tell the play is deliberate, the writer simply looks wrong.

The strongest case for it: spelling is a meaning-making resource, not a fence. Deliberate respelling builds voices readers can hear, names they remember, and tones that the standard cannot reach. Defenders are right that English has always changed through use, and that the standard is one agreed variety of the language — the right tool for some jobs, not the only legitimate one.

Both views are correct because they describe different uses of one resource. The analytical question is never “is non-standard spelling good or bad?” but **“is this bend deliberate, signalled, and worth its cost — here?”** Question 13 asks you to argue this properly.

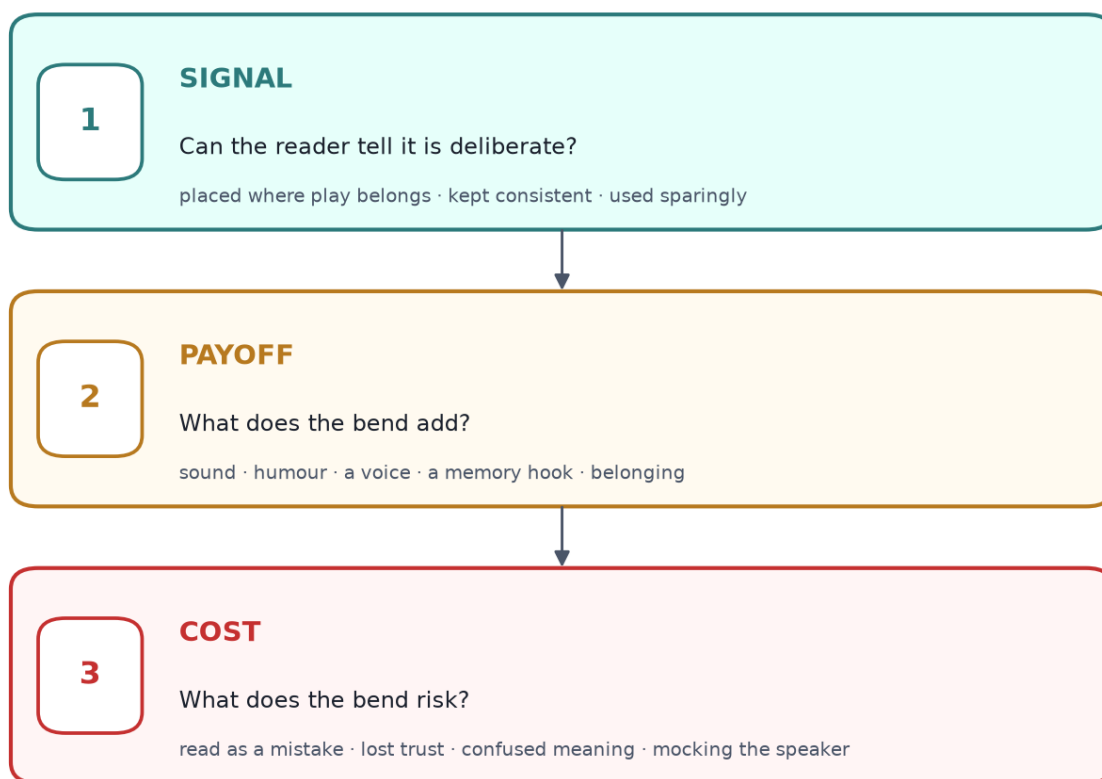
Every judgement in this section runs on one checklist — three questions, asked in order.

1. **Signal** — Can the reader tell the spelling is deliberate? Is it placed where play belongs, kept consistent, and used sparingly?

2. **Payoff** — What does the bend add? Sound, humour, a voice, a memory hook, a sense of belonging?
3. **Cost** — What does the bend risk? Being read as a mistake, losing the reader’s trust, confusing the meaning, or mocking the speaker it claims to portray?

Judging a non-standard spelling

Three questions, asked in order. Naming the move is analysis; answering these is evaluation.



A spelling that fails SIGNAL is a mistake, whatever the writer intended.

Checklist of the three questions for judging a non-standard spelling: signal, payoff and cost, each with its tests

A judgement that stops at naming the move (“that’s a homophone swap”) is analysis, not evaluation. Evaluation is the second sentence: *and it works because...* — or *and it fails because...*

6. The moves working together: a model flyer

No writer uses one move at a time. Figure 9 is a flyer written for this section — for a school night market — that mixes playful spelling with the standard, on purpose. Each choice is labelled with the writer’s reason.

One flyer, two registers

An original flyer for a school night market. Each choice is labelled with the writer's reason.

RIVERBEND NITE MARKETS

Friday 24 October · 6-9 pm · school yard

Stalls

Gr8 Bites — food

Sole Search — shoe repair

Knight Moves — chess table

Live music from The Lite Notes

Bring your own bag.

All welcome.

- 1

NITE — letters dropped from night; the title is the one place play is invited
- 2

Gr8 Bites — sound shortcut (great); youthful energy for a food stall
- 3

Sole Search — homophone swap (soul); ties the name to shoes and makes it stick
- 4

Knight Moves — homophone swap (night); the swapped word belongs to chess
- 5

The Lite Notes — homophone swap (light); promises soft, easy music
- 6

the body copy keeps the standard — when, where and what to bring are facts the reader must trust

The play lives in the names, where attention is the point; the standard holds the facts, where trust is the point.

Annotated original flyer for a school night market, with the playful spellings in the title and stall names — NITE, GR8 Bites, Sole Search, Knight Moves, The Lite Notes — labelled with their mechanisms and effects, and the standard-spelled body copy marked as carrying the facts

Read the flyer once, then read only the labels. The craft principle underneath is one you already know, now applied to spelling: **the job comes first, and the spelling is chosen to do it**. The writer did not want “a respelling”; the writer wanted the event to feel lively and the facts to be trusted — so the play lives in the names, where attention is the point, and the standard holds the details, where trust is the point. Every time you draft, ask in the same order: *what does this text need the reader to feel, and to trust — and which spelling does each job?*

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Task. Figure 9 is the night-market flyer. Every playful spelling in it was chosen over the standard form, and every standard spelling was chosen over the play. The analysis table below is completed for you. Read it line by line, matching each choice to its mechanism and its job.

Choice in the flyer	Mechanism	What it does
“NITE MARKETS” in the title	respelling of <i>night</i> — letters dropped	The title is the one place play is

Choice in the flyer	Mechanism	What it does
		invited; <i>NITE</i> says <i>evening</i> , <i>informal</i> , <i>fun</i> before a single fact arrives. Placement does the signalling.
“Gr8 Bites” (food stall)	sound-for-letter shortcut — <i>great</i> becomes <i>gr8</i>	Youthful, quick energy for a food stall; the number is a small puzzle solved instantly.
“Sole Search” (shoe repair)	homophone swap — <i>soul</i> becomes <i>sole</i>	The swap ties the name to shoes (<i>soles</i>) while keeping the familiar phrase, which is what makes it memorable.
“Knight Moves” (chess table)	homophone swap — <i>night</i> becomes <i>knight</i>	The swapped word belongs to chess, so the play has a reason to exist; it also echoes <i>NITE</i> in the title, tying the flyer together.
“The Lite Notes” (band)	homophone swap — <i>light</i> becomes <i>lite</i>	Promises soft, easy music; the same swap as the curriculum’s <i>lite milk</i> , here describing sound instead of a drink.
“Friday 24 October · 6–9 pm · school yard. Bring your own bag. All welcome.”	standard spelling, untouched	These are the facts a reader must trust: when, where, what to bring. Play here would spend trust the flyer cannot spare.

The point to copy: each row of a good analysis does three things — it quotes the exact spelling, names the mechanism precisely (which swap, which shortcut, which drop), and states the job the spelling does for this reader. The last row matters as much as the playful ones: naming where the writer *held* the standard is part of analysing the choices.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Task. Below is a student’s draft paragraph for the school newsletter about a new bike shed. It contains six spelling errors — four homophone mistakes and two morpheme mistakes. The correction table is completed for you: read it line by line and notice that every fix is reasoned from the system, never guessed by sound.

The prinicipals decision to rebuild the bike shed was a good one, accept for the timing. The builders where still working last Thursday, so their was no shelter for our bikes in the rain. The shed should be finished soon, and than every student will be able to lock up safely. I definately recommend parking there once it opens.

Error	Type	Fix	Reasoning from the system
<i>prinicipals</i>	morpheme + homophone	principal’s	The word is <i>principal</i> (the head of a school) with a possessive ’s. Meaning test: <i>principal</i> names a person here; <i>principle</i> means a rule or belief, which cannot make a decision.
<i>accept</i>	homophone	except	Meaning test: the writer means <i>apart from</i> the timing, which is <i>except</i> . <i>Accept</i> means to receive or

Error	Type	Fix	Reasoning from the system
<i>where</i>	homophone	were	agree to something — you cannot <i>receive for</i> the timing. Meaning test: the sentence needs the past-tense verb <i>were</i> (the builders <i>were</i> working). <i>Where</i> names a place, and no place is being named.
<i>their</i>	homophone	there	Meaning test: the sentence needs the “existence/place” word — <i>there was no shelter</i> . <i>Their</i> unpacks as belonging to them; nothing belongs to anyone here.
<i>than</i>	homophone	then	Meaning test: the writer means <i>at that time</i> / <i>after that</i> , which is <i>then</i> . <i>Than</i> belongs to comparisons, and nothing is being compared.
<i>definatly</i>	morpheme — blurred vowel	definitely	Find the family: the word is built from <i>finite</i> (with <i>de-</i> before and <i>-ly</i> after). Hearing the family keeps the middle <i>i</i> from turning into <i>a</i> .

Notice the pattern: the ear approved all six errors — every one of them sounds correct when read aloud. The fixes all come from meaning: unpacking homophones, and finding the smaller word hiding inside the longer one.

Example 3 — independent

Task. The figure below (the same one shown earlier, as Figure 7) puts the same respelling — *nite* — into two different texts. No scaffold is given.

Same spelling. Two settings. Two judgements.

SETTING 1 — a school poster	SETTING 2 — a formal letter
DANCE NITE! Friday · 7 pm · school hall Bring your friends. <i>the reader's take:</i> "Playful. It fits a poster." attention is the point here	Dear Principal, I would like to apply to host the school dance nite. Yours sincerely, <i>the reader's take:</i> "An error? It costs trust." trust is the point here

The word is identical in both texts.

What changes is the deal the text makes with its reader.

Appropriateness lives in the purpose and the audience — not in the spelling.

Two panels showing the same respelling, nite, in two settings — a school poster and a formal letter to the principal — for the reader to judge

- For each panel, run the three questions in order: **signal**, **payoff**, **cost**. Is the respelling appropriate in that setting?
- Explain *why the same spelling earns two different judgements*. Your explanation must use the ideas of placement and purpose, not just "one is formal and one isn't".
- Write one further setting of your own — a text type not shown — where *nite* would be appropriate, and one where it would not. For each, give a one-sentence reason that names the reader's expectation.

Pointers to structure your answer:

- Start each panel's judgement with the question that decides it (for the poster, that is usually **payoff**; for the letter, **cost**).
- For (b), say what the reader assumes about each text type before they read a word of it.
- For (c), pick text types with different purposes — one where attention is the point, one where trust is the point.

A model opening, to show the shape — finish it yourself:

The spelling is identical in both panels; what changes is the deal the text makes with its reader. In the poster, the reader arrives expecting...

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. For each word below, name the layer of the spelling system (sound, pattern, meaning or history) that best explains the tricky part, and give the reason.

- (a) *have* — why the silent *e*?
- (b) *signature* — why the *g* is heard here but is silent in *sign*?
- (c) *photo* — why *ph* for the /f/ sound?
- (d) *walked* — why *-ed* when the ending sounds like /t/?

Q2. Choose the correct word for each sentence, then state the meaning test that decided you.

- (a) The team celebrated (there / their / they're) win.
- (b) (Its / It's) raining, so the match is off.
- (c) The new rule had no (affect / effect) on attendance.
- (d) Everyone was there (accept / except) the captain.
- (e) The school (principal / principle) opened the assembly.
- (f) Please be (quiet / quite) during the exam.
- (g) Check the (brake / break) before you ride.

Q3. Spelling from word families. Use the smaller word given to spell the larger one, and underline the morpheme that stays fixed.

- (a) *heal* → the state of being well: h _ _ _ _ _
- (b) *music* → a person who performs it: m _ _ _ _ _ _
- (c) *nation* → the adjective: n _ _ _ _ _ _
- (d) *argue* → the noun: a _ _ _ _ _

Q4. Each respelling below uses one of three mechanisms: **homophone swap**, **sound-for-letter shortcut**, or **letter drop**. Sort them, and for each one state the standard word it plays on.

- (a) KWIK LUNCH
- (b) SEA YOU SOON
- (c) L8 CHECKOUT
- (d) NITE OWL BOOK CLUB
- (e) THE PLAICE TO BE (fish-and-chip shop)

Q5. Deliberate or careless? For each scenario, judge whether the reader is likely to read the non-standard spelling as a deliberate choice or as an error, and name the signal that decides you (placement, consistency, economy, payoff — or the absence of one).

- (a) A pizza store called PI IN THE SKY, with a menu printed in full standard spelling.
- (b) A science report that says “the results where consistent”.
- (c) A novel in which one character always writes *nothin'* and *comin'* — and only that character.
- (d) A text message that reads “that was soooo funny”.

Q6. Bend and unbend.

- (a) Take the standard phrase *great value* and respell it playfully for a store banner. Name the mechanism you used.
- (b) Take the playful name *KNIGHT CAP* — a stall selling bike helmets at a night market — and explain in one sentence why the homophone swap suits the stall.
- (c) Rewrite this message in standard spelling for a formal context, keeping the meaning: “heyyyy are we still on 2moro? c u at 4!!!”

Q7. Register switch. Here is a student’s message to a friend about a lost library book.

“dude i totally lost the book, its not in my bag or anythin. gonna b in so much trouble. can u pls not tell anyone til i find it?”

Rewrite the same information as a message to the librarian. Keep every fact, switch to the standard, and choose a level of formality that fits. Then write one sentence explaining what you changed and why.

Q8. (*Speaking and listening.*) Work with a partner. Here are two drafts of the same student’s application to run a stall at the school fair.

Version X: “I would luv to run a bake stall. My cakes r the best in my famly and every1 who trys them wants more. It would be grate fun.” Version Y: “I would like to run a bake stall. My cakes are well practised — everyone who tries them asks for the recipe. It would be a lively addition to the fair.”

Discuss: which version gives the writer a better chance of being trusted with the stall? Where, exactly, does Version X spend trust — and does it buy anything back? Does Version Y lose anything by holding the standard? Use the three questions — signal, payoff, cost — and come to one shared judgement you can give the class. Protocol: each person speaks first on one question; build on your partner’s points (“I agree, and I’d add...”); disagree with reasons, not with voices raised.

Independent

Q9. Look again at the original scene in Figure 6. Write a paragraph of six to eight sentences answering:

How does non-standard spelling build the grandfather's character in this scene?

Structure your paragraph with a claim, at least two quotes from the scene, and an effect sentence after each quote. Include one sentence on the narration's standard spelling and what it signals. The model paragraph in the fully-worked solutions is colour-coded in Figure 10 so you can see the shape before you write.

The shape of an analytical paragraph

A model answer to Question 9, colour-coded so you can see each sentence's job.

The scene builds the grandfather's character through his voice — bent spelling layered on dialect word choice — without a single line of physical description. His opening line — “Pass us the spanner, love” — swaps us for me and drops in love. Both are dictionary spellings used in dialect ways, and they place him at once: easy, familiar, unhurried. The bent spelling arrives next: “Nuthin' some wire can't sort” drops the g from nothing. The reader hears the actual sound of his voice, and the casual nuthin' carries his confidence that nothing here is beyond fixing. Meanwhile the narration holds the standard — “I watched his hands work” — which frames every bent spelling as the character's property, never the writer's slip. By keeping the play inside the spoken lines, the writer lets spelling and dialect do the job description usually does: they build a person the reader can hear.

 claim  quoted lines  effect sentences  closing link

Claim, then quote, then effect — and a closing sentence that links the evidence back to the question.

Model analytical paragraph colour-coded to show the claim, the quotes, the effect sentences and the closing link

Q10. A student has designed this poster for a lunchtime chess tournament.

KNIGHT MOVES — the lunchtime chess showdown Every Tuesday · lunch · library annexe “Check in, check mate.” Bring your own opponent or grab one here. All skill levels welcome.

- Identify every non-standard or playful choice in the poster and name the mechanism of each (homophone swap, sound shortcut, letter drop — or a different move if you can name one).
- Run the three questions — signal, payoff, cost — on the title *KNIGHT MOVES*. Is the play appropriate here?
- The tagline “Check in, check mate.” plays on a phrase from air travel and hotels. Judge whether this second layer of play helps the poster or crowds it, and give your reason in two or three sentences.
- Rewrite the poster's final line — “Bring your own opponent or grab one here. All skill levels welcome.” — so that it keeps its meaning but sounds livelier. State whether you bent any spellings, and if not, why you held the standard there.

Q11. Write a crafted scene of six to ten sentences: two people talking, where one of them has a clearly distinctive way of speaking. Your scene must use:

- (a) at least three deliberate non-standard spellings, all inside the distinctive speaker's lines;
- (b) standard spelling throughout the narration and the other speaker's lines;
- (c) no more than one bent spelling per sentence of speech, so the reader can carry them.

After the scene, write one sentence of intent for each of your three spellings: what the reader should hear or understand about the character from it. Marked on control: the reader must never be able to mistake your play for carelessness.

Q12. (*Speaking and listening.*) In groups of three or four, run a spelling panel. Each member brings one example of non-standard spelling met in the wild during the week — a store name, a poster, an app, a post, a menu — recorded with where it came from. Take turns to present each find; the panel runs the three questions on it (signal, payoff, cost) and reaches a verdict: *works*, *fails*, or *depends on the reader*. One member notes the single strongest reason for each verdict. Each group then reports its most interesting split decision to the class. Listeners: check whether the group's reason names a mechanism and a reader effect, or only a preference.

Q13. Consider this claim:

“Non-standard spelling is just bad spelling by another name.”

Write a reasoned response. You must:

- give the strongest version of the case *for* the claim — what its defenders would actually say;
- give the strongest version of the case *against* it — what its critics would actually say;
- then state your own position: is there a real difference between a deliberate bend and a mistake — and what test separates one from the other?

Use the definitions of *standard*, *non-standard* and *manipulate* given in this section. You are marked on the quality of your reasoning — defined terms, real examples, honest limits — not on which side you land on. Whichever side you favour, spend equal effort on the other one.

Q14. Over one week, collect three deliberate non-standard spellings from texts you actually meet — a shop sign, an app name, a menu, a post from a club you follow, a song title. For each find, record:

- the spelling, word for word, the standard word it plays on, and where it came from;
- the mechanism: homophone swap, sound shortcut, letter drop, or name your own;
- your judgement in two or three sentences using signal, payoff and cost.

Bring your finds to class ready to defend one judgement. If a find turns out to be an error rather than a play after all, keep it anyway and say which missing signal gave it away.

Answers

These are sample answers. For open questions, any response that meets the task is acceptable.

Q1. (a) pattern — English words almost never end in *v*, so *have* grows a silent *e*. (b) meaning — the morpheme *sign* keeps its spelling across the family; *signature* finally lets you hear the *g*. (c) history — *photo* comes from Greek roots, and Greek-derived words spell the /f/ sound as *ph*. (d) meaning — *-ed* always marks past tense; the sound may change (/t/ here) but the meaning-spelling stays fixed.

Q2. (a) *their* — belonging to them: the win belongs to the team. (b) *It's* — unpacks to *it is raining*, which works; *its* would claim belonging. (c) *effect* — a result (noun); *affect* is the doing word meaning to act on something. (d) *except* — meaning *apart from*; *accept* would mean to receive. (e) *principal* — the person in charge; a *principle* is a rule or belief. (f) *quiet* — low noise; *quite* means fairly or completely. (g) *brake* — the stopping device; a *break* is a rest or a shattering.

Q3. (a) **health** — *heal* stays visible. (b) **musician** — *music* stays visible. (c) **national** — *nation* stays visible. (d) **argument** — *argue* keeps its base, dropping the *e* before *-ment*; reward the family reasoning over the memorised form.

Q4. (a) KWIK LUNCH — sound-for-letter shortcut, playing on *quick*. (b) SEA YOU SOON — homophone swap, playing on *see you soon*. (c) L8 CHECKOUT — sound-for-letter shortcut, playing on *late*. (d) NITE OWL BOOK CLUB — letter drop, playing on *night*. (e) THE PLAICE TO BE — homophone swap, playing on *the place to be*, with *plaice* (a flat fish) supplying the seafood theme.

Q5. (a) Deliberate — placement: the play sits in the store's name, exactly where play belongs, and the standard menu signals the owner can spell. Payoff: the pun makes the name memorable. (b) Careless — a science report is a trust text; *where* for *were* has no placement or payoff to mark it as chosen, so it reads as an error and spends the report's credibility. (c) Deliberate — consistency and placement: the bent spellings belong to one voice only, which marks them as the character's, not the writer's. (d) Deliberate — placement and payoff: the stretched letters carry emphasis and tone in a genre where play is expected; no trust is at stake.

Q6. (a) Sample: **GR8 VALUE** — sound-for-letter shortcut (*great* → *gr8*); or **8** in any clearly playful banner context. Reward a named mechanism. (b) Sample: the swap ties the stall to knightly armour (helmets being the knight's gear) while echoing *night* from the market itself, so one word does double duty. (c) “Hey, are we still on for tomorrow? See you at four.” — the bent spellings and stretched greeting belong to friendship; the formal context keeps the standard.

Q7. Sample: “Hello, I need to report that I have lost my library book. It is not in my bag or anywhere I have checked. I am sorry for the trouble and I will keep searching. Could I please arrange the replacement or loan once it is confirmed lost?” Changes: greeting and sign-off added, slang shortened to full words (*dude*, *gonna*, *pls*, *til* unbent), homophone *its* corrected to *it is*, and the request phrased politely — because the librarian needs the facts and deserves the courtesy, and trust is the point of the message.

Q8. Teacher observation of the pair judgement. Look for: students noticing that Version X bends spellings in a text where trust is the point (*luv*, *r*, *famly*, *every1*, *grate*); a judgement that Version X's play buys nothing an application needs; a fair word for what Version Y keeps — liveliness through word choice, not bent spelling. A strong pair notices the middle: some of Version X's warmth is real, and a gifted writer could carry some of it into a formal application without losing trust — the test is whether the bend pays for itself.

Q9. See the fully-worked solutions and Figure 10. A sound paragraph makes a claim about how spelling builds the character, quotes at least two of the grandfather's lines, gives each quote an effect sentence, and includes one sentence on the standard narration as the signalling frame.

Q10. (a) **KNIGHT MOVES** — homophone swap (*night* → *knight*); *Check in*, *check mate*. — a phrase play borrowing *check in* from travel (not a respelling; reward students who notice the difference). (b) Sample: signal — the play sits in the event title, where play is invited; payoff — *knight* belongs to chess, so the swap is witty and on-topic, and it is memorable; cost — near zero, since the standard words around it carry the facts. Appropriate. (c) Open to judgement; reward a stated position with reasoning. Sample: it helps — two compact plays make the poster feel clever without touching the facts; also accept: it crowds — a second joke so soon after the first competes for attention that the details need. (d) Sample: “Bring a rival or find one here — everyone's welcome at the board.” Reward livelier word choice

with the facts and welcome intact, and a stated decision about spelling (usually: no bend, because this line carries the information readers must trust).

Q11. See the fully-worked solutions for a model scene and intent statements. Reward three bent spellings placed only in one speaker's lines, standard everywhere else, at most one bend per sentence, and intent statements that name what the reader should hear.

Q12. Teacher observation. Look for: each find recorded with its source; verdicts justified with signal, payoff or cost rather than preference; the split-decision report naming a mechanism and a reader effect. A strong panel notices the “depends” verdicts — finds where the play works for one audience and not another (a store name that amuses the young and annoys the formal) — because those verdicts prove the judgement lives in the setting, not the spelling.

Q13. Marked on reasoning, not conclusion. A strong response defines its terms (standard, non-standard, deliberate); gives the case for the claim in real strength (to a reader who cannot tell the play is deliberate, a bend and a mistake land the same way, and credibility is lost either way; habits leak between registers); gives the case against in real strength (a mistake has no reason behind it and a bend has one — the difference is intent plus signal, which are real, testable properties of a text); then takes a position with a test — for example, the difference is whether the spelling passes signal, payoff and cost in its setting. Responses that attack only one side, or conclude without reasons, score low whichever side they pick.

Q14. Answers will vary. Reward three real finds, each with source, standard word, mechanism and a judgement using signal, payoff or cost. A find honestly reclassified as an error after testing (“I thought this was play, but there is no placement or payoff to mark it as chosen, so it is a mistake”) is worth full marks for that item.

Fully-worked solutions

Q3(d) — reasoning. The family strategy does the work: *argument* is *argue* + *-ment*. The base word is still visible, and knowing that the suffix is *-ment* (not *-ement*) is a pattern fact that applies to every word built this way (*enjoy* → *enjoyment*, *appoint* → *appointment*). One family rule spelled this word and its cousins.

Q5 — the deciding principle. Deliberateness is not a property of the spelling; it is a property of the signals around it. The same bent spelling becomes deliberate when it is placed where play belongs, kept consistent, used sparingly, and pays for itself. Remove those signals and the reader has no frame for the bend — so the bend reads as carelessness. This is why a writer who wants to play must build the frame first.

Q9 — model analytical paragraph (this is the paragraph colour-coded in Figure 10).

The scene builds the grandfather's character through his voice — bent spelling layered on dialect word choice — without a single line of physical description. His opening line — “Pass us the spanner, love” — swaps *us* for *me* and drops in *love*. Both are dictionary spellings used in dialect ways, and they place him at once: easy, familiar, unhurried. The bent spelling arrives next: “Nuthin' some wire can't sort” drops the *g* from *nothing*. The reader hears the actual sound of his voice, and the casual *nuthin'* carries his confidence that nothing here is beyond fixing. Meanwhile the narration holds the standard — “I watched his hands work” — which frames every bent spelling as the character's property, never the writer's slip. By keeping the play inside the spoken lines, the writer lets spelling and dialect do the job description usually does: they build a person the reader can hear.

The claim is supported by two quoted lines from the grandfather — one dialect, one bent spelling — each followed by an effect sentence naming what the reader hears (ease, confidence, the sound of the voice). The sixth sentence earns its place by analysing the frame, not the play. The closing sentence links the evidence back to the question.

Q10(b) — model judgement. The play in *KNIGHT MOVES* passes all three questions. Signal: the bend sits in the event title, the one place on the poster where play is invited, and every fact around it keeps the standard, so no reader could mistake the swap for a slip. Payoff: *knight* belongs to chess, which makes the swap witty rather than random, and the name is more memorable than *NIGHT MOVES* could be. Cost: almost nothing — the standard words carry the when, where and who, so no trust is spent. The bend pays for itself, which is the definition of appropriate here.

Q11 — model scene and intent statements.

The new girl at the sailing club kept her hands in her pockets and her eyes on the water. “First time?” asked the instructor, coiling a rope. “Yeah. I’ve never been on a boat, actually.” “She’ll be right,” said Baz, the club’s oldest hand, without turning around. “Nuthin’ to it once the wind sorts itself out. The ole club boat has been waiting for a skipper since March. Yer keen to get out there, then? We all started green, love.” He flicked a glance at the sky and went back to his knot. “See? Green,” laughed the instructor. “That’s practically a welcome speech from Baz.”

Intent: the three bent spellings — *nuthin’*, *ole*, *yer* — sit one per sentence in Baz’s lines: *nuthin’* drops the *g* so the reader hears his unhurried voice and his certainty that there is nothing to fear, while *ole* and *yer* colour the rest of his speech without crowding any sentence. *love* is his term of address — a dictionary spelling doing dialect work, warmth from a man who doesn’t even turn around — so the word does the characterising that description refuses to. *sorts itself out* keeps the standard spelling but bends the phrasing, giving Baz the easy confidence of someone who expects the weather to cooperate. The narration and the instructor stay standard, so every bend belongs to Baz alone — placement marks them as deliberate.

Q13 — model structure.

For: The claim holds whenever the reader cannot tell the difference — and that is often. Non-standard spelling and bad spelling look the same on the page, and they cost the same when the reader reads them as carelessness: lost trust, lost fluency, lost marks. Defenders of the claim are right that intent is invisible, that habits formed in casual writing leak into formal writing, and that a writer who cannot reliably produce the standard has no business bending it — because a bend is only visible against a background of control.

Against: The claim flattens a real difference into a slogan. A mistake has no reason behind it; a deliberate bend has one, and the reason can be read in the text itself — the bend is placed where play belongs, kept consistent, used sparingly, and pays for itself in humour, voice or memory. English spelling has always been bent by its users, from shop signs to poems, and the standard itself is only the spelling that won. Where the signals are present, “just bad spelling” is a description that misses the intent that makes it writing.

Position (sample): The difference is real, and the test is the three questions. A spelling that fails signal — no placement, no consistency, no payoff — is a mistake whatever the writer intended, because writing is judged by readers, not intentions. A spelling that passes them is a choice the reader can see. Non-standard spelling is therefore not “just bad spelling” — but it earns the exemption one text at a time, and the burden of proof is on the writer to make the deliberate visible.

Note that the model takes a position — yours may differ, and a well-reasoned opposite position scores equally. What is marked: defined terms, both sides at full strength, a position with a test, and honest limits.

Q12 — what a strong panel verdict contains.

- A clear verdict — *works*, *fails* or *depends on the reader* — stated in one sentence.
- The question the decision turned on, usually **signal** (could we tell it was deliberate?) or **cost** (did the play spend trust it needed?).
- At least one named mechanism with a reader effect: “the homophone swap makes the shop name stick because the reader solves it in half a second.”
- A fair word for the other reading: the strongest panels say what the spelling would cost in a different setting — “fine on a store sign; fatal in a job application.”

Section 4C · English 10 · Curriculum reference: VC2E10LY03, drawing on VC2E10LY03.E01. Builds on VC2E9LY03 (Level 9). All flyers, dialogues, letters, posters and advertisements in this section were written for this book.

Judging representations in context: people, places, events and concepts

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 10 · strand: Literacy · sub-strand: Texts in context · **VC2E10LY04** · Draws on: VC2E10LY04.E01 (VC2E10LY04.E02 is recorded as a §2A exclusion and is not drawn on in this section) · builds on Level 9 VC2E9LY04

Theory

In Level 9 you analysed how the people, places, events and concepts a text represents reflect the contexts it came from. Level 10 keeps that skill and adds a harder one: **evaluate**. It is one thing to explain that a text builds a certain version of a person and that the version fits its time and place. It is another thing to judge how well that version works, what it flattens, what it costs, and what your own opinion of it is — with reasons. That is the work of this section.

The three words this section runs on. The Victorian Curriculum uses all three but defines none of them, so this section states how each is used here.

- **Representation.** A *representation* is the version of a person, group, place, event or idea that a text builds through its choices — the words, images, sounds and omissions that tell us what to notice and how to feel about it. A representation is never a neutral copy of the world; it is a set of choices, and different choices build different versions of the same thing. You met this idea in Section 2C for images and sound; here it applies to every kind of text.
- **Context.** A *context* is anything outside the text that shaped it and that helps explain it: who made it, who paid for it, who it was made for, when it was made, and what that time and place took for granted. The frame-dependent rule from earlier sections applies: “what does this reflect?” becomes precise once you say *which* layer of context you mean.
- **Stereotype.** The term *stereotype*, in its modern sense, entered social commentary through Walter Lippmann’s book *Public Opinion* (1922), which described stereotypes as the “pictures in our heads” — simplified, fixed images of whole groups that stand in for the messier reality. This section uses the term in that sense: a **stereotype** is a representation that is (1) simplified to a few features, (2) fixed, as if those features never change, (3) applied to every member of a group, and (4) carrying judgement, whether praise or blame. Notice the fourth test: a stereotype does not have to be cruel to be a stereotype. “People from that town are all so warm and simple” flattens just as “they are all lazy” does — one hands out a compliment, but both hand out a costume.

The curriculum names four things texts represent: **people, places, events and concepts**. Each has its own stereotyped forms and its own evaluation questions.

Category	What the representation builds	A stereotyped form might say	The evaluation question
People	a version of a person or group: what they are like, what they do, who is allowed to speak	<i>"Teenagers in this series are all lazy and loud."</i>	Who is being flattened — and who gets to speak for them?
Places	a version of a place: what it is for, what mood it carries, who belongs there	<i>"Country towns are either sleepy and backwards or perfect and peaceful."</i>	Whose life in this place has been left out?
Events	a version of what happened: which facts are kept, which are dropped, what the event is made to mean	<i>"The protest turned ugly" — one moment chosen to name the day.</i>	Which facts were kept and which dropped — and who gains from that choice?
Concepts	a version of an idea — success, freedom, home, justice: what counts as the real one	<i>"Success is money, followers and no boss."</i>	Whose values does this version of the idea serve?

Figure 1 The four categories the curriculum names, with common stereotyped forms and the evaluation question for each.

A four-row table covering the four categories the curriculum names — people, places, events and concepts — with what a representation of each one builds, a sample of the stereotyped form each commonly takes, and the evaluation question that fits it.

How a stereotype forms. Stereotypes are not usually planned. They grow out of a repeating loop: a text picks a few features of a group, simplifies and exaggerates them, and later texts copy the picture because it is fast to make and fast to recognise. After enough repeats, the picture starts to feel like the truth, and new makers draw on the picture instead of the people. The loop runs on every one of the four categories, and it is the reason evaluation matters: a representation that is repeated enough stops looking like a choice at all.

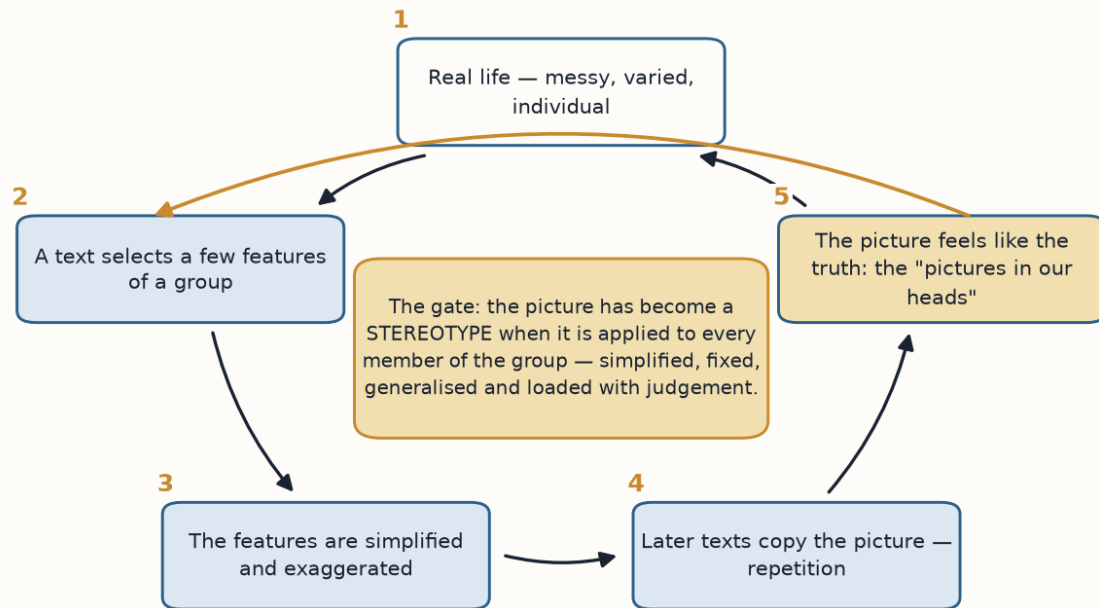


Figure 2 How a stereotype forms: selection, simplification, repetition — and the gate where a picture becomes a mould.

A looping flow diagram showing how a stereotype forms: from the complexity of real life, a text selects a few features, simplifies and exaggerates them, the picture repeats across many texts until it feels like the truth, and makers then draw on the picture instead of the people — with a gate marking the point where a repeated picture becomes a stereotype.

The four tests. When you suspect a representation is a stereotype, run it through the four tests one at a time. A representation can fail one test and pass the others — a character built from a few strong features is not automatically a stereotype — but a representation that fails all four has stopped describing a group and started pressing a mould onto it.

Is it a stereotype?

?	1 Simplified Reduced to a few features, the rest dropped.	"Teenagers are just lazy."
?	2 Fixed Presented as if the features never change.	"That's just how they are."
?	3 Applied to all Applied to every member of the group.	"All of them are like that."
?	4 Loaded Carrying judgement — blame or praise.	"They're all so warm and simple."

One failed test is a prompt to look closer. Four failed tests mark a stereotype — no matter how nice the wrapping.

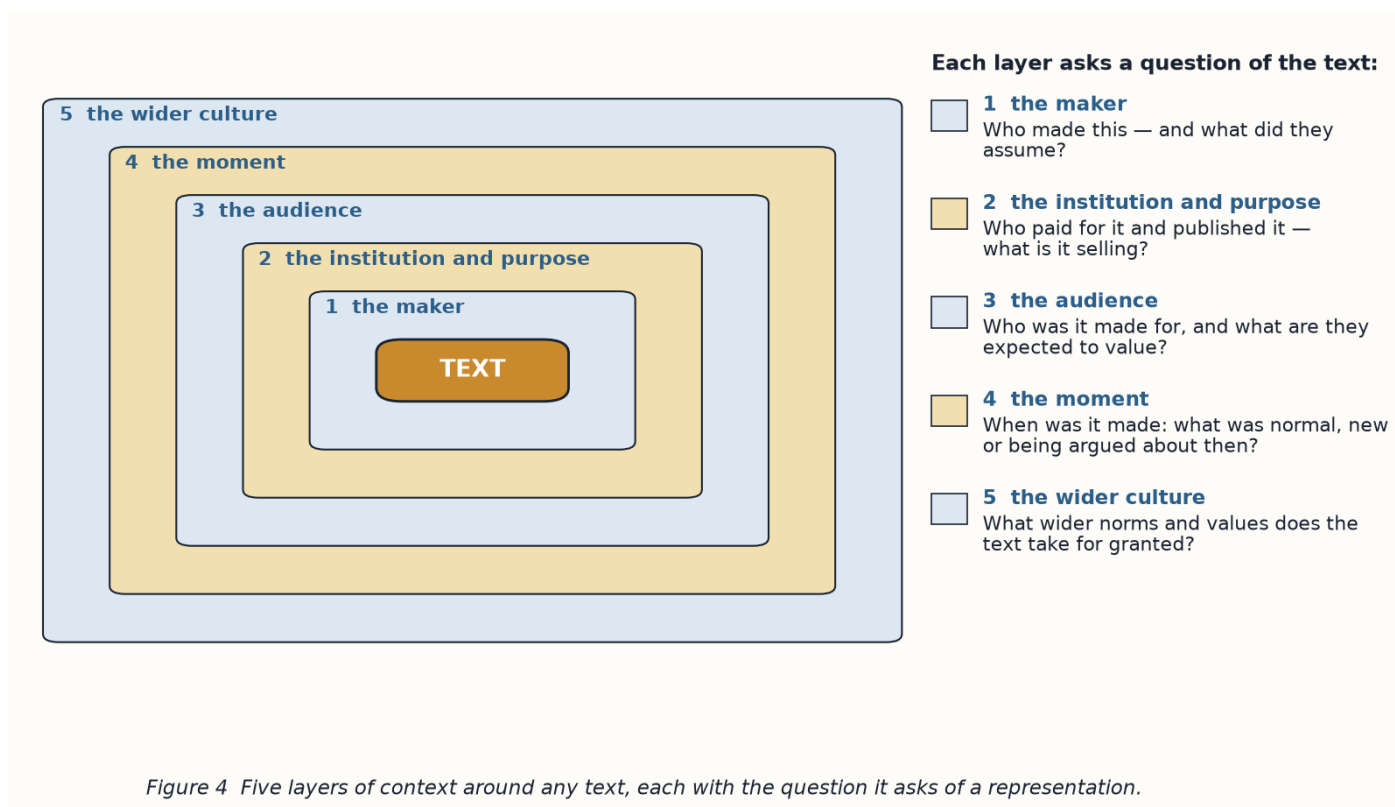
Figure 3 The four tests for a stereotype; the judgement can be blame or praise and still be a stereotype.

A checklist card titled *Is it a stereotype?* listing the four tests — simplified to a few features, fixed as if never changing, applied to every member of a group, and carrying judgement or praise — each with a short example, and a footer note that one failed test is a prompt to look closer while four failed tests mark a stereotype.

How representations reflect their contexts. The claim this section tests — the curriculum’s own claim — is that representations **reflect** the contexts that made them. That reflection shows in at least three ways:

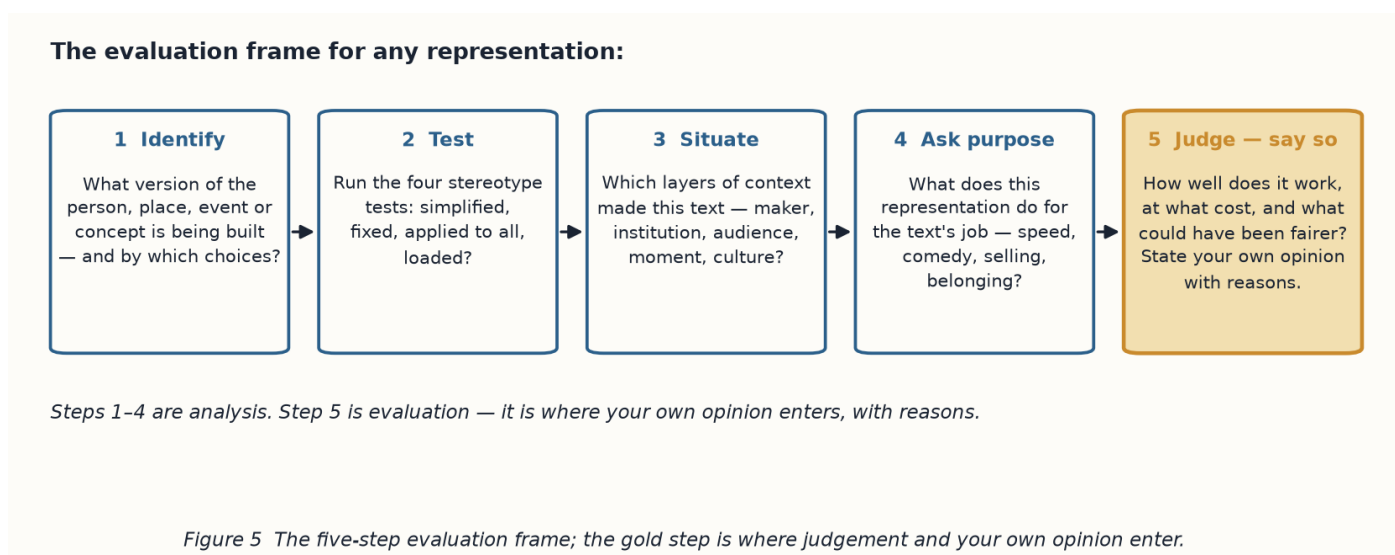
1. **What the maker assumed.** A text can only use ideas it expects its audience to share. An advertisement from 1957 that shows housework as naturally a woman’s job is not just describing homes in 1957; it is assuming what most people of that time and place would accept without argument.
2. **What the institution rewards.** Texts are made inside institutions — newspapers, brands, studios, social platforms — and each institution keeps the representations that suit its business. A local paper and a finance site covering the same council meeting will build two different events, because their readers and their purposes differ.
3. **What the moment was arguing about.** Representations change when contexts change, and the change is the evidence. When a brand re-makes an old advertisement for a new decade, the difference between the two versions is a map of what shifted in the culture between them.

You can picture every text as sitting inside five layers of context, each with a question worth asking.



A labelled diagram of five nested layers of context around a text — the maker, the institution and purpose, the audience, the historical moment, and the wider culture — each layer carrying the question it asks of any representation.

From analysis to evaluation — and to your own opinion. Analysis names the representation and explains how the context produced it. Evaluation goes further: it judges how well the representation works and at what cost. The elaboration this section draws on also asks you to **express your own opinion** with reference to context — not just what the text does, but what you conclude about it, and why. Use the five-step frame every time.



A five-step horizontal flow diagram: 1 Identify the version being built and the choices building it; 2 Run the four stereotype tests; 3 Situate the text in its layers of context; 4 Ask what the representation does for the text's purpose; 5 Judge how well it works, at what cost, and state your own opinion with reasons. Steps one to four are outlined in blue and step five in gold.

Two strong cases, tested the same way. Stereotypes in media are contested, and the argument deserves both sides at full strength before you take a position.

Two strong cases, one shared test

The strongest case FOR types and shortcuts

Recognition is fast: a 20-second ad or a one-line joke cannot build a whole person.

Shared types give an audience a shared world; comedy runs on that recognition.

Satire uses types against themselves — the type, knowingly applied, becomes the weapon.

Short formats need quick meaning; shorthand is what the format can afford.

The strongest case AGAINST stereotypes

Repeated pictures harden into truth: what was made starts to feel natural.

Flattening shapes real treatment — who gets hired, believed or feared.

Praise presses too: the "good" picture is also an expectation no member can leave.

The cost lands hardest on groups with the least space to represent themselves.

Test both sides the same way — swap the group in the representation: does it still work? What changes? If it works about anyone, the real subject is the behaviour, not the group.

Figure 6 The two strongest cases in the argument over stereotypes — and the test both sides must face.

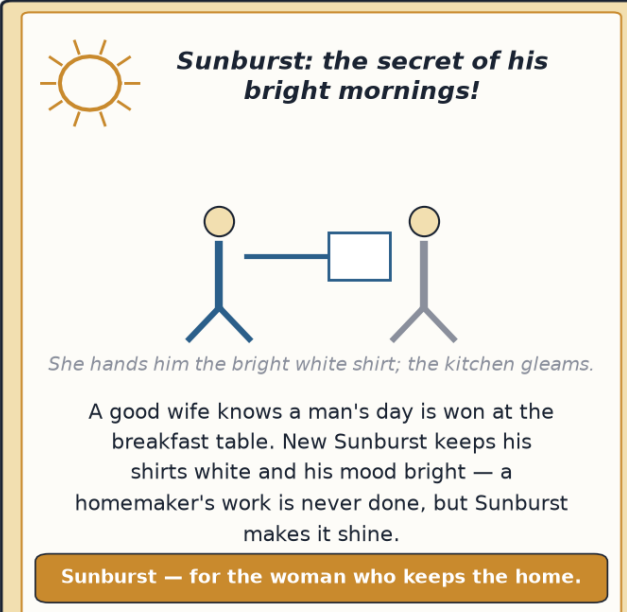
A two-column balanced diagram: the strongest case for types as shorthand — speed, shared recognition, comedy, and satire using types against themselves — against the strongest case against stereotypes — repeated pictures hardening into truth, flattening shaping real treatment, praise pressing as hard as blame, and the cost landing hardest on groups with few chances to represent themselves. A strip below states the shared test: swap the group in the representation and ask whether it still works.

Notice the bottom strip: the same test is applied to both sides, including to representations you might favour. A test used on one side only is not rigour; it is advocacy wearing rigour's clothes. Your job is to reason, not to pick a team in advance.

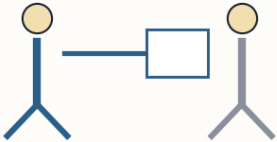
Worked examples

All four stimuli in this section are original texts written for this book. Together they cover the four categories the curriculum names: people, events, places and concepts.

Stimulus A — *Sunburst*, two advertisements (people). The same invented washing-powder brand, 69 years apart. The 1957 version is a print advertisement; the 2026 version is a 20-second social video, shown here as a storyboard.



Sunburst: the secret of his bright mornings!



She hands him the bright white shirt; the kitchen gleams.

A good wife knows a man's day is won at the breakfast table. New Sunburst keeps his shirts white and his mood bright — a homemaker's work is never done, but Sunburst makes it shine.

Sunburst — for the woman who keeps the home.

1957 · print advertisement for household magazines

Sunburst — 20-second social video (2026)

SHOT 1
A muddy footy guernsey drops into the laundry basket.
On screen: "Saturday: everyone's game."

SHOT 2
Dad loads the washing machine; a child pairs socks, laughing.
On screen: "Sunday: everyone's wash."

SHOT 3
The family — three generations — in bright clean jumpers under the sun.
Tagline: "Sunburst. Shared work is lighter work."

2026 · the same brand's social video, 69 years on

Figure 7 Stimulus A — Sunburst, 1957 and 2026: the same product, two representations of people, 69 years apart.

Two panels for the same invented brand, Sunburst. The left panel is a 1957 print advertisement in which a smiling homemaker hands her husband a bright white shirt, with the headline *Sunburst: the secret of his bright mornings* and the footer line *for the woman who keeps the home*. The right panel is a 2026 social video storyboard of three shots — a muddy football guernsey dropped in a basket, a father loading the washing machine while a child pairs socks, and a family in bright clean jumpers in the sun — closing on the tagline *Shared work is lighter work*.

Stimulus B — One event, two news texts (events). On Tuesday, the council of the invented town of Millfield voted five to four to close its sixty-year-old outdoor pool and review the site. Two invented outlets covered the same vote.

THE MILLFIELD COURIER
weekly · free · for residents

Pool closure a 'heartbreak' for Millfield swimmers

More than sixty years of summer mornings may have come to an end on Tuesday, when the council voted five to four to close the town's outdoor pool.

'Every kid in this town learned to swim in that pool. You can't put a price on that,' swimming coach Dana Okafor said.

Photo: Millfield's learn-to-swim class, last Saturday. A petition to keep the pool has drawn 800 signatures.

THE LEDGER
daily city finance site · for ratepayers and investors

Millfield cuts its losses: ageing pool to close

Millfield Council has moved to stem a growing loss, voting five to four on Tuesday to close the town's sixty-year-old outdoor pool.

'The pool has cost ratepayers \$300,000 a year to run. This was the responsible call,' councillor Rob Hastings said.

- Repair costs up 40% in three years
- Attendance down 12% in five years
- The site to be reviewed

Same vote. Two events. Each construction reflects its outlet's readers and purpose.

Figure 8 Stimulus B — the same council vote in two invented outlets: selection, not invention, builds the difference.

Two columns of news text covering the same council vote. The left column is from the weekly local paper, the Millfield Courier, with the headline *Pool closure a heartbreak for Millfield swimmers*, a quote from a swimming coach about every kid in town learning to swim there, and a photo caption about a learn-to-swim class. The right column is from the city finance site *The Ledger*, with the headline *Millfield cuts its losses: ageing pool to close*, a quote from a councillor about the pool costing ratepayers three hundred thousand dollars a year, and a bullet list of repair costs and falling attendance.

Stimulus C — Port Merren, two tourism cards (places). The same invented coastal town, promoted to two different audiences.



Port Merren. Slow days, safe surf.

No traffic lights. No hurry. Just the tide, the bakery queue, and all the time in the world.

calm beach · mini golf · Saturday markets

Card 1 — family holiday brochure



PORT MERREN SENDS IT

The south coast's last wild water. Forty-metre cliffs and winter swells that stand up and swing. Not for spectators.

cliff walks · surf breaks · winter storms

Card 2 — adventure travel page

Figure 9 Stimulus C — Port Merren sold twice: the same streets and surf, two stereotypes of a place.

Two tourism cards for the same invented town, Port Merren. The left card, aimed at families, uses soft pastel colours and the headline *Slow days, safe surf*, with copy about no traffic lights and the bakery queue. The right card, aimed at young visitors chasing adventure, uses hard contrast and the headline *PORT MERREN SENDS IT*, with copy about forty-metre cliffs and winter swells.

Stimulus D — Success, two posts (concepts). The same abstract idea — what counts as success — represented by two invented accounts.

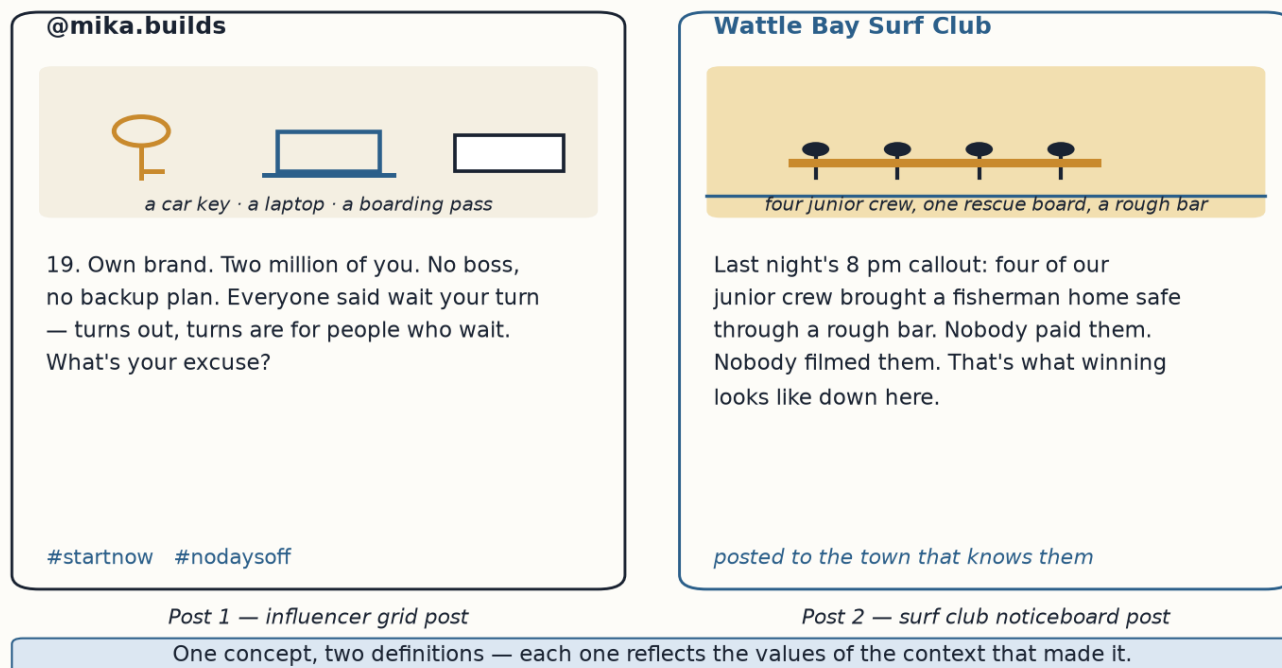


Figure 10 Stimulus D — the concept of success defined twice, once as a private race and once as service.

Two social media posts representing the concept of success. The left post, from an invented influencer account, shows a car key, a laptop and a boarding pass with the caption 19. Own brand. Two million of you. No boss, no backup plan, and the question What's your excuse? The right post, from an invented surf club noticeboard, shows junior crew members carrying a rescue board at dusk with the caption Last night four of our junior crew brought a fisherman home safe, and the closing line That's what winning looks like down here.

Example 1 — scaffolded (people: the two Sunburst advertisements)

Use the five-step frame to evaluate how the two advertisements represent people, and why the representation changed.

Analysis	Comment
The 1957 advertisement builds one version of a person: a smiling homemaker whose whole working life is keeping her husband's shirts bright. The choices doing the work are the headline (<i>the secret of his bright mornings</i> — his morning, her secret), the image of her handing him the shirt, and the footer (<i>for the woman who keeps the home</i>).	Step 1: identify the version being built and the choices building it. The representation assigns all the household work, and all the pride in it, to one sex.
Run the four tests: the homemaker is simplified to one role; the role is fixed, presented as her nature; it is applied to women as a class (<i>the woman</i>); and it carries praise that is also a fence — she is celebrated only inside the job. All four tests fail, so this is a stereotype.	Step 2: the tests applied one at a time. Notice that the judgement here is positive in tone and still flattening.
The advertisement reflects its context on every layer: made by a brand selling to a 1950s household market, placed in magazines read mostly by women, aimed at an audience that largely accepted housework as women's work, made in a decade when married women had left wartime jobs and were being steered back home, and inside a culture that called that arrangement natural.	Step 3: situate the text. Every layer of context — maker, institution, audience, moment, culture — points the same way, which is why the stereotype reads as simple good sense in 1957.
For its purpose, the representation does its job: it flatters the buyer and ties the product to her daily pride. But the	Step 4: ask what the representation does for the purpose.

Analysis	Comment
flattery is the trap — the advertisement sells powder by selling a life sentence.	
The 2026 version answers the first one directly: the work is shared, the father loads the machine, and the tagline (<i>Shared work is lighter work</i>) names the change. The context changed — dual-income households, audiences who push back online against ads that chain one sex to housework, and a brand with a 1957 image it now has to answer for — so the representation changed with it. That difference is the proof of this section's central claim: representations track their contexts.	Steps 3–5: changed context, changed representation.
Honest limitation: the new advertisement swaps one tidy picture for another. In 2026 the sharing is all laughter and sunlight; nobody scrubs a stain or argues about whose turn it is. The stereotype of the effortless family is softer than the stereotype of the homemaker, but it is still a costume, not a life.	Step 5: evaluation means judging the new version too, not just the old one.

Example 2 — scaffolded (events: one vote, two reports)

Analyse how the same council vote becomes two different events, and connect each version to its context.

Analysis	Comment
The <i>Courier</i> builds the vote as a loss: headline word <i>heartbreak</i> , a coach quoted on what the pool means to children, a photo of a learn-to-swim class, and the petition's 800 signatures. Sixty years of mornings is doing quiet work — it turns a budget decision into a story about memory.	Step 1: identify the version of the event. This is the pool as home.
The <i>Ledger</i> builds the same vote as a correction: <i>cuts its losses</i> , a councillor quoted on the annual cost, and a bullet list of repair bills and falling attendance. The people at the pool appear nowhere; the ratepayer appears instead.	Step 1 again: the same facts, assembled into the pool as a bad investment.
Each version reflects the institution that published it. The <i>Courier</i> is a free weekly read by the people who swim there; its business is community feeling, so the event is built as community loss. The <i>Ledger</i> is a city finance site read by ratepayers and investors; its business is money watched well, so the event is built as money saved. Neither outlet lied. Both selected.	Steps 3–4: institution and purpose explain the two constructions. Selection, not invention, is the usual mechanism of representation.
Test the frame by swapping it: imagine the <i>Ledger</i> running the coach's quote as its lead, or the <i>Courier</i> opening on the repair bill. Both would feel like the wrong paper — which is how you know the representation belongs to the context.	A substitution-style test applied to outlets instead of groups: swap the frame and see whether the text still belongs to its home.
Judgement: both reports are effective for their purpose and audience, and both are partial. Between them they still miss the full event — the swimmers who are also ratepayers, for instance, who lose a pool and save money in the same breath. Your own opinion belongs here: which partiality is more honest about the vote, and why?	Step 5: evaluation with an invitation to your own reasoned position.

Example 3 — unscaffolded (places: the two Port Merren cards)

Model response.

Both *Port Merren* cards sell the same streets and the same surf, and neither one of them shows the town. The family card builds Port Merren as an escape from time — *no traffic lights, no hurry* — in soft pastels, with the bakery queue standing in for community and the calm beach standing in for safety. Run the four tests and the place fails them: the town is simplified to a holiday feeling, fixed as permanent summer, applied to the whole place, and loaded with the promise that this is all a town is for. The adventure card fails the same tests wearing a different costume: forty-metre cliffs and winter swells reduce the town to a playground for people who want to conquer something, and *not for spectators* quietly deletes everyone who lives there and does not climb. Both representations reflect their contexts exactly: one is built for parents buying an easy week, the other for young visitors scrolling past anything soft, and each platform rewards the loudest version of the place that suits its buyers. As persuasion, both cards work — that is the uncomfortable part, and the reason evaluation matters more than dislike. The family card is warmer but not more true; the adventure card is braver but not more honest. What both omit is the town's ordinary life: the winter, the work, the Tuesday afternoon with nothing on. A fuller representation would keep some of each card's appeal — safety is a real selling point, and so is wild water — while letting residents exist inside the picture instead of as scenery. My own view is that the family card is the better advertisement and the worse representation, because its calm is so complete that it makes the town look uninhabited, and a town with nobody in it is not a place but a product.

Example 4 — unscaffolded (concepts: the two success posts)

Model response.

The two posts in Stimulus D define the same concept against each other, and each definition fits the context that produced it. The influencer post represents success as a private race won early — a car key, a laptop, a boarding pass, and a score: *19. Own brand. Two million of you.* Every feature is a possession or a number, and the closing question — *What's your excuse?* — turns the definition into a judgement of the reader. It fails the four tests as a representation of the concept: success is simplified to wealth and visibility, fixed as if no other form counted, applied as the only real version, and carrying blame for anyone unmoved by it. Yet the steelman matters here, because the post's power is real: it speaks to agency, to refusing to wait, and for a reader who has been told to wait their whole life that message lands — which is exactly why the flattened definition travels so fast. The surf club post builds success from different material: a rescue, a rough bar, four teenagers, and nobody paid and nobody filming. Success here is an action done for others, witnessed by the people it served. Its context explains it — a club that runs on volunteers, posting to the town that knows them, where the currency is trust, not followers. As representations, my judgement is that the club post is fuller without being softer: it shows success with a scene instead of a scoreboard, and it leaves room for the reader instead of pointing at them. Its honest limitation is reach — it reads as preachy to an outsider, and *that's what winning looks like down here* only persuades someone who already half-belongs. The influencer post's limitation is the deeper one: a definition of success that needs a reader to feel behind is a definition that manufactures its own audience of the disappointed. Between a concept that sells by making you feel late and a concept that asks you to show up for someone else, the evaluation is not close — but the first step is admitting that the post you find less appealing may be the one working harder on you.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Sort the following representations into the four categories — **people, places, events, concepts**: (a) “Every disaster film turns the flood into a race against the clock.” (b) “In this series, city teenagers are loud, lazy and glued to their phones.” (c) “The outback is either empty and dangerous or spiritual and healing.” (d) “The advertisement defines freedom as a car on an open road.”

Q2. Run the four tests — simplified, fixed, applied to every member, carrying judgement — on each representation below. State which are stereotypes and which are not, and why. (a) “Farmers in this campaign are all salt-of-the-earth and suspicious of change.” (b) “The report interviewed three farmers, one of whom had worked the same land for forty years.” (c) “Coastal towns are either sleepy and backwards or perfect and peaceful.” (d) “The new student in the film is shy at first and grows brave by the end.”

Q3. For the 1957 *Sunburst* advertisement (Stimulus A), give one fact or reasonable inference for each of the five context layers: maker, institution, audience, moment, culture.

Q4. Copy and complete this table for the two reports in Stimulus B.

	<i>The Millfield Courier</i>	<i>The Ledger</i>
The word or phrase doing the most representational work		
The version of the event it builds		
The layer of context that best explains it		

Q5. Classify each sentence as **analysis** or **evaluation**. (a) “The *Ledger* opens on the cost figure rather than the vote itself.” (b) “Opening on the cost figure suits a finance reader but hides the human cost, which weakens the report as a full account.” (c) “The family card uses soft pastel colours and a slow headline.” (d) “The pastel softness sells calm effectively, but at the cost of making a real town look like a painting.”

Q6. Steelman practice. Write each of the following in its strongest form, in one sentence each: (a) the case **for** keeping types and shortcuts in advertising and comedy; (b) the case **against** stereotypes in advertising and comedy. Then state which of your two sentences you find harder to argue, and one reason why.

Unscaffolded

Q7. Using the five-step frame, write one paragraph (7–9 sentences) evaluating the representation of people in the two *Sunburst* advertisements. Your paragraph must name the context that changed between 1957 and 2026 and include one honest limitation of the newer advertisement.

Q8. (*Creating.*) Design a third *Port Merren* card, aimed this time at people thinking of **moving** to the town rather than visiting it. Your card must not use either stereotype from Stimulus C. Provide: an image description, a headline, two lines of copy, and the feature you would list first. Then write two sentences evaluating your own card: its strongest choice, and its riskiest one.

Q9. A crisp-foods company runs this invented television line: “*Real men don’t read recipes. MAXI CRUNCH: open, pour, done.*” Apply the substitution test: swap the group so the line reads *real women*, then swap it again so the line targets no group at all (*busy people don’t read recipes*). For each version, state what changes. Then reach a reasoned conclusion about the original line: is the group doing real work in the joke, or is it doing rhetorical work? Use the definition of stereotype from this section in your answer.

Q10. (*Speaking and listening.*) In pairs, discuss this claim: “*The 2026 Sunburst advertisement is just as stereotyped as the 1957 one — it simply uses the stereotype that suits 2026.*” Speaker: argue for or against the claim for 60–90 seconds, using the five-step frame out loud. Listener: respond with one point of agreement and one respectful challenge (“I’d argue the new version is less flattening, because ...”). Swap roles, then each write down the challenge you received and how you answered it.

Q11. (*Creating.*) Rewrite the *Ledger* report from Stimulus B as a 30-second radio news read for the *Courier*’s audience. Keep the facts accurate; change the construction. Then write two sentences: what you changed first, and which layer of context told you to change it.

Q12. Evaluate this claim: “*A stereotype is only a problem when it is negative.*” First state the claim in its strongest form — what is genuinely right about it? Then test it against Stimulus C or Stimulus D, where the flattering versions do the flattening, and reach a reasoned conclusion. Make sure your test applies as hard to the position you end up holding as to the one you reject.

Answers

Q1. (a) events; (b) people; (c) places; (d) concepts.

Q2. (a) Stereotype — fails all four tests: one pair of traits, fixed, applied to all farmers, carrying romantic praise. (b) Not a stereotype — three named individuals with different details; nothing is applied to a class. (c) Stereotype — the town type is simplified to two fixed moods and applied to every coastal town, carrying judgement either way. (d) Not a stereotype — one character changing over time is an arc, not a mould applied to a group.

Q3. Accept any answer supported by the stimulus, for example: maker — a brand agency selling washing powder; institution — print magazines and early TV advertising paid by the brand; audience — married women running households; moment — a decade in which married women were being steered from wartime jobs back to the home; culture — housework presented as women's natural, cheerful work.

Q4. *Courier*: *heartbreak* (or *sixty years of summer mornings*); the vote as community loss; audience/culture layer — a free local paper whose readers swim there. *Ledger*: *cuts its losses* (or *costing ratepayers*); the vote as money saved; institution/purpose layer — a finance site whose business is money watched well.

Q5. (a) analysis; (b) evaluation; (c) analysis; (d) evaluation.

Q6. Sample strong forms: (a) “A 20-second advertisement cannot build a whole person, so types give audiences something they can recognise instantly, and comedy and satire both depend on that shared recognition.” (b) “Repeated pictures harden into what feels like truth, and flattening shapes real treatment — who gets hired, believed or feared — so the shortcut is never only a shortcut.” The third part is personal: the honest answer is whichever sentence cost you more to write, with a reason.

Q7–Q12. See the fully-worked solutions below.

Fully-worked solutions

Q7. Model paragraph. The 1957 *Sunburst* advertisement represents women through a single role — the homemaker whose pride is her husband's bright shirt — and the four tests mark it as a stereotype: one feature, fixed, applied to women as a class, and wrapped in praise that doubles as a fence. Every layer of its context points the same way: a brand selling to a 1950s household market assumed, correctly, that its audience accepted housework as women's natural work, so the representation flattered the buyer while binding her to the job. The 2026 version reflects a changed context — dual-income households and an audience that quickly rejects ads chaining one sex to housework — and represents the work as shared, with the father at the machine and a tagline that names the change. The contrast proves the section's claim: when the context moved, the representation moved with it. Neither version lies about women; each tells the truth about the decade that paid for it. The newer advertisement is plainly fairer, but it has an honest limitation: it replaces one tidy picture with another, showing shared work as pure laughter and sunlight, with no stain, no tiredness and no negotiation, so the effortless family becomes its own costume. My view is that the newer representation is better and still not full: it opens the door the old advertisement locked, but it has not yet let a real, complicated family walk through it.

Q8. Sample card and self-evaluation. Image: the same jetty at 7 a.m. in winter, lights on in houses on the hill, a school bus pulling in and a resident unlocking the bakery; no holiday props. Headline: *Port Merren. A town that lives here too.* Copy: “We have a school, a footy club, a winter that means something, and room for one more family at the Saturday market.” Feature listed first: the school and the town's clubs — the institutions of a working week. Self-evaluation: the strongest choice is the winter morning, because the family card is locked in permanent summer and the adventure card turns winter into a thrill, so showing the cold as an ordinary working morning breaks the holiday mould both sell. The riskiest choice is the word *family* in the copy, which could slide back toward the family card's warmth and start selling a feeling instead of a life; if it reads that way, the fix is to name the practical things harder — the school, the jobs, the bus.

Q9. Model answer. With *real women*, the line stops working as comedy and starts working as an old accusation — women who do not cook as failed women — because that substitution lands on the group historically judged by cooking, and the joke turns from a tease into a grade. With *busy people*, the line loses its edge entirely: nobody is being told what a “real” member of their group does, and the message becomes a plain statement about convenience,

which is all the product actually needed. The test shows that in the original line the group is doing rhetorical work, not real work: maleness has no historical tie to recipe-reading, so *real men* contributes nothing to the claim about convenience except a dare — buy this or you are less of one. By this section’s definition the line is a stereotype in praise form: manhood is simplified to one appetite, fixed, applied to every man, and carrying judgement of any man who reads a recipe anyway. My reasoned conclusion is that the line sells crisps by selling a dare, and the dare is the part that dates, flattens and costs — a version aimed at hungry people in a hurry would keep everything the product needs and drop the costume.

Q10. Sample listening note. “My partner challenged my claim that the 2026 ad is just as stereotyped, arguing that the new version at least spreads the work across the family instead of pinning it to one person, which changes who gets to exist in the picture. I answered that spreading a tidy picture across more people is still a tidy picture — the 2026 family never tires or negotiates — but I conceded that the difference between one person flattened and five people flattened is a real difference, not just a numerical one, because the older version also excluded. I now hold a weaker form of my claim: both ads trade in costumes, but the new costume fits more bodies, and that counts.”

Q11. Sample radio read and note. “Millfield’s outdoor pool will close after more than sixty years, following Tuesday’s five-to-four council vote. Swimming coach Dana Okafor says every child in town learned to swim there. The council says the pool has cost ratepayers three hundred thousand dollars a year, and attendance has fallen twelve percent in five years. The site’s future will be reviewed, and a petition to keep the pool has drawn eight hundred signatures.” *Note:* I changed the lead first — the *Ledger* opened on the money, but for the *Courier*’s audience the sixty years and the coach’s voice carry the story, so the loss leads and the cost follows as fact, not as verdict. The layer of context that told me this was the audience layer: residents who swim there read the pool as home first and as a budget line second.

Q12. Model evaluation. Stated in its strongest form, the claim is right about something real: a flattering representation feels like a gift, and it is harder to argue against praise than against insult — nobody wants to complain about being called warm, brave or natural. The claim also correctly notices that positive types often escape scrutiny precisely because they seem kind. But the claim fails when tested against the stimuli, because the problem with a stereotype is the flattening, not the temperature. In Stimulus C, the family card praises Port Merren into permanent summer and deletes everyone who lives and works there; the flattery is the mechanism of the erasure, not an excuse for it. In Stimulus D, the influencer post’s version of success is all achievement and agency — nothing negative in sight — and it still manufactures a reader who feels behind, because a concept applied as the only version presses on everyone it excludes. Praise can also bind: a group celebrated as endlessly warm or naturally hardworking is being told what it must keep being, and any member who differs now disappoints twice — the group and the compliment. The claim therefore mistakes the wrapper for the contents: negative stereotypes wound openly and positive ones quietly, but both are moulds, and the test this section hands you — simplified, fixed, applied to all, carrying judgement — never asks whether the judgement was nice.