

English Level 5

Chapter 1 — Language: interacting with others and structuring texts

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Language for social contexts: roles and relationships

Owens: VC2E5LA01 — *understand how language is selected for social contexts and that it helps to signal social roles and relationships* (Language strand, sub-strand *Language for interacting with others*). **Draws on:** VC2E5LA01.E01, VC2E5LA01.E02.

Theory

The big idea. Your words always do two jobs at once. The first job is the message: *Can I borrow the glue?* The second job is the **signal** your words send about who is talking to whom. The same ask, worded in different ways, tells the listener something about your **role** — the job you have in a situation, such as chairperson, team captain or class member — and about your **relationship** with the person you are talking to: a close friend, a teacher, or someone you have never met.

The people, the place and what is happening make up the **social context** (the situation you are in when you speak or write). Skilled speakers and writers choose language to fit the context. That is what this section is about: noticing the signals in word choices, and choosing your own words to fit the role, the person and the place.

Two handy labels. Language that suits official, structured jobs — running a meeting, opening a debate, speaking to the whole school — is called **formal** language. Language that suits relaxed, everyday moments with people you know well is called **informal** language. Both are good language. The skill is picking the one that fits.

One greeting, two signals. Read these out loud:

- *Hey Mia! Wait up!*
- *Good morning, Ms Lee.*

The message is small in both. The signals are not. The first says: *you are my friend, we are equals, this is a relaxed moment*. The second says: *you are a person in charge, I am a student, this is the start of the school day*. Nobody had to say any of that out loud. The word choices carried it.

Part 1 — Formal roles: the class meeting

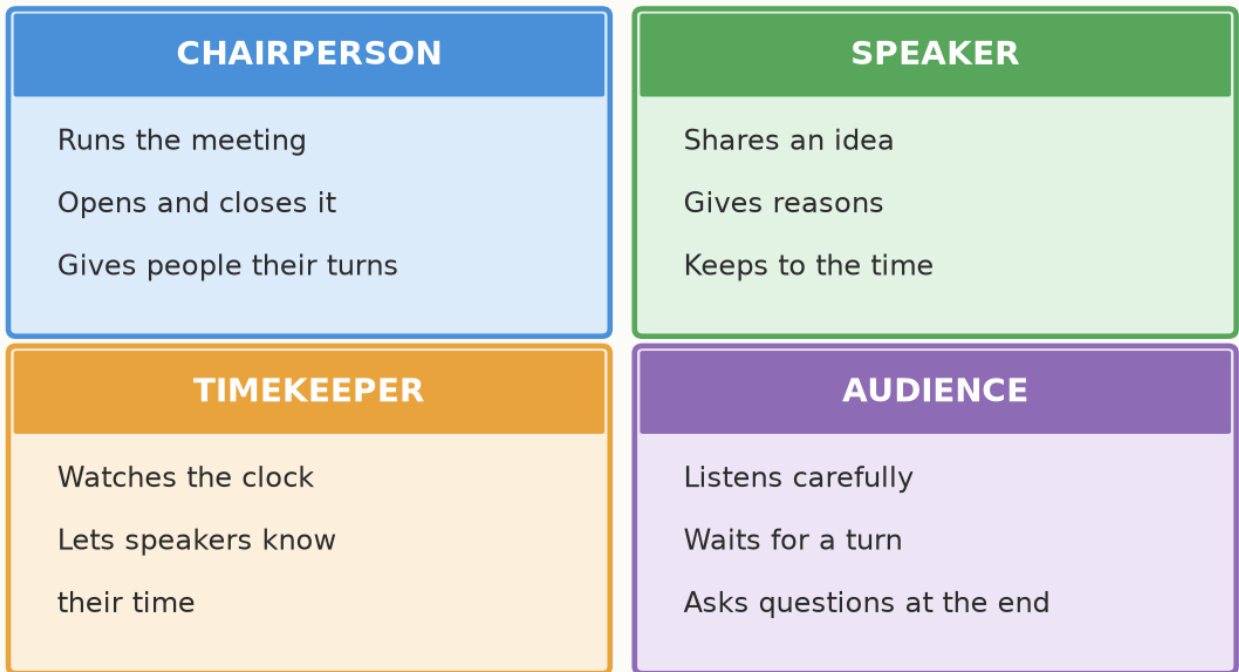
A class meeting is a formal situation with set roles. Here are the four you will meet in this section. The **chairperson** is the person who runs the meeting: they open it, name the topic, give people their turns, keep to the rules and close it. A **speaker** is a person who stands up to share an idea or a side of the topic. The **timekeeper** watches the clock and lets each speaker know when their time is almost up. The **audience** is the group that listens; audience members wait for the chairperson to give them a turn before they speak.

Each role has its own kind of language. The chairperson does not say *Righto, let's get into it*. The chairperson says *Welcome, everyone. Our first speaker is Mia*. The words are doing the job of the role.

Figure 1 — The four meeting roles

Class meeting roles

Every role has its own job - and its own kind of words



Four cards showing the roles in a class meeting: chairperson, speaker, timekeeper and audience, each with the job that role does

Figure 2 — Model text 1: a chairperson's script (with labels)

Model text 1 - The chairperson's script

A class meeting about the class garden. What job is each line doing?

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to our class meeting.

welcomes the group

Today we will talk about the class garden.

names the topic

Our first speaker is Mia. Please begin, Mia.

gives a turn

Thank you, Mia. Your reasons were clear.

thanks a speaker

We have heard two great ideas. Our next speaker is Jack.

moves the meeting on

The meeting is now closed. Thank you for coming.

closes the meeting

The chairperson names each step as it happens, so the whole room knows where the meeting is up to.

A model of a chairperson's script for a class meeting, with each line labelled: welcome, name the topic, give a turn, thank a speaker, move the meeting on, close the meeting

Look at Figure 2 again and notice three things:

1. The chairperson uses full names and short, complete sentences.
2. The chairperson names what is happening as it happens: *Our first speaker is... Thank you, Mia... The meeting is now closed.*
3. The chairperson's words link the parts of the meeting together, so everyone knows where they are up to.

Part 2 — Formal roles: the debate

A **debate** is a formal talk in which two teams argue opposite sides of a statement. The statement is the idea being debated, for example *Our school should have a homework-free day each week*. The team that agrees with the statement is the **affirmative** team (it says *yes, this should happen*). The team that disagrees is the **negative** team (it says *no, this should not happen*). Each team has three speakers, and each speaker position has its own job:

- **Speaker 1** opens the team's case: greets the room, states the team's side, and gives the first reasons.
- **Speaker 2** builds the case: adds new reasons and examples.
- **Speaker 3** answers the other team's points and wraps up the team's case.

The chairperson introduces the debate and the speakers; the audience listens and may ask questions at the end.

Figure 3 — How a debate is set out

How a debate is set out

The statement

"Our school should have a homework-free day each week."

AFFIRMATIVE TEAM

(agrees with the statement)

Speaker 1: opens the case and gives the first reasons

Speaker 2: adds reasons and examples

Speaker 3: answers the other team and wraps up

VS

NEGATIVE TEAM

(disagrees with the statement)

Speaker 1: opens the case and gives the first reasons

Speaker 2: adds reasons and examples

Speaker 3: answers the other team and wraps up

CHAIRPERSON

introduces the debate and the speakers

keeps order and gives the turns

AUDIENCE

listens carefully to both teams

may ask questions at the end

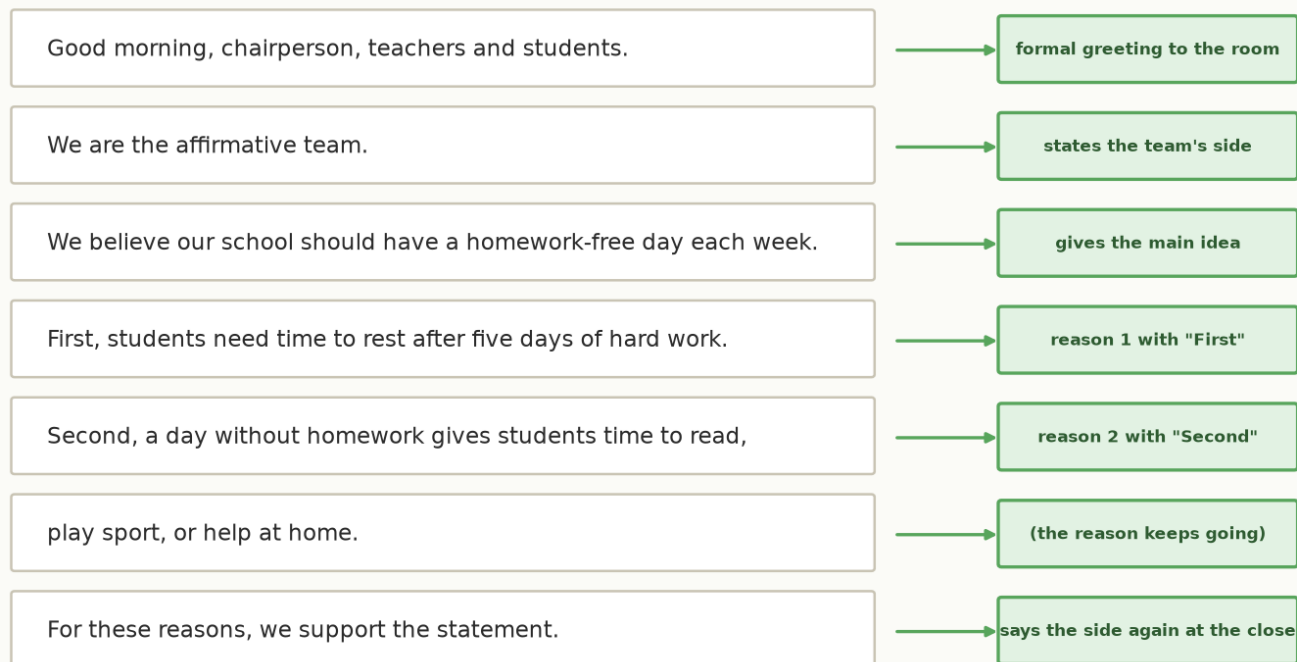
Labelled diagram of a debate: the statement in the middle, the affirmative team on one side and the negative team on the other, each with three speaker jobs, plus the chairperson and the audience

Every speaker uses role language: a greeting that names the room (*Good morning, chairperson, teachers and students*), signpost words for reasons (*First... Second...*), and a closing line that says the team's side again.

Figure 4 — Model text 2: an affirmative first speaker's opening (with labels)

Model text 2 - First affirmative speaker

The same statement as Figure 3. Each part of the speech does a set job.



Signpost words like "First" and "Second" help the audience follow the reasons.

A model of an affirmative first speaker's debate speech, labelled: formal greeting, state the side, give reasons with signpost words, say the side again at the end

Part 3 — Requests: the same ask, different words

A **request** is when you ask someone for something or ask them to do something. Requests are where roles and relationships show up most in everyday life, because every culture, family and group has its own habits for making requests and answering them.

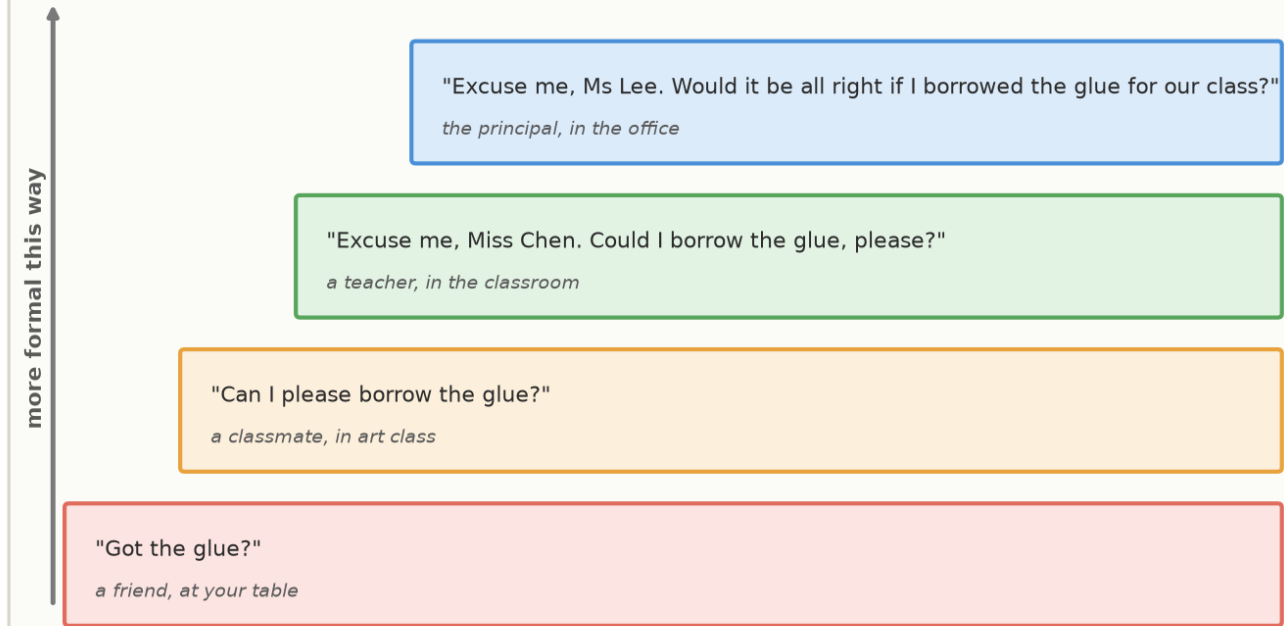
In some groups, people ask in a very direct way (*Dad, I need the scissors now*), and a quick answer shows you are keen. In other groups, people ask in a softer way, often as a question with *please*, and a quick *yes* can even feel rushed. In some groups, a pause before an answer is normal and shows the person is thinking carefully; in others, a long pause might be read as *I don't want to*. Both ways are okay — they are different habits. So when you make or answer a request, it helps to know the habits of the people you are with.

One ask can be worded for many contexts. Figure 5 climbs a ladder of the same request, from the most informal step at the bottom to the most formal at the top.

Figure 5 — One request, four ways to ask

One request, four ways to ask

The same ask, worded to fit the person and the place



A ladder showing four wordings of the same request, climbing from a casual ask between friends at the bottom to a formal ask to the principal at the top

What can a pause mean? Silence — a stretch of quiet — is part of how requests and turns work in many groups. The same quiet moment can carry different messages.

Figure 6 — What a pause can mean

What can a pause mean?

Silence sends signals too. Here are four common ones.

THINKING CAREFULLY

"Let me think about that ..."

A pause before an answer can mean the person is working out what to say.

SHOWING RESPECT

While an elder is speaking

In some families and groups, children stay quiet while an elder is speaking. The quiet is the respect.

WAITING FOR A TURN

Quiet hands, patient ears

At a meeting, the audience stays quiet until the chairperson gives them a turn.

SAYING YES WITHOUT WORDS

A smile and a nod

Not every answer needs words. A smile and a nod can answer a request.

Different families and groups have different habits. Watch, listen, then choose your words.

Four panels showing things a pause can mean: thinking carefully, showing respect, waiting for your turn, and saying yes without words

Respect means showing that someone matters. In some families and groups, children stay quiet while an elder — an older person such as a grandparent — is speaking, because the quiet itself is the respect. In a class meeting, the audience's quiet is a different signal: *we are waiting for our turn*. The words you did not say still send a message.

Part 4 — Check your signals

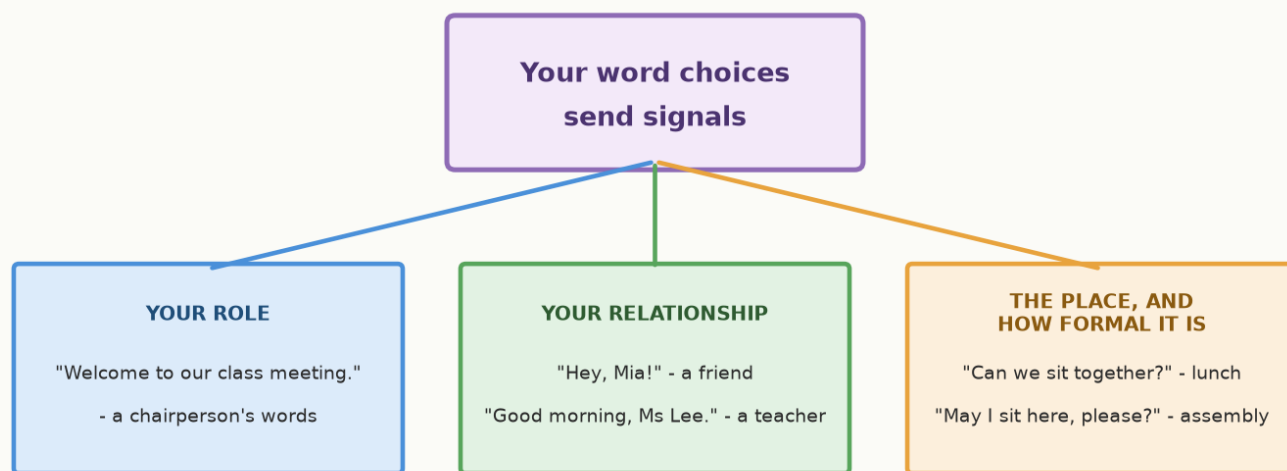
Before you speak or write for a real purpose, ask yourself three questions:

1. **What is my role?** Chairperson, speaker, student, captain, friend on duty?
2. **Who am I talking to?** A close friend, the whole class, a person in charge, someone I have never met?
3. **Where are we?** The yard, the hall, a meeting, an assembly?

Your answers choose your words for you.

Figure 7 — Word choices send three signals

Word choices send three signals



Before you speak or write, ask yourself:

1. What is my role?
2. Who am I talking to?
3. Where are we?

Your answers choose your words for you.

A map with the idea “your word choices send signals” in the middle and three branches: your role, your relationship with the person, and the place and how formal it is, each with example wordings

Worked examples

Example 1 — with support

Match each chairperson’s sentence to its meeting job.

Working

Welcome, everyone, to our class meeting. → **welcome the group**

Today we will talk about the class garden. → **name the topic**

Our first speaker is Priya. Please begin, Priya. → **give a speaker their turn**

Thank you, Leo. That was a clear point. → **thank a speaker**

The meeting is now closed. Thank you for coming. → **close the meeting**

Comment

Welcome and *our class meeting* name the start of the meeting.

Today we will talk about... tells the room what the meeting is about.

The chairperson names the person and hands the turn over.

Thank you plus one thing the speaker did well.

Now closed ends the meeting; the thanks goes to the whole room.

Example 2 — with support

A student wants to borrow a ruler from the office. They say: *Oi, gimme that ruler*. Rewrite the request so it fits the person and the place.

Working

Step 1 — Who and where? The school office, talking to an adult the student does not know well.

Step 2 — What is wrong with the first words? *Oi* is a shout, and *gimme that* is an order with no *please*.

Comment

This is a formal context, so the words need to be formal too.

Orders and shouts suit the yard with mates, not an office with a person in charge.

Working	Comment
Step 3 — Make it a question, add a greeting and <i>please</i> . Answer: <i>Excuse me. Could I please borrow a ruler?</i>	Questions sound like asks; orders sound like demands. The signal now is: <i>I am a student, you are in charge here, and I am asking, not ordering.</i>

Practice questions

With support

Q1. Match each meeting role to its job.

Roles: chairperson · speaker · timekeeper · audience

- (a) listens and waits for a turn to speak
- (b) runs the meeting and gives people their turns
- (c) stands up to share an idea about the topic
- (d) watches the clock and lets speakers know their time

Q2. Label each chairperson's sentence: *welcome · name the topic · give a turn · thank a speaker · close the meeting*.

- (a) Good morning, everyone. Welcome to our meeting.
- (b) Today we will talk about the school fete.
- (c) Our next speaker is Jack. Please begin, Jack.
- (d) Thank you, Priya. Those were strong reasons.
- (e) The meeting is now closed. Thank you for listening.

Q3. The statement for a debate is: *Our class should keep a vegetable garden*.

- (a) Which team agrees with the statement — the affirmative or the negative?
- (b) Which team disagrees with it?
- (c) Which speaker position opens the team's case?
- (d) Which speaker position answers the other team's points and wraps up the case?

Q4. Complete each chairperson's sentence with your own words.

- (a) Welcome, everyone, to our meeting about _____.
- (b) Our first speaker is _____. Please begin.
- (c) Thank you, _____. Now our next speaker is _____.
- (d) The meeting is now _____. Thank you for _____.

Q5. Here are three wordings of the same ask. Write them in order from the most informal to the most formal.

A. *Excuse me, Mr Roberts. Would it be all right if I borrowed the stapler?*

B. *Got the stapler?*

C. *Can I please borrow the stapler?*

Q6. Use Figure 8 to match each person and place to the ask that fits best.

Figure 8 — Which ask fits?

Which ask fits?

Draw a line from each person and place to the ask that fits best.

Who and where

the principal, at assembly

your teacher, in class

your dad, at home

The asks

Ask 1: "Excuse me, Ms Lee. May I please sit with my class?"

Ask 2: "Dad, can I have an apple, please?"

Ask 3: "Excuse me, Miss Chen. Could I please borrow a pencil?"

Hint: think about the person, the place, and how formal the moment is.

A matching table with three people and places down one side and three wordings of an ask across the other side, with boxes to draw lines

Q7. Read each moment below. Choose what the quiet most likely means: *thinking carefully* · *showing respect* · *waiting for a turn*.

- (a) The chairperson asks the audience for questions. The room is quiet for a few seconds while people think about what they want to ask.
- (b) At a family lunch, the children do not talk while their grandmother is telling a story. They listen until she finishes.
- (c) At the class meeting, Mia keeps her hand up and stays quiet until the chairperson says her name.

Q8. A student says to the principal: *Hey, you! Open the door for me*. Rewrite the request so it fits the person and the place. Use this frame: *Excuse me, _____. Could you _____?*

On your own

Q9. Your class is holding a meeting about this statement: *Our class should have a reading buddy time each week*. Write the chairperson's opening: the welcome, the naming of the topic, and the first hand-over to a speaker. Three or four sentences.

Q10. Choose a side of this statement: *Students should help plan one school excursion each year*. Write a first speaker's opening of three or four sentences. Include a formal greeting, the team's side, and at least two reasons with signpost words.

Q11. You want to borrow a book from the library at lunch. Write the same request two ways:

- (a) asking your best friend to grab the book for you;
- (b) asking the librarian, who you do not know well.

Then (c) write two differences between your two versions and say why each difference fits the person.

Q12. A friend asks you to help at their stall at the school fete. You pause for a few seconds before answering. Write two different reasons for your pause — one where the pause means you are thinking, and one where the pause is a polite way of saying *I don't think I can*. For each reason, write what you say next.

Checkpoint

Task. Your class is holding a formal meeting about this statement: *Our class should start a litter-free lunch challenge.* You are the chairperson. Write the chairperson's words for four moments of the meeting:

- (a) welcoming the class;
- (b) naming the topic;
- (c) giving the first speaker their turn;
- (d) closing the meeting.

Then (e) choose two of your own sentences and explain how the word choices show that your role is the chairperson, not a speaker or an audience member.

Scored against the Level 5 achievement standard (Speaking and Listening): *students ... select language for social purposes and roles, to clarify meaning and make connections.*

What to look for	What it shows
The words fit a formal, official role: full sentences, names, no casual words.	Selecting language for a social role (chairperson) and purpose (running a meeting).
Each sentence makes its step of the meeting clear: welcome, topic, turn, close.	Clarifying meaning for the room.
Linking words connect the steps and the people: <i>Our first speaker is... Thank you, Mia...</i>	Making connections between speakers and parts of the meeting.

Answers

Q1. (a) audience; (b) chairperson; (c) speaker; (d) timekeeper. **Q2.** (a) welcome; (b) name the topic; (c) give a turn; (d) thank a speaker; (e) close the meeting. **Q3.** (a) the affirmative team; (b) the negative team; (c) Speaker 1; (d) Speaker 3. **Q4.** Answers will vary. See the worked solutions for one set of answers. **Q5.** B, C, A. **Q6.** See Figure 8 and the worked solutions. **Q7.** (a) thinking carefully; (b) showing respect; (c) waiting for a turn. **Q8.** *Excuse me, Ms Lee. Could you please open the door for me?* (Names may vary.) **Q9–Q12.** Answers will vary. See the worked solutions for model answers.

Worked solutions

Q1. The chairperson runs the meeting, so (b). The speaker shares ideas, so (c). The timekeeper watches the clock, so (d). The audience listens and waits, so (a).

Q2. (a) *Welcome to our meeting* opens the meeting, so it is the welcome. (b) *Today we will talk about...* names what the meeting is about. (c) *Our next speaker is...* hands a turn to a speaker. (d) *Thank you, Priya* thanks a speaker. (e) *The meeting is now closed* ends it.

Q3. The affirmative team agrees with the statement, and the negative team disagrees with it. Speaker 1 opens each team's case, and Speaker 3 answers the other team and wraps up the case.

Q4. One set of answers: (a) Welcome, everyone, to our meeting about *the school fete*. (b) Our first speaker is *Alex*. Please begin. (c) Thank you, *Alex*. Now our next speaker is *Sam*. (d) The meeting is now *closed*. Thank you for *listening*.

Q5. B is a quick, casual ask between mates: the most informal. C adds *please* and a full question: in the middle. A adds a title (*Mr Roberts*), a soft opener (*Excuse me*) and a very polite question form: the most formal.

Q6. Dad at home suits ask 2 — relaxed and short, with *please*. The teacher in class suits ask 3 — a full question with *Excuse me* and *please*. The principal at assembly suits ask 1 — the most formal ask, with a title and *May I*. The pattern: the more formal the person and the place, the more formal the words.

Q7. (a) The room is quiet because people are working out what to ask: thinking carefully. (b) The children stay quiet while their grandmother speaks: the quiet shows respect. (c) Mia is quiet until the chairperson gives her a turn: waiting for a turn.

Q8. The first words are a shout and an order — they suit a mate in the yard, not the principal at the school door. Change the shout to a soft opener, drop *you!*, add *please*, and turn the order into a question: *Excuse me, Ms Lee. Could you please open the door for me?*

Q9. Model answer: *Good morning, everyone. Welcome to our class meeting. Today we will talk about the statement: Our class should have a reading buddy time each week. Our first speaker is Mia. Please begin, Mia.* The first two sentences welcome the group, the third names the topic, and the last two hand the first turn to a speaker — all chairperson jobs.

Q10. Model answer (affirmative): *Good morning, chairperson, teachers and students. We are the affirmative team, and we believe students should help plan one school excursion each year. First, students know what kinds of places the class would love to visit, so their ideas would make excursions more fun. Second, planning is a skill, and helping to plan teaches students to organise time and money. For these reasons, we support the statement.* The greeting names the room, the second sentence states the side, *First* and *Second* signpost the reasons, and the last sentence says the team's side again.

Q11. Model answer: (a) *Hey Mia, could you grab that book for me? Thanks!* (b) *Excuse me. Could I please borrow this book for lunch?* Two differences: the friend version opens with *Hey* and drops *please*, because close friends can use relaxed words; the librarian version uses *Excuse me*, *Could I* and *please*, because the librarian is an adult the student does not know well and the asking needs more polite forms.

Q12. Model answer: Thinking pause — *I paused because I was working out whether I could help for the whole hour. Then I said: Yes, I can help from two o'clock.* Polite not-able pause — *I paused because I already knew I had band practice, and a small pause is a gentle way to show the answer will be no. Then I said: I'm sorry, I can't this time, but I can help next week.*

Beyond bare assertions: accounting for differing opinions and sources

Curriculum focus — Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 5 · Language strand · sub-strand *Language for interacting with others* · Section 1B · Owns content description VC2E5LA02 · Draws on elaboration VC2E5LA02.E01.

Content description VC2E5LA02 (verbatim): understand how to move beyond making bare assertions by taking account of differing ideas or opinions and authoritative sources.

Elaboration VC2E5LA02.E01 (verbatim): recognising that a bare assertion (for example, ‘It’s the best film this year.’) often needs to be tempered by using the ‘impersonal it’ to distance oneself (for example, ‘It could be said that it is the best film this year.’); recruiting anonymous support (for example, ‘It is generally agreed that it is the best film this year.’); indicating a general source of the opinion (for example, ‘Most critics agree that it is the best film this year.’); specifying the source of the opinion (for example, ‘Reviewers for The Reel Film stated that it is the best film this year.’) and reflecting on the effect of these different choices.

Where you are. Last year you learned about the language of opinion, fact and feeling, and how to quote what someone said. This section builds on both. You will learn how to back up what you say — by naming where an idea comes from, and by handling different opinions with care. Writing a whole persuasive text is work for Section 5D; here we focus on the wording of claims.

1. What is a bare assertion?

A **claim** is something you say is so. ‘The canteen pies are delicious’ is a claim.

A **bare assertion** is a claim with nothing behind it — no reason, no proof, no hint of who thinks so. It is just the words, out in the open. (The word *bare* here means ‘nothing extra on it’, like a bare branch with no leaves.)

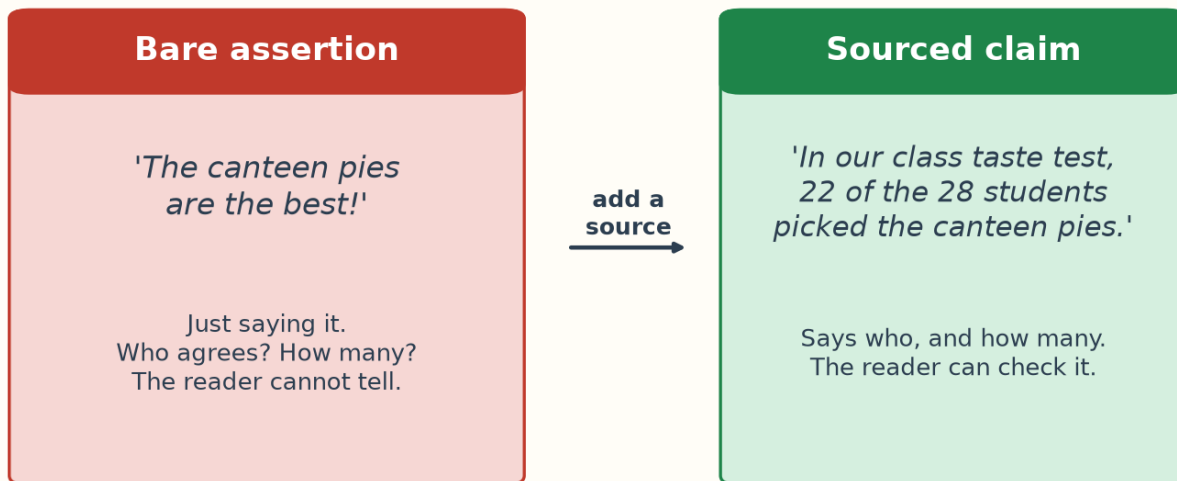
‘It’s the best film this year.’

That sentence is a bare assertion. The speaker feels strongly — but the reader learns nothing about where the idea came from. One person said it. Was it just them? Did anyone agree? Did an expert say it? The sentence does not say.

Bare assertions are weakest when they are about **opinions**. An opinion tells how someone thinks or feels about something. You cannot test an opinion the way you can test a fact. The fact ‘the film is 95 minutes long’ can be checked with a clock. The opinion ‘the film is the best this year’ cannot — because different people can honestly hold different opinions about the same film. That is not a problem to fix. It is just how opinions work.

So when you make a claim that is really an opinion, saying it loudly does not make it more true. What helps is showing the reader *who is behind it*.

The same claim — with and without a source



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 1B · Beyond bare assertions

Two speech bubbles side by side; the left one holds a bare assertion with no backing, and the right one holds the same claim with a source named

Key words so far

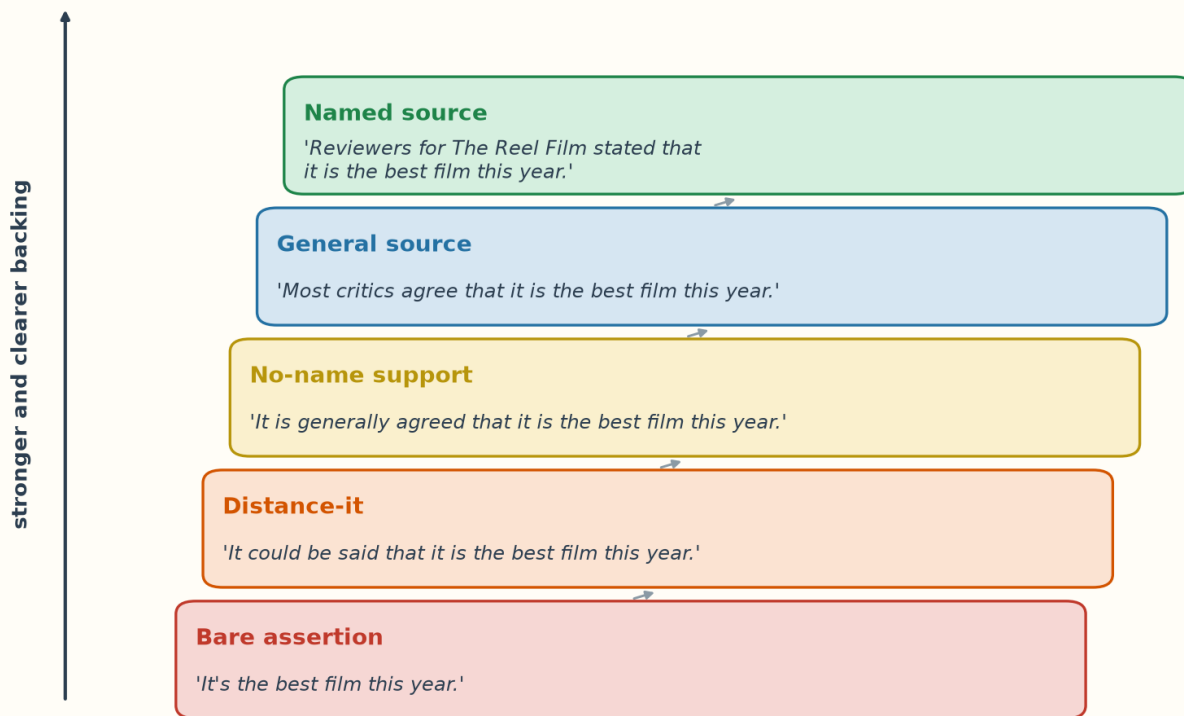
- **claim** — something you say is so.
- **bare assertion** — a claim with no reason, no proof and no source behind it.
- **opinion** — what someone thinks or feels; people can honestly disagree.
- **source** — where an idea comes from: a person, a survey, a review, a book.

2. Four moves that put backing behind a claim

To **temper** a claim means to soften it a little so it does not say more than you can back up. Think of tempering like turning down the volume on a speaker: the song is still there, but it is no longer shouting.

There are four common moves. Each one brings someone — or something — in behind the claim.

The claim ladder: backing gets stronger as you climb



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 1B · Beyond bare assertions

A ladder with five steps, climbing from a bare assertion at the bottom to a named source at the top, with one example sentence on each step

Move 1 — The distance-it: 'It could be said that ...'

This move starts the sentence with the word *it* instead of *I*. The speaker steps back from the claim. Writing teachers call this the **impersonal it** — *impersonal* means 'not attached to any person'.

'It could be said that it is the best film this year.'

What it does: it makes the claim sound softer and more careful. But notice what is missing — nobody is named. The reader still does not know who said it. That makes this the gentlest temper of the four.

Move 2 — Support without a name: 'It is well known that ...'

This move says that many people agree — but it does not say who those people are. The support is **anonymous**, which means no one is named.

The curriculum's own example of this move is 'It is generally agreed that it is the best film this year.' Other shapes of the same move are 'It is well known that ...' and 'Many people agree that ...'.

What it does: it makes the claim feel bigger, as if a crowd is behind it. But the reader still cannot check. Which people? How many? The move sounds strong, yet it gives the reader nothing to hold. Use it with care.

Move 3 — A kind of person: 'Most critics agree that ...'

This move names the *kind* of people behind the claim, without naming one person.

'Most critics agree that it is the best film this year.'

What it does: now the reader knows who to picture — critics, whose job is to watch and judge films. The backing is stronger and clearer than Moves 1 and 2. It is still a group, though, not a named voice.

Move 4 — Name who said it: 'Reviewers for *The Reel Film* stated that ...'

This move names the exact source.

‘Reviewers for The Reel Film stated that it is the best film this year.’

What it does: this is the strongest backing of the four. The reader knows exactly who said it and where to look. If a reader wants to check, they can find The Reel Film’s review and read it. A claim with a named source is the easiest kind to trust — and the hardest to fake.

The four moves that put backing behind a claim

Move	Starter	Who is behind the claim?	What it does
Bare assertion	—	No one — just the words	Nothing backs it. The reader has to take it or leave it.
Distance-it	<i>‘It could be said that ...’</i>	Nobody is named	Softens the claim and steps the speaker back.
No-name support	<i>‘It is well known that ...’</i>	A crowd — but no names	Feels big, but the reader cannot check who.
General source	<i>‘Most critics agree that ...’</i>	A kind of person (e.g. critics)	Stronger: the reader knows who to picture.
Named source	<i>‘Reviewers for The Reel Film stated that ...’</i>	The exact people or place	Strongest: the reader can look it up.

Row 1 is the starting point — the other four rows are the tempering moves.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 1B · Beyond bare assertions

A table of the four moves, showing each move’s sentence starter, who stands behind the claim, and what the move does

3. Choosing a move — and staying honest

Each move changes three things about your claim:

1. **How strong the backing is.** A named source (Move 4) backs a claim more than the distance-it (Move 1).
2. **How easy it is to check.** Can the reader find out who said it? Move 4 — yes. Moves 1 and 2 — no.
3. **How far the speaker stands back.** Move 1 hides the speaker almost out of sight. Move 4 puts the spotlight on the source instead.

Two habits keep these moves honest.

Habit 1: do not dress up a bare assertion. Writing ‘Everyone knows that homework is bad’ does not add backing. It is a bare assertion wearing a costume. If you have not checked, do not say ‘everyone’ or ‘well known’. Say what you really have: ‘I think ...’ or ‘In our class survey ...’.

Habit 2: owning your own view is a fine source. Sometimes the truest source is you. ‘I think it is the best film this year, because it made me laugh and it made me think’ is an honest claim. The reader knows exactly who is behind it — you. Use the four moves when you actually have a bigger source to name, not to make a small source sound big.

An **authoritative source** is a source worth listening to on the topic — someone who knows it well or whose job is to judge it. Reviewers who watch films all year are an authoritative source about films. Your class survey is an authoritative source about your class. Your cousin who has never seen the film is not.

The checklist card below is a quick way to test any claim before you say it or write it down. It is worth keeping in mind for the checkpoint at the end of this section.

Before you say it ... check your claim

- ☐ Have I said whose idea this is — mine, or someone else's?
- ☐ If I have a source, have I named it?
- ☐ Could a reader check my source?
- ☐ If people disagree, have I reported the other view with care?
- ☐ Am I only saying 'everyone' when I have really checked?

Four ticks and a source — your claim is ready to be heard.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 1B · Beyond bare assertions

A checklist card with five yes-or-no questions for checking a claim before saying it

4. What if people disagree?

The content description for this section says we take account of *differing ideas or opinions*. Differing opinions are two or more views that do not match. They are normal, and they are useful — they show the reader you have looked at more than one side.

Three rules for writing about a view you do not share:

1. **Say it in a fair way.** Give the other view the same care you would want for your own. If you would not like your view called 'silly', do not call anyone else's view silly.
2. **Use respectful wording.** 'Some students disagree. They think ...' keeps the talk friendly. The words you choose signal whether you are listening or just waiting to talk.
3. **Name the source if you can.** 'Some reviewers found the middle of the film slow' tells the reader who holds that view.

Useful sentence starters for differing views:

- 'Some people think ..., while others think ...'

- ‘Not everyone agrees. Leo’s view is that ...’
- ‘Others see it another way. They say ...’
- ‘I disagree with Mia here, because ...’

Differing views are normal — report them fairly

Mia

*'The book was better
than the film.'*

Leo

*'The film told the story
better than the book.'*

both views, one fair sentence

*'Some students think the book was better,
while others think the film told the story better.'*

1

Say both sides.

2

Use respectful words.

3

Name a source if you can.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 1B · Beyond bare assertions

Two students hold different views about a book and its film; below them, one fair sentence reports both views

5. Model texts

Model A — a review you could check

Below is a short review written for the school paper, *Film Notes Weekly*. It is new writing made up for this book, about a made-up film. Two sentences are highlighted: one uses a general source (Move 3), and one reports a differing view.

FILM NOTES WEEKLY

The school paper · Issue 12

Rocket the Kelpie: a tail with a lot of heart

By Ava Chen, young reviewer

Rocket the Kelpie tells the story of a farm dog who will not give up. When a storm washes out the bridge, Rocket leads the sheep home the long way. The film is slow to start, but it grows on you.

Most critics agree that animal films often end in tears, but this one ends with a grin. The farm scenes glow with morning light, and the music hums along like a friend.

Some reviewers found the middle of the film slow. They may be right — yet the ending earns its happy bark. It is a film for dog lovers and for anyone who likes a brave heart.

a general source
(Move 3)

a differing view

Rating: 3½ out of 5 stars — a warm, brave story with a happy bark.

(This review was written for this book. The film, the paper and the reviewer are made up, so you can practise reading sources.)

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 1B · Beyond bare assertions

A made-up page of the school paper Film Notes Weekly, reviewing the film Rocket the Kelpie, with a general-source sentence and a differing-view sentence highlighted

Notice how the review never says ‘everyone’ or ‘the best ever’. It tells you who thought what. That is what makes it easy to trust.

Model B — a film club paragraph, move by move

Here is a paragraph a student wrote to argue for this week’s film club choice. Each coloured underline marks one of the moves from Section 2.

Model B — one paragraph, every move underlined

Does our class watch *Rocket the Kelpie* for film club? I think it is the best film this year, and here is why. It could be said that a good film needs a brave hero, and Rocket is the bravest dog on screen. It is well known that dogs on film can make you cry — but this story ends with a grin. Most critics agree that the farm scenes are beautiful. Reviewers for Film Notes Weekly stated that it is a film for the whole family. Some reviewers found the middle a little slow, but I did not. Bring your popcorn.

What the colours mean:

<u> </u>	'I think ...' — owning your own view	<u> </u>	'It could be said ...' — distance-it
<u> </u>	'It is well known ...' — no-name support	<u> </u>	'Most critics agree ...' — general source
<u> </u>	'Reviewers for ... stated' — named source	<u> </u>	'Some reviewers found ...' — differing view

Can you say why the writer saved the named source for the strongest claim?

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 1B · Beyond bare assertions

A student paragraph about film club with coloured underlines marking each move, and a legend showing what each colour means

Does our class watch *Rocket the Kelpie* for film club? I think it is the best film this year, and here is why. It could be said that a good film needs a brave hero, and Rocket is the bravest dog on screen. It is well known that dogs on film can make you cry — but this story ends with a grin. Most critics agree that the farm scenes are beautiful. Reviewers for Film Notes Weekly stated that it is a film for the whole family. Some reviewers found the middle a little slow, but I did not. Bring your popcorn.

Can you spot each move? The first claim is owned ('I think'). Then come the distance-it, the no-name support, the general source, the named source — and, at the end, a differing view reported with care.

Practice questions

With support

Q1. Label each sentence **bare assertion**, **distance-it**, **no-name support**, **general source** or **named source**.

- (a) 'It could be said that Friday is the best day of the week.'
- (b) 'The library is the best room in the school.'
- (c) 'Most teachers agree that reading every day helps you write.'
- (d) 'The judges of the art show stated that Mia's painting was the pick of the show.'
- (e) 'It is well known that recess goes too fast.'

Q2. Take the bare assertion ‘The new library books are great.’ Write it four times, once for each move, using these starters:

- ‘It could be said that ...’
- ‘It is well known that ...’
- ‘Most students agree that ...’
- ‘The librarians stated that ...’

Q3. Draw lines to match each move to what it does. Use the cards in the figure below.

Match each move to what it does — draw a line

Distance-it	Says exactly who said it, so a reader can check.
No-name support	Softens the claim and steps the speaker back.
General source	Names a kind of person, like critics, but not one voice.
Named source	Says many people agree, but does not say who.

Tip: read the effect card first, then ask 'which move does this?'

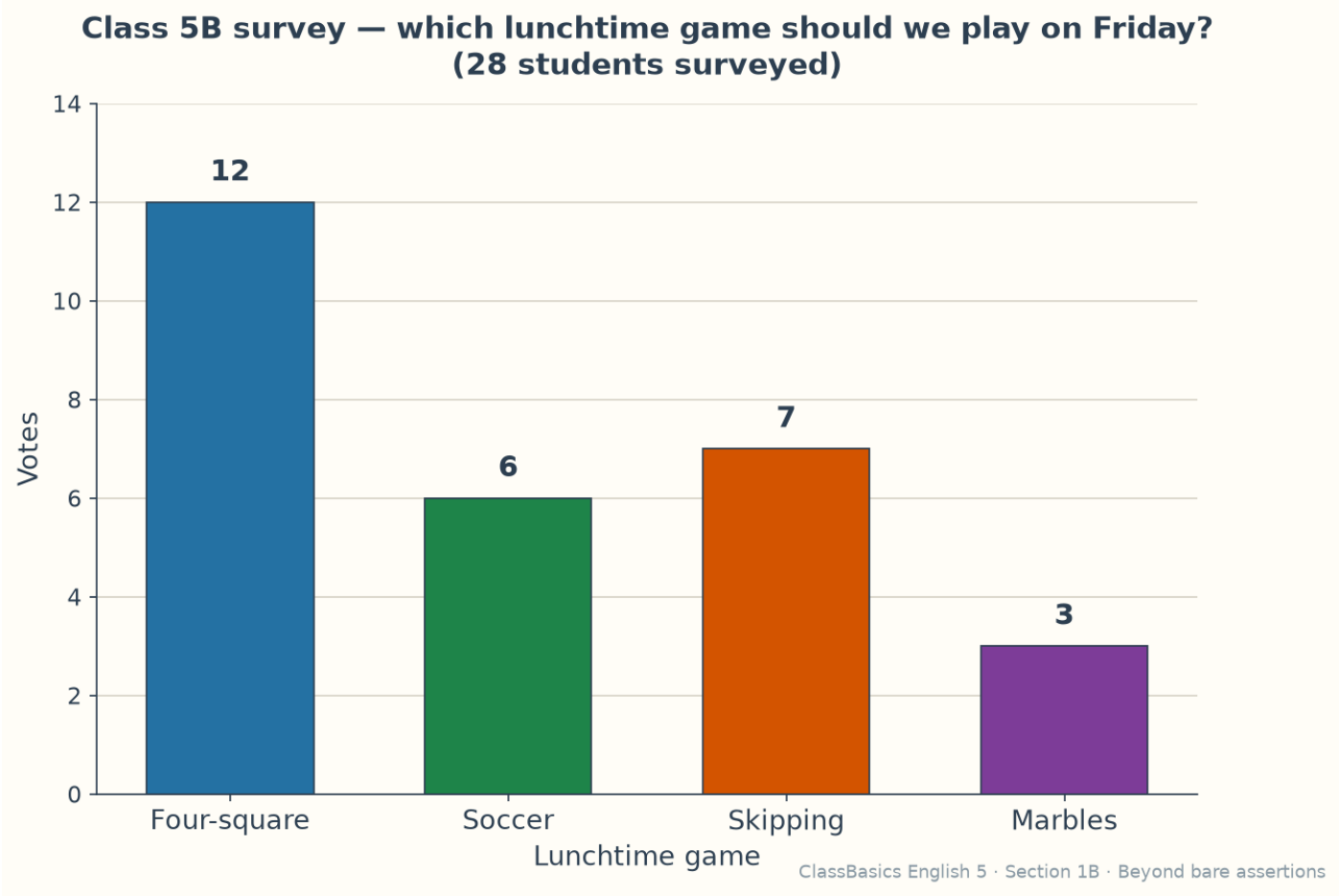
ClassBasics English 5 · Section 1B · Beyond bare assertions

Four move cards in one column and four effect cards in another column, in mixed order, ready to be matched

Q4. Look at the review in Model A (the Film Notes Weekly figure). Find the highlighted sentences. In each one, what are the claim, and who is behind it? Copy and complete the table.

Sentence	The claim	Who is behind it
Highlight 1		
Highlight 2		

Q5. Class 5B ran a survey to choose a lunchtime game. The chart shows their votes.



A bar chart of votes from a class survey asking which lunchtime game the class should play on Friday

- (a) Write one claim that uses the survey as its source. Start with: ‘In a class survey of 28 students, ...’
- (b) Sixteen of the 28 students voted for a game other than four-square. Write one sentence that reports this differing view with care, starting with: ‘Not everyone agreed, though. ...’

On your own

Q6. This note was pinned to the class wall. Every sentence is a bare assertion.

‘The school fete was the best day ever. Everyone loved the cake stall. The face painting was boring.’

Rewrite the note so that every claim has backing. Use at least two different moves from Section 2, and own at least one view yourself (‘I think ...’). If someone enjoyed the face painting, you may report that view too.

Q7. Mia thinks the class pet should be a fish: quiet, cheap, easy to care for. Leo thinks it should be a rabbit: soft, friendly, fun to hold. Write three sentences:

- one reporting Mia’s view, with her reason;
- one reporting Leo’s view in a fair way, with his reason;
- one giving your own view, with your reason.

Q8. You want to ask the principal for more library books. You could say:

- ‘Some people think our library needs more books.’
- ‘In the Year 5 survey, 26 of the 30 students said they read every week. Our class thinks the library needs more books.’

Which backing would you bring? Write two sentences: one naming the source you would use, and one explaining why that source is stronger.

Checkpoint 1B

Scenario. Your class is choosing a film for the end-of-term party. Your friend says: ‘*Shark Soup 3* is the best film ever. We have to watch it.’

Task. Write (or say, in a class discussion) a short reply — two or three sentences — that extends the talk beyond your friend’s bare assertion. Your reply must take account of a differing opinion, and bring in at least one source (a survey, a review, a named person, or your own clearly owned view). Then add one sentence naming the move or moves you used, and why you picked them.

Scored against the achievement standard. The Level 5 Speaking and Listening standard says students select language for social purposes and extend discussion beyond bare assertions.

What to look for	Yes, at standard	Not yet
The reply moves beyond the bare assertion — it does not just repeat or shout down the claim.		
A differing opinion is taken into account, and reported with respectful wording.		
At least one source is named or clearly owned (survey, review, named person, or ‘I think ... because ...’).		
The student can name the move used (distance-it, no-name support, general source, named source, or owned view) and say why it fits.		

Sample answers

Q1. (a) distance-it; (b) bare assertion; (c) general source; (d) named source; (e) no-name support.

Q2. Sample answers: ‘It could be said that the new library books are great.’ / ‘It is well known that the new library books are great.’ / ‘Most students agree that the new library books are great.’ / ‘The librarians stated that the new library books are great.’

Q3. Distance-it → ‘Softens the claim and steps the speaker back from it.’ No-name support → ‘Says many people agree, but does not say who.’ General source → ‘Names a kind of person, like critics or teachers, but not one voice.’ Named source → ‘Says exactly who said it, so a reader can check.’

Q4. Highlight 1 — the claim: animal movies often end in tears, but this one ends with a grin; who is behind it: most critics (a general source). Highlight 2 — the claim: the middle of the movie is slow; who is behind it: some reviewers (a general source, reporting a differing view).

Q5. (a) Sample: ‘In a class survey of 28 students, four-square won the most votes, with 12 of the 28.’ (b) Sample: ‘Not everyone agreed, though. Sixteen of the 28 students voted for soccer, skipping or marbles instead.’

Q6. Sample rewrite: ‘I think the school fete was the best day of the year, because the whole class was there and smiling. Most students agree that the cake stall was the top spot — it sold out by lunchtime! Reviewers for the school paper stated that the cakes were the best they had tasted. Some people found the face painting slow, but others loved it, and the queue never stopped.’ Moves used: owned view, general source, named source, differing view reported with care.

Q7. Sample: ‘Mia thinks the class pet should be a fish, because it is quiet and easy to care for. Leo sees it another way: he thinks a rabbit is the right pick, because it is soft and friendly to hold. I agree with Mia, because our classroom is small, and a fish tank fits on the shelf.’

Q8. Sample: 'I would bring the survey, and say: "In the Year 5 survey, 26 of the 30 students said they read every week, so our class thinks the library needs more books." The survey is stronger, because it names a real source the principal can check — not just "some people".'

Checkpoint 1B. Sample reply: 'I can see why you like *Shark Soup 3*, but not everyone agrees. In our class survey, 14 of the 28 students picked *Rocket the Kelpie* as their top film, so maybe we should vote on the two. I think *Rocket the Kelpie* is the right pick, because most critics agree it is a film the whole class can enjoy.' Moves used: differing view reported with care, survey as source, owned view, general source.

How text types are organised: stages, phases and purposes

Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · English · Level 5 · Strand: Language · Sub-strand: Text structure and organisation · Content code: **VC2E5LA03** · Modes: Reading and Viewing, Writing

Content description (quoted exactly): “Describe how different types of texts use language features and are typically organised into characteristic stages and phases, depending on purposes.”

Coverage linkage (for MCQ and audit joining, not a teaching order): VC2E5LA03.E01, VC2E5LA03.E02, VC2E5LA03.E03.

Last year you learned two big ideas. Every text has a job — its **purpose** — and every text is built in **stages** that fit that job. This year you look inside the stages. You will meet the **phase**, the smaller job a stage does. You will meet new text types — the **discussion**, the **review**, and two new kinds of recount — and you will see how a **paragraph** changes its job from one text type to the next. The big idea stays the same: the job shapes the build.

Words to know first

These words do the heavy work in this section. Each one is defined here, and this is the meaning it has all the way through this book. Other books may use some of these words in different ways.

Word	What it means here
text type	a family of texts that do the same job and are built in the same shape
purpose	the job a text is doing
stage	one of the big parts of a text, coming in the order you can expect
phase	a smaller job inside a stage — the little parts that make up a stage
paragraph	a group of sentences kept together, doing one job in a text
historical recount	a retelling of events from a time long ago
procedural recount	a retelling of the steps someone did to make or do something
causal explanation	a text that tells why something happens, by linking causes to effects
discussion	a text that shows both sides of an issue, fair to each, then wraps up
review	a text that tells about a book, film or game and judges it, to help the reader choose
verse	a group of lines in a poem, like a paragraph in a story

Why a meanings box? This learning area uses words like *stage*, *phase*, *discussion* and *review* but does not give exact meanings for them. So this book gives them the meanings in the table above, and every task in this section can be answered using those meanings alone.

Learn

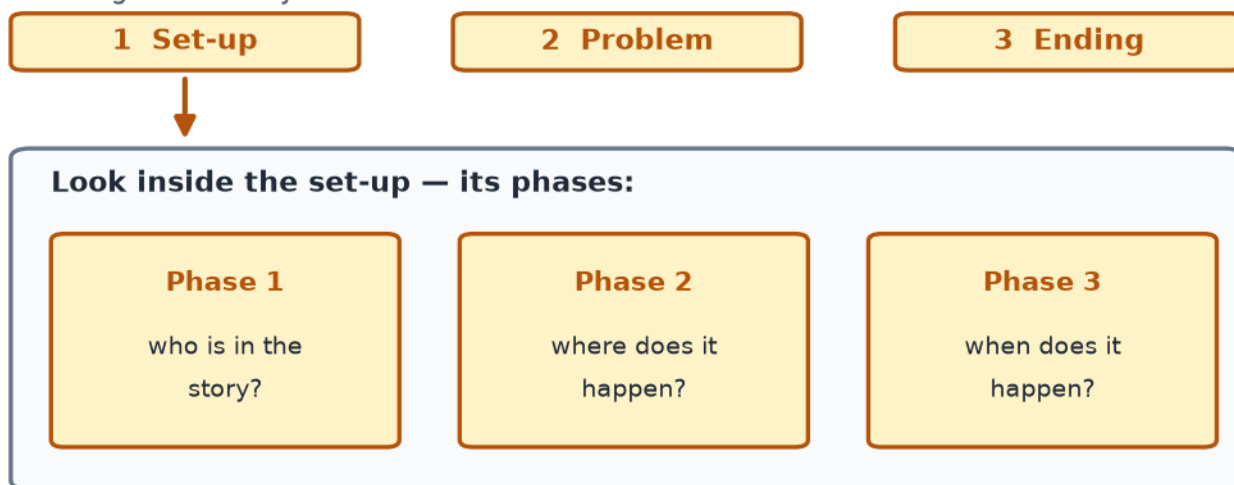
1. Stages have phases — this year’s big idea

Last year you met **stages**: the big parts of a text, coming in the order you can expect. A story’s stages are its set-up, its problem and its ending.

New this year is the smaller size: the **phase**. A stage is built from phases — the smaller jobs it does. Think of the set-up of a story. Its phases answer three little questions: who is in the story? where does it happen? when does it happen?

Stages and phases — two sizes of parts

The stages of a story:



Stages are the big parts of a text. Phases are the smaller jobs inside each stage.

Three story stages as blocks — set-up, problem, ending. An arrow opens the set-up to show its three phases: who is in the story, where it happens, when it happens.

Figure 1 — stages, and the phases inside one stage.

Phases help both sides of the page:

- **The reader** can check: did I find the who, the where and the when?
- **The writer** can check: did I put them all in?

When you know the phases of a stage, nothing important gets left out.

2. The text type family grows

Here is your map for the year. You know most of this family already — narrative, report, explanation, argument, recount, poems. New this year are the **discussion**, the **review**, and two kinds of recount. For each type, the map gives its job and its usual stages.

The text type family in Year 5



Some of these you know from last year. New this year: discussion, review, historical recount, procedural recount — and phases inside every stage.

A map of the Year 5 text type family, grouped by job: to entertain (narrative, poems), to inform (information report, procedure, causal explanation), to retell what happened (historical recount, procedural recount), to win over, talk through or judge (argument, discussion, review). Each type lists its usual stages.

Figure 2 — the text type family in Year 5.

Read the map once now, and come back to it often. The rest of this section looks at the new shapes on the map, one by one.

3. Discussion — both sides, fair to each

An **argument** picks one side and tries to win you over. A **discussion** is different: it shows both sides of an issue, fair to each, then wraps up. Its job is to help the reader see the whole issue, not to win.

Its stages:

1. **State the issue** — the question both sides are talking about.
2. **One side** — the reasons some people say yes. (*Phases: a first reason, then a second reason.*)
3. **The other side** — the reasons some people say no. (*Phases: a first reason, then a second reason.*)
4. **Wrap-up** — sum up, fair to both sides. A discussion does not need a winner.

Discussion — job: to show both sides of an issue



An argument picks one side and tries to win you over. A discussion shows both sides, fair to each, then wraps up.

A stage map for discussions: state the issue; one side, with the phases first reason and second reason; the other side, with the same phases; wrap-up.

Figure 3 — the stages of a discussion.

Language features: side words that show who is speaking (*some, others, but*), and fair wrap-up words (*both sides, fair points*).

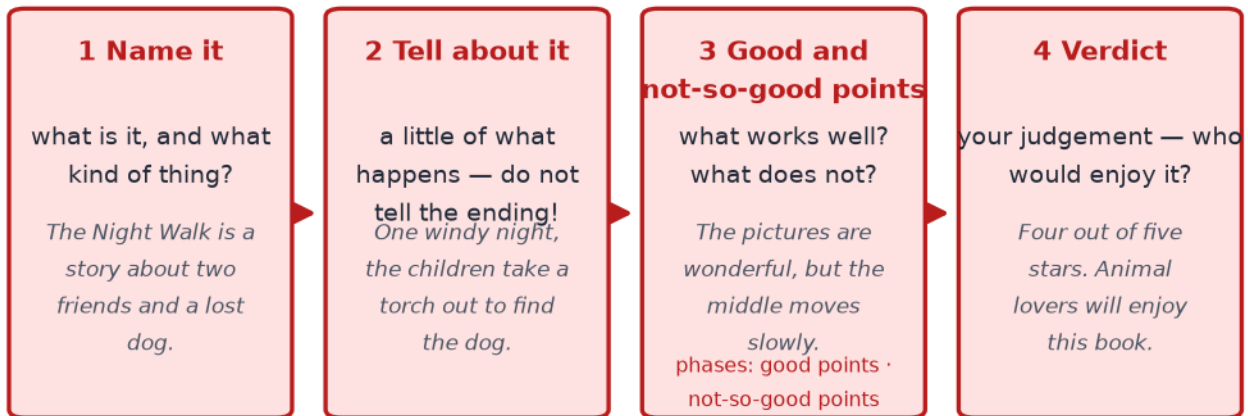
4. Review — help the reader choose

A **review** tells the reader about a book, a film or a game, and judges it. Its job is to help the reader choose: should I read it, watch it, play it?

Its stages:

1. **Name it** — what is it, and what kind of thing is it?
2. **Tell about it** — a little of what happens. Do not tell the ending!
3. **Good and not-so-good points** — what works well, and what does not? (*Phases: the good points, then the not-so-good points.*)
4. **Verdict** — your judgement: stars, and who would enjoy it.

Review — job: to help the reader choose



A review helps the reader choose. Be fair — say the good and the not-so-good.

A stage map for reviews: name it; tell about it; good and not-so-good points, with the phases good points and not-so-good points; verdict.

Figure 4 — the stages of a review.

Language features: judging words (*wonderful, slow*), star ratings (*four out of five*), and words that talk to the reader (*you will love this book*). A fair review always gives the not-so-good points too.

5. Two new recounts: historical and procedural

Last year you met the factual recount — a retelling of something that really happened to you or your class, with a set-up, events in order and a closing. This year the family gains two more recounts:

- A **historical recount** retells a time long ago. It adds a stage at the end: **why it mattered** — why we still talk about it now.
- A **procedural recount** retells the steps someone did to make or do something: the **goal**, the **steps in order**, and the **result**.

Two new recounts



A procedure tells you how to do it. A procedural recount tells how someone did it.

Two cards side by side. Historical recount: job is to retell a time long ago, with the stages set-up, events in order, why it mattered. Procedural recount: job is to retell the steps someone did, with the stages goal, steps in order, result.

Figure 5 — historical recount and procedural recount.

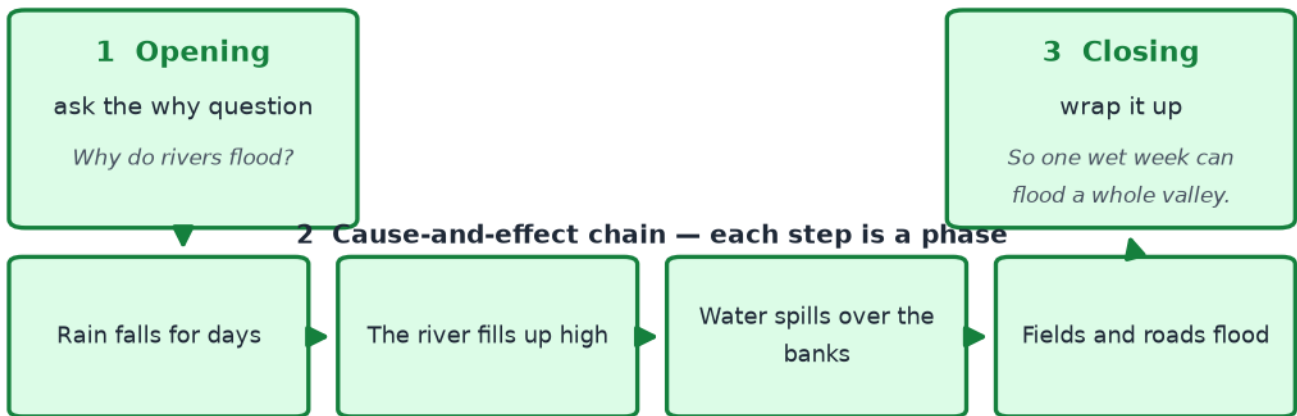
Do not mix up a **procedure** with a **procedural recount**. A procedure tells *you* how to do something, so you can do it (goal, what you need, steps). A procedural recount tells what *someone did*, in the past tense.

Language features: past tense (*ran, made*), and time words (*long ago, first, next, then*).

6. Causal explanation — the why chain

Last year you met the explanation — a text that tells how or why something happens. This year you go deeper into the *why*: the **causal explanation**. Its middle stage is a chain of causes and effects — *this happens, so that happens, so that happens next*. Each link in the chain is a phase.

Causal explanation — job: to tell why something happens



A cause makes something happen. An effect is what happens. Cause words: because, so, leads to.

A causal explanation map. The opening asks the why question: why do rivers flood? The middle is a cause-and-effect chain: rain falls for days, the river fills up high, water spills over the banks, fields and roads flood. The closing wraps it up.

Figure 6 — the cause-and-effect chain of a causal explanation.

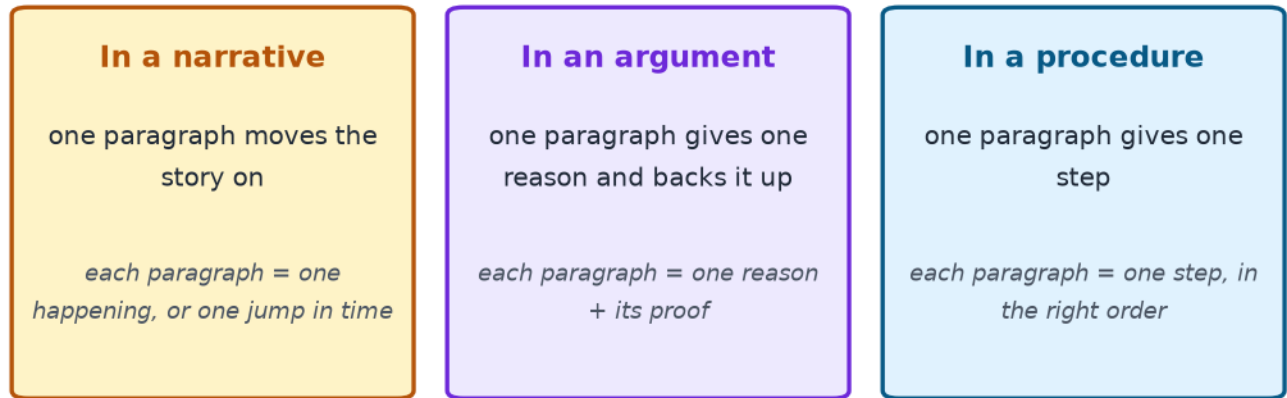
Language features: present tense (*falls, fills*), and cause words (*because, so, leads to*).

7. Paragraphs change jobs

A **paragraph** is always a group of sentences doing one job. But the job changes with the text type — the same shape does different work:

- In a **narrative**, one paragraph moves the story on — one happening, or one jump in time.
- In an **argument**, one paragraph gives one reason and backs it up with proof.
- In a **procedure**, one paragraph gives one step, in the right order.

Paragraphs change jobs in different text types



A paragraph is always a group of sentences doing one job — but the job changes with the text type. In a report, each paragraph tells about one side of the topic.

Three cards showing the job of a paragraph: in a narrative, one paragraph moves the story on; in an argument, one paragraph gives one reason and backs it up; in a procedure, one paragraph gives one step.

Figure 7 — the job of a paragraph in three text types.

In a **report**, each paragraph tells about one side of the topic. In a **discussion**, each side gets its own paragraph.

Why? Because paragraphs show the reader the shape of the text. When each reason in an argument gets its own paragraph, that reason stands out. When each step in a procedure gets its own paragraph, the order is easy to follow. So when you plan a text, ask: *what job should each paragraph do here?*

8. Types of poems

Last year you met the jobs poems do — tell stories, describe, share thoughts and feelings. This year you meet the shapes poems come in:

- A **verse poem** is built in **verses**, with **rhyme** (words that end with the same sound) and **rhythm** (the beat you hear when a poem is read aloud).
- A **free verse poem** has no rhyme rules. It leans on word pictures and rhythm instead.
- A **shape poem** is drawn to look like its topic — the lines make a shape on the page.

Types of poems



You met poems that tell stories, describe and share feelings — now you know their shapes too.

Three cards for types of poems: verse poem, built in verses with rhyme and rhythm; free verse poem, with no rhyme rules; shape poem, with the lines drawn to look like the poem's topic.

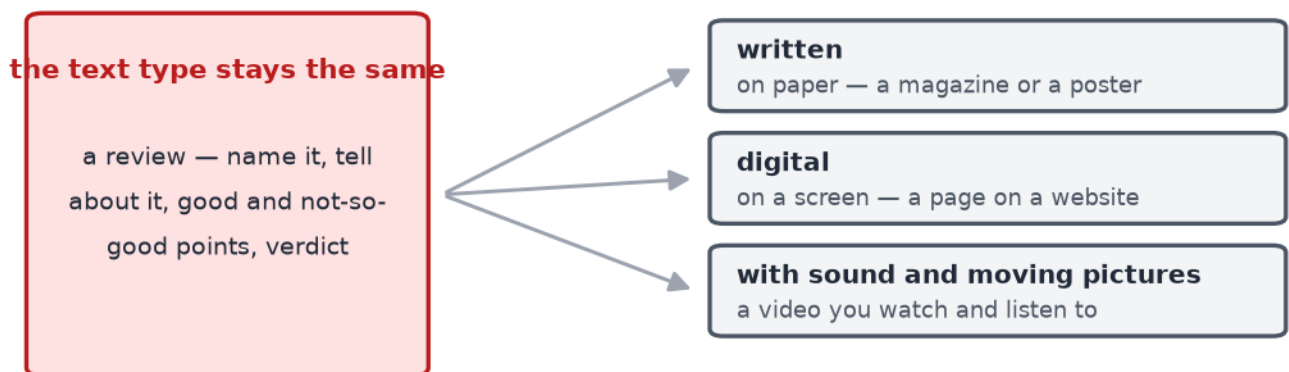
Figure 8 — three types of poems.

A poem's shape follows its job, just like every other text type.

9. The same text type, in many forms

Last year you learned that **form** (what a text looks like on the outside) is not the same as stages. This year you meet the forms texts come in: written on paper, digital on a screen, or built with sound and moving pictures.

One text type, many forms



The form can change. The job and the stages stay the same — a video review uses the same stages as one on paper.

One text type on the left — a review. Arrows point to three forms: written on paper, digital on a screen, and with sound and moving pictures. The stages stay the same in every form.

Figure 9 — one text type, in three forms.

The form can change; the job and the stages stay the same. A review on a website page uses the same stages as a review in a magazine. A video review — spoken, with sound and moving pictures — still names the thing, tells about it, gives the good and not-so-good points, and ends with a verdict.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — finding the stages and phases in a discussion

Read this short discussion, written just for this book.

Longer Lunch?

Should our school have a longer lunch break? People in our school think different things.

Some students would love a longer lunch. There would be time to eat slowly, finish a game, or read in the library. Teachers would get a longer rest too, and come back to class fresh.

But others think lunch should stay as it is. A longer lunch means a longer day, and students who ride the bus would get home later. By the end of a longer day, some students would feel tired.

Both sides have fair points. Before we choose, we should talk about one big question: can the school day start earlier?

Now watch how a reader sorts it out, step by step.

Step	What the reader does	In this text
1	Find the text's job.	It shows both sides of an issue, fair to each → it is a discussion .
2	Find stage 1: state the issue .	“Should our school have a longer lunch break?” — the question both sides talk about.
3	Find stage 2: one side , and its phases.	Phase 1: time to eat slowly, finish a game, read. Phase 2: a longer rest for teachers.
4	Find stage 3: the other side , and its phases.	Phase 1: a longer day, home later on the bus. Phase 2: tired by the end of the day.
5	Find stage 4: wrap-up .	“Both sides have fair points” — a fair sum-up, with a question to talk about.
6	Name the language features.	Side words: <i>some</i> , <i>others</i> , <i>but</i> . Fair words: <i>both sides</i> , <i>fair points</i> .

Worked example 1 — Longer Lunch?, a discussion, with its stages labelled

Longer Lunch?

Should our school have a longer lunch break? People in our school think different things.

Some students would love a longer lunch. There would be time to eat slowly, finish a game, or read in the library. Teachers would get a longer rest too, and come back to class fresh.

But others think lunch should stay as it is. A longer lunch means a longer day, and students who ride the bus would get home later. By the end of a longer day, some students would feel tired.

Both sides have fair points. Before we choose, we should talk about one big question: can the school day start earlier?

State the issue

One side

The other side

Wrap-up

Language features found:

side words: some, others, but

fair words: both sides, fair points

present tense: think, means

The model discussion Longer Lunch? with its four stages labelled along the side and its language features listed underneath.

Figure 10 — the discussion, with its stages labelled.

Worked example 2 — finding the stages and phases in a review

Read this short review, written just for this book.

The Night Walk

The Night Walk is a story about two friends, Zac and Lily. One windy night, they take a torch out to find a lost dog.

The story starts when the children hear a small sound by the gate. They follow the sound with their torch, into the dark. Will they find the dog in time? I will not tell you how the story ends!

The best part of this book is its pictures. The dark street and the yellow torch light look wonderful. The only not-so-good part: the middle moves slowly.

My verdict: four out of five stars. If you like animals and night adventures, you will love this book.

The reader's steps:

Step	What the reader does	In this review
1	Find the text's job.	It tells about a book and judges it, to help the reader choose → it is a review .
2	Find stage 1: name it .	"A story about two friends ... a lost dog" — what it is, and what kind of thing.
3	Find stage 2: tell about it .	A sound by the gate, a torch, the

Step	What the reader does	In this review
4	Find stage 3: good and not-so-good points , and its phases.	dark — and no ending given away. Phase 1 (good): the pictures look wonderful. Phase 2 (not-so-good): the middle moves slowly.
5	Find stage 4: verdict .	Four out of five stars, and who would enjoy it: lovers of animals and night adventures.
6	Name the language features.	Judging words: <i>wonderful, best</i> . Stars: <i>four out of five</i> . Talks to the reader: <i>you will love this book</i> .

Worked example 2 — The Night Walk, a review, with its stages labelled

The Night Walk

The Night Walk is a story about two friends, Zac and Lily. One windy night, they take a torch out to find a lost dog.

The story starts when the children hear a small sound by the gate. They follow the sound with their torch, into the dark. Will they find the dog in time? I will not tell you how the story ends!

The best part of this book is its pictures. The dark street and the yellow torch light look wonderful. The only not-so-good part: the middle moves slowly.

My verdict: four out of five stars. If you like animals and night adventures, you will love this book.

Name it

Tell about it

Good and not-so-good points

Verdict

Language features found:

judging words: wonderful, best

stars: four out of five

talks to the reader: you will love this book

The model review *The Night Walk* with its four stages labelled along the side and its language features listed underneath.

Figure 11 — the review, with its stages labelled.

Worked example 3 — finding the stages in a procedural recount

Read this short procedural recount, written just for this book.

We Planted Flowers by the School Gate

On Friday, our class set out to plant flowers by the school gate. This is what we did.

First, we made five holes in the soil. Next, we put one small plant into each hole. Then, we pressed the soil back with our hands and gave each plant a cup of water.

By Monday, two of the plants had new leaves. We will keep watering them all term.

The reader's steps:

Step	What the reader does	In this recount
1	Find the text's job.	It retells the steps someone did → a procedural recount . (Not a procedure — it tells what we did, in the past tense.)
2	Find stage 1: goal .	“Our class set out to plant flowers by the school gate.”
3	Find stage 2: steps in order , and its phases.	Phase 1: made five holes. Phase 2: put in the plants. Phase 3: pressed the soil and watered. Time words: <i>first, next, then</i> .
4	Find stage 3: result .	New leaves by Monday — and a plan to keep watering.
5	Name the language features.	Past tense: <i>planted, made, put</i> . Time words: <i>first, next, then</i> .

Worked example 3 — We Planted Flowers, a procedural recount, with its stages labelled

We Planted Flowers by the School Gate

On Friday, our class set out to plant flowers by the school gate. This is what we did.

First, we made five holes in the soil. Next, we put one small plant into each hole. Then, we pressed the soil back with our hands and gave each plant a cup of water.

By Monday, two of the plants had new leaves. We will keep watering them all term.

Goal

Steps in order

Result

Language features found:

past tense: planted, made, put

time words: first, next, then

we-words: we made, we put

The model procedural recount *We Planted Flowers by the School Gate* with its three stages labelled along the side and its language features listed underneath.

Figure 12 — the procedural recount, with its stages labelled.

Practice tasks

With help

Q1. Match the job to the text type. Draw a line from each job to the text type that does it.

Job	Text type
Shows both sides of an issue, fair to each	causal explanation
Helps the reader choose a book, film or game	discussion
Retells a time long ago	procedure
Retells the steps someone did	historical recount
Tells why something happens, linking causes to effects	review
Tells the steps so you can do it yourself	procedural recount

Q2. Here is the set-up of a story. Its three phases are hidden inside it. Write down the words that answer each phase.

On Tuesday after school, Tom and his grandma sat in the garden.

Phase	The words
who is in the story?	
where does it happen?	
when does it happen?	

Q3. Here is a short discussion. The four parts are marked **a**, **b**, **c** and **d**. Write the matching stage name next to each letter. Choose from: *one side* · *state the issue* · *the other side* · *wrap-up*.

- a** — Our class is talking about getting a class pet. Not everyone feels the same way.
- b** — Some students would love a class pet. Looking after it would teach us to be careful and kind.
- c** — But others worry about a class pet. It needs care in the holidays, and some students are scared of animals.
- d** — Both sides have good points. We will vote after we hear everyone.

Then circle the two words in **b** and **c** that show which side is talking.

Q4. The stages of this review are all mixed up. Number them 1–4 in the right order.

- () You hop your frog from leaf to leaf, and try to win.
- () My verdict: three stars. If you like funny games, you will like Frog Hop.
- () Frog Hop is a game for two to four players.
- () The best part is the funny frog cards. The not-so-good part: two players must wait a long time.

Q5. Three short texts below. One is a historical recount, one is a procedural recount, and one is a procedure. Name each one, and give one clue.

Text A — In 1901, the first trains ran between our two towns. People lined the road to watch them go by. The trains changed how people travelled from then on.

Text B — We wanted to make a bird house. First we cut four pieces of wood. Next we nailed them together. Last, we hung it in the big tree.

Text C — To make a bird house, you will need wood, nails and string. First, cut four pieces of wood. Next, nail them together. Last, hang your bird house in a tree.

Q6. The cause-and-effect chain of a causal explanation is mixed up. Number the links 1–4.

- () The river fills up high.
- () Fields and roads flood.
- () Rain falls for days.
- () Water spills over the banks.

Then choose the cause word you could put between link 3 and link 4: *because* · *but* · *so*.

Q7. Three paragraphs from three different text types. For each one, name the text type and the job the paragraph is doing.

P1 — First, warm up for five minutes. Next, stretch your legs and your back.

P2 — Second, walking to school means clean air near the gate. Not so many cars, and clean air for everyone.

P3 — That night, the wind began to push the old door. Jack watched it and did not say a word.

Q8. Your class wrote one review of the same book, in three forms. Fill in the table.

The review	Form
In the school magazine, on paper	
On a page of the school website, on a screen	
As a video, spoken with sound and moving pictures	

Choose the form for each: *digital* · *with sound and moving pictures* · *written*. Then answer: do the stages of the review change when the form changes? (yes / no)

On your own

Q9. Read this short discussion.

Homework — Yes or No?

Should kids have homework? Families think different things about it.

Some people say homework is a good thing. It helps kids practise what they learned, and it gets them ready for bigger school years.

But others say kids work hard all day. At home, they need time to play, to read for fun, and to help at home.

Both sides care about kids. The best answer may be a little of both: short homework that helps, and time to be a kid too.

- (a) What text type is this? What is its job?
- (b) Find its four stages. What does each stage do?
- (c) Name one language feature you can find, and give an example from the text.

Q10. Read this short review.

Robot Week

Robot Week is a short film about a girl named June. She builds a robot from old bike parts.

The robot goes with June to school, to the shop and to the park. Every day it learns one new thing. But on Friday, it learns something June did not plan. I will not say what!

The film is short, funny and warm. The not-so-good part: June's mum and dad are not in it much, and I wanted more of them.

My verdict: four stars. If you like robots and funny stories, Robot Week is for you.

- (a) Name the four stages of this review, with one example from the text for each.
- (b) The third stage has two phases. What are they, and what does this review say in each?
- (c) Who would enjoy Robot Week, according to the review?

Q11. Read this short text.

Trees for the Playground

I think our school should plant more trees around the playground.

First, trees give cool places to sit on hot days. Second, trees bring birds, and our playground would be full of them.

For these reasons, more trees would make our playground a better place.

- (a) How many paragraphs does it have? What job is each paragraph doing?
- (b) What text type is it? How do you know?
- (c) Now imagine a **procedure** about planting a tree. How would the job of each paragraph be different?

Q12. Read the two poems.

The Kite

The kite pulls hard against the string, It wants to fly, it wants to sing. I laugh and run, I hold the line, The kite and I are doing fine.

Rain

Rain writes on the window in long wet lines, then the sun dries them out.

- (a) Which poem is a verse poem with rhyme? Copy two pairs of rhyming words.
- (b) Which poem is free verse? How do you know?
- (c) If you redrew **Rain** as a shape poem, what shape would you draw it in? Why?

Your writing task

Your class magazine wants a short review of a book, film or game you know and enjoyed.

- 1. **Choose** a book, film or game you know well.
- 2. **Plan** using the review stage map: name it → tell about it (do not give away the ending!) → good and not-so-good points → verdict.
- 3. **Write** your review in 3–4 paragraphs (about 120–180 words). Write the stage name beside each paragraph.

Success checklist — can you tick every box?

- ☐ My opening names the thing and says what kind of thing it is.
- ☐ My tell-about-it paragraph does not give away the ending.
- ☐ My points paragraph has both phases: good points and not-so-good points.
- ☐ My verdict gives stars (or a judgement) and says who would enjoy it.

- ☐ Each of my paragraphs does one job.
- ☐ My writing is neat and easy to read.

Teacher marking guide (teacher-facing). Score the product against the Level 5 achievement standard.

Reading and Viewing: “They explain how different types of texts, both print and digital, are organised into characteristic stages for purpose.” Writing: “They use text structures, including paragraphs, to create prominence and build sequence and cohesion.” The stage-labelling and one-job-per-paragraph requirements trace to those two sentences. Credit a correct review shape (name it → tell about it → points with both phases → verdict) even where spelling is imperfect; this section’s assessed construct is staging, not spelling.

Answers

Q1. Shows both sides → discussion. Helps the reader choose → review. Retells a time long ago → historical recount. Retells the steps someone did → procedural recount. Tells why, linking causes to effects → causal explanation. Tells the steps so you can do it yourself → procedure.

Q2. who: Tom and his grandma. where: in the garden. when: on Tuesday after school.

Q3. a = state the issue. b = one side. c = the other side. d = wrap-up. Circle: *some* (b) and *others* (c) — or *but* at the start of c.

Q4. From the top: 2, 4, 1, 3. (Name it 1: “Frog Hop is a game ...”. Tell about it 2: “You hop your frog ...”. Points 3: “The best part ...”. Verdict 4: “My verdict ...”.)

Q5. A = historical recount — a time long ago (1901), and why it mattered (“changed how people travelled”). B = procedural recount — retells steps someone did, past tense (*cut, nailed, hung*). C = procedure — tells you how to do it yourself (*you will need*, command words *cut, nail, hang*).

Q6. 1 = Rain falls for days. 2 = The river fills up high. 3 = Water spills over the banks. 4 = Fields and roads flood. Cause word between 3 and 4: *so*.

Q7. P1 = procedure — the paragraph gives one step (in order, with time words). P2 = argument — the paragraph gives one reason (*second*) and backs it up. P3 = narrative — the paragraph moves the story on (one happening, at one time).

Q8. Magazine = written. Website page = digital. Video = with sound and moving pictures. Do the stages change? No — the same review stages in all three forms.

Example responses

These are model answers for the on-your-own tasks. Your own words are fine if your thinking is right.

Q9. (a) A **discussion**. Its job is to show both sides of an issue, fair to each, then wrap up. (b) State the issue: “Should kids have homework?” One side: homework helps kids practise and gets them ready. The other side: kids need time to play, read for fun and help at home. Wrap-up: both sides care about kids; a little of both. (c) Side words — *some people, but others*.

Q10. (a) Name it: “a short film about a girl named June”. Tell about it: the robot goes with June to school, to the shop and to the park, and learns one new thing each day — and the ending is not given away. Good and not-so-good points: funny and warm; mum and dad not in it much. Verdict: four stars, for lovers of robots and funny stories. (b) The good points (“short, funny and warm”) and the not-so-good points (“mum and dad are not in it much”). (c) Kids who like robots and funny stories.

Q11. (a) Three paragraphs. P1 says the opinion; P2 gives the reasons; P3 says the opinion again. (b) An **argument** — it says what the writer thinks (“I think ...”) and gives reasons to win the reader over. (c) In a procedure, each paragraph would give **one step** of planting (first dig the hole, next put in the tree, then water it) — not a reason.

Q12. (a) The Kite. string / sing, and line / fine. (b) Rain — no rhyming word pairs, but strong word pictures (“Rain writes on the window”) and a soft rhythm. (c) A drop of rain (or a cloud, or a window with rain on it) — because the poem is about rain, and a shape poem is drawn to look like its topic.

Teacher note (teacher-facing). Assumed coming in — not re-taught here: the three jobs (entertain, inform, win the reader over), the stage shapes of narrative, recount, information report, explanation and argument, and form-vs-stages (Level 4 VC2E4LA03); paragraphs as grouped sentences (Level 3 VC2E4LA04 lineage). Hands forward, not taught: Level 6 VC2E6LA03 (how organisation serves purpose) — Year 5 describes stages and phases; the purpose-serves argument waits for Level 6. This section is the Language-strand view of text organisation (stages, phases, paragraph function); 5B takes the Literacy view (features meeting purpose and audience) and is taught after this section. E01’s “written, digital and multimedia forms” is presented to students as *written on paper*, *digital on a screen* and *with sound and moving pictures* — ‘multimedia’ sits above the Yr5 word ceiling. ‘Procedural’ is subject terminology under the word-level policy’s exemption 2, defined at first use in the meanings table. Texts in this section are all original, written for this book; no published text is reproduced.

Sequencing and cohesion: what sentence and paragraph openings do

Curriculum focus — Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 5 · Language strand · sub-strand *Text structure and organisation* · Section 1D · Owns content description VC2E5LA04 · Draws on elaborations VC2E5LA04.E01, VC2E5LA04.E02, VC2E5LA04.E03.

Content description VC2E5LA04 (verbatim): understand how texts are sequenced and can be made cohesive by using the starting point of a sentence or paragraph to give prominence to the message and to guide the reader through the text.

Elaboration VC2E5LA04.E01 (verbatim): observing how writers use the beginning of a sentence to signal to the reader how the text is developing, for example ‘Snakes are reptiles. They have scales and no legs. Many snakes are poisonous. However, in Australia they are protected.’

Elaboration VC2E5LA04.E02 (verbatim): recognising that a sequence of clauses may use different tenses but remain connected through a topic, for example ‘Snakes were a problem in Australia. However, urban sprawl is ruining their habitats and they are now protected.’

Elaboration VC2E5LA04.E03 (verbatim): recognising that sentence openers signal what the sentence will be about, and the rest of the sentence typically elaborates on the sentence opener by providing new information.

Where you are. Last year you learned about connectives — joining words like *first*, *however* and *if* — and about how the tense of a verb puts an event in time. This section builds on both. You will look at the **starting point** of sentences and paragraphs: how it signals what is coming, how it hands the reader along from idea to idea, and how it puts the main message where the reader meets it first. The texts in this section are new writing, made up for this book.

Theory

Part 1 — Every sentence has a starting point

Take any sentence and look at its first word or words. That starting spot has a name:

opener — the first word or words of a sentence; the sentence’s starting point. You may also see the name *sentence opener*.

Read this sentence:

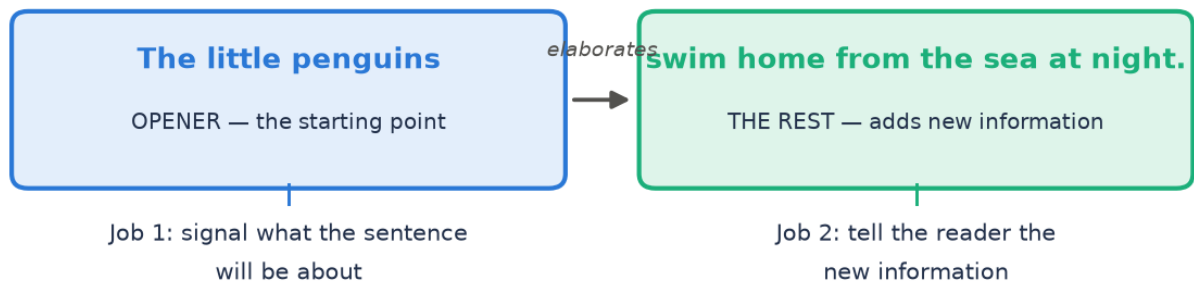
The little penguins swim home from the sea at night.

The opener is *The little penguins*. It does the first job of any opener: it **signals** what the sentence will be about. To signal something is to give a sign that it is coming — like a wave before a hello. Here, the opener tells the reader: this sentence is going to be about the little penguins.

The rest of the sentence — *swim home from the sea at night* — does the second job. It **elaborates** on the opener. To elaborate is to add more. The added part is the news: what the penguins do, and when they do it.

The two jobs of a sentence opener

"The little penguins swim home from the sea at night."



The opener comes first, so the reader meets the topic before the news about it.

A sentence split into two blocks: the opener 'The little penguins' in blue, labelled as the starting point that signals what the sentence is about, and the rest of the sentence in green, labelled as the part that adds new information

Figure 1 — The two jobs of a sentence opener

Most sentences work this way. The opener names the topic, and the rest of the sentence adds news about it. A reader who notices openers can always answer the question: *what is this sentence about?* before the sentence is even finished.

Part 2 — From given to new: how a text moves a reader along

One smooth sentence is a start. But a text is many sentences, and they have to walk the reader along together. Writers do this with two kinds of information:

given information — the part of a sentence the reader already knows, either from earlier in the text or from life.

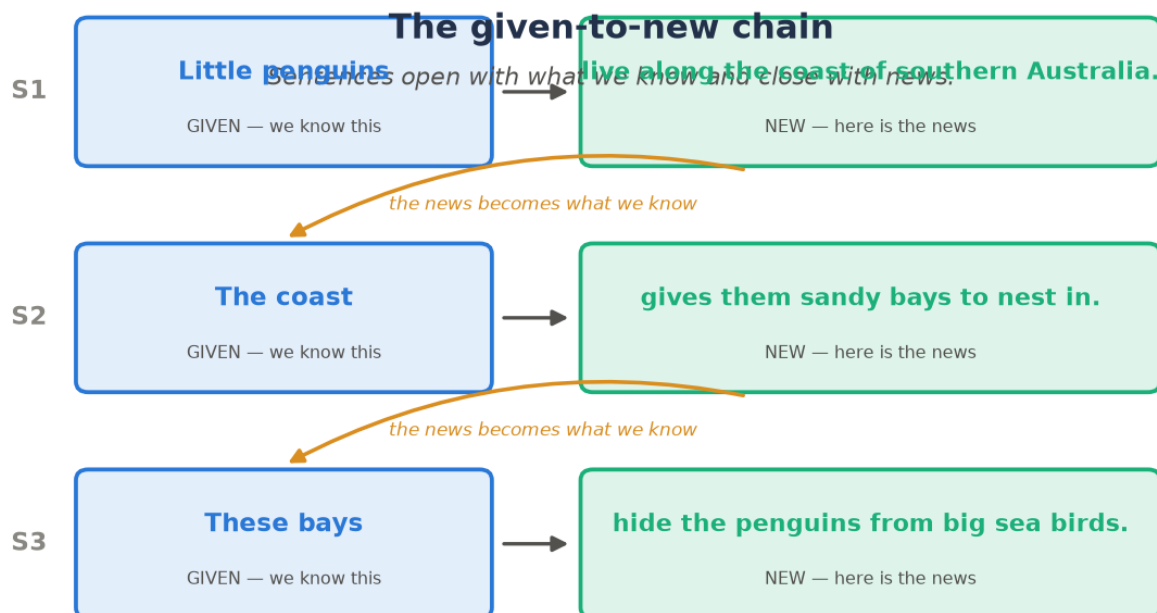
new information — the part of a sentence that brings news the reader did not have yet.

A smooth sentence usually opens with given information and closes with new information. Then comes the clever part: **the news of one sentence becomes the given of the next.**

Look at this chain of three sentences:

1. Little penguins live along the coast of southern Australia.
2. The coast gives them sandy bays to nest in.
3. These bays hide the penguins from big sea birds.

Sentence 1 starts with what we can picture straight away (little penguins) and ends with news (the coast of southern Australia). Sentence 2 opens on that news — *The coast* — and adds more news (sandy bays). Sentence 3 opens on *that* news — *These bays* — and adds more again. Each sentence holds the reader's hand before taking the next step.



One sentence's new information is the next sentence's given. That is how a text walks the reader forward.

Three sentences stacked as a chain; each sentence has a blue GIVEN chip on the left and a green NEW chip on the right, with amber arrows showing the news of one sentence becoming the given of the next

Figure 2 — The given-to-new chain

This chain is one of the big ways a text is made **cohesive**.

cohesive — sticking together. A cohesive text holds together so a reader can move through it without getting lost. The way a text sticks together is called its **cohesion**.

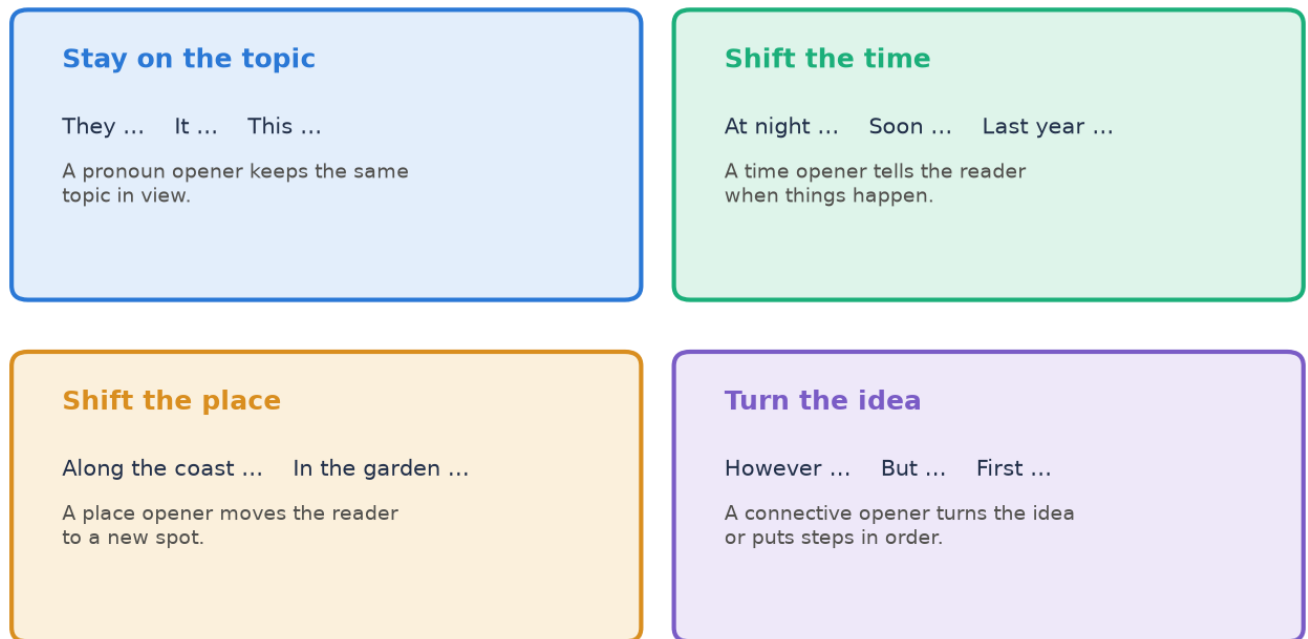
Part 3 — Openers signal the way

Because the opener comes first, it is the perfect spot to signal how the text is developing. Writers use openers to do four common jobs:

1. **Stay on the topic.** A pronoun opener keeps the same topic in view. (A **pronoun** is a word that stands in for a noun, like *they*, *it* or *this*. You met pronouns in Level 4.)
2. **Shift the time.** A time opener tells the reader that things are moving: *At night ... Soon ... Last year ...*
3. **Shift the place.** A place opener moves the reader to a new spot: *Along the coast ... In the garden ...*
4. **Turn the idea, or order the steps.** A connective opener turns the idea a new way (*However ... But ...*) or puts steps in order (*First ... Then ...*). (A **connective** is a joining word. You met connectives in Level 4.)

Four ways an opener can guide the reader

Read the opener and you know where the sentence is going.



One small opener does a big job: it signals how the text is developing.

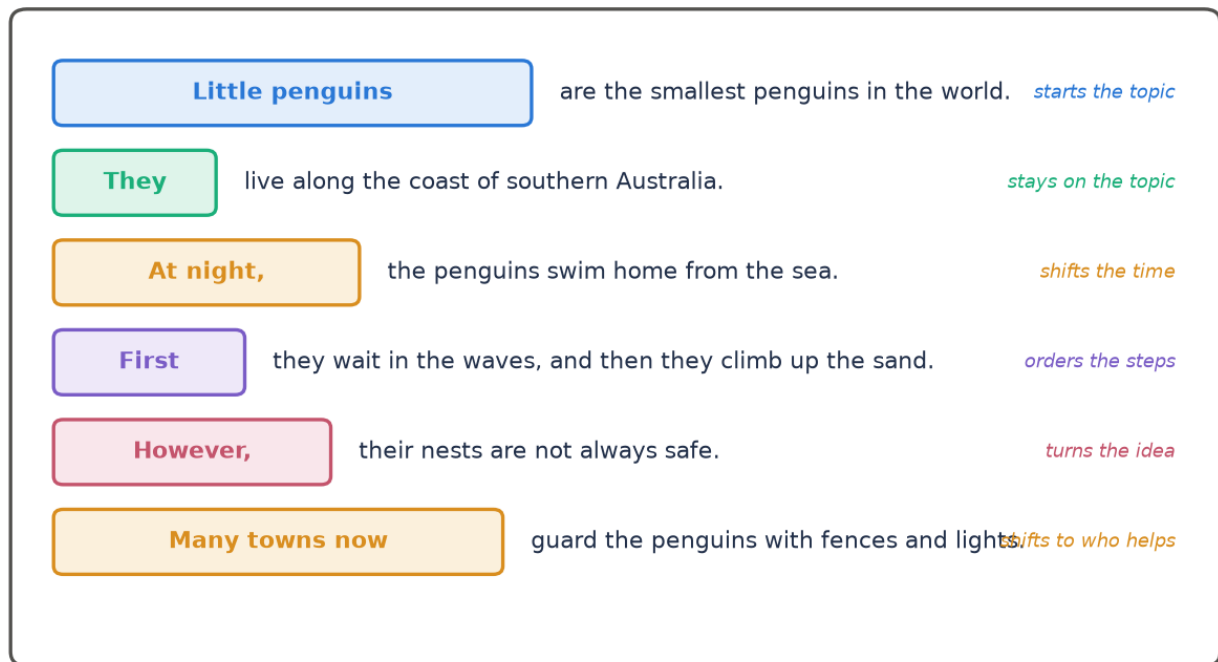
Four cards naming the signals an opener can send: stay on the topic, shift the time, shift the place, and turn the idea or order the steps, each with example openers and a short note

Figure 3 — Four ways an opener can guide the reader

Here is a short model text written for this book. Each opener is highlighted and tagged with the signal it sends.

Model text — Little Penguins

Every opener (in colour) sends the reader a signal.



Six openers, five different signals — and the reader is never lost.

A model text about little penguins with each sentence opener highlighted and tagged with its signal: starts the topic, stays on the topic, shifts the time, orders the steps, turns the idea, and shifts to who helps

Figure 4 — Model text 1: Little Penguins

Read the openers down the left of the model: *Little penguins ... They ... At night ... First ... However ... Many towns now ...* The text stays, stays, shifts time, orders steps, turns — and hands the topic to the towns that help. Six openers, five signals, and the reader is never lost.

Part 4 — Topic chains across tenses

A text does not always stay in one time. A recount looks back; a report tells what is so now; a plan looks ahead. So the **tenses** can change inside one piece of writing. (The tense of a verb shows its time: past, present or future. You worked with tenses in Level 4.)

Changing tense does not break a text, as long as one thing holds: the **topic**.

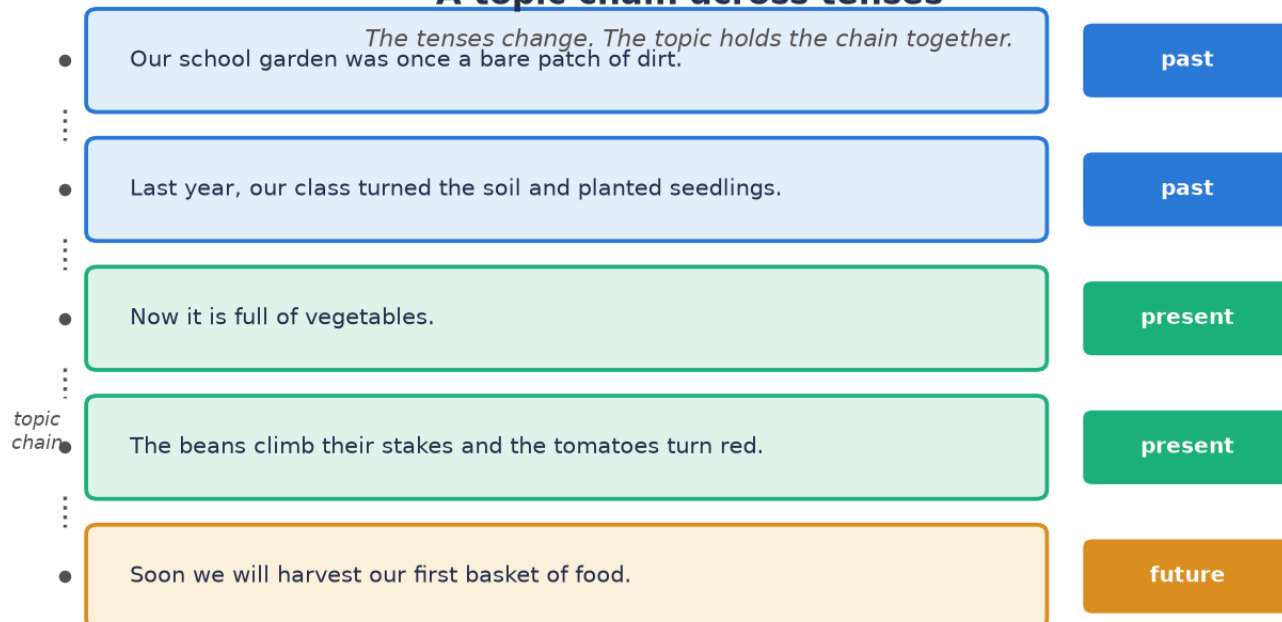
topic chain — a run of sentences that stay connected through one topic, even when other words in them change.

Look at this chain about a school garden. The tenses move from past, to present, to future — but the topic never lets go:

1. Our school garden was once a bare patch of dirt.
2. Last year, our class turned the soil and planted seedlings.
3. Now it is full of vegetables.
4. The beans climb their stakes and the tomatoes turn red.
5. Soon we will harvest our first basket of food.

Each sentence is built around a verb, and that verb-and-its-words group is called a **clause**. You met clauses in Level 4. Here, the clauses use different tenses — *was*, *turned*, *is*, *climb*, *will harvest* — yet they remain connected through the topic: the school garden and what grows in it.

A topic chain across tenses



One topic — the school garden — stays in view the whole way through, from was, to is, to will.

Five sentences stacked as a chain, each tagged past, present or future in colour, with a dotted rail on the left marking the topic chain that holds them together

Figure 5 — A topic chain across tenses

Part 5 — Paragraph openers and prominence

So far you have looked at sentence openers. Paragraphs have openers too, and they do the same job at a bigger scale. But first, one more idea — because it is the reason openers matter.

prominence — standing out; being what the reader notices first.

Whatever a writer puts first, the reader meets first. The starting point of a sentence or a paragraph is the place of greatest prominence, so the message that sits there gets noticed before anything else.

Look at one piece of news told two ways:

A. The old gum tree came down in last night's storm.

B. Last night's storm brought down the old gum tree.

Both sentences carry the same news. But Version A opens on the tree, so the reader meets the tree first. Version B opens on the storm, so the reader meets the storm first. The opener chooses what gets prominence.

Same news — two different openers

What the writer puts first is what the reader meets first.

Version A	Version B
"The old gum tree came down in last night's storm."	"Last night's storm brought down the old gum tree."
The reader meets THE TREE first.	The reader meets THE STORM first.

Both sentences carry the same news. The opener chooses which part of the news gets prominence.

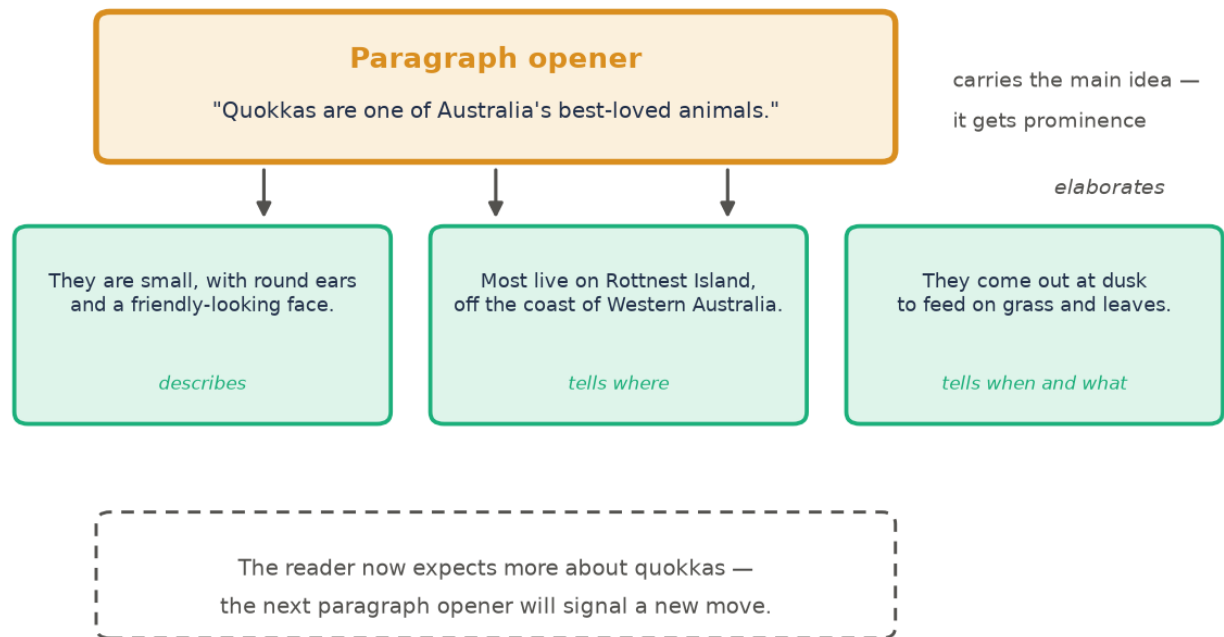
Two versions of the same news side by side; Version A opens on the old gum tree and Version B opens on last night's storm, showing that the opener chooses what the reader meets first

Figure 6 — Same news, two openers

Inside a paragraph, the first sentence is the paragraph's opener. Very often it carries the main idea of the whole paragraph. Writers call this first sentence the **topic sentence**. The sentences after it elaborate: they add detail, examples and reasons.

The shape of a paragraph

The opener carries the main idea. The rest elaborates.



A labelled diagram of a paragraph's shape: an amber opener block carrying the main idea, three green support blocks that elaborate, and a note that the next paragraph opener will signal a new move

Figure 7 — The shape of a paragraph

Here is a two-paragraph model text written for this book. Watch what each paragraph opener does:

Model text — Quokkas

Two paragraphs. Two openers. Each one carries its paragraph's main idea.

Quokkas

are one of Australia's best-loved animals.
They are small, with round ears and a friendly-looking face.
Most live on Rottnest Island, off the coast of Western Australia.
They come out at dusk to feed on grass and leaves.

Paragraph 1 opener:
what quokkas are like

But quokkas

need our care.
Their numbers have fallen on the mainland, where foxes and cats
hunt them. On Rottnest Island they are safer.
Visitors are asked to look but not touch, and never to feed them.Paragraph 2 opener:
a turn — why they need care

The second opener, *But*, tells the reader the text is turning from describing quokkas to caring for them — before the rest of the sentence says so.

A two-paragraph model text about quokkas with each paragraph opener highlighted and labelled: the first opener tells what quokkas are like, and the second opener turns to why they need care

Figure 8 — Model text 2: Quokkas

The first opener, *Quokkas are one of Australia's best-loved animals*, tells the reader what paragraph 1 will be about: what quokkas are like. The second opener, *But quokkas need our care*, does two jobs at once. It keeps the topic (quokkas) and turns the text — the word *But* is an early sign that the mood is changing, before the rest of the sentence even says so. That is an opener guiding the reader.

Key words so far

- **opener** — the first word or words of a sentence or paragraph; its starting point.
- **elaborate** — to add more about something.
- **given information** — what the reader already knows.
- **new information** — the news a sentence brings.
- **cohesive / cohesion** — sticking together; the way a text holds together.
- **signal** — to give a sign that something is coming.
- **topic chain** — a run of sentences connected through one topic, even across tenses.
- **prominence** — standing out; being what the reader notices first.
- **topic sentence** — a paragraph's opening sentence when it carries the paragraph's main idea.
- **pronoun** — a word that stands in for a noun, like *they*, *it* or *this*.
- **connective** — a joining word, like *first*, *however* or *if*.
- **clause** — a group of words built around a verb.
- **tense** — the form of a verb that shows time: past, present or future.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Look at Model text 1, *Little Penguins* (Figure 4). Name the opener of each sentence and the signal it sends. Copy and complete the table.

Sentence	Opener	Signal	Why it works
1	Little penguins	starts the topic	It names what the whole text is about.
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Working	Comment
Sentence 2: <i>They</i> — stays on the topic.	A pronoun keeps the penguins in view without repeating the name.
Sentence 3: <i>At night</i> — shifts the time.	The text moves from facts about the penguins to what happens at night.
Sentence 4: <i>First</i> — orders the steps.	The penguins' trip home has steps; <i>first</i> starts the order.
Sentence 5: <i>However</i> — turns the idea.	The text turns from the penguins' trip to the danger they face.
Sentence 6: <i>Many towns now</i> — shifts the time and hands the topic on.	The text moves to the present and to the people who help.

The chain of openers — name, pronoun, time, order, turn, new helper — is what guides the reader from the first word to the last.

Example 2 — with help

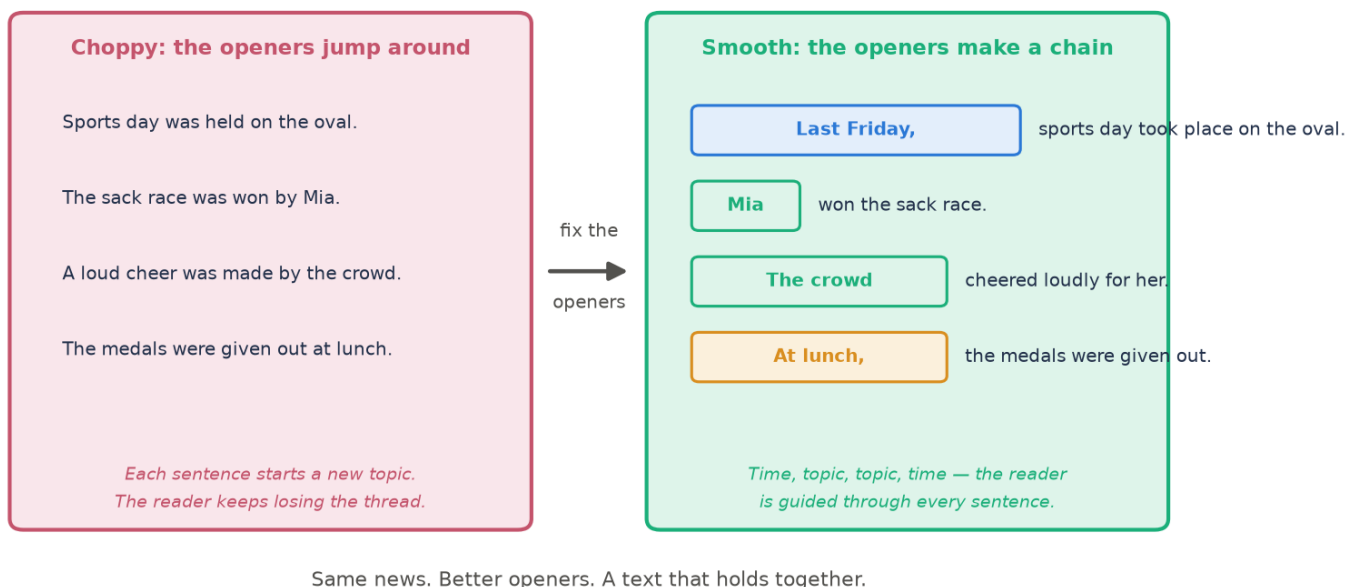
Here is a choppy text. Every fact is fine, but every sentence opens on a different topic, so the reader keeps losing the thread:

Sports day was held on the oval. The sack race was won by Mia. A loud cheer was made by the crowd. The medals were given out at lunch.

Rewrite it so the openers make a chain: time, then topic, then topic, then time.

Working	Comment
Choose the story's flow first: when, who, what response, when.	Openers work best when you know the order of your news.
Sentence 1: open with a time — <i>Last Friday, sports day took place on the oval.</i>	A time opener sets the scene.
Sentence 2: open with the person — <i>Mia won the sack race.</i>	The topic is now Mia; the opener puts her first.
Sentence 3: stay on the topic — <i>The crowd cheered loudly for her.</i>	The crowd's cheer follows Mia's win; the link is clear.
Sentence 4: close with a time — <i>At lunch, the medals were given out.</i>	A time opener signals the last step of the day.

Fixing a choppy text with openers



The choppy text and the fixed text side by side: the choppy version's openers jump from topic to topic, while the fixed version's openers make a chain of time, topic, topic, time

Figure 9 — Fixing a choppy text with openers

Example 3 — on your own

Read the two versions in Figure 6. They carry the same news. (a) Which version gives prominence to the storm? (b) For each version, write one sentence that could come next, opening with given information.

Version B gives prominence to the storm, because the storm is what the reader meets first: *Last night's storm* opens the sentence. Version A opens on *The old gum tree*, so the tree gets prominence there.

Next sentences: Version A could continue *The tree had stood by the gate for fifty years.* — the opener (*The tree*) picks up the given. Version B could continue *The storm also knocked down two fences.* — the opener (*The storm*) keeps the storm in view. Each next sentence opens on whatever its version made given.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Write the opener of each sentence. Then label its signal: *stays on the topic*, *shifts the time*, *shifts the place* or *turns the idea*.

- (a) 'At dawn, the birds began to sing.'
- (b) 'They built their nest in the old gum tree.'
- (c) 'However, a storm was coming.'
- (d) 'Under the tree, the chicks waited.'

Q2. Read these two sentences:

Our class planted a lemon tree. The tree stands by the library window.

- (a) In the second sentence, what part is given information?
- (b) In the second sentence, what part is new information?
- (c) Which sentence could come next — (i) *It gets sunshine all morning.* or (ii) *Some windows are made of glass.*? Explain why.

Q3. Fill each blank with an opener from the box: **They · Last month · Now · However**

Our class grows vegetables. (a) _____ get water every morning. (b) _____, the beans were tiny seeds. (c) _____ they climb tall stakes. (d) _____, the slugs found them one night.

Q4. Match each opener to its signal.

- 1. *Soon, ...*
- 2. *She ...*
- 3. *But ...*
- 4. *At the market, ...*

Signals: (i) stays on the topic · (ii) turns the idea · (iii) shifts the time · (iv) shifts the place.

Q5. Read this topic chain:

The hall was quiet before the show. Now it hums with chatter. In one hour it will ring with music.

- (a) Label the tense of each sentence: past, present or future.
- (b) What is the topic that holds the chain together?

Q6. A paragraph's other sentences are: *He gets fresh hay and water. His carrots are chopped small. On Fridays, we clean out his cage.* Which is the best paragraph opener?

- (a) 'Our class pet is a guinea pig called Biscuit.'
- (b) 'Every morning, Biscuit gets his breakfast.'
- (c) 'Animals live all around the world.'

Explain your choice.

Q7. Rewrite this sentence so the gate comes first and gets prominence: 'The wind slammed the gate.'

Q8. Read this paragraph:

The market opens at eight. Sellers set out fruit, bread and flowers. Crowds move slowly down the lanes. By noon, though, the stalls are almost empty.

- (a) Find two openers that keep the text on the market topic.
- (b) Find the opener that turns the idea, and the word in it that does the turning.

On your own

Q9. Every fact in this text is fine, but the openers jump around. Rewrite it so the openers make a chain. Use at least one time opener and one pronoun opener.

The cake was baked by Ava. The icing was made by her brother. A song was sung by the guests. The candles were blown out by Ava.

Q10. Write your own topic chain: three sentences about one place you know well (the oval, the canteen, your street). Your chain must use two different tenses, and the topic must hold the chain together.

Q11. One piece of news, two ways. 'The dog messed up the garden.' Write the news twice: version A so the reader meets the dog first, and version B so the reader meets the garden first. Then say which version gives prominence to the garden.

Q12. Write a paragraph of four or five sentences about your favourite place at school. Your paragraph must open with a topic sentence that carries the main idea. Underline your opener, and under the paragraph, name the signals your other openers send.

Checkpoint

Scenario. Your school newsletter is running a page called *Growing Things*. The editor has asked your class for short texts about something that lives or grows at your school — the school garden, the class pet, or the old gum tree on the oval.

Task. Write a two-paragraph text for the page. Your text must:

- have two paragraphs, each opening with a topic sentence that carries the paragraph’s main idea;
- use at least four different opener signals across the text (stay on the topic, shift the time, shift the place, turn the idea, order the steps);
- build a given-to-new chain inside each paragraph;
- if your tenses change, keep the clauses connected through one topic.

Then, under your text, add one sentence naming an opener you chose on purpose and saying what it signals. Check your writing against the checklist in Figure 10.

My opener checklist

☐

Each paragraph opens with a sentence that carries its main idea.

☐

My openers signal where the text is going (topic, time, place, turn).

☐

My sentences form a chain: news in one becomes given in the next.

☐

When my tenses change, my topic still holds the chain together.

☐

I read my text back. Does every opener guide the reader?

Tick each box as you check your writing.

A clipboard checklist with five checks for the writing task: topic-sentence openers, opener signals, a given-to-new chain, a topic that holds across tenses, and reading back for flow

Figure 10 — My opener checklist

Scored against the achievement standard. The Level 5 Writing standard says students ‘use text structures, including paragraphs, to create prominence and build sequence and cohesion.’

What to look for	Yes, at standard	Not yet
Each paragraph opens with a topic		

What to look for	Yes, at standard	Not yet
sentence that carries the main idea, giving the main idea prominence.		
Openers signal how the text is developing, with at least four different signals used on purpose.		
Sentences form a given-to-new chain inside each paragraph, building sequence.		
Where tenses change, the topic keeps the clauses connected, building cohesion.		

Answers

Q1. (a) *At dawn* — shifts the time. (b) *They* — stays on the topic. (c) *However* — turns the idea. (d) *Under the tree* — shifts the place. **Q2.** (a) *The tree*. (b) *stands by the library window*. (c) (i) — see the full answers. **Q3.** (a) They. (b) Last month. (c) Now. (d) However. **Q4.** 1—iii, 2—i, 3—ii, 4—iv. **Q5.** (a) past, present, future. (b) the hall. **Q6.** (b) — see the full answers. **Q7.** See the full answers. **Q8.** (a) *Sellers* and *Crowds*. (b) *By noon, though* — the word *though* does the turning. **Q9–Q12.** Answers will vary; see the full answers for samples to check against. **Checkpoint.** Answers will vary; check against the table and Figure 10.

Full answers

Q1. The opener is the first word or words, up to the main news of the sentence. (a) *At dawn* tells when — it shifts the time. (b) *They* is a pronoun standing in for the birds — it stays on the topic. (c) *However* turns the idea from birdsong to weather. (d) *Under the tree* tells where — it shifts the place.

Q2. (a) Sentence 1 ended on the news of a lemon tree, so sentence 2 opens on it as given: *The tree*. (b) The news of sentence 2 is where the tree stands: *stands by the library window*. (c) Sentence (i) is the better next sentence. Its opener, *It*, picks up the tree as given and adds news (sunshine all morning). Sentence (ii) opens on *Some windows* — a new topic the text never prepared the reader for — so the chain breaks.

Q3. (a) *They* — a pronoun opener keeps the vegetables in view. (b) *Last month* — a time opener looks back to when the beans were seeds. (c) *Now* — a time opener shifts to the present; the beans have grown. (d) *However* — a connective opener turns to bad news: the slugs.

Q4. *Soon* shifts the time (iii). *She* is a pronoun that stays on the topic (i). *But* turns the idea (ii). *At the market* shifts the place (iv).

Q5. (a) *was quiet* is past; *hums* is present; *will ring* is future. (b) Every sentence is about the hall and what fills it — the hall is the topic that holds the chain, even though the tenses move from before the show, to now, to one hour ahead.

Q6. (b). The paragraph's other sentences are all about feeding Biscuit and cleaning his cage, so the opener must carry that main idea: *Every morning, Biscuit gets his breakfast*. Option (a) would fit a paragraph about what Biscuit is like, and option (c) is too big — it promises a text about animals all over the world, not one guinea pig's breakfast.

Q7. 'The gate slammed shut in the wind.' The gate now opens the sentence, so it gets prominence; the storm's part — the wind — moves to the end as news.

Q8. (a) *Sellers* and *Crowds* both keep the text on the market: they are part of the market topic, and each one picks up where the last sentence left off. (b) *By noon, though* turns the idea from a busy market to an empty one; *though* is the turning word.

Q9. Sample rewrite: 'Ava baked the cake. Her brother made the icing. The guests sang a song. Then Ava blew out the candles.' The openers now make a chain: Ava (topic), her brother (topic), the guests (topic), *Then* (time). The reader is guided from step to step of the one party.

Q10. Sample: 'The canteen was quiet this morning. Now the line reaches past the door. Soon it will smell of fresh pies.' Tenses: past (*was*), present (*reaches*), future (*will smell*). The topic — the canteen and what happens there — holds all three clauses together.

Q11. Version A: 'The dog messed up the garden.' Version B: 'The garden was messed up by the dog.' Version B gives prominence to the garden, because the garden is what the reader meets first.

Q12. Sample: ‘The library is the calmest room in our school. It smells of paper and wooden shelves. Students read there on wet days. At lunch, the librarian reads aloud from a new book. I always leave with a story to finish.’ Opener (underlined): *The library is the calmest room in our school* — the topic sentence, carrying the main idea. Signals used after it: *It* (stays on the topic), *Students* (stays on the topic), *At lunch* (shifts the time), *I* (stays on the writer’s view).

Checkpoint. Sample outline: paragraph 1 opens ‘Our school garden began as a bare patch of dirt.’ and tells the garden’s story in past tense; paragraph 2 opens ‘Now the garden is full of food.’ and tells what grows there now, with one look ahead. Openers across the text: topic sentence, time (*Last year*), pronoun (*it*), turn or order (*First, Soon*). The topic — the school garden — holds both paragraphs together across the tense change. The extra sentence might read: ‘I chose “Now” to open paragraph 2 on purpose, because it shifts the reader from the garden’s past to its present.’ Marking looks for the four rows of the table above: topic-sentence prominence, opener signals on purpose, given-to-new sequence, and cohesion across tenses.

English Level 5 — Construction task C1: Narrative

Construction task C1 · Narrative construction on a supplied opening · 15 marks

English Level 5 (Year 5) · Victorian Curriculum 2.0

Task coverage: creating a narrative with sequenced events, paragraphs and sentences chosen for effect, and details that build character and setting — narrative craft from the literary texts the course has encountered.

Content descriptions assessed:

- VC2E5LY10 — create different types of texts, written and spoken, with relevant, elaborated and sequenced ideas, using text structure appropriate for topic, purpose and audience, and multimodal elements as appropriate (the creating spine of this task)
- VC2E5LE05 — create texts, experimenting with vocabulary, figurative language, storylines, characters and settings from literary texts they have encountered (the craft choices of this task)

Marks and structure: 15 marks over 15 items — sentence combining/repair, items 1–4 (4 marks) · ordering events into a complication, items 5–7 (3 marks) · connective and time-phrase choice, items 8–10 (3 marks) · choosing the detail that builds character or setting, items 11–13 (3 marks) · choosing a resolution consistent with the theme, items 14–15 (2 marks). Every item is worth 1 mark.

Timing: guidance time 20 minutes. This is a classroom check, not an exam. There is no strict time limit; your teacher will let you finish.

Permitted materials: none. No dictionary, no notes. Answers are given on screen (H5P); for paper administration, write your answers in the spaces your teacher gives you.

This is a school-designed task. It is not a VCAA instrument. Achievement in the Victorian Curriculum is reported against the Level 5 achievement standard, not against a mark on this task.

Conditions

- Your teacher may read any question or option aloud to you (live teacher read-aloud; no recorded audio is needed for this task). The teacher will not help with answers.
- Every item is objective and is marked against a fixed key.
- Attempt every item.

Words you need (read these before you start; every term used on this paper is defined here first):

- **opening / orientation** — the start of a story, which tells the reader who is in it, where it happens and when
- **complication** — the moment when trouble begins in a story
- **resolution** — how the trouble is settled at the end of a story
- **theme** — the big idea a story keeps coming back to, such as working together
- **tension** — the worried, waiting feeling a story builds in the reader before trouble hits
- **connective** — a word or phrase that joins ideas, such as *because*, *when* or *suddenly*
- **time phrase** — a phrase that moves a story along in time, such as ‘the next morning’

The supplied opening — every item on this task builds the one story that starts here. Read it first.

The Kite on the Hill (opening)

The kite tugged at the string like a live thing, and Pearl knew today was the day to fly it from the hill. She and her grandfather had built it together — light timber, green paper and a tail of red ribbons. Now the spring wind was strong at last.

Written for this book.

Part 1 — Sentence combining and repair (4 marks)

Item 1 — Combine the ideas for a reason. [1 mark]

Drag the word cards into order to build one sentence that gives a reason.

Word cards: **Pearl ran up the hill · because · the wind was rising**

Write the sentence in the answer box.

Item 2 — Repair the run-on. [1 mark]

Pearl's draft reads: 'The kite lifted off the grass it spun wildly.' Which repair is correct?

- A. 'The kite lifted off the grass it spun wildly!'
- B. 'The kite lifted off the grass, and it spun wildly.'
- C. 'The kite lifted, off the grass it spun wildly.'
- D. 'THE KITE LIFTED OFF.'

Item 3 — Combine the ideas in time. [1 mark]

Drag the word cards into order to build one sentence. Begin with the word 'When'.

Word cards: **the kite · When · leapt · the gust hit · into the sky**

Write the sentence in the answer box.

Item 4 — Choosing the best combination. [1 mark]

Which sentence best combines 'The string grew tight.' and 'Pearl held on firmly.'?

- A. 'The string grew tight Pearl held on firmly.'
- B. 'The string grew tight, Pearl held on firmly.'
- C. 'As the string grew tight, Pearl held on firmly.'
- D. 'The string grew tight. Pearl. Held on firmly.'

Part 2 — Ordering events into a complication (3 marks)

Item 5 — Order the events. [1 mark]

Drag the event cards into the order they should happen in the story, from first to last.

Word cards: **The kite climbed above the treetops · Pearl let out more string · A sudden squall snatched the kite sideways**

Write the order in the answer box.

Item 6 — Choosing the strongest complication. [1 mark]

A complication is the moment when trouble begins. Which event would make the strongest complication for this story?

- A. Pearl stops for lunch on the hill.
- B. Grandpa waves from the farm gate.

- C. The kite sits perfectly still on the grass.
- D. The string snaps, and the kite flies free over the treetops.

Item 7 — Where the complication belongs. [1 mark]

Where does the complication belong in a narrative?

- A. after the orientation, when the trouble of the story begins
 - B. before anything else in the story
 - C. only in the very last sentence
 - D. narratives do not have complications
-

Part 3 — Connective and time-phrase choice (3 marks)

Item 8 — A connective of time. [1 mark]

Complete the sentence with a connective that links the two clauses in time. Type one word in the blank.

‘ ____ the kite cleared the hilltop, Pearl let out more string.’

Item 9 — A word for sudden change. [1 mark]

Which word best fills the blank to show a sudden change?

‘The kite climbed higher and higher. ____, the wind dropped away.’

- A. Meanwhile
- B. Suddenly
- C. For example
- D. In the same way

Item 10 — A time phrase that moves the story on. [1 mark]

Which sentence uses a time phrase to move the story forward?

- A. ‘Kites are made from paper and light timber.’
 - B. ‘Pearl likes the colour green.’
 - C. ‘The next morning, Pearl and her grandfather climbed the hill to search for the kite.’
 - D. ‘The hill near Fernbank is very big.’
-

Part 4 — Choosing details that build character and setting (3 marks)

Item 11 — The detail that builds tension. [1 mark]

Which detail best builds tension in the reader just before the complication?

- A. ‘Pearl’s palms grew damp on the wooden reel.’
- B. ‘Pearl remembered to tie her shoelaces.’
- C. ‘The grass on the hill was green.’
- D. ‘The kite had two red ribbons.’

Item 12 — The detail that builds the setting. [1 mark]

Which detail best builds the hilltop setting for the reader?

- A. ‘Pearl had eaten breakfast.’
- B. ‘The wind made a sound.’
- C. ‘Kites need wind to fly.’
- D. ‘Below her, the roofs of Fernbank looked as small as toy houses.’

Item 13 — The detail that builds character. [1 mark]

Which detail best shows that Pearl is determined?

- A. ‘Pearl glanced at the clouds once.’
 - B. ‘Even when the reel jerked hard, Pearl set her feet and held on.’
 - C. ‘Pearl thought about going home.’
 - D. ‘The kite was green and red.’
-

Part 5 — Choosing a resolution that fits the theme (2 marks)

This story’s theme is: careful, shared effort is worth it.

Item 14 — A resolution consistent with the theme. [1 mark]

Which resolution best fits the theme of this story?

- A. ‘Pearl forgot about the kite and never spoke of it again.’
- B. ‘The kite turned into a real bird and flew to the sea.’
- C. ‘By that afternoon, Pearl and her grandfather had found the kite caught in a she-oak, and they carried it home together to mend it.’
- D. ‘Pearl bought ten brand-new kites from the shop.’

Item 15 — Building the closing line. [1 mark]

Drag the word cards into order to build the story’s closing line.

Word cards: **That evening · they · mended · the kite · together · by the kitchen fire**

Write the sentence in the answer box.

End of Construction task C1. The solutions, full model text and marking key start on the next page.

English Level 5 — Construction task C1 (Narrative) — Solutions and marking key

Teacher copy · 15 marks · Keep this key with the task. The task is auto-marked on screen against these keys; this copy is for the teacher's record and for paper administration.

Content descriptions assessed: VC2E5LY10 (creating spine) and VC2E5LE05 (craft choices).

This is the marking key for a school-designed task. It is not a VCAA instrument.

How to administer. One sitting; guidance time 20 minutes; no strict time limit. The teacher may read any question or option aloud (live read-aloud; no recorded audio needed). Every item is objective and worth 1 mark. The supplied opening 'The Kite on the Hill' is printed in the task; no item presumes any text read outside it.

Marking key

Item	Family (H5P)	Family per §7.5	Answer	Mark
1	H3 Drag-text / ordering	sentence combining/repair	Pearl ran up the hill because the wind was rising. (cards: Pearl ran up the hill → because → the wind was rising)	1
2	H2 Multiple Choice	sentence combining/repair	B. 'The kite lifted off the grass, and it spun wildly.'	1
3	H3 Drag-text / ordering	sentence combining/repair	When the gust hit, the kite leapt into the sky.	1
4	H2 Multiple Choice	sentence combining/repair	C. 'As the string grew tight, Pearl held on firmly.'	1
5	H3 Drag-text / ordering	ordering events into a complication	Pearl let out more string → The kite climbed above the treetops → A sudden squall snatched the kite sideways	1
6	H2 Multiple Choice	ordering events into a complication	D. The string snaps, and the kite flies free over the treetops.	1
7	H2 Multiple Choice	ordering events into a complication	A. after the orientation, when the trouble of the story begins	1
8	H1 Fill in the Blanks	connective and time-phrase choice	When (accepted: <i>When, As, Once, After</i>)	1
9	H2 Multiple Choice	connective and time-phrase choice	B. Suddenly	1
10	H2 Multiple	connective and	C. 'The next	1

Item	Family (H5P)	Family per §7.5	Answer	Mark
	Choice	time-phrase choice	morning, Pearl and her grandfather climbed the hill to search for the kite.'	
11	H2 Multiple Choice	detail that builds character/setting	A. 'Pearl's palms grew damp on the wooden reel.'	1
12	H2 Multiple Choice	detail that builds character/setting	D. 'Below her, the roofs of Fernbank looked as small as toy houses.'	1
13	H2 Multiple Choice	detail that builds character/setting	B. 'Even when the reel jerked hard, Pearl set her feet and held on.'	1
14	H2 Multiple Choice	resolution consistent with the theme	C. 'By that afternoon, Pearl and her grandfather had found the kite caught in a she-oak, and they carried it home together to mend it.'	1
15	H3 Drag-text / ordering	resolution consistent with the theme	That evening, they mended the kite together by the kitchen fire.	1
Total				15

Full model text assembled from the correct choices (P2)

The Kite on the Hill

The kite tugged at the string like a live thing, and Pearl knew today was the day to fly it from the hill. She and her grandfather had built it together — light timber, green paper and a tail of red ribbons. Now the spring wind was strong at last.

Pearl ran up the hill because the wind was rising. When the gust hit, the kite leapt into the sky. As the string grew tight, Pearl held on firmly. The kite lifted off the grass, and it spun wildly before settling into the wind.

Pearl let out more string. The kite climbed above the treetops. Below her, the roofs of Fernbank looked as small as toy houses. Pearl's palms grew damp on the wooden reel, and even when the reel jerked hard, Pearl set her feet and held on.

A sudden squall snatched the kite sideways. The string snapped, and the kite flew free over the treetops.

The next morning, Pearl and her grandfather climbed the hill to search for the kite. By that afternoon, Pearl and her grandfather had found the kite caught in a she-oak, and they carried it home together to mend it. That evening, they mended the kite together by the kitchen fire.

Alternative model (where the task allows genuine variation)

The resolution in items 14–15 may instead honour the theme through letting go, for example:

‘Pearl watched the kite until it was only a green speck in the sky. That evening, she and her grandfather sat by the kitchen fire and began to build a second kite together — this one with a blue paper sail.’

Both models satisfy item 14’s requirement (a resolution consistent with the theme of careful, shared effort) and item 15’s card order; the platform key ships the primary model.

Construction principle each item evidences (against the Writing-mode achievement standard)

Item	Construction principle	Achievement-standard sentence it feeds
1, 3, 4	clause combining for reason and time; dependent clauses placed for effect	‘use ... grammar ... to create ... cohesion’ (paragraphs and sentences built to build sequence)
2	repairing run-ons into complete sentences	‘edit their texts using an agreed set of criteria’ (accuracy of grammar)
5	ordering events so sequence builds toward the complication	‘paragraphs, to create prominence and build sequence’
6, 7	narrative structure: orientation → complication	structure appropriate for topic and purpose
8, 9, 10	connectives and time phrases as cohesive devices	‘build sequence and cohesion’
11	detail choice builds tension before the complication	elaborated ideas chosen for effect
12	detail choice builds setting	elaborated ideas chosen for effect
13	detail choice builds character	elaborated ideas chosen for effect
14, 15	resolution consistent with the theme	structure appropriate for purpose; coherence of the whole text

Level discipline notes: all combining items stop at an independent clause plus one dependent clause (no embedded clauses — VC2E6LA05 stays out). No author-style characteristics are discussed; craft items stay at detail choices for character, setting, tension and theme (VC2E5LE05 scope).

Sourcing: the supplied opening, every item, the full model text and the alternative model are original compositions for this book (TOC D10, §6; P5). No published story, NAPLAN or VCAA content is reproduced or required.

End of C1 solutions. This block is removable as a whole page unit (L1).