

English Level 5

Chapter 5 — Literacy: understanding, analysing and creating texts

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Texts and their time and place

Every text carries hidden clues about **when** and **where** it was made. A letter, an advertisement, a school note — each one shows its own time and place to a careful reader. In this section you will learn to find those clues and to say, in your own words, how a text *reflects* its time and place.

The big idea — every text shows its time and place

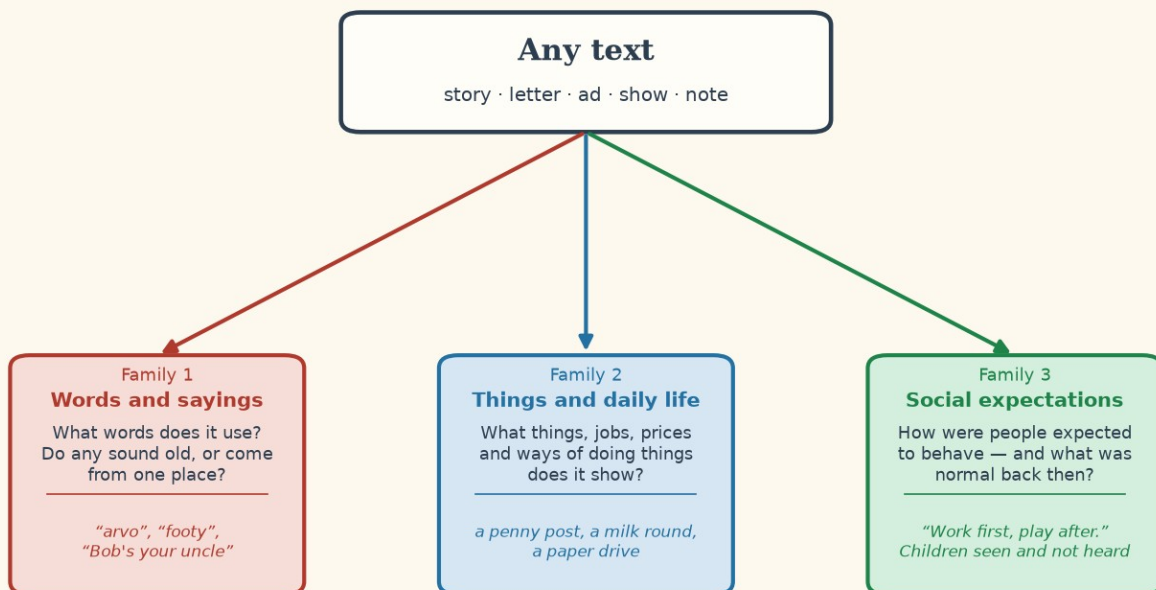
Every text is made by a real person. That person lives **somewhere**, at **some time**, in **some way of life** — and all of that sneaks into the words, even when the writer does not mean it to. In this section, our key word is **reflects**: we say a text *reflects* its time and place when it shows us, through its clues, when and where it was made.

The clues come in three families. Learn the three families and you have the whole toolkit:

1. **Words and sayings** — words that sound old, or words that belong to one place. *“It costs just a penny”* sounds old; *“arvo”* sounds Australian.
2. **Things and daily life** — the things, jobs, prices and ways of doing things a text shows. A penny post, a milk round, a paper drive.
3. **Social expectations** — what people were *expected* to do back then, and what was normal. *“Work first, play after.”* Children seen and not heard.

How does a text show its time and place?

Read for the three clue families



Every text drops clues into all three families — and together they answer: **WHEN** was it made? **WHERE?** What was life like?

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5A · Texts and their time and place

Diagram with “Any text” in a card at the top and three family cards below it — Family 1 Words and sayings, Family 2 Things and daily life, Family 3 Social expectations — each card holding a question to ask and an example clue

The three clue families. Every text drops clues into all three — and together they answer: **WHEN** was it made? **WHERE?** What was life like?

Model text A — a letter from 1912

Here is a letter written by a twelve-year-old girl called Edith in 1912. It was written for this book, but it is built the way real letters of 1912 were built. Read it once for sense, then read it again as a clue detective.

14 Station Street

12 May 1912

1d

Dear Cousin Margaret,

Thank you for your letter. It reached us on Tuesday and I have read it three times. Mother says I must write back at once, so here I am at the kitchen table.

School keeps me busy. I walk the two miles each way with my brother, and we must be in our seats when the bell rings. On Saturday mornings I help with the washing, and in the afternoon I mind my little sister. Father says work first, play after.

It costs just a penny to post a letter, so write soon. Please give my love to Aunt Rose.

Your loving cousin,
Edith

Model text A — A Letter from 1912 (written for this book)

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A letter on old paper dated 12 May 1912, from Edith at 14 Station Street to her cousin Margaret, with a 1d stamp mark in the top corner

Model text A — A Letter from 1912 *(written for this book)*

14 Station Street 12 May 1912

Dear Cousin Margaret,

Thank you for your letter. It reached us on Tuesday and I have read it three times. Mother says I must write back at once, so here I am at the kitchen table.

School keeps me busy. I walk the two miles each way with my brother, and we must be in our seats when the bell rings. On Saturday mornings I help with the washing, and in the afternoon I mind my little sister. Father says work first, play after.

It costs just a penny to post a letter, so write soon. Please give my love to Aunt Rose.

Your loving cousin, Edith

Now watch a clue detective at work. Each clue is sorted into its family:

Clue from the letter	What it tells us	Family
“It costs just a penny to post a letter.”	In 1912, a letter cost a penny. Australia’s money then was pounds, shillings and pence — not dollars and cents.	Family 2 — things and daily life
“I walk the two miles each way with my brother.”	Most children walked to school. A car ride to school was not normal in 1912.	Family 2 — things and daily life
“I help with the washing, and ... I mind my little sister.”	Children had jobs at home. Looking after little children and helping with the washing were part of a child’s week.	Family 3 — social expectations
“Father says work first, play after.”	Grown-ups set strict rules, and children were expected to follow them.	Family 3 — social expectations
“Your loving cousin,”	A way of signing off that sounds old to us now — a clue in the words themselves.	Family 1 — words and sayings

Not one of these clues says “*this is 1912*” — only the date does that. Yet every clue **shows** 1912. That is what reflecting means: the time is inside the words.

Words that date a text — and place it too

Vocabulary is the fastest clue of all. Some words tell you **when** a text was made; some tell you **where**.

Words that tell you WHEN. Australia used pounds, shillings and pence until **1966**, when dollars and cents began. So any text that prices things in pounds and shillings was made before 1966. Words like *penny post*, *the milk round* and *write back at once* also sound like older times — today we would say *stamp*, *the milk truck* (or no milk at all!), and *text straight back*.

Words that tell you WHERE — sayings. Some groups of words have a meaning you cannot work out from the single words alone. In this section, the word for that is an **idiom** (the describing word is *idiomatic*). If you hear “*it’s raining cats and dogs*” for the first time, you might picture pets falling from the sky — but every speaker knows it really means *it’s raining very hard*.

Sayings — words that mean more than they say

An idiom is a group of words with a meaning you cannot work out from the single words alone.

"It's raining cats and dogs."

It is raining very hard.

"Bob's your uncle."

There you go — it is as easy as that.

"It's a piece of cake."

It is very easy to do.

"Don't spill the beans."

Do not tell the secret.

"I feel a bit under the weather."

I feel a little unwell.

"Once in a blue moon."

That does not happen very often.

The words paint a silly picture — but every speaker knows the real meaning. Sayings like these are clues to a text's time and place.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5A · Texts and their time and place

Six cards, each holding a saying in red and its real meaning below: "It's raining cats and dogs" means it is raining very hard; "Bob's your uncle" means there you go, it is as easy as that; "It's a piece of cake" means it is very easy to do; "Don't spill the beans" means do not tell the secret; "I feel a bit under the weather" means I feel a little unwell; "Once in a blue moon" means that does not happen very often

Sayings — words that mean more than they say. The words paint a silly picture, but every speaker knows the real meaning.

Idioms change with time *and* place. "Bob's your uncle" is heard much more in Australia and Britain than in America — so it is a place clue as well as a friendly, old-fashioned sound.

Words that tell you WHERE — Australian favourites. One thing can have different names in different places. The name a writer chooses tells you at once where the writer lives.

One thing, different names

Words can show *WHERE* a text comes from — here are some Australian favourites.

The thing	In Australian English	Used in a sentence
The afternoon	arvo	"See you this arvo!"
Rubber sandals	thongs	"Wear your thongs to the beach."
An outdoor cook-up	barbie	"Come round for a barbie."
The football code	footy	"Did you watch the footy?"
The path beside the road	footpath	"Walk on the footpath." — In America: sidewalk

A reader in another country might need these words explained — but they tell us at once where the writer lives.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5A · Texts and their time and place

A three-column chart titled "One thing, different names": the afternoon is "arvo" ("See you this arvo!"); rubber sandals are "thongs" ("Wear your thongs to the beach."); an outdoor cook-up is a "barbie" ("Come round for a barbie."); the football code is "footy" ("Did you watch the footy?"); the path beside the road is a "footpath", while in America it is a sidewalk

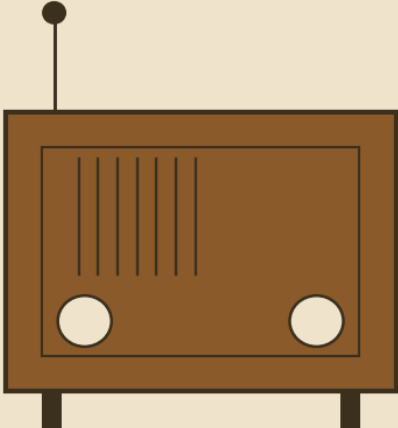
One thing, different names. A reader in another country might need these words explained — but they tell us at once where the writer lives.

Model texts B and C — an advertisement and a newsletter

Texts are not only letters. Advertisements and school notes are texts too — and they reflect their time and place just as strongly.

Model text B is a newspaper advertisement from 1936.

A VOICE IN EVERY HOME!
THE NEW STAR RADIO SET



brings music, news and stories
straight into your sitting room.

*No more quiet evenings — now the **WHOLE FAMILY**
can sit together and listen in!*

£8 10s — or easy payments of 10 shillings a month

Ask at BRIDLEY'S STORE, MAIN STREET

(A deposit of £1 secures delivery.)

Model text B — a newspaper advertisement, 1936 (written for this book)

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5A · Texts and their time and place

A framed newspaper advertisement from 1936 with a drawn radio set: “A voice in every home! The new Star radio set brings music, news and stories straight into your sitting room. No more quiet evenings — now the whole family can sit together and listen in! 8 pounds 10 shillings, or easy payments of 10 shillings a month. Ask at Bridley’s Store, Main Street. A deposit of 1 pound secures delivery.”

Model text B — The New Star Radio Set *(a newspaper advertisement, 1936, written for this book)*

A VOICE IN EVERY HOME! THE NEW STAR RADIO SET brings music, news and stories straight into your sitting room. No more quiet evenings — now the **WHOLE FAMILY** can sit together and listen in! £8 10s — or easy payments of 10 shillings a month Ask at BRIDLEY’S STORE, MAIN STREET (A deposit of £1 secures delivery.)

Clue hunt:

- **£8 10s and 10 shillings a month** — pounds and shillings: this ad was made before 1966, when Australia changed to dollars and cents. (Family 2)
- **“listen in” and “sitting room”** — words of the time. Families gathered round one radio in the sitting room; that was the big night-time fun. (Families 1 and 2)
- **“the **WHOLE FAMILY** can sit together”** — an expectation: the ad sells the idea that the family *should* spend the evening together, listening. (Family 3)

Model text C is a school newsletter from 1988 — a little more than a lifetime after the radio ad.

GREENGUM PRIMARY SCHOOL — NEWSLETTER No. 4

Friday 18 March 1988

PAPER DRIVE

Please send old newspapers to school with your child. We will sell them to raise money for new library books.

SPORTS DAY — FRIDAY NEXT WEEK

Children should wear house colours and bring a hat and a drink. Parents are welcome to come and cheer. The egg-and-spoon race begins at 11 o'clock.

LOST PROPERTY

One blue jumper, size 10. If found, please phone the school office on 72 4183.

Model text C — a school newsletter, 1988 (written for this book)

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5A · Texts and their time and place

A typed school newsletter on pale paper: “Greengum Primary School — Newsletter No. 4, Friday 18 March 1988”, with three short notices: a paper drive to raise money for library books; a sports day notice asking children to wear house colours and bring a hat and a drink; and a lost property notice for one blue jumper, size 10, with the phone number 72 4183

Model text C — Greengum Primary School Newsletter No. 4 (1988, written for this book)

GREENGUM PRIMARY SCHOOL — NEWSLETTER No. 4 Friday 18 March 1988

PAPER DRIVE: Please send old newspapers to school with your child. We will sell them to raise money for new library books.

SPORTS DAY — FRIDAY NEXT WEEK: Children should wear house colours and bring a hat and a drink. Parents are welcome to come and cheer. The egg-and-spoon race begins at 11 o'clock.

LOST PROPERTY: One blue jumper, size 10. If found, please phone the school office on 72 4183.

Clue hunt:

- **phone the school office on 72 4183** — a short local number, with no mobile number and no website in the whole notice. This is before mobile phones and the internet were part of school life. (Family 2)
- **PAPER DRIVE** — raising money by selling old paper was a normal school activity of the time. (Family 2)
- **Children should wear house colours ... Parents are welcome to come and cheer.** — the expectations side of school life: children belong to a house team, and parents come along to watch. (Family 3)

A message from today — and the four texts in a line

Now read a message of the same kind (a note to school families) written today.

A fete message from today *(written for this book)*

Hi everyone! Don't forget — the school fete is on Saturday. No worries if it rains — the sausage sizzle moves under the cover of the hall. See you there — it will be a blast!

Clue hunt:

- “No worries”, “sausage sizzle”, “a blast” — friendly Australian words of now. (Family 1)
- The easy, casual way it is written — today we expect school notes to sound like a friend talking. In 1912, even a child's letter was more careful and formal. (Family 3)

Put the two school notes side by side and you can **see** the expectations change. The chart below lines up parts of life in our model texts with parts of life now:

Then and now — what texts show people were expected to do

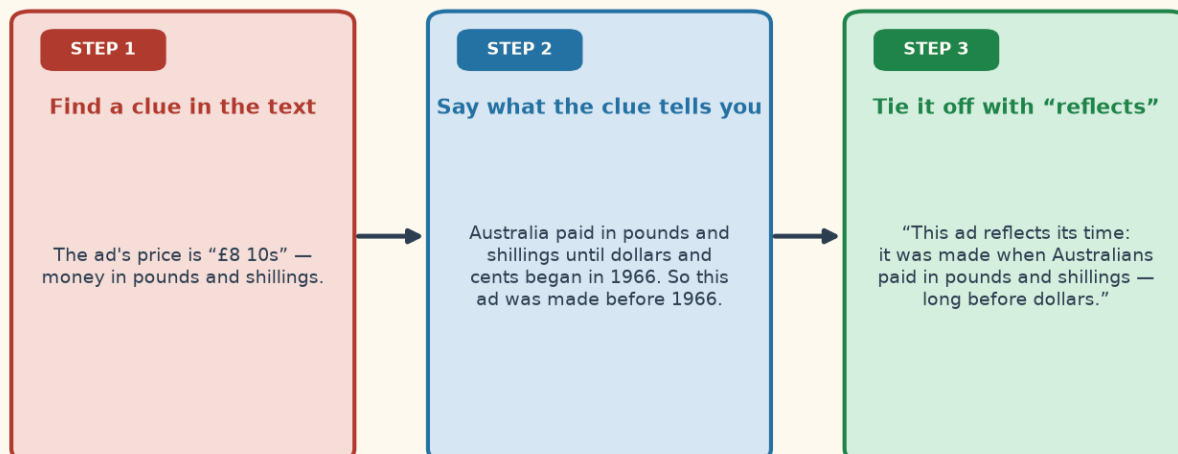
Part of life	THEN — in the model texts	NOW — in our time
Children's work	Edith helps with the washing and minds her little sister. “Work first, play after.”	Most children's jobs are school, sport and a few chores at home.
Talking to adults	Letters start “Dear ...” and end “Your loving cousin”. Manners are formal.	Messages to family are shorter and more relaxed — but still polite.
Shopping	You ask the shopkeeper at the counter; the milk round brings milk to the door.	Families mostly serve themselves at big shops and supermarkets.
An evening together	One radio for the whole family: “sit together and listen in!”	Each person often has their own screen, show or game.
Money	Pounds and shillings: £8 10s, or 10 shillings a month.	Dollars and cents — Australia changed over in 1966.

Neither side is “right” — but a text's expectations tell you when and where it belongs.

A three-column chart titled “Then and now”: Part of life / THEN in the model texts / NOW in our time. Children's work: help with the washing, mind the little ones — after school jobs, if any. Talking to adults: “Yes, Mother”, “No,

From clue to sentence — the three steps of a good answer

Worked on Model text B, the 1936 radio advertisement



Do this three times with three different clues — and you have described how a text reflects its time and place.

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Three step cards joined by arrows. Step 1, Find a clue in the text: the ad's price is "8 pounds 10 shillings" — money in pounds and shillings. Step 2, Say what the clue tells you: Australia paid in pounds and shillings until dollars and cents began in 1966, so this ad was made before 1966. Step 3, Tie it off with "reflects": "This ad reflects its time: it was made when Australians paid in pounds and shillings — long before dollars."

Do this three times with three different clues — and you have described how a text reflects its time and place.

Worked example — the three steps on Model text A.

1. **Find a clue.** "Father says work first, play after."
2. **Say what it tells you.** In 1912, grown-ups set strict rules, and children were expected to work before they played.
3. **Tie it off with "reflects".** "The letter reflects its time: in 1912, children were expected to work hard and follow adult rules — 'work first, play after' was a normal part of family life."

One clue, three steps, one strong sentence. That is the whole skill.

Practice questions

With support

1. Read Model text A again. (a) Copy one group of words about money. (b) Copy one group of words about a child's work at home.
2. Match each saying (1–6) to its real meaning (a–f).
 1. "It's raining cats and dogs." 2. "Bob's your uncle." 3. "It's a piece of cake." 4. "Don't spill the beans." 5. "I feel a bit under the weather."
 2. "Once in a blue moon."
 - a. Do not tell the secret. b. It is raining very hard. c. That does not happen very often. d. It is very easy to do. e. I feel a little unwell.
 - b. There you go — it is as easy as that.

- Model text B: (a) Copy the money words in the ad. (b) Australia began using dollars and cents in 1966. Was this ad made before or after 1966? How do you know?
- Model text C: find two clues that show the newsletter was made before mobile phones and the internet were part of school life.
- Use the sorting chart below. Write each clue's number (1–8) in its family bucket. Clue (1) is done for you: **(1)** → **Family 2**, because a penny post is a thing from daily life of the time.

Sort the clues into their families

(1) "It costs just a penny to post a letter."	(2) The letter ends "Your loving cousin."
(3) Children walk two miles to school.	(4) "No worries if it rains — the fete is still on!"
(5) "Father says work first, play after."	(6) The milk round brings bottles to the door.
(7) "Bob's your uncle!"	(8) Lost property: phone the office on 72 4183.

Write each clue's number in its family bucket:

Family 1 Words and sayings 	Family 2 Things and daily life 	Family 3 Social expectations
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Some clues could fit two families — sort them where they fit best and be ready to say why.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5A · Texts and their time and place

Eight clue cards to sort — (1) "It costs just a penny to post a letter." (2) The letter ends "Your loving cousin." (3) Children walk two miles to school. (4) "No worries if it rains — the fete is still on!" (5) "Father says work first, play after." (6) The milk round brings bottles to the door. (7) "Bob's your uncle!" (8) Lost property: phone the office on 72 4183 — above three family buckets to fill in

Some clues could fit two families — sort them where they fit best and be ready to say why.

- Fill in the gaps: "The advertisement reflects its _____ because it prices the radio in _____ and _____, and Australia used that money only until _____."
- Look at the then-and-now chart. Choose one row, then add one more difference of your own as a new row: part of life / then / now.
- The fete message: underline two words that sound Australian and friendly. Then finish this frame: "These words tell me the message is from _____ because _____."

On your own

- Choose one clue from Model text A. In two or three sentences, work the three steps: the clue, what it tells you, and a "reflects" sentence about 1912.

2. Compare Model text C with the fete message. Write two differences: one in *how people write*, one in *what school life was like*.
 3. A reader from another country has never heard “Bob’s your uncle” or “a piece of cake”. Choose one. In one sentence, explain its real meaning. In one more sentence, say why sayings like this are clues to a text’s time or place.
 4. Write the same short piece of news twice: once the way Edith might write it in 1912, and once the way you would write it today. Underline two words that changed, and say in one sentence what the change shows.
-

Checkpoint

Read the postcard below. It was written for this book, in the style of a real postcard from 1930.

Checkpoint text — A postcard from 1930 (*written for this book*)

POSTCARD — 3 June 1930

Dear Mum,

The train ride was long but the view was grand. I have found a room near the sea. The landlady brings tea at seven sharp and we must be quiet after nine. I will write again on Sunday, when the post leaves.

Love, Nell

(a) Find two clues in the postcard that give details about life in 1930. For each clue, name its family (words and sayings / things and daily life / social expectations).

(b) In three or four sentences, describe how the postcard reflects its time and place. Use the word *reflects* and at least one clue from part (a).

Score your work against the achievement standard wording below.

Part	Working towards	At the standard	Beyond the standard
(a) Finding the clues	I found one clue with a hint.	I identify aspects of the text that represent details about historical, cultural and social contexts — two or more clues, each named to its family, on my own.	I also explained <i>why</i> each clue is a clue, not only which family it fits.
(b) Describing the reflection	I wrote a sentence with a clue, but the link to time and place is missing.	I describe how the text shows its time and place: three or four sentences that link each clue to what it tells us, using the word <i>reflects</i> .	I also said what the words suggest beyond the plain meaning — for example, what Nell's rules tell us about how she felt.

Answers

With support

1.
 - (a) “It costs just a penny to post a letter.” (b) “I help with the washing” or “I mind my little sister.”
2. 1–b, 2–f, 3–d, 4–a, 5–e, 6–c.
3.
 - (a) £8 10s; 10 shillings a month; a deposit of £1. (b) Before 1966 — the ad uses pounds and shillings, and Australia stopped paying in those in 1966.
4. Any two of: the short phone number 72 4183 (no mobile number); no website in the whole notice; the paper drive (selling old paper to raise money).
5. Suggested sort: (1) Family 2; (2) Family 1; (3) Family 2; (4) Family 1;
(5) Family 3; (6) Family 2; (7) Family 1; (8) Family 2. Answers may vary where a clue fits two families — for example (3) could sit in Family 3 if you argue children were *expected* to walk.
6. time; pounds; shillings; 1966.
7. Answers will vary. A sample row: “Keeping in touch / a letter that takes days / a message that arrives at once.”
8. “No worries”, “sausage sizzle”, “a blast”, “Hi everyone”. Sample frame: “These words tell me the message is from Australia, today, because that is how Australians talk to each other now — easy and friendly.”

On your own — answers will vary; see the worked solutions for sample answers to questions 1 and 4.

Checkpoint

- (a) Sample clues: “the landlady brings tea at seven sharp” (Family 3 — social expectations: boarders followed set times); “we must be quiet after nine” (Family 3); “I will write again on Sunday, when the post leaves” (Family 2 — letters and post days were how people kept in touch); “the view was grand” (Family 1 — an older way of saying *beautiful*).
 - (b) See the worked solutions.
-

Worked solutions

On your own 1 — sample answer (clue: “I mind my little sister”).

- Step 1, the clue: “in the afternoon I mind my little sister.”
- Step 2, what it tells us: in 1912, a child like Edith had real jobs at home, and looking after little children was part of her week — not a choice, but an expectation.
- Step 3, the “reflects” sentence: “*The letter reflects its time: in 1912, children were expected to help at home, and minding a little sister was part of a child’s week, not a choice.*”

On your own 4 — sample pair.

- 1912 style: “Dear Cousin Margaret, Our sports day is on Friday. Mother says I must wear my house colours. Your loving cousin, Edith.”
- Today’s style: “Hey! Sports day Friday — wear your house colours. See ya!”
- What the change shows: the words and the expectations both relaxed — today’s note is short, casual and friendly, while Edith’s careful greeting and signing show the more formal way people wrote, and were expected to write, in

Checkpoint (b) — model answer.

“The postcard reflects its time and place. Nell writes that ‘the landlady brings tea at seven sharp’ and that boarders ‘must be quiet after nine’ — in 1930, a guest house ran on strict set times, and people who rented rooms were expected to follow the rules. ‘I will write again on Sunday, when the post leaves’ shows that letters and post days were

the way people kept in touch, long before mobile phones. Together, these clues describe a time when life ran on posted letters and set times — the postcard carries 1930 inside it.”

For the teacher

Traceability. VC2E5LY07 is the section’s single content description (TOC D1). E01 is taught in “Words that date a text — and place it too” (idioms and place words; time-dating vocabulary including the 1966 currency change). E02 is taught in the letter and newsletter clue hunts and the then-and-now chart (expectations of children, families and school communities). The checkpoint scores against the Reading and Viewing achievement standard wording (identify context aspects; describe how a text shows meaning).

Place in the sequence. Builds on VC2E4LY07 (compare texts from different times with similar purposes, assumed secure); hands to VC2E6LY06 at Level 6.

Boundary with 3A. Section 3A reads *story and poem* texts for context clues (time, place, way of life). 5A is the dating of *everyday and media* texts through vocabulary — including idioms — and social expectations. The model texts here (letter, advertisement, newsletter, message, postcard) do not overlap 3A’s story and poem.

Content notes. All six texts are original, written for this book; not one reproduces a published source. The six sayings are common idioms, free for anyone to use, presented as language data and each glossed. Historical facts (penny post; pounds, shillings and pence until 1966) are accurate. No war content; and per the house content policy’s Rule 1, the content that rule excludes does not appear in this section.

Register. Guided register throughout (band 3–6): short model texts, worked examples before on-your-own work, frames and buckets in the with-support set, plain on-your-own set.

Vocabulary gate. `src/_gate_5a.py` checks every student-facing word against the house word ladder at ceiling rank 5, with the three `WORD_LEVEL_POLICY` special cases: (1) curriculum word families — the content description and elaborations quoted in the carved-out block, plus *curriculum / elaborations* naming those documents in these notes; (2) subject words defined at first use — *idiom / idioms / idiomatic*, boxed where first met; (3) proper nouns and numerals. Unplaced words were reviewed at authoring: the Australian place words (*arvo, thongs, barbie, footy*) are the taught language data themselves, and *with support / on your own* are house heading labels.

Figures (10, all original, made by `src/gen_5a_*.py` in this tree). 5a_three_families (the toolkit); 5a_letter_1912 (Model A); 5a_sayings_card (idioms); 5a_place_words (place vocabulary); 5a_radio_ad (Model B); 5a_newsletter_1988 (Model C); 5a_then_now (expectations chart); 5a_timeline (the four texts in a line); 5a_clue_to_sentence (the three-step method); 5a_sort (practice sorting chart).

Characteristic features: how texts meet purpose and audience

Curriculum focus: Literacy strand · Sub-strand: Analysing, interpreting and evaluating · Section 5B · Owns **VC2E5LY08** · Draws on elaborations **E01** and **E02**.

VC2E5LY08 — explain characteristic features used to meet the purpose and audience in different types of texts

E01 — explaining how the features of a text advocating community action (for example, action on a local area preservation issue) are used to meet the purpose of the text

E02 — explaining how characters are used to deliver the message in persuasive texts; for example, explaining how characters are used to present persuasive messages about health issues in advertising, and considering why characters have been used instead of real people

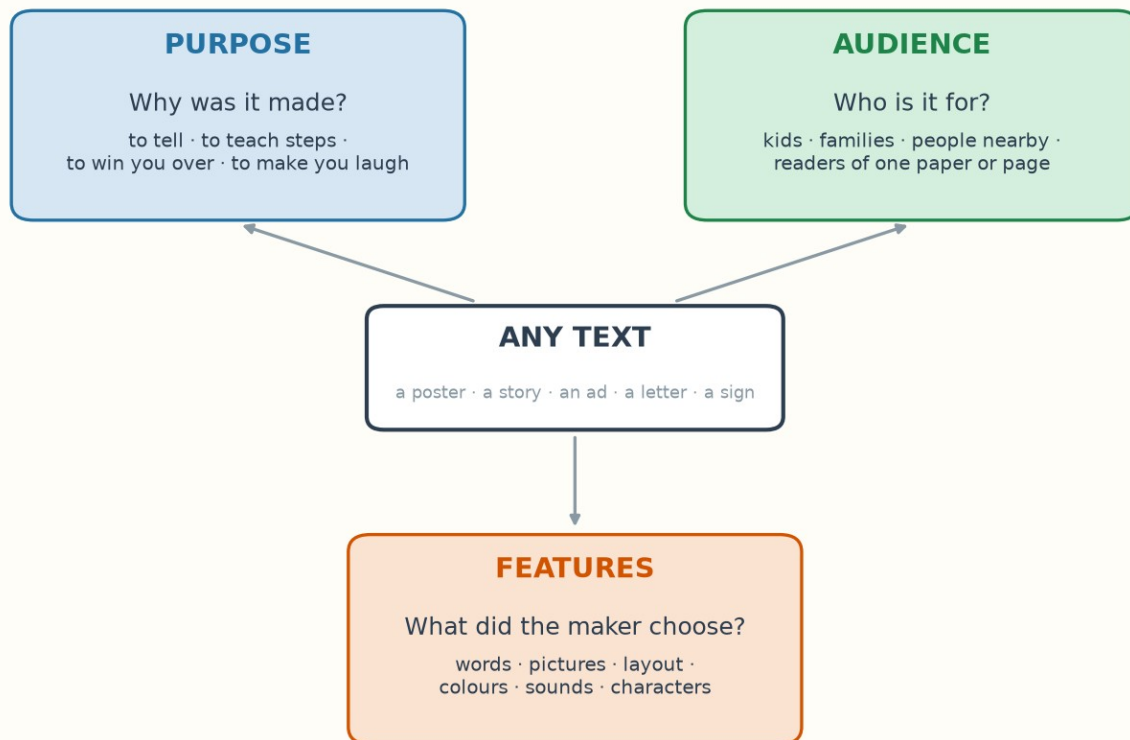
Where you are: In Level 4 you identified features of texts. In Section 1C you looked at the stages different types of texts move through. This section is the next step: not just *spot* a feature, but *explain* it — say why the maker chose it, and how it meets the purpose of the text and the audience it is for. Making your own texts is Section 5D's job. Here, you read like a maker.

1 Three questions to ask about every text

Every text is made by someone, for a reason, for someone else. That means three questions can open up any text:

- **Purpose** — Why was it made? To tell a story? To teach steps? To win you over? To make you laugh?
- **Audience** — Who is it for? Kids? Families? People who live nearby? Readers of one paper or page?
- **Features** — What did the maker choose? Words? Pictures? Layout? Colours? Sounds? Characters?

Three questions to ask about every text



Ask all three, and you can explain why a text looks the way it does.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

Three question cards — PURPOSE (Why was it made?), AUDIENCE (Who is it for?) and FEATURES (What did the maker choose?) — joined by arrows to a centre card labelled ANY TEXT

A feature is **characteristic** of a text type when it is typical of that kind of text — when you would expect to find it there. A big heading and a “what to do next” line are characteristic of posters. “Once upon a time” is characteristic of stories.

Key words so far

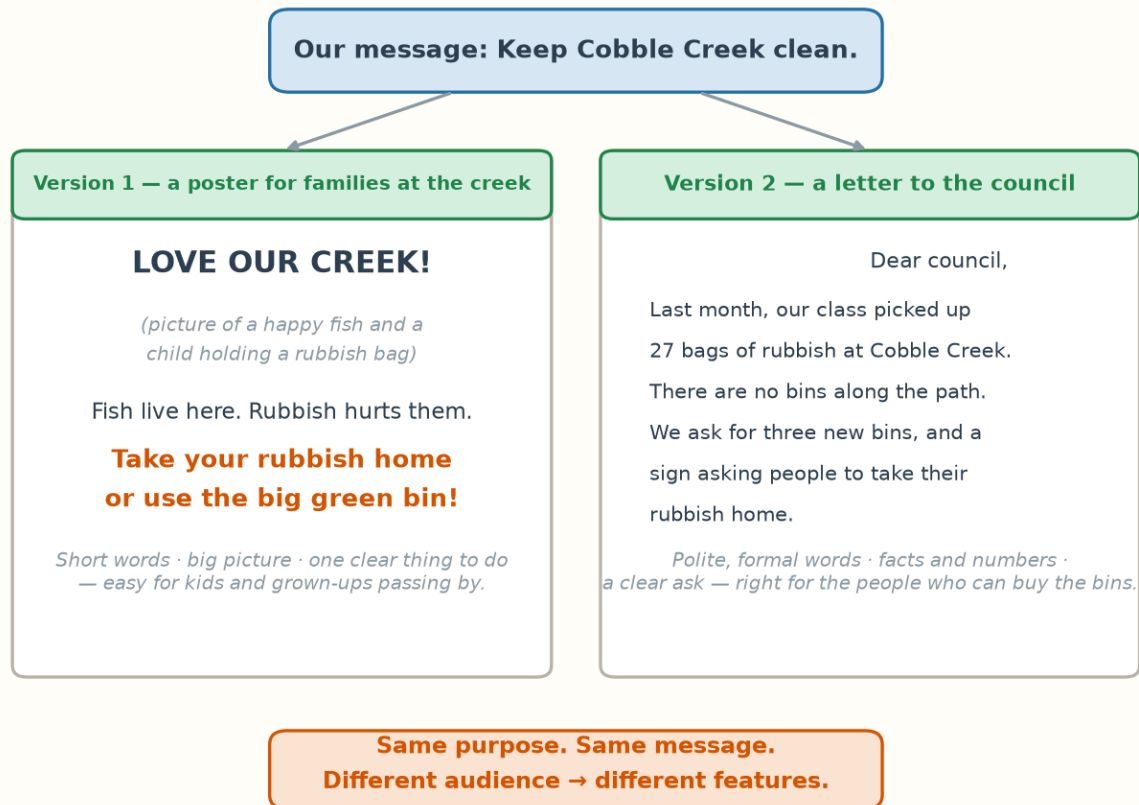
- **purpose** — why a text is made.
- **audience** — who a text is for.
- **feature** — a choice the maker made: words, pictures, layout, colours, sounds, characters.
- **characteristic** — typical of a kind of text; what you expect to find there.

2 Features have jobs

A feature is not just there to look nice. Every feature has a job: it serves the purpose, or it fits the audience.

Here is one message, shaped two ways. The purpose is the same both times — keep the creek clean — but the audience changes, so the features change.

Same message, two audiences, different features



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

One message bubble, “Our message: Keep Cobble Creek clean.”, leading to two versions: a poster for families at the creek, and a letter to the council

Read the two versions side by side:

- The **poster** uses short words, a big picture and one clear thing to do. Job: families passing by can read it in three seconds — even little kids get the message.
- The **letter** uses polite, formal words, facts and numbers, and a clear ask. Job: the council is the audience that can actually buy the bins, and they need facts they can check.

Same purpose. Same message. Different audience → different features. When you can say *why* a feature is there, you are explaining, not just spotting.

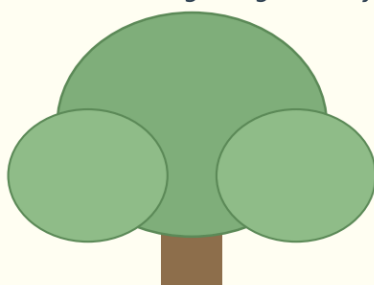
3 Model A — a text that stands up for something

Some texts are made to get a community acting together. A text like that is called an **advocacy text**: it stands up for something and asks people to act — often for something local, like a park, a creek or a tree.

Read this poster. Everything in it was made up for this book, so you can practise on it.

SAVE THE BIG FIG TREE

Our street's oldest living thing needs your help.



(a picture of the big tree, drawn by the Tree Group)

For 80 years, the big fig tree on the corner of Hillside Parade
has shaded our walks and caught the rain.

Now there is a plan to cut it down for four new parking spaces.

This tree is home to birds, possums and insects.

Sign our letter. Come to the meeting.

Tuesday 6 September · 6 pm · Hillside Hall

From the Tree Group, Hillside Parade

(This poster was written for this book. The street, the tree and the group are made up, so you can practise reading advocacy texts.)

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

An advocacy poster headed *SAVE THE BIG FIG TREE*, with a drawn tree, a fact strip about the birds, possums and insects that live in it, and a call to action giving a day, time and place

SAVE THE BIG FIG TREE *Our street's oldest living thing needs your help.*

For 80 years, the big fig tree on the corner of Hillside Parade has shaded our walks and caught the rain.
Now there is a plan to cut it down for four new parking spaces.

This tree is home to birds, possums and insects.

Sign our letter. Come to the meeting. Tuesday 6 September · 6 pm · Hillside Hall

From the Tree Group, Hillside Parade

(This poster was written for this book. The street, the tree and the group are made up, so you can practise reading advocacy texts.)

Now the explanation. The **purpose** is to get people to act: save the tree by signing and coming. The **audience** is people who live nearby — the ones walking past the poster.

Feature by feature, each choice has a job:

The fig-tree poster, feature by feature

What the maker chose — and the job each choice does

The feature	Its job
A big, bold heading: “SAVE THE BIG FIG TREE”	People walking past can read it from across the street — it grabs attention.
Feeling words: “our street’s oldest living thing”	Readers start to care. The tree feels like it belongs to everyone.
True facts: 80 years old, home to birds and insects	Readers can trust the message — and check it for themselves.
A picture of the tree	The audience sees what they would lose — not just words about it.
A call to action: sign, come, with the day, time and place	Readers know exactly what to do next — and it is easy to do.

Every feature works for the purpose (save the tree) and fits the audience (people who live nearby).

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

A two-column figure matching each feature of the fig-tree poster — big bold heading, feeling words, true facts, picture of the tree, call to action — to the job it does, colour-coded by whether the job serves the purpose or fits the audience

Notice the pattern: every feature either serves the purpose (makes readers care, trust, act) or fits the audience (quick to read, easy to see, about *their* street) — and the best ones do both.

One more feature name to know: a **call to action** is the part of a text that tells readers exactly what to do next, and when and where. “Sign our letter. Come to the meeting. Tuesday 6 September · 6 pm · Hillside Hall” is the call to action here. An advocacy text almost always has one — a purpose of “get people acting” needs a next step.

Key words so far

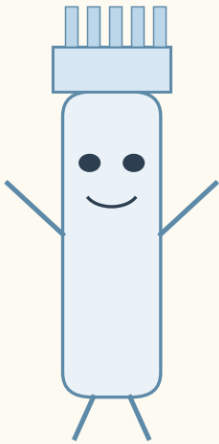
- **advocacy text** — a text that stands up for something and asks people to act, often for something local.
- **call to action** — the part of a text that tells readers exactly what to do next.

4 Model B — when a character carries the message

An advocacy poster leans on facts and feeling words. Another kind of text that tries to win you over — a **persuasive text** — often uses a **character** instead: a made-up figure, animal or object with a face and a name.

Health ads love characters. Here is a made-up one, written and drawn for this book.

BRISTLE'S BIG BRUSH-UP!
a made-up ad for practising reading ads



Bristle

Two minutes, top and bottom —
let's make those teeth shine!

Brushing morning and night keeps teeth
strong and gums healthy.

TWICE A DAY, EVERY DAY!

Grab your brush tonight and join in!

*(This ad was written and drawn for this book. Bristle is not selling anything —
you are practising reading ads that use characters.)*

*An advertisement headed **BRISTLE'S BIG BRUSH-UP!** showing Bristle, a smiling toothbrush character, with a speech bubble, a health fact about brushing, the slogan **TWICE A DAY, EVERY DAY!** and a call to action*

BRISTLE'S BIG BRUSH-UP! Bristle says: “Two minutes, top and bottom — let’s make those teeth shine!”

Brushing morning and night keeps teeth strong and gums healthy.

TWICE A DAY, EVERY DAY! Grab your brush tonight and join in!

(This ad was written and drawn for this book. Bristle is not selling anything — you are practising reading ads that use characters.)

How does the character deliver the message?

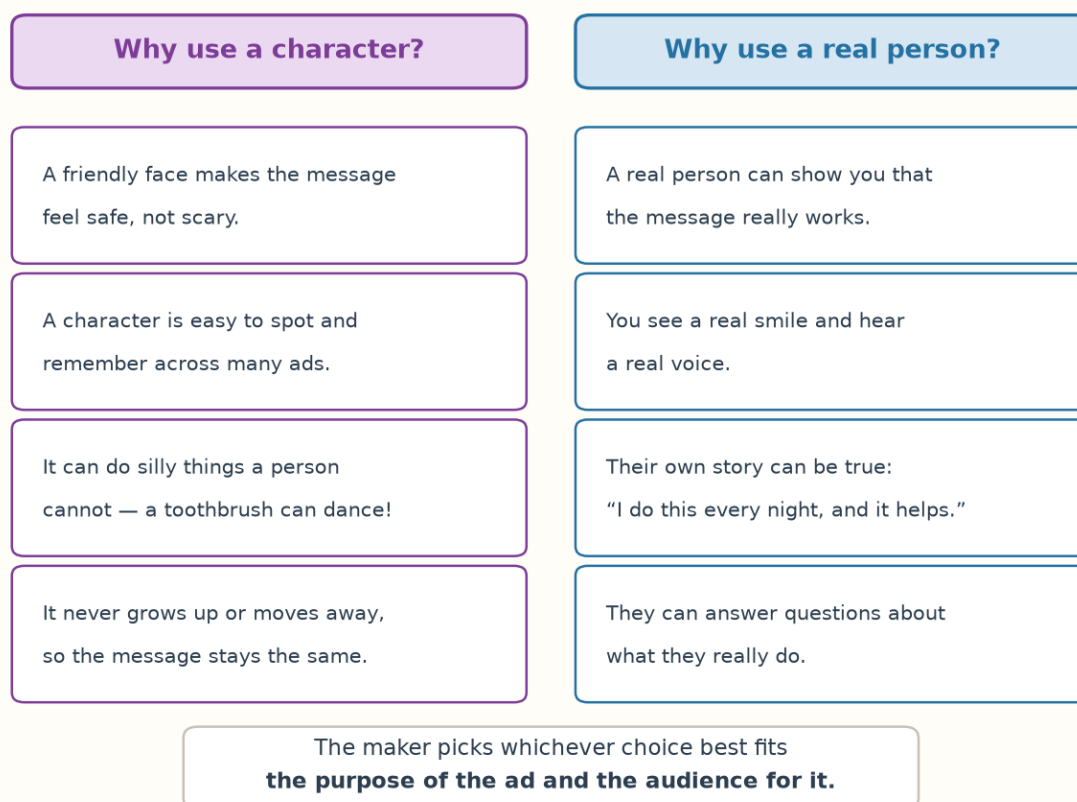
- Bristle makes the message feel friendly, not scary. A smiling toothbrush saying “let’s” feels like a mate, not a boss.
- Bristle is easy to spot and remember. See the same face on a poster and on a page in your reader, and you know straight away whose message it is.
- Bristle can do silly things a real person cannot — a toothbrush can dance! Silly is memorable.

And the line **TWICE A DAY, EVERY DAY!** is a **slogan**: a short, catchy line made to be remembered. You catch yourself saying it later. That is its whole job.

Why a character instead of a real person? Both choices can work — the maker picks the one that fits the purpose and the audience best.

Characters or real people? Both can work.

Why a maker might choose each one in an ad



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

A two-column figure: four reasons a maker might choose a character (friendly not scary, easy to remember, can do silly things, never changes) and four reasons a maker might choose a real person (can show the message works, real smile and voice, a true story, can answer questions), with a summary card saying the choice depends on the purpose and the audience

So when you meet an ad with a character, ask the Section 1 questions *past* the friendly face: what is the message, and who wants me to do what? The character is there to make you feel something. Your job is to also think: is the message true, and is it for me?

Key words so far

- **persuasive text** — a text that tries to win you over to think or do something.
- **character** (in an ad) — a made-up figure, animal or object that carries the message.
- **slogan** — a short, catchy line made to be remembered.

5 Explain it yourself — the five-step checklist

When a question says *explain*, run the checklist. Steps 1–3 are the questions from Section 1; steps 4–5 turn spotting into explaining.

FEATURE-SPOTTING CHECKLIST



1. What kind of text is it?

(Think of Section 1C: narrative, procedure, persuasive ...)



2. What is its purpose? Why was it made?

(to tell, to teach steps, to win you over, to entertain)



3. Who is the audience?

(kids, families, people nearby, readers of one page)



4. Circle three features the maker chose.

(words, pictures, layout, colours, sounds, characters)



5. For each one, finish this sentence:

"This feature is here SO THAT ..."

If you can say the "so that" for each feature, you can explain how the text meets its purpose and fits its audience.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

A five-step *FEATURE-SPOTTING CHECKLIST* card: 1 what kind of text is it, 2 what is its purpose, 3 who is the audience, 4 circle three features the maker chose, 5 finish the sentence "This feature is here SO THAT ..." for each

The magic sentence is step 5. It forces the job into the open:

- "The maker used **a big, bold heading** SO THAT **people walking past read it first.**"
- "The maker used **Bristle** SO THAT **the message feels fun, not scary.**"

If your "so that" is about the purpose or the audience, you are explaining how the text meets them. If you can only say "it looks nice", keep digging.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Name the three questions from Section 1. Then answer each one in a single line for the Bristle ad (Model B).

Q2. Match each feature to its job, then say each pair as a “so that” sentence.

Match each feature to its job

Draw a line from each feature card to the job it does. Say each pair with “so that”.

1 A big, bold heading

2 Short, easy words

3 True facts and numbers

4 A warm, fun character

5 A big, bright picture

A so the message feels fun, not scary.

B so readers can trust it and check it.

C so people walking past read it first.

D so little kids can read it fast.

E so you see what it is about at a glance.

*Example: “The maker used short, easy words
so that little kids can read it fast.”*

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

A matching figure: five feature cards on the left (a big, bold heading; short, easy words; true facts and numbers; a warm, fun character; a big, bright picture) and five job cards on the right (so the message feels fun, not scary; so readers can trust it and check it; so people walking past read it first; so little kids can read it fast; so you see what it is about at a glance)

Q3. Look at Model A. (a) What is its purpose? (b) Who is its audience? (c) Copy two features and say the job of each.

Q4. Model A’s audience is people who live nearby. Find one feature that fits *that* audience, and explain it with a “so that” sentence.

Q5. Model B: name two ways Bristle helps deliver the message.

Q6. Model B: give one reason the maker might have used a character instead of a real person.

Q7. Section 2 shaped one message two ways. Explain why the letter would not work as a poster at the creek. Use the word *audience* in your answer.

Q8. Read this text, then run checklist steps 1–3 (kind, purpose, audience). After that, spot two features and say the job of each.

WALK TO SCHOOL WEEK! Stride in with us next week. Walking to school wakes up your body, clears your head and keeps cars off the gate. Every class that walks every day earns a point on the big board. Start Monday. Bring your hat. Walk with a friend.

Un scaffolded

Q9. These six cards come from three kinds of texts: narrative, procedure and advocacy. Sort them into pairs, name the kind of text each pair came from, and give one feature clue for each pair.

Sort the cards

Six openings from different texts. Which text type does each belong to?

"Once upon a time, deep in a dark forest, a small light began to glow."

"You will need: string, tape and a long paper tail."

"Sign our letter today — stand up for our park!"

"The girl tiptoed past the sleeping dragon and held her breath."

"Step 2: Fold the paper in half, then fold it again."

"Our park is worth saving. Join us on Saturday at 10 am."

Narrative

Procedure

Advocacy poster

Tip: ask what the text is trying to do — tell a story, teach steps, or win people over.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

Six text cards to sort: two story sentences (a "Once upon a time" opening and a girl tiptoeing past a sleeping dragon), two procedure sentences (a "You will need" list and a numbered folding step), and two advocacy sentences (a call to action for a park and a "worth saving" line)

Q10. The Tree Group's poster was made for people walking past on Hillside Parade. Now the group wants the same message in the school newsletter, for parents. Name two features they would change, and explain each with "so that".

Q11. Think of Bristle, or of a character ad you have seen on TV or on a page. Explain why the maker used a character instead of a real person. Then give your view: would a real person have done the job better here? Say why.

Q12. Pick any short text you meet this week — a sign, a packet, a page in a book. Run the whole five-step checklist on it, and write your step-5 sentences in full.



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Checkpoint 5B

Scenario. Your school’s garden club has put up this note.

FROM THE GUMNUT GARDEN CLUB

The old garden bed by the school gate has been empty all year.
We want to fill it with veggies and flowers — but we need a hand.

Could your family help? We are asking for:

- spare pots or tubs
- a packet of seeds
- ten minutes on Saturday morning

Every pot counts. Every seed counts.

Meet us by the school gate on Saturday at 9 am.

Thank you for helping us grow something good.

— The Gumnut Garden Club

(This note was written for this book. The club and the garden are made up, so you can show what you can do.)

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5B · Characteristic features

A note headed FROM THE GUMNUT GARDEN CLUB asking families for spare pots or tubs, a packet of seeds, or ten minutes on Saturday morning, with the line “Every pot counts. Every seed counts.” and a meeting time at the school gate, signed by the club

FROM THE GUMNUT GARDEN CLUB The old garden bed by the school gate has been empty all year. We want to fill it with veggies and flowers — but we need a hand.

Could your family help? We are asking for:

- spare pots or tubs
- a packet of seeds
- ten minutes on Saturday morning

Every pot counts. Every seed counts.

Meet us by the school gate on Saturday at 9 am. Thank you for helping us grow something good.

— The Gumnut Garden Club

(This note was written for this book. The club and the garden are made up, so you can show what you can do.)

Task. Explain how the features of this note meet its purpose and audience. In your answer: name the kind of text; name the purpose and the audience; and explain at least three features, each with a “so that” sentence. Write in full sentences.

Scored against the achievement standard.

Reading and Viewing (Level 5, in part): “They explain how different types of texts, both print and digital, are organised into characteristic stages for purpose. ... They evaluate information and ideas in texts.”

What to look for	What it shows
Names the kind of text, its purpose and its audience	You can open a text with the three questions
Spots at least three characteristic features	You know the choices makers make
Explains each feature with a “so that” tied to the purpose or the audience	You can explain, not just spot — the heart of this section
Says whether the note does its job, with a reason	You are weighing up texts, not just describing them

Note: score the reasoning, not the side reached. A strong answer can say the note works well or does not — what counts is how clearly each feature is tied to a job.

Sample answers

Q1. The three questions: Why was it made? Who is it for? What did the maker choose? For the Bristle ad — Purpose: to win kids over to brushing twice a day. Audience: kids (and the grown-ups who read with them). Features: a character with a face and a name, a speech bubble, a slogan, a big call to action. (Any three.)

Q2. 1–C, 2–D, 3–B, 4–A, 5–E. Example sentence: “The maker used a big, bold heading so that people walking past read it first.”

Q3. (a) Purpose: to get people to act to save the tree — sign the letter and come to the meeting. (b) Audience: people who live nearby on Hillside Parade. (c) Any two, e.g.: “80 years old” and “home to birds, possums and insects” are true facts, so that readers can trust the message and check it; the call to action gives the day, time and place, so that readers know exactly what to do next.

Q4. Example: the heading is big and bold so that people walking past — the audience — can read it from across the street. Or: the feeling words “our street’s oldest living thing” are here so that people nearby feel the tree is theirs to save.

Q5. Any two: Bristle makes the message feel friendly, not scary; Bristle is easy to spot and remember across many ads; Bristle can do silly things a real person cannot; the character never grows up or changes, so the message stays the same.

Q6. Example: a friendly face makes a health message feel safe, so kids listen instead of feeling told off. Or: a character is easy to remember, so the message sticks.

Q7. The letter is for the council, who can buy the bins; it uses long, polite sentences and facts to check. At the creek, families pass by in seconds, and little kids cannot read a letter that fast — and there is no picture to show the message. The poster’s short words, big picture and one clear thing to do fit *that* audience.

Q8. Kind: advocacy text (it asks people to act). Purpose: to get kids and families walking to school. Audience: students and their families. Any two features: the big heading WALK TO SCHOOL WEEK! is here so that you see what it is about at a glance; “wakes up your body, clears your head” gives reasons, so that readers want to join in; “Every class that walks every day earns a point” makes it a team game, so that kids encourage each other; “Bring your hat” is a helpful step, so that families know what to pack.

Q9. Narrative: “Once upon a time...” and “The girl tiptoed...” — clue: a story opening and story characters. Procedure: “You will need...” and “Step 2: Fold...” — clue: a things-to-get list and steps with numbers. Advocacy: “Sign our letter today...” and “Our park is worth saving...” — clue: a call to action and stand-up-for words.

Q10. Example: (1) They would swap the huge street-side heading for a smaller title, so that it fits a newsletter page where readers are already reading. (2) They would add the true facts (the tree’s age, the animals that live in it), so that parents who never walk past the tree can see why it matters. (3) They might change the call to action to “come to the meeting”, so that parents, who are at school twice a week anyway, know it is an easy step to take.

Q11. Example: Bristle makes a health message feel fun and safe, and a dancing toothbrush is memorable — a real person saying “brush twice a day” can feel like being told off. View: for little kids, the character does the job better; for grown-ups, a real person might work better, because a real person’s own story is easier to trust. (Any view, with a reason tied to purpose or audience.)

Q12. Answers will vary. A good one names the kind of text, the purpose and the audience, and gives at least one full step-5 sentence — e.g. “The packet uses a bright picture and a big brand name so that you spot it on the shelf.”

Checkpoint. The note is an advocacy text: a club standing up for its garden and asking people to act. Its purpose is to get families to give pots, seeds or ten minutes; its audience is the families of the school, grown-ups and kids reading a note at the gate. Features: (1) the list of three small asks is here so that helping feels easy — every family can do at least one; (2) “Every pot counts. Every seed counts.” works like a slogan, so that readers feel even a small gift matters; (3) the day, time and place (“Saturday at 9 am, by the school gate”) is a clear call to action, so that readers know exactly when and where to come; (4) the warm words (“we need a hand”, “thank you”) are here so that the note feels like a friendly ask, not an order. Weighing up: the note fits its audience because every ask is small and the next step is clear — a family reading it at the gate can say yes on the spot.

Comprehension strategies: evaluating information and building literal and inferred meaning

Section 5C · Chapter 5 — Literacy: understanding, analysing and creating texts · Owns VC2E5LY09 · Draws on VC2E5LY09.E01, VC2E5LY09.E02, VC2E5LY09.E03

Curriculum focus — quoted exactly as VCAA wrote it.

VC2E5LY09 — use comprehension strategies, such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning, to evaluate information and ideas to build literal and inferred meanings

VC2E5LY09.E01 — summarising ideas and information to determine the main idea of a text

VC2E5LY09.E02 — using research skills, including identifying research purpose; locating texts; gathering and organising information; evaluating relative value; evaluating the accuracy and currency of print and digital sources; and summarising information from several sources

VC2E5LY09.E03 — comparing texts on the same topic to identify similarities and differences in the ideas or information included

Theory

Part 1 — Your toolkit gets a new job

You already own six reading strategies. You have used them since Year 4, and they still work at Level 5. Figure 1 lays them out as cards.

Figure 1 — The six strategy cards, and the new Level 5 job.



Six rounded cards in two rows name the strategies — picture-making, predicting, connecting, summary-making, monitoring and questioning — above a strip naming the new Level 5 job: judging the information and ideas as you read.

At Level 5 the strategies take on a new job. Understanding a text is not enough. A strong reader also **judges** it: Is this true? Is this useful? Is this fair? The card in Figure 2 gives this judging job its big name.

Figure 2 — What the big word means.

What does 'evaluate' mean?

The curriculum uses this word but does not define it. So this section gives it a clear meaning:

To evaluate information or ideas means to judge how true, useful and fair they are — using evidence, not just a feeling.

You already do this kind of judging every day.

With a rumour

'Is that really true? Who saw it happen?'

With a game

'Are the rules fair for both sides?'

Reading is the same. A strong reader checks the information, instead of just swallowing it.

A definition card: to judge information or ideas means to decide, using evidence, how true, useful and fair they are; two everyday examples below, a rumour and a game, show the same judging.

Notice what the definition rests on: **evidence** — the clues and facts you can point to — not just a feeling. You will use evidence all through this section.

Part 2 — Two kinds of meaning: literal and inferred

Every text gives you two kinds of meaning.

- **Literal meaning** is right there in the words. The text says it directly, and you could underline it.
- **Inferred meaning** is not written down. You *infer* it: you work it out from clues in the text plus what you already know.

Model text 1 in Figure 3 shows both kinds at work in the one paragraph.

Figure 3 — Model text 1, 'The Friday Check', with literal and inferred clues marked.

Model text 1 — The Friday Check

Read it twice. First for the story — then hunt for clues.

blue = the text says it directly green = a clue; you do the working-out

Our class keeps a bee hive in the corner of the school garden.

Every Friday, Ms Chen opens the lid to check on the bees.

← the text says it

This Friday, she leaned in close and went very still then

← clues to work out

closed the lid slowly 'Right,' she said quietly

'Who would like to help me ring our beekeeper?'

Nobody moved Ms Chen picked up the phone and stepped away from the hive.

Two kinds of meaning:

LITERAL meaning — right there in the words. INFERRED meaning — you work it out from clues plus what you already know.

An original story about a class bee hive; blue boxes mark what the text says directly and green boxes mark clue phrases the reader works meaning out from; a key at the bottom defines the two kinds of meaning.

Read the green clues again: *leaned in close*, *very still*, *closed the lid slowly*, *quietly*, *Nobody moved*. Not one of them says 'Ms Chen is worried.' Yet by the last line, every reader knows it. That is the second kind of meaning at work: clues plus what you know give you meaning the text never spells out.

The blue parts matter just as much. When a question asks what the text *says*, the literal meaning is what you point to.

Part 3 — The main idea, and the details that hold it up

Ask of any text: *What is the whole text about?* The answer is the **main idea** — the big point every part of the text works towards. The other sentences are **details**: the smaller facts that hold the main idea up.

Model text 2 in Figure 4 shows the shape of a paragraph with the main idea and every detail tagged.

Figure 4 — Model text 2, 'Small Helpers, Big Job', with the main idea and each detail tagged.

Model text 2 — finding the main idea

MAIN IDEA

Bees do a big job in the garden: they move pollen, and that helps our food grow.

Small Helpers, Big Job

Bees are small, but they do a big job in our garden.

★ says the main idea

When a bee lands on a flower, a very fine yellow dust called pollen sticks to its furry body.

detail 1 — what pollen is

The bee flies to the next flower and leaves some of the pollen there.

detail 2 — how pollen moves

This moving of pollen helps fruit and seeds grow.

detail 3 — why it matters

Apples, berries, cucumbers and pumpkins all need bees at work.

detail 4 — foods that need bees

No wonder gardeners smile when they hear buzzing.

a closing sentence

How we found it: ask 'What is this text mostly about?', then check that every detail fits under your answer.

An original paragraph about bees moving pollen; a banner above states the main idea, and each sentence carries a tag: the sentence that says the main idea, four supporting details, and a closing sentence.

Making a summary is the fastest way to find a main idea: keep the biggest idea, let the small stuff go, and say what is left in one sentence.

But how do you know your main idea is right? Figure 5 shows the test, with three tries that miss in different ways.

Figure 5 — The main-idea test: too broad, just right, too narrow.

The main-idea test

Three students read Model text 2. Each writes one 'main idea'. Test each one.

A 'Many small animals live near flowers.' TOO BROAD The text is not about all small animals. It is about the one job bees do.	B 'Bees do a big job: moving pollen helps our food grow.' JUST RIGHT It covers what the whole text is mostly about — and every detail fits under it.	C 'Pollen is a very fine yellow dust.' TOO NARROW That is only one detail. The text says much more than what pollen is.
---	--	---

The test: does your sentence cover the WHOLE text — not more than the text, and not less?

Three cards each hold one student sentence offered as the main idea of Model text 2, marked *TOO BROAD*, *JUST RIGHT* or *TOO NARROW* with a reason; a rule below says the sentence must cover the whole text — not more than the text, and not less.

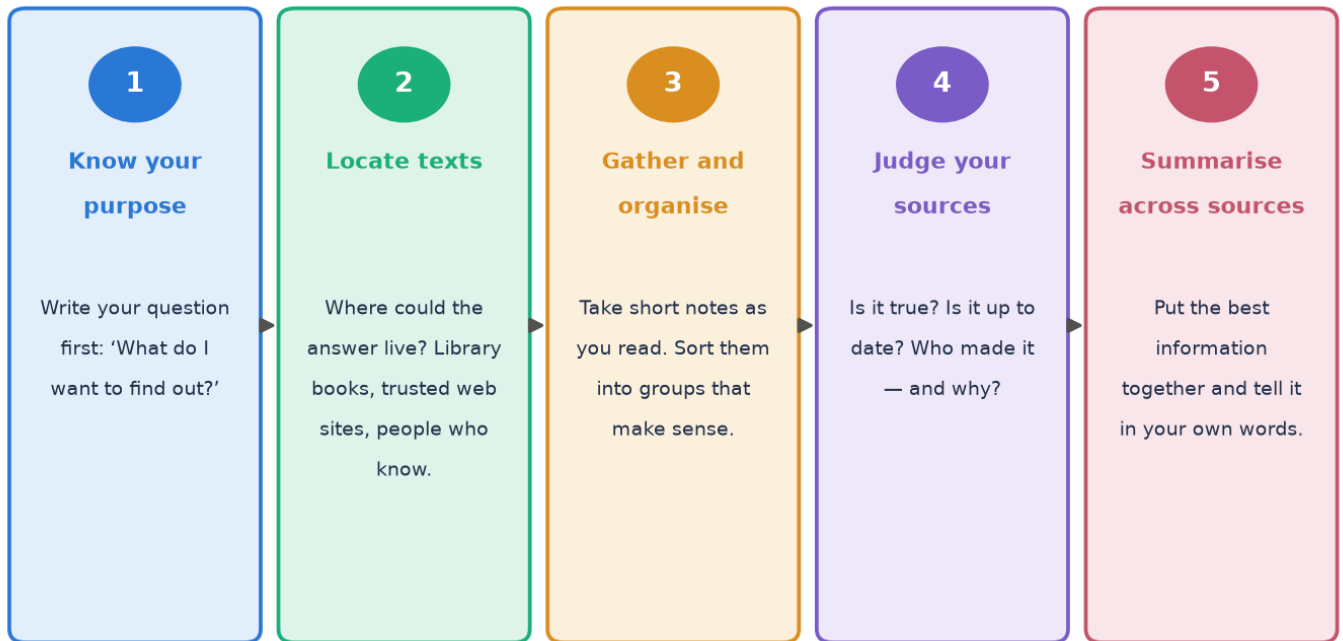
The rule to remember: the main idea covers the **whole** text — not more than the text, and not less.

Part 4 — Research: find it, then judge it

Sometimes the information you need is not in one text. You have to go and find it — that is research. Figure 6 turns research into five steps.

Figure 6 — The five research steps.

Research — five steps that keep you in control



Step 4 is the one most readers skip — and it is the one this section practises most.

A good researcher is not someone who finds information fast. It is someone who checks it.

Five connected step cards in a row: know your purpose; locate texts; gather and organise; judge your sources; and put the best information together in your own words.

Step 4 is where Level 5 readers shine. A **source** is any place information comes from — a book, a site, a poster, a person. Before you trust a source, look at it the way Mia does in Figures 7 and 8.

Figure 7 — Three sources Mia found for one research question.

Mia's sources

Mia's research question: 'What colours of flowers do bees like best?' She found these three sources.

SOURCE A <i>a book</i>	SOURCE B <i>a web site</i>	SOURCE C <i>an online post</i>
Title: Bees and Their World	Title: 'Gardening for Bees'	Title: 'My bees are the BEST!'
Where from: the school library	Where from: the city museum's web site	Where from: a site where anyone can post
Made: published in 1988	Made: updated March 2026	Made: no date shown
Made by: a scientist who studies bees	Made by: a museum worker, name on the page	Made by: someone who sells honey

Same question, three very different places to look. The next figure shows what Mia asks each one.

Three source cards for the question 'What colours of flowers do bees like best?': a 1988 library book by a scientist, a museum web page updated in March 2026 with a named worker, and an undated post by someone who sells honey.

Figure 8 — The four questions to ask any source.

Before you trust a source, ask four questions

Accuracy	Is the information right? Can you check it against another trusted source — or against what you can see for yourself?
Currency	When was it made or updated? Does the age matter for your question?
Who made it?	Is the writer someone who knows about this? Did they put their name to it?
Why made?	To help you learn — or to sell you something? A writer who is selling has a reason to make things sound great.
Old does not always mean wrong, and new does not always mean right. Check the writing against other sources — don't just guess from the cover.	

Four labelled bands — accuracy, currency, who made it, and why it was made — each with its question, above a rule: old does not always mean wrong, and new does not always mean right.

Two of those questions have proper names:

- **Accuracy** — is the information right? Can you check it against another trusted source?
- **Currency** — how new or old is it? A page updated last month has better currency than one from 1988 — *if* the age matters for your question.

And be fair while you judge. Old does not always mean wrong: the 1988 book's bee facts may still be solid. New does not always mean right: a shiny page updated yesterday can still stretch the truth. A writer who sells something has a *reason* to make it sound wonderful — they may still be right, but you check a little harder.

Part 5 — Same topic, different texts

When two texts cover the same topic, reading them side by side is one of the best moves a reader can make. You stop asking only *What does this text say?* and start asking *What did each writer choose to tell me?*

Figure 9 gives you two original texts about bees at one school.

Figure 9 — Text A and Text B, side by side.

Two texts, one topic

Both texts are about bees at our school. Read them side by side.

TEXT A <i>an informative article in the school magazine</i>	TEXT B <i>a news report in the school newsletter</i>
Why our garden needs bees Our school garden grows tomatoes, cucumbers and pumpkins. All of them need bees. Bees carry pollen from flower to flower, and this helps fruit grow. This year, fewer bees are visiting our garden, so some flowers are not turning into fruit. We can help by planting the flowers bees love best — lavender, rosemary and dandelions. More flowers means more bees, and more bees means more food.	Year 5 builds a bee hotel This week, Year 5 built a bee hotel beside the garden shed. Solitary bees — bees that live alone, not in a hive — need small holes to rest and lay eggs. The class filled a wooden box with dry sticks, bark and leaves, and drilled holes of different sizes. The hotel sits in a warm, dry spot. Solitary bees do not make honey, but they carry pollen just like hive bees, so they are just as useful to our garden.

Same topic — but did each writer choose the same things to tell you?

Two cards: Text A, an informative article ‘Why our garden needs bees’, and Text B, a news report ‘Year 5 builds a bee hotel’, both about bees at the same school garden.

Figure 10 shows one way to sort what you notice.

Figure 10 — A completed same-and-different sorting chart for Texts A and B.

Sorting what two texts tell you

One way to show what you found when comparing Text A and Text B.

In BOTH texts	Only in TEXT A	Only in TEXT B
• Bees help our school garden. • Bees carry pollen from flower to flower.	• Which foods need bees. • Fewer bees are visiting this year. • Flowers we can plant to help bees.	• What the class built, and what it is made of. • What solitary bees are. • Where the bee hotel sits.

Same topic — different choices about what to include. Noticing those choices is the skill.

A three-column chart: what both texts include, what only Text A includes, and what only Text B includes.

Both texts agree that bees help the garden. But only Text A tells you which foods need bees, and only Text B tells you about bees that live alone. Different choices, different purposes: Text A wants you to plant flowers; Text B wants you to know what the class built.

Finally, pull the whole section together with the reader's check in Figure 11. Two jobs, on every text.

Figure 11 — The reader's check: build the meaning, then judge it.

The reader's check — use it on any text

JOB 1 — Build the meaning	JOB 2 — Judge it
☐ What does the text say right there in the words?	☐ Is the information right? How do I know?
☐ What can I work out — and which words gave me the clue?	☐ Is it up to date? Does that matter here?
☐ What is the main idea?	☐ Who made it — and why did they make it?
☐ Which details hold the main idea up?	☐ What do other texts say about the same topic?

Strong readers do both jobs on every text — even the ones they enjoy.

Two checklist cards: Job 1, build the meaning (what the text says, what you can work out, the main idea, the details), and Job 2, judge it (is it right, is it current, who made it and why, what other texts say).

Worked examples

Example 1 — Literal or inferred? (with support)

Read this tiny passage, then follow the working.

Ada runs to the bee hotel and stops. It is on its side. Two of the holes are filled with mud. Ada sits down beside it, and a small smile grows on her face.

Working	Comment
'The bee hotel is on its side.' → literal	The text says it directly. You could underline it.
'Two of the holes are filled with mud.' → literal	Also said directly — another underline.
'Bees have moved into the hotel.' → inferred	The mud is the clue. You know that bees plug their holes with mud, so you work it out. The text never says it.
'Ada is pleased.' → inferred	'A small smile grows' is the clue. The text never says 'Ada is pleased', yet you know it.

Two literal facts, two inferred meanings — all from four sentences. That is the Level 5 habit: collect what the text says, then work out what it means.

Example 2 — Testing a main idea (with support)

Read the passage, then test three tries at the main idea.

A hive of honey bees is a busy team. One hive can hold about 60,000 bees. The queen lays the eggs. Worker bees clean the hive, feed the young, and fetch nectar and pollen. Drones are the male bees, and their one job is to mate with a queen. Every bee has a job, and together the jobs keep the hive alive.

Try	Verdict	Comment
‘Bees are interesting insects.’	Too broad	Any text about bees could sit under it. It says nothing this text works towards.
‘Every bee in a hive has a job, and the jobs keep the hive alive.’	Just right	The queen’s job, the workers’ jobs, the drones’ job — every detail fits under it.
‘The queen lays the eggs.’	Too narrow	True — but it is only one detail. The text says much more.

The just-right sentence passes the test from Figure 5: it covers the whole text — not more, not less.

Example 3 — Judging two sources (with support)

Two sources make two very different claims about bees. Judge them with the four questions from Figure 8.

Source 1 — a book, *The Life of the Honey Bee*, by a university bee scientist, published 2024. It says worker bees fetch nectar and pollen.

Source 2 — an online post, ‘THE AMAZING TRUTH ABOUT BEES!!!’, no date and no name on it. It says bees can smell fear.

Working	Comment
Who made it? Source 1 names a scientist who studies bees. Source 2 names nobody.	A named person stands behind the words.
Why was it made? Source 1 to help you learn. Source 2 reads like it wants clicks and shares.	The purpose changes how hard you check.
Currency: 2024 against no date at all.	Source 1 wins on currency — though for bee basics, an older careful book can still be right.
Accuracy: can you check it? ‘Bees fetch nectar’ matches books, sites and beekeepers. ‘Bees smell fear’ matches nothing else you can find.	When a claim matches nothing, the claim is the one on trial.

Verdict: trust Source 1. For Source 2 — don’t just swallow it. A wild claim with no name, no date and no check is a claim you set aside.

Practice questions

With support

Q1. Match each reader’s thought (a–d) to the strategy card in Figure 1 it belongs to.

- ‘I can see the garden in my head as I read.’
- ‘I bet the last line is Ms Chen making that phone call.’
- ‘This reminds me of our veggie patch at home.’
- ‘Wait — I lost the thread. Reread that part.’

Q2. Answer these two questions about Model text 1 (Figure 3). Both answers are literal — right there in the words.

- Who opens the hive lid to check on the bees?
- Where does the class keep the hive?

Q3. Now an inferred question about Model text 1.

- a. How do you think Ms Chen is feeling by the end of the text?
- b. Quote two green clue phrases that gave you the answer.

Q4. Look at Figure 5. In your own words, say why try A is too broad and why try C is too narrow.

Q5. Complete this summary frame for Model text 2 (Figure 4).

‘Bees are ____, but they do a ____ job: they move ____ from flower to flower, and this helps ____ and ____ grow.’

Q6. These six research actions (Figure 6) are out of order. Put them back in the right order.

- a. Put your notes into groups that make sense.
- b. Write your research question first.
- c. Check each source: is it true, is it current, who made it?
- d. Find books, sites and people that could hold the answer.
- e. Pull the best information together in your own words.
- f. Take short notes as you read.

Q7. Use Mia’s sources in Figure 7.

- a. Which source has the best currency? How can you tell?
- b. Which maker has the biggest reason to stretch the truth? Why?
- c. Source C says its bees are the best. Name one way Mia could check that claim.

Q8. Read Texts A and B in Figure 9. Write one same and one different that Figure 10 does **not** already list.

On your own

Q9. Read this passage, then answer parts a–c.

Behind the hall, a big grey tank catches rain from the roof. A pipe runs from the roof into the top of the tank. When the tank is full, it holds enough water for the garden all summer. This week, the class painted a fish on the side of the tank. Now the tank is the first thing you see in the yard.

- a. Write the main idea in one sentence.
- b. Give two details that hold it up.
- c. What can you work out about how the tank looks now, compared with before? Quote the clue.

Q10. Your research question: *Do bees like one colour of flower best?* Plan your research in four lines.

- a. Your purpose — what exactly do you want to find out?
- b. Two places you will locate texts.
- c. How you will gather and organise your notes.
- d. Two questions you will ask to judge each source.

Q11. Two short texts about walking to school. List two sames and two differences.

Text 1 — This term, 24 students in our class walk to school. Last term it was 16. Walking is good for the planet, and it wakes your brain up before class, says Ms Chen.

Text 2 — To walk to school safely, cross only at the lights, wear something bright, and walk with a friend or a grown-up. A walking group is even better.

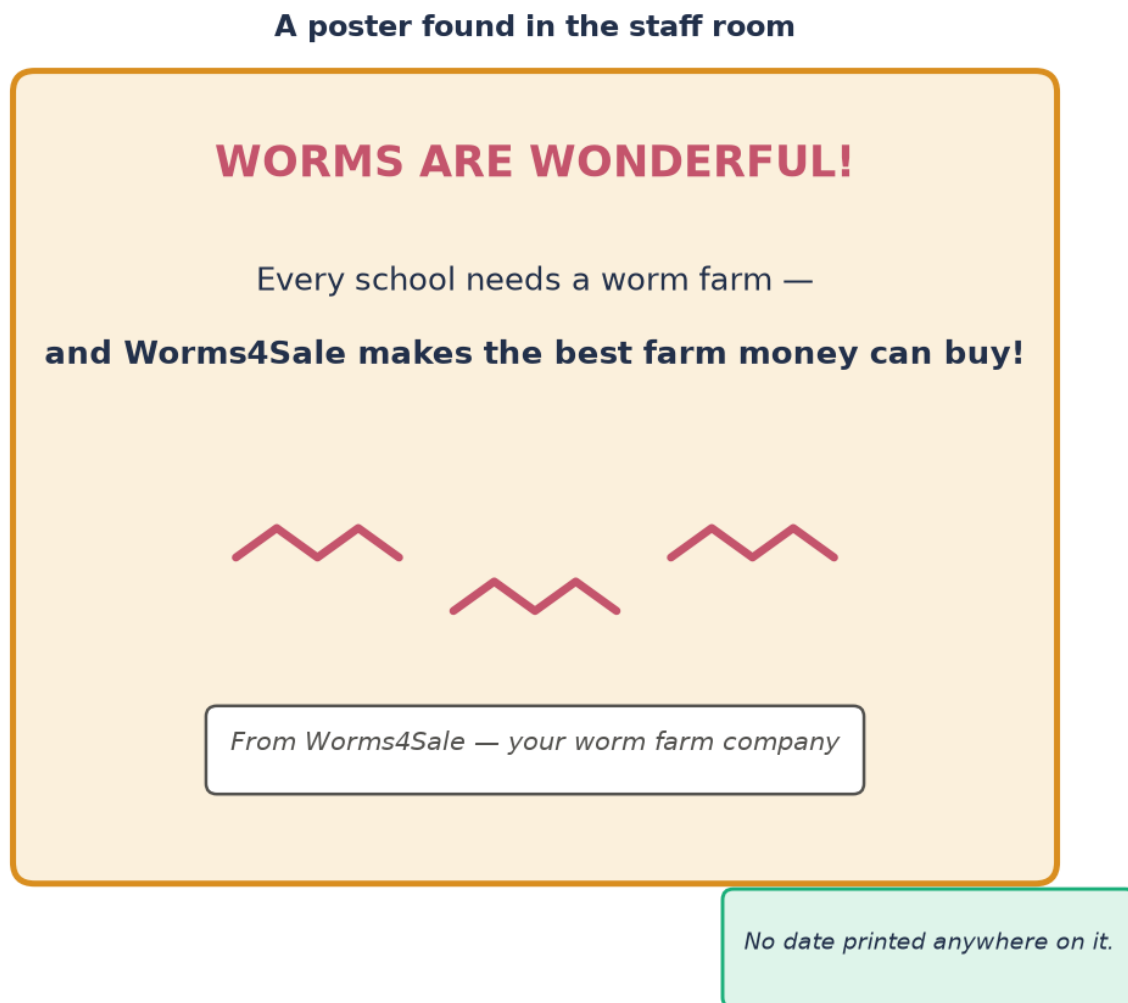
Q12. A video on a toy shop’s site says the shop’s new puzzle toy ‘makes kids smarter’. Before you trust it, write three questions you would ask, using the four questions from Figure 8.

Checkpoint

Read the passage and look at the poster in Figure 12. Then do parts (a), (b) and (c).

In March, our class set up a worm farm. The worms live in a bin under the garden bench. Each day, two students feed them fruit and vegetable scraps from lunch. The worms eat the scraps and turn them into dark, rich soil. We dig the soil into our veggie beds. Ms Chen says the worms have already eaten half of the class scraps this term.

Figure 12 — A poster found in the staff room.



A bright poster reading 'Worms are wonderful — every school needs a worm farm, and Worms4Sale makes the best farm money can buy', from a worm farm company; a sticky note says no date is printed on it at all.

- Write the **main idea** of the passage in one sentence, plus **two details** that hold it up.
- Write one **inferred** meaning about how the worm farm is going, and quote the clue words that let you work it out.
- Now judge the poster like a Level 5 reader. Who made it, and why? What does the missing date mean for its currency? Then give your verdict with evidence: is the poster a good source of facts about worm farms?

Scored against the Level 5 achievement standard (Reading and Viewing): They describe how texts convey feelings, mood, actions and ideas to build literal and inferred meanings. They evaluate information and ideas in texts.

What to look for

What it shows

A main idea that covers the whole passage, not one part of it

You can build literal meaning and hold it in one sentence.

What to look for	What it shows
Details quoted straight from the words	You can separate what the text says from what you added.
A worked-out meaning with its clue words named	You can build inferred meaning and show the evidence for it.
A verdict on the poster that names the maker, the maker's reason, and the missing date	You can judge information and ideas with evidence, not just a feeling.

Answers

Q1. a — the picture-making card; b — the predicting card; c — the connecting card; d — the monitoring card.

Q2. a. Ms Chen. b. In the corner of the school garden.

Q3. a. Worried (something is wrong with the bees). b. Any two of: *leaned in close*; *went very still*; *closed the lid slowly*; *said quietly*; *Nobody moved*.

Q4. A is too broad because the text is not about all small animals — it is about the one job bees do. C is too narrow because pollen being a fine dust is only one detail; the text says much more.

Q5. small; big; pollen; fruit; seeds.

Q6. b, d, f, a, c, e.

Q7. a. Source B — it was updated in March 2026, the newest date shown. b. The honey seller (Source C) — someone selling honey has a reason to make bees sound wonderful. c. Check it against a book or a trusted site, or ask a beekeeper.

Q8. Same (example): both texts say bees carry pollen from flower to flower. Different (example): Text A is written to make you do something (plant flowers); Text B tells you something the class already did.

Q9. a. The class tank catches and stores rain for the garden. b. Any two of: the pipe runs from the roof into the tank; a full tank holds enough water for the garden all summer. c. The tank now stands out / you notice it first; clue: ‘Now the tank is the first thing you see in the yard.’

Q10. Answers vary. A strong plan names a clear purpose (which colours bees visit most), two sensible places to locate texts (a library book; a trusted site such as a museum or bee group), notes kept in groups (one group per colour), and two judging questions from Figure 8.

Q11. Sames (any two): both are about walking to school; both say walking is a good thing. Differences (any two): Text 1 gives numbers about one class, Text 2 gives no numbers; Text 2 gives safety rules, Text 1 does not; Text 1 quotes a named teacher, Text 2 names nobody.

Q12. Any three, such as: Who made the video — the shop that sells the toy? Why was it made — to sell puzzles, not to test them? Is it accurate — do any other sources say the same? Is it current — when was it made?

Checkpoint. a. Main idea: the class worm farm turns lunch scraps into soil for the garden beds. Details (any two): two students feed the worms each day; the worms turn scraps into dark, rich soil; the soil goes into the veggie beds. b. Example worked-out meaning: the worm farm is going well; clue: ‘the worms have already eaten half of the class scraps this term.’ c. The poster was made by Worms4Sale, a company that sells worm farms, so it has a reason to stretch the truth; no date is printed, so its currency cannot be checked; fine as an ad, poor as a source of facts — check the claims against a book or trusted site first.

Worked solutions

Q3. The text never says ‘Ms Chen is worried.’ You build that meaning from clues: she goes *very still*, closes the lid *slowly*, speaks *quietly*, and *Nobody moved* when she asked for help. Clues + what you know (people act that way when something is wrong) = a meaning you worked out. This is exactly the green-box work in Figure 3.

Q6. Research starts with the purpose (b), because a question tells you what to look for. Then you locate texts (d), take notes (f) and sort them (a) — gathering and organising. Then the step most readers skip: judge your sources (c). Last, you make a summary across sources, in your own words (e). That order is the flow of arrows in Figure 6.

Q7. Currency is a comparison: 1988, March 2026, no date — B is newest. But currency is only one question. The honey seller may still be right about some things; the point is that a seller has a *reason* to stretch, so you check their words against a source with nothing to sell.

Q9. The main idea must cover the whole passage: catching rain, storing it, using it on the garden. ‘The class painted a fish’ is a detail, not the main idea — the painting is really the clue for part c. Before, the tank was plain grey; now the

painted fish makes it stand out, which is why it is ‘the first thing you see’. The text never says ‘the tank looks great now’ — you inferred it.

Q11. Start with what both texts share — the topic — then look at the choices each writer made: numbers against no numbers, rules against news, a named person against nobody. Sorting into sames and differences is the chart from Figure 10 — here you built your own from two new texts.

Q12. The four questions from Figure 8 turn into three checks here. *Who made it?* A shop that sells the toy. *Why?* To sell toys — so the claim has a seller’s reason behind it. *Accuracy:* does any source with nothing to sell say the same? If the claim matches nothing, set the video aside. That is the judging habit in one small move: check the information, not just the shine on it.

Checkpoint (b) and (c). For (b), the clue ‘already eaten half of the class scraps this term’ lets you work out the farm is doing its job well — the text never says ‘the worm farm is a success’. For (c), a fair verdict names all three: the maker (a seller), the reason (sales), and the missing date (currency you cannot check). ‘Worms are wonderful’ may even be true — worm farms really do turn scraps into soil — but the poster is an advertisement. A Level 5 reader uses it as a clue that worm farms exist, and goes to a careful source for the facts.

Creating texts: structure, sequence, elaboration and multimodal elements

Curriculum focus — Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 5 · Literacy strand · sub-strand *Creating texts* · Section 5D · Owns content description VC2E5LY10 · Draws on elaborations VC2E5LY10.E01, VC2E5LY10.E02, VC2E5LY10.E03, VC2E5LY10.E04, VC2E5LY10.E05, VC2E5LY10.E06.

Content description VC2E5LY10 (verbatim): 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

Elaboration VC2E5LY10.E01 (verbatim): using research from print and digital resources to gather and organise information for writing

Elaboration VC2E5LY10.E02 (verbatim): planning a report on a topic, sequencing ideas logically and providing supporting detail, including graphics, sound and visuals, to enhance audience engagement and understanding

Elaboration VC2E5LY10.E03 (verbatim): selecting an appropriate text structure for the writing purpose, and sequencing content according to that text structure, introducing the topic and grouping related information in well-sequenced paragraphs with a concluding statement

Elaboration VC2E5LY10.E04 (verbatim): using vocabulary, including technical vocabulary, appropriate for purpose and context

Elaboration VC2E5LY10.E05 (verbatim): using appropriate grammatical features, including more complex sentences and relevant verb tenses, pronoun references, and adverb and noun groups/phrases for effective descriptions

Elaboration VC2E5LY10.E06 (verbatim): writing letters in print and by email, demonstrating understanding of audience

Where you are. You have already done a lot of the work this section builds on. You have shaped paragraphs around a main idea (Sections 1C and 1D), joined clauses into longer sentences (Section 2A), and matched text types to their jobs in other sections. Here, all of that comes together in one big job: **writing texts that work for a reader**. You will gather facts, plan their order, choose the right shape for your purpose, pick words and grammar that fit, and add pictures, graphics or sound when they help. You will also write letters, on paper and by email. Every text in this section is new writing, made up for this book. Polishing and editing a draft is the job of Section 5E — this section is about planning and writing the draft well.

Theory

Part 1 — Every text starts with three questions

Before a writer writes, a writer asks:

1. **Why am I writing this?** That *why* is the **purpose**.

purpose — the reason a text is made: to tell readers about something, to explain how to do something, to retell what happened, or to get readers to agree or act.

2. **Who is it for?** That *who* is the **audience**.

audience — the people a text is for. A text for the principal reads in a different way from a text for your best friend, even when the news is the same.

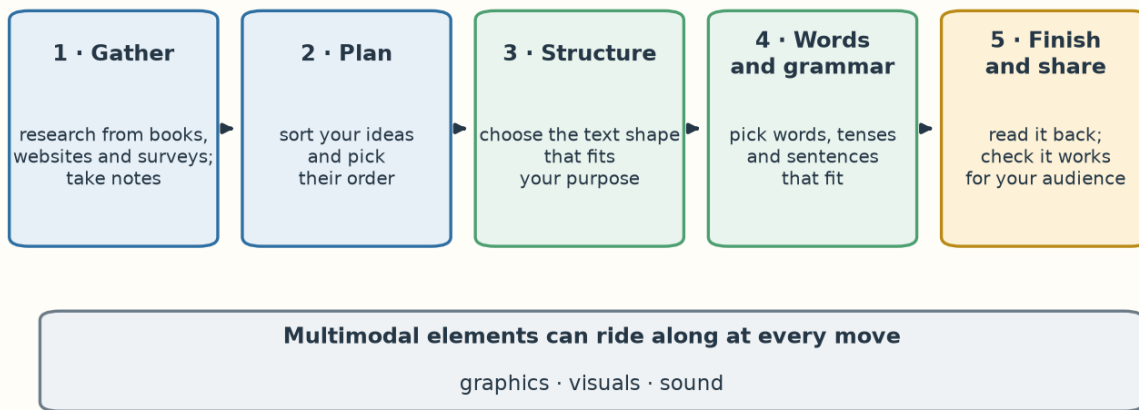
3. **What will it be made of?** Words, yes — but maybe also pictures, graphics or sound.

multimodal — using more than one way to carry meaning: words plus pictures, graphics, sound, or other modes. A **mode** is one way of carrying meaning — reading words, seeing images, hearing sound.

The purpose and the audience decide almost everything: the shape of the text, the words in it, and which pictures or sounds help. That is why they come first.

Writing a text is not one big leap. It is five small moves, and multimodal elements can ride along at every one of them:

The five moves of a writer



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5D · Creating texts

Five cards in a row, joined by arrows: 1 Gather (research from books, websites and surveys; take notes), 2 Plan (sort your ideas and pick their order), 3 Structure (choose the text shape that fits your purpose), 4 Words and grammar (pick words, tenses and sentences that fit), 5 Finish and share (read it back; check it works for your audience). Below the row, a wide card says multimodal elements can ride along at every move: graphics, visuals, sound

Figure 1 — The five moves of a writer

This section walks the five moves in order, using one running example: a class that builds a worm farm beside the canteen.

Part 2 — Move 1: gather (research)

Writers of information texts do not make facts up. They **research**.

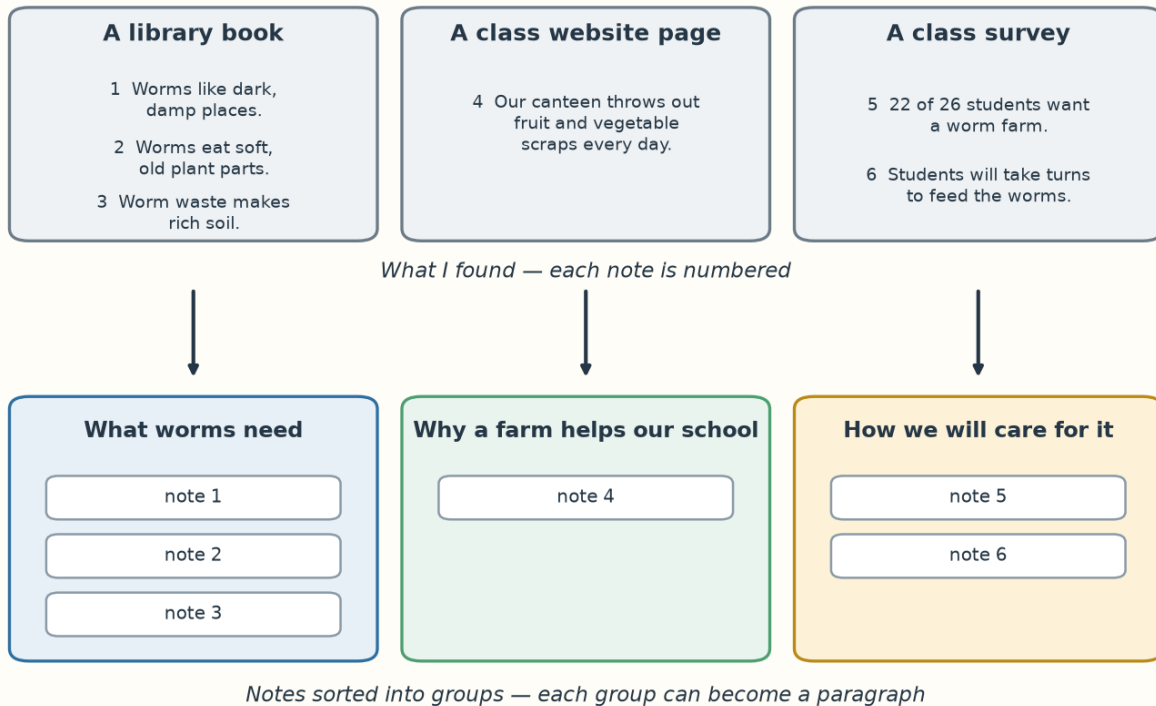
research — looking for facts in more than one place, and sorting what you find so your writing can use it. Each place you get a fact from is a **source**.

source — where a fact comes from. Print sources are on paper, like books. Digital sources are on screens, like websites. People can be sources too, when you ask them questions and write down their answers in a survey.

Good research uses more than one source. If a book and a website and a survey all point the same way, the fact is worth writing.

Here is a page of research notes about the worm farm. Every note is numbered, and every note names its source. Then the notes are sorted into groups — and each group can become one paragraph.

Research notes for a report: Our school worm farm



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5D · Creating texts

Three source cards at the top: a library book with notes 1 to 3 (worms like dark, damp places; worms eat soft, old plant parts; worm waste makes rich soil), a class website page with note 4 (the canteen throws out fruit and vegetable scraps every day), and a class survey with notes 5 and 6 (22 of 26 students want a worm farm; students will take turns to feed the worms). Arrows lead down to three group cards: What worms need (notes 1, 2, 3), Why a farm helps our school (note 4), How we will care for it (notes 5, 6)

Figure 2 — Research notes, sorted into groups

Notice the two steps: first **gather** (number the notes), then **sort** (put related notes in the same group). The sorting is what turns a pile of facts into a plan.

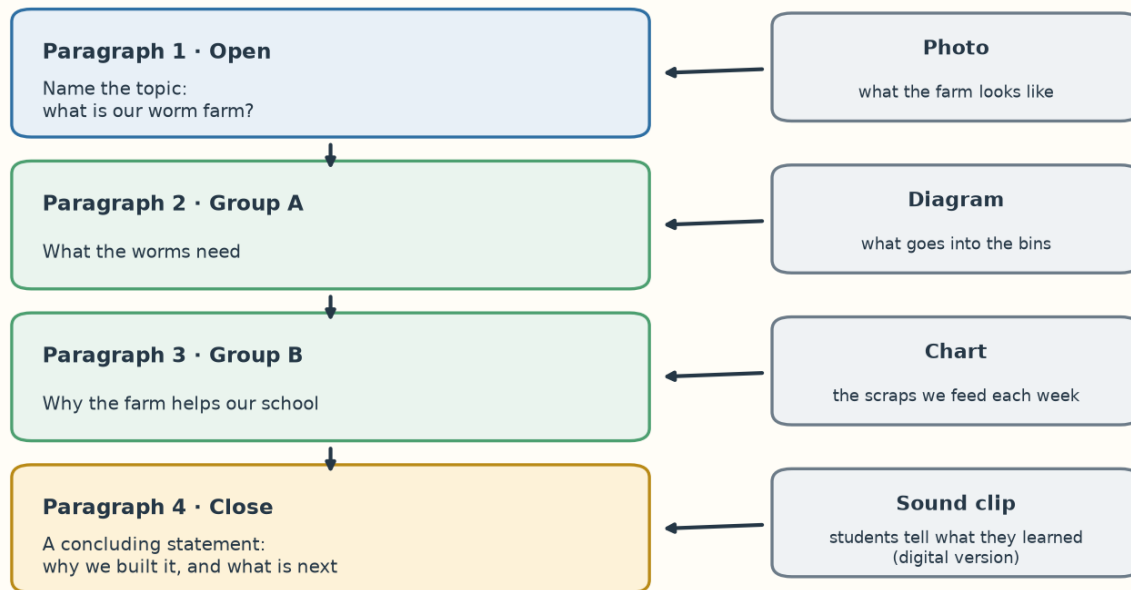
Part 3 — Move 2: plan a report

The groups from Figure 2 want a home. The home we will use in this section is a **report**.

report — a text that tells readers about a topic. It names the topic, groups related facts into paragraphs, and closes by wrapping the topic up.

A report is built from **paragraphs**, and each paragraph has one job: to hold one group of related information. The plan below takes the three groups from Figure 2 and gives each one a paragraph, with an opening paragraph before them and a close at the end.

A report plan — ideas in order, with multimodal helpers



Each picture or sound has a job — it helps the reader understand

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5D · Creating texts

A plan in two columns. Left column, top to bottom, joined by arrows: Paragraph 1 Open (name the topic: what is our worm farm?), Paragraph 2 Group A (what the worms need), Paragraph 3 Group B (why the farm helps our school), Paragraph 4 Close (a concluding statement: why we built it, and what is next). Right column: a Photo slot pointing to Paragraph 1 (what the farm looks like), a Diagram slot pointing to Paragraph 2 (what goes into the bins), a Chart slot pointing to Paragraph 3 (the scraps we feed each week), and a Sound clip slot pointing to Paragraph 4 (students tell what they learned, digital version)

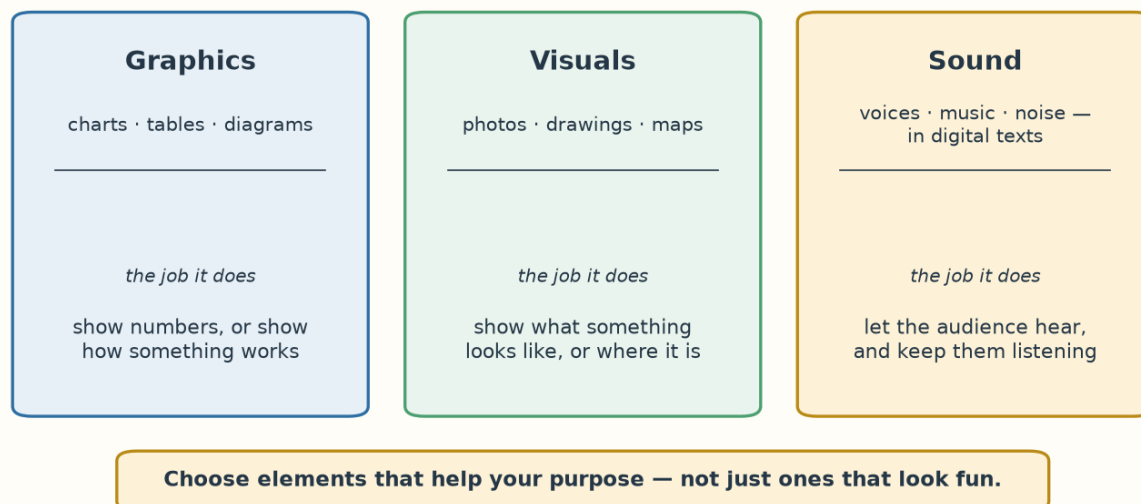
Figure 3 — A report plan: ideas in order, with multimodal helpers

Two things to notice. First, the plan fixes the **order**: open, group A, group B, close. Second, the pictures and the sound are not decorations. Each one has a **job** tied to a paragraph.

Writers also **elaborate** as they plan. To elaborate is to add more about an idea — a detail, a reason, an example — so the idea is full, not just a bare list. The notes in each group are the elaborating details for that paragraph's main idea.

The multimodal helpers in a plan come in three families:

What multimodal elements can do



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5D · Creating texts

Three cards: Graphics (charts, tables, diagrams — show numbers, or show how something works), Visuals (photos, drawings, maps — show what something looks like, or where it is), Sound (voices, music, noise in digital texts — let the audience hear, and keep them listening). A line below says: choose elements that help your purpose, not just ones that look fun

Figure 4 — What multimodal elements can do

A chart shows numbers better than a sentence can. A photo shows what a thing looks like. A sound clip lets the audience hear. The test is always the same: **does it help the reader?**

Part 4 — Move 3: choose the structure that fits the purpose

Different purposes need different shapes. The name for the shape of a text is its **text structure**.

text structure — the way a text is organised: how it opens, how the information is grouped and ordered, and how it closes.

sequence — the order the ideas come in. To sequence ideas is to put them in an order that makes sense for the purpose.

Four structures you will use often:

Choose the structure that fits your purpose

Your purpose	The structure that fits	How it opens and closes
Tell readers about a topic	Information report	names the topic · grouped facts · a concluding statement
Tell how to make or do something	Procedure	a goal · steps in order
Tell what happened	Recount	sets the time and place · events in order
Get readers to agree or act	Persuasive text	states a view · reasons · a call to act

The purpose decides the structure — choose the one that fits.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5D · Creating texts

A three-column table with four rows. Headers: Your purpose; The structure that fits; How it opens and closes. Row 1: Tell readers about a topic — Information report — names the topic, grouped facts, a concluding statement. Row 2: Tell how to make or do something — Procedure — a goal, steps in order. Row 3: Tell what happened — Recount — sets the time and place, events in order. Row 4: Get readers to agree or act — Persuasive text — states a view, reasons, a call to act

Figure 5 — Choose the structure that fits your purpose

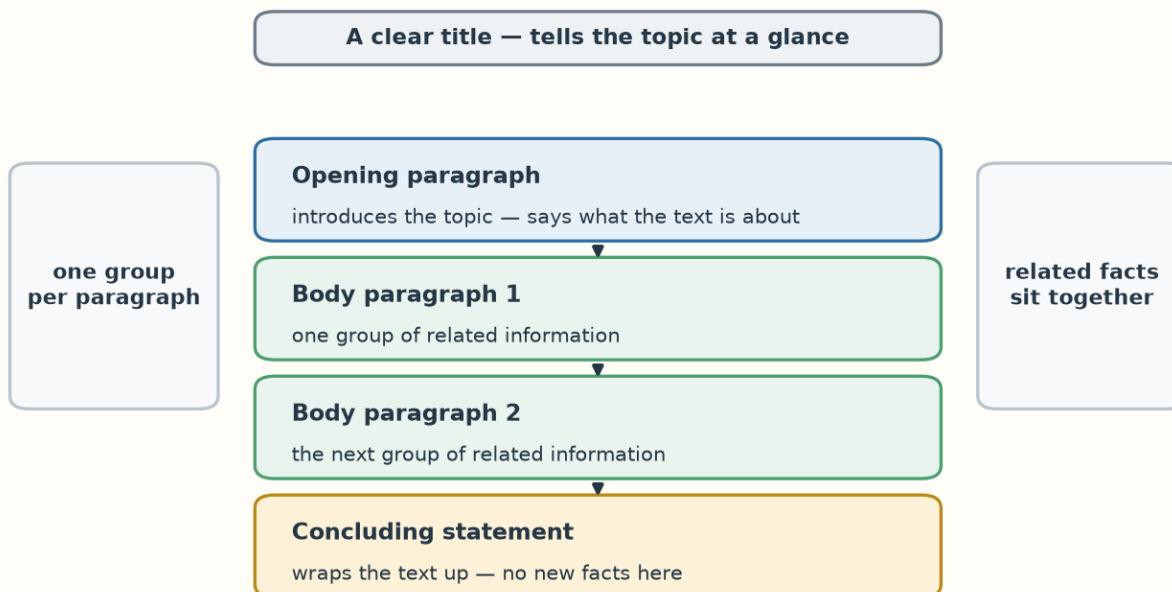
procedure — a text that tells how to make or do something, in steps.

recount — a text that retells what happened, in time order.

persuasive text — a text that gives a view and reasons, to get readers to agree or act.

This section's running example is a report, so here is the report shape in full:

The shape of an information report



The reader always knows where they are: what the text is about, what comes next, and when it is done.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5D · Creating texts

The shape of an information report: a title bar (a clear title tells the topic at a glance), then an opening paragraph (introduces the topic), body paragraph 1 (one group of related information), body paragraph 2 (the next group), and a concluding statement (wraps the text up, no new facts here), joined top to bottom by arrows. Side notes say: one group per paragraph, and related facts sit together

Figure 6 — The shape of an information report

The opening paragraph **introduces** the topic: it tells the reader what the text is about. Each body paragraph holds one group of related facts. The **concluding statement** wraps the text up — it looks back at the topic and closes the text; it does not start anything new.

concluding statement — the closing part of a report; it wraps the topic up without adding new facts.

With this shape, the reader always knows where they are: what the text is about, what comes next, and when it is done.

Part 5 — Move 4a: words that fit the purpose

A report uses the exact words its topic uses. Those exact words are **technical vocabulary**.

technical vocabulary — the special, exact words a topic uses. A worm farm report uses words like *compost* — the rich, soil-like mix that old plant matter turns into.

Technical words are not show-off words. They are the shortest way to say the exact thing. But a writer must remember the audience: **if the reader may not know the word, explain it.** The model report in Part 7 says *compost* and then shows what it means in the very next words.

Part 6 — Move 4b: a grammar toolkit

Words carry the meaning; grammar carries the words. Five tools do most of the work in a report:

A writer's grammar toolkit

Complex sentences *add information and reasons*

"We feed the worms once a week because too much food can go bad."

Tenses that fit *put the reader in the right time*

reports: what is so now · recounts: what happened · plans: what will happen

Clear pronouns *point at one thing only*

"The worms eat the scraps. Then they rest." — they = the worms

Adverb groups *tell how, when or where*

"We check the bins carefully each week."

Noun groups *describe more fully*

"the small red worms in the top bin"

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5D · Creating texts

Five wide cards stacked. *Complex sentences (add information and reasons): "We feed the worms once a week because too much food can go bad."* *Tenses that fit (put the reader in the right time): reports tell what is so now, recounts tell what happened, plans tell what will happen.* *Clear pronouns (point at one thing only): "The worms eat the scraps. Then they rest." — they = the worms.* *Adverb groups (tell how, when or where): "We check the bins carefully each week."* *Noun groups (describe a thing in more detail): "the small red worms in the top bin"*

Figure 7 — A writer's grammar toolkit

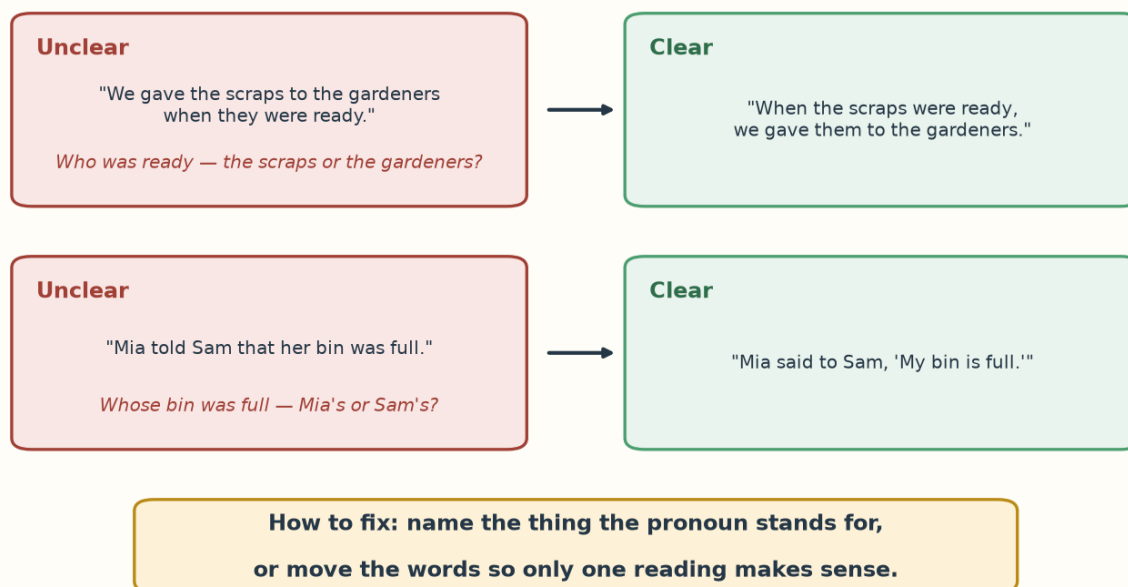
complex sentence — a sentence made of two clauses joined together, so one part adds a reason, a time, or more detail to the other. A **clause** is a group of words built around a verb. *We feed the worms once a week because too much food can go bad* is a complex sentence: the second clause gives the reason for the first.

Tenses put the reader in the right time. A report uses present tense most of the time, because it tells what is so now (*worms need a dark home*). A recount shifts to past (*last week we built the bins*). A plan looks ahead (*soon we will harvest*). You worked with tenses in Level 4 — here they are a writer's choice, matched to the purpose.

pronoun — a word that stands in for a noun, like *they*, *it*, *her*. A pronoun's **reference** is the thing it points at. In *The worms eat the scraps. Then they rest.*, the reference of *they* is *the worms*.

A pronoun is only useful when its reference is clear. If a pronoun could point at two things, the reader has to guess — and a reader who is guessing is a reader who is lost.

Pronouns must point at one clear thing



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Two unclear-to-clear pairs. First: "We gave the scraps to the gardeners when they were ready." (who was ready — the scraps or the gardeners?) fixed as "When the scraps were ready, we gave them to the gardeners." Second: "Mia told Sam that her bin was full." (whose bin was full — Mia's or Sam's?) fixed as "Mia said to Sam, 'My bin is full.'"

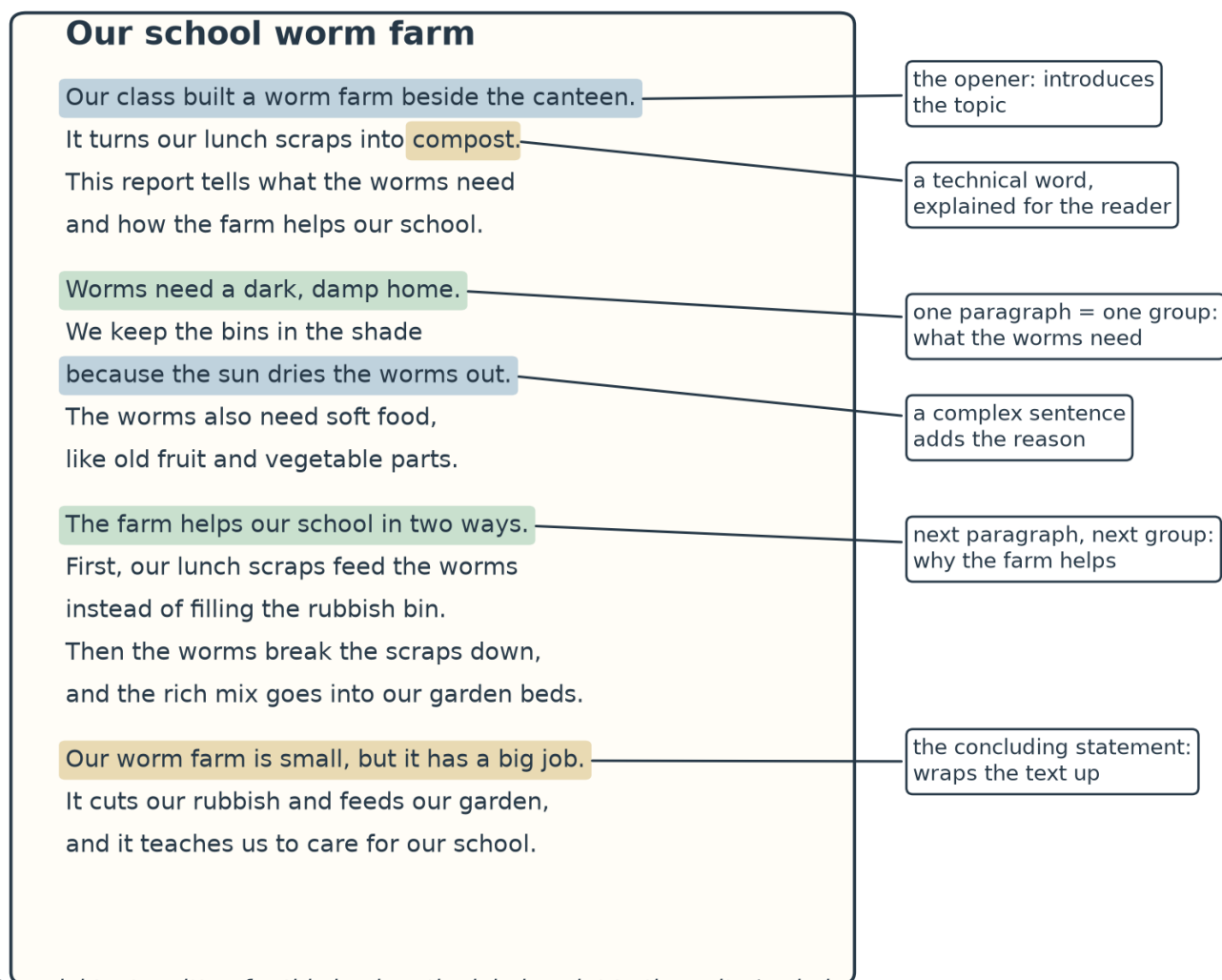
A box below says: how to fix — name the thing the pronoun stands for, or move the words so only one reading makes sense

Figure 8 — Pronouns must point at one clear thing

The last two tools make descriptions fuller. An **adverb group** tells how, when or where (*carefully each week*). A **noun group** packs more describing words around a thing (*the small red worms in the top bin*). Both let a writer add detail without adding a new sentence.

Part 7 — A model report, with labels

Here is the plan from Figure 3, written out. Every label points to a writer's choice from the moves above.



A model text, written for this book — the labels point to the writer's choices.

A model report titled *Our school worm farm*, written for this book, with six highlights and labels: the opening sentence highlighted in blue (the opener: introduces the topic); the word *compost* highlighted in amber (a technical word, explained for the reader); the first line of paragraph 2 in green (one paragraph = one group: what the worms need); the line *because the sun dries the worms out* in blue (a complex sentence adds the reason); the first line of paragraph 3 in green (next paragraph, next group: why the farm helps); the first line of paragraph 4 in amber (the concluding statement: wraps the text up)

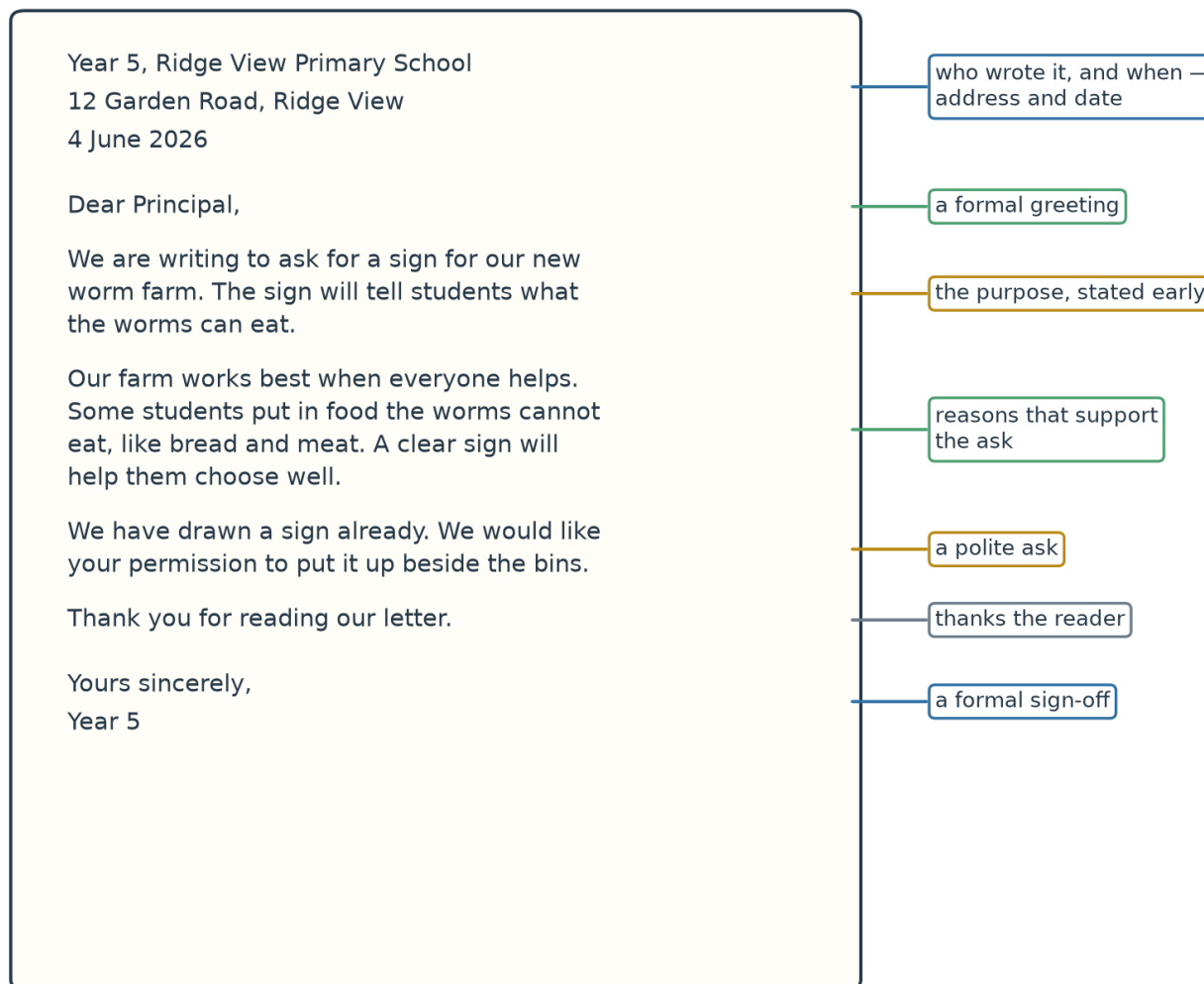
Figure 9 — Model text: Our school worm farm

Read the model the way a writer reads:

- **Paragraph 1 opens by introducing the topic** — *Our class built a worm farm beside the canteen.* — and closes by saying what the report will cover.
- **The technical word is explained.** *It turns our lunch scraps into compost.* The next paragraph shows compost doing its job, so the reader never has to guess.
- **One paragraph, one group.** Paragraph 2 holds everything the worms need; paragraph 3 holds everything the farm does for the school. No fact is in the wrong group.
- **A complex sentence adds a reason.** *We keep the bins in the shade because the sun dries the worms out.* The *because* clause does the explaining.
- **The concluding statement wraps up.** *Our worm farm is small, but it has a big job.* It looks back at the whole topic and closes the text. No new facts appear after it.

Part 8 — Letters in print and by email

Sometimes the purpose is to ask. A class that wants something — a sign, a visit, a change — writes to the person who can say yes. Letters travel two ways: in print, on paper, and by email, on a screen. Both are formal when the audience is formal, and both follow the same shape.



A model letter in print — written for this book.

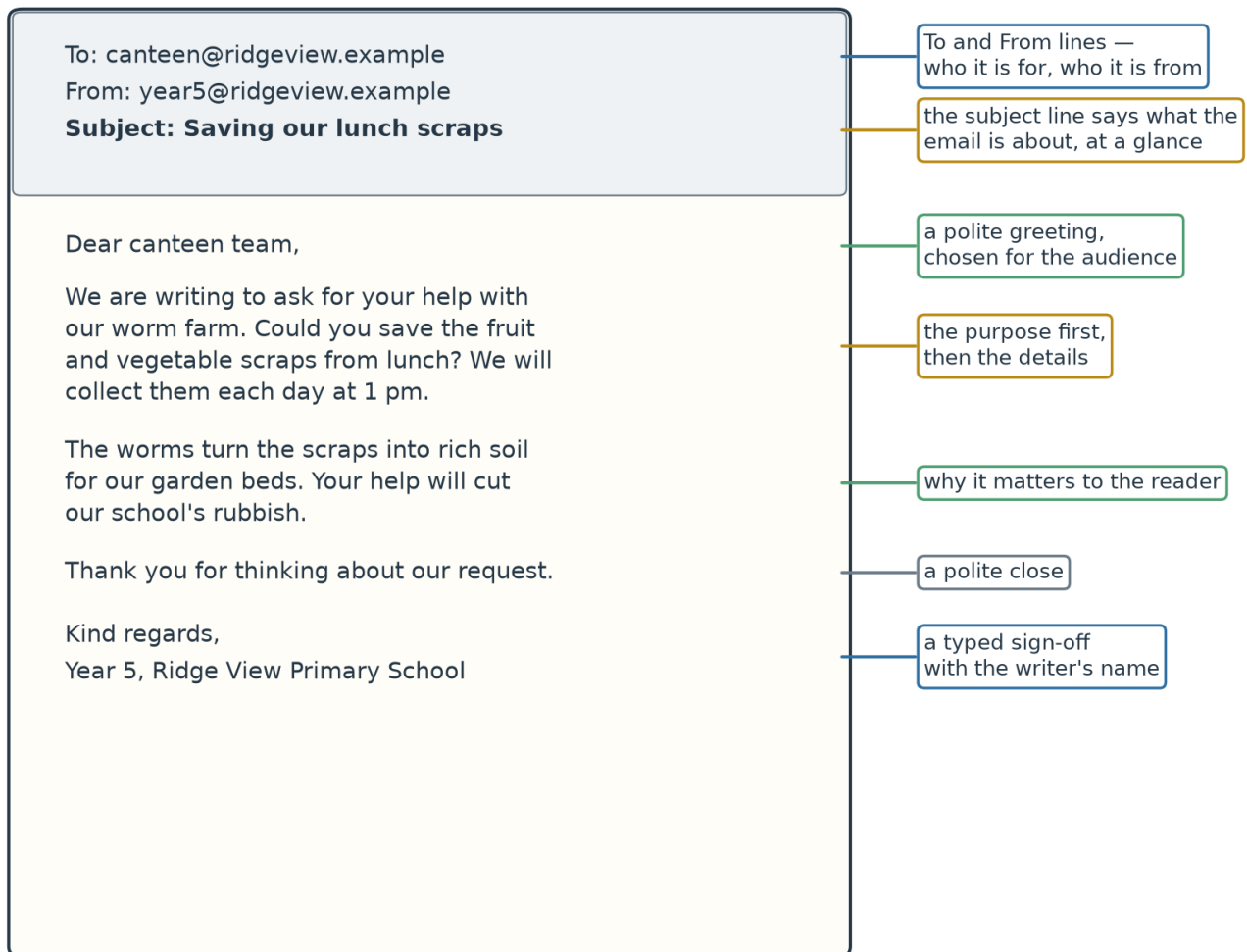
A model letter in print, written for this book, from Year 5 to the Principal, asking for a sign for the worm farm. Labels point to: the address and date at the top (who wrote it, and when); a formal greeting (Dear Principal,); the purpose stated early; reasons that support the ask; a polite ask; thanks the reader; a formal sign-off (Yours sincerely, Year 5)

Figure 10 — Model letter in print

greeting — the hello at the start of a letter or email, chosen for the audience: *Dear Principal*, not *Hey!*.

sign-off — the goodbye at the end of a letter or email, chosen for the audience: *Yours sincerely*, in a formal letter.

The same message, sent by email:



A model email — written for this book.

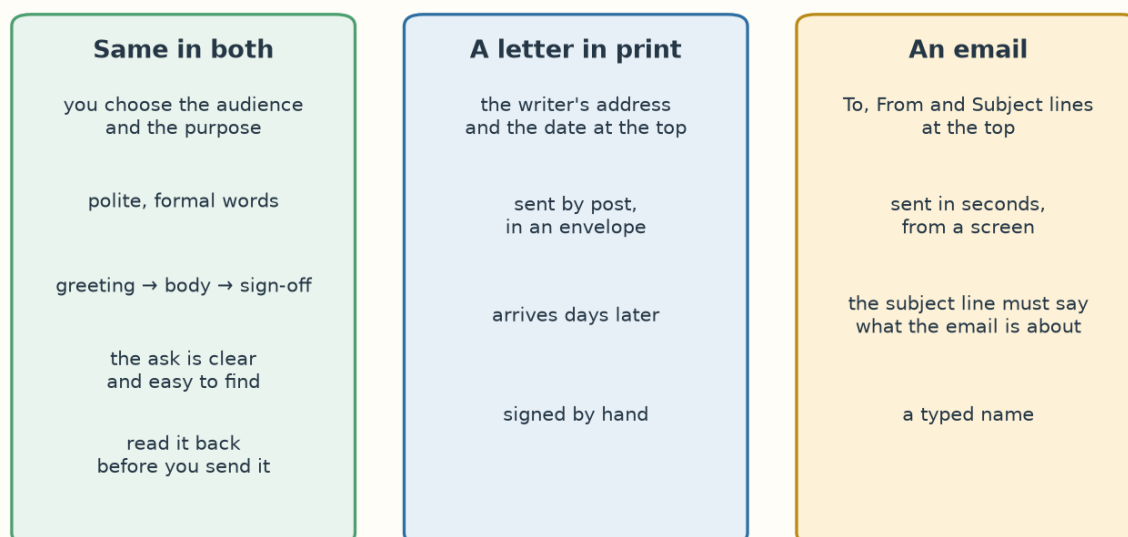
A model email, written for this book, from Year 5 to the canteen team, asking them to save fruit and vegetable scraps. Labels point to: the To and From lines (who it is for, who it is from); the subject line (says what the email is about, at a glance); a polite greeting chosen for the audience; the purpose first, then the details; why it matters to the reader; a polite close; a typed sign-off with the writer's name

Figure 11 — Model email

subject line — the line in an email that says, in a few words, what the email is about. A good subject line lets the reader file the email, find it again, and answer it fast.

What stays the same, and what changes, between the two ways?

One message, two ways to send it



The audience and purpose decide the words — the way it is sent decides the layout.

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Three cards. Same in both: you choose the audience and the purpose; polite, formal words; greeting, body, sign-off; the ask is clear and easy to find; read it back before you send it. A letter in print: the writer's address and the date at the top; sent by post in an envelope; arrives days later; signed by hand. An email: To, From and Subject lines at the top; sent in seconds from a screen; the subject line must say what the email is about; a typed name

Figure 12 — One message, two ways to send it

The audience and the purpose decide the words. The way it is sent decides the layout. A writer who knows both can carry the same message any way it needs to travel.

Key words so far

- **purpose** — the reason a text is made.
- **audience** — the people a text is for.
- **multimodal** — using more than one way to carry meaning: words plus pictures, graphics or sound.
- **research** — looking for facts in more than one source, and sorting them for writing.
- **source** — where a fact comes from: print, digital, or people.
- **report** — a text that tells readers about a topic, in grouped paragraphs.
- **paragraph** — one group of related information.
- **elaborate** — to add more about an idea: a detail, a reason, an example.
- **text structure** — the way a text is organised: how it opens, groups and orders ideas, and closes.
- **sequence** — the order the ideas come in.
- **procedure / recount / persuasive text** — structures for telling how, retelling what happened, and getting readers to agree or act.
- **concluding statement** — the close of a report; it wraps the topic up.
- **technical vocabulary** — the exact, special words a topic uses.
- **complex sentence** — two clauses joined, so one part adds a reason or detail to the other.
- **pronoun / reference** — a stand-in word, and the thing it points at.
- **adverb group / noun group** — words that tell how, when or where; words that describe a thing in more detail.

- **greeting / sign-off** — the hello and goodbye of a letter or email, chosen for the audience.
- **subject line** — the email line that says what the email is about.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Use the research notes in Figure 2. The plan in Figure 3 gives paragraph 2 the group *what the worms need* (notes 1, 2 and 3). Draft paragraph 2 with me: choose its opener, put the notes in order, and add one complex sentence.

Working	Comment
Opener: <i>Worms need a dark, damp home.</i>	The opener carries the group's main idea — all three notes are about what worms need.
Order: note 1 (home), then note 2 (food), then note 3 (what the food becomes).	The order moves from where the worms live, to what they eat, to what their waste makes. Each note leads to the next.
Add a reason with a complex sentence: <i>We keep the bins in the shade because the sun dries the worms out.</i>	The <i>because</i> clause elaborates note 1 — it gives the reason for the shade.

The paragraph now has an opener with the main idea, notes in a sequence that makes sense, and elaborated detail — exactly what the plan promised.

Example 2 — with help

Here is a draft paragraph about the worm farm. Three things need fixing: an unclear pronoun, two short sentences that could be one complex sentence, and a technical word the reader has not met.

The worms love soft food. We put in fruit parts. They go into the top bin. Compost comes out. It is great.

Working	Comment
Fix the pronouns: <i>The worms love soft food, so we put fruit parts into the top bin.</i>	In the draft, <i>They</i> and <i>It</i> had no clear reference. Naming the bins and the food keeps every pronoun pointing at one thing.
Join with a complex sentence: <i>...because soft food breaks down fast.</i>	The <i>because</i> clause adds the reason the worms love soft food — two clauses, joined.
Explain the technical word: <i>Rich compost — a soil-like mix — comes out the other end.</i>	The word <i>compost</i> now carries its own explanation, so a new reader is not lost.

Fixed version: *The worms love soft food because soft food breaks down fast. We put fruit parts into the top bin, and rich compost — a soil-like mix — comes out the other end.*

Example 3 — on your own

Look at Figure 5. (a) Name the structure that fits each purpose: (i) tell the school how to use the worm farm bins; (ii) tell what happened on working bee day; (iii) get the canteen to save scraps. (b) For (iii), write an opener and a closer.

(a)

- (i) procedure — it tells how to do something, in steps. (ii) recount — it retells what happened, in time order. (iii) persuasive text — it gives a view and reasons, to get someone to act. (b) Sample opener: *The canteen throws out fruit and vegetable scraps every day, and our worms could eat them.* Sample closer: *Save the scraps for us, and our school's rubbish will shrink.* The opener states the view; the closer is the call to act.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Match each purpose to its structure (Figure 5): (a) tell readers what worms need; (b) tell how to set up a worm farm bin; (c) tell what happened when the farm opened; (d) get readers to put scraps in the right bin.

Q2. Name the source type — print, digital or people — for each: (a) a library book about worms; (b) the canteen's page on the school website; (c) answers from a class survey; (d) a fact sheet from the council's website.

Q3. Here are five research notes for a report about a class recycling station. Sort them into two groups and name each group.

1. Paper goes in the blue bin.
2. The station cuts our school's rubbish.
3. Cans and bottles go in the yellow bin.
4. Each class takes a turn to check the bins.
5. The station keeps useful things out of the rubbish.

Q4. These five sentences belong to a short report, *Our school library*. Label each one: title, opening, body paragraph 1, body paragraph 2, or concluding statement.

- (a) Our school library is the busiest room at lunchtime.
- (b) The library also keeps us reading at home, with a basket to take home.
- (c) Our school library
- (d) Small, but busy: our library is the heart of our school.
- (e) Students borrow books, return books and read in the big chairs.

Q5. Choose the best multimodal element (Figure 4) for each job: (a) show how many scraps each class puts in each week; (b) show what the worm farm looks like; (c) show where the bins sit beside the canteen; (d) let the audience hear the students talk about the farm in a digital text.

Q6. Circle the technical word in each sentence, then write a reader-friendly explanation for it, the way the model report explains *compost*.

- (a) The worms make castings, and gardeners love them.
- (b) A worm has no teeth, so its food must be soft.
- (c) The farm's habitat is dark and damp.

Q7. Join each pair into one complex sentence, using a joining word like *because*, *so* or *when*.

- (a) The bins sit in the shade. The sun dries the worms out.
- (b) We check the food each week. Too much food can go bad.
- (c) The bell rings. We collect the scraps.

Q8. Each passage has a pronoun with no clear reference. Fix it, using Figure 8.

- (a) Sam told Max that he would feed the worms.
- (b) We put the scraps in the bin and it was full.

Q9. These five sentences are a body paragraph in the wrong order. Put them in a sequence that makes sense.

- (a) Then the worms break the food down.
- (b) First, we chop the scraps into small bits.
- (c) Feeding the worms takes three quick steps.
- (d) At the end, the rich mix goes into the garden beds.
- (e) Next, we spread the bits on top of the bedding.

On your own

Q10. Topic: *Our school kitchen garden*. Write an opening paragraph (two or three sentences) that introduces the topic, and a concluding statement (one sentence) that wraps it up.

Q11. Write one body paragraph (four or five sentences) for the kitchen garden report. It must hold one group of related information, use one complex sentence, and use one technical word with its explanation.

Q12. Your class needs something — new sports gear, a shade sail, a corner for quiet reading. Write a short letter in print to the principal asking for it. Use the parts from Figure 10: address and date, formal greeting, purpose early, reasons, polite ask, thanks, formal sign-off.

Q13. Now carry the same ask by email to the right person at the school. Give it a To line, a From line and a subject line, and keep the greeting, purpose, reasons and sign-off fitting the audience (Figure 11).

Checkpoint

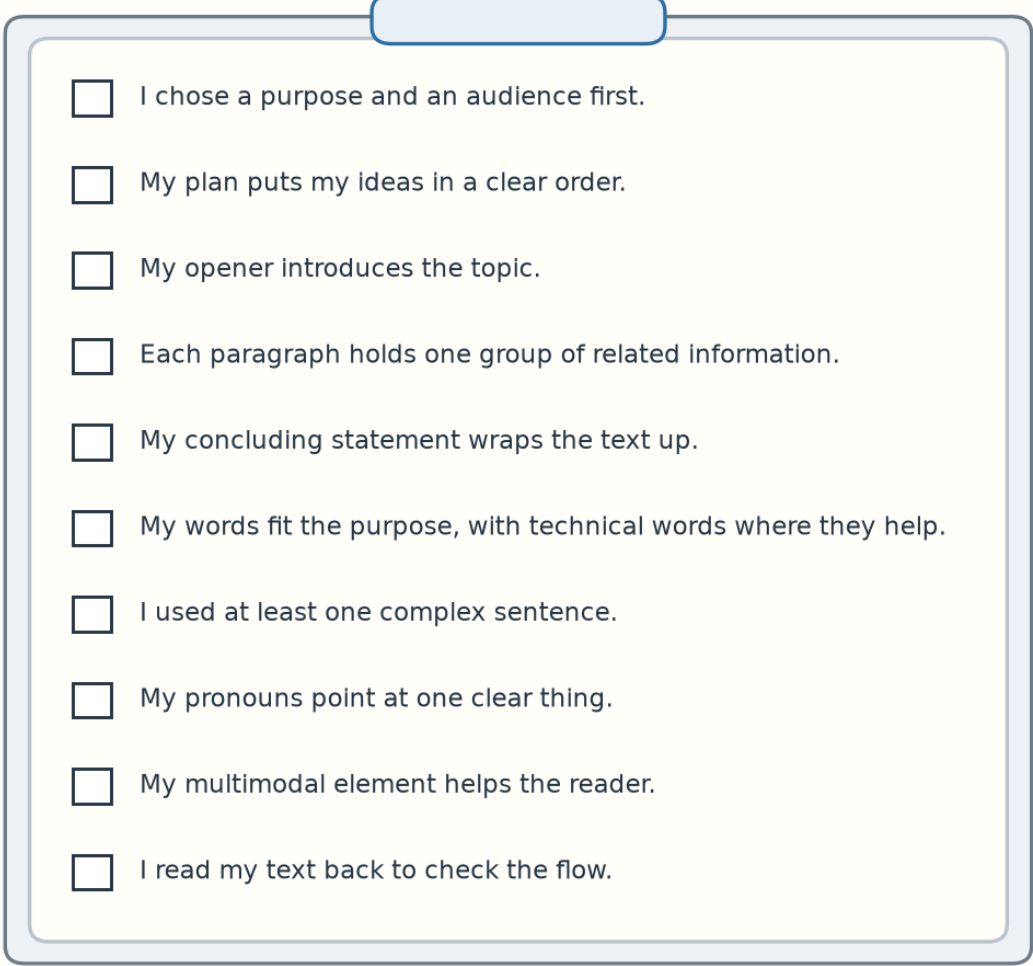
Scenario. Your class magazine is running a feature on things our class has built or started — a worm farm, a garden bed, a recycling station, a bird feeder. The editor has asked you for a short information report, with one multimodal element planned.

Task. Complete the three moves below.

1. **Gather.** List two sources you would use (one print or digital, one people), and write four numbered research notes.
2. **Plan.** Sort your notes into two groups, name each group, and choose one multimodal element with a job (Figure 4).
3. **Write.** Write the report: an opening paragraph that introduces the topic, one body paragraph for each group, and a concluding statement. Your report must use at least one complex sentence, one technical word explained for the reader, and pronouns with clear references.

Check your writing against the checklist in Figure 13.

My creating-texts checklist

- 
- ☐ I chose a purpose and an audience first.
 - ☐ My plan puts my ideas in a clear order.
 - ☐ My opener introduces the topic.
 - ☐ Each paragraph holds one group of related information.
 - ☐ My concluding statement wraps the text up.
 - ☐ My words fit the purpose, with technical words where they help.
 - ☐ I used at least one complex sentence.
 - ☐ My pronouns point at one clear thing.
 - ☐ My multimodal element helps the reader.
 - ☐ I read my text back to check the flow.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5D · Creating texts

A clipboard checklist with ten checks: I chose a purpose and an audience first; my plan puts my ideas in a clear order; my opener introduces the topic; each paragraph holds one group of related information; my concluding statement wraps the text up; my words fit the purpose, with technical words where they help; I used at least one

complex sentence; my pronouns point at one clear thing; my multimodal element helps the reader; I read my text back to check the flow

Figure 13 — My creating-texts checklist

Scored against the achievement standard. The Level 5 Writing standard says students ‘develop ideas and adapt textual details drawn from texts and include appropriate multimodal elements. ... They use text structures, including paragraphs, to create prominence and build sequence and cohesion. They use grammar and punctuation, including complex sentences to provide additional information and description. They use precise vocabulary, such as specialist and technical terms.’

What to look for	Yes, at standard	Not yet
The report names its topic in an opening paragraph and closes with a concluding statement, so the reader always knows where they are.		
Each body paragraph holds one group of related information, and the ideas run in a sequence that makes sense, so the text holds together.		
Ideas are elaborated with detail, and at least one complex sentence adds a reason or detail; pronouns point at one clear thing.		
Technical and precise words are used where they fit, and explained for the reader.		
The planned multimodal element has a real job that helps the audience.		

Answers

Q1. (a) information report. (b) procedure. (c) recount. (d) persuasive text. **Q2.** (a) print. (b) digital. (c) people. (d) digital. **Q3.** See the full answers. **Q4.** (a) opening. (b) body paragraph 2. (c) title. (d) concluding statement. (e) body paragraph 1. **Q5.** (a) chart. (b) photo. (c) map. (d) sound clip. **Q6.** See the full answers. **Q7.** See the full answers. **Q8.** See the full answers. **Q9.** c, b, e, a, d. **Q10–Q13.** Answers will vary; see the full answers for samples to check against. **Checkpoint.** Answers will vary; check against the table and Figure 13.

Full answers

Q3. One sorting: Group A, *what goes in each bin* — notes 1 and 3. Group B, *how the station helps our school* — notes 2 and 5. Note 4 (classes take turns) can start a third group, *how we will care for it*. Any sorting works if each group holds related facts and the group names say what the facts share.

Q6. (a) *castings* — worm waste, rich like plant food. (b) *teeth* is not technical here; the topic word is the worms' food — but the word to explain is *soft food*: food in small, tender bits a worm can break down. (c) *habitat* — the place a living thing makes its home. Each explanation uses words a new reader already knows.

Q7. Samples: (a) *The bins sit in the shade because the sun dries the worms out.* (b) *We check the food each week because too much food can go bad.* (c) *When the bell rings, we collect the scraps.* Each answer is one sentence made of two clauses.

Q8. Samples: (a) *Sam told Max, "I will feed the worms."* — now the feeder names himself. (b) *We put the scraps in the bin, and the bin was full.* — naming the bin stops it from pointing two ways.

Q10. Sample opening: *Our school kitchen garden grows food for our canteen. It sits behind the hall, and every class has a bed of its own.* Sample concluding statement: *The kitchen garden feeds our canteen and teaches us where food comes from.* The opening names the topic; the close wraps it up without new facts.

Q11. Sample: *The garden beds grow more than food. Tomatoes climb their stakes because the sun reaches that wall all day. We feed the soil with compost — the rich mix our scraps become — and the plants grow strong.* One group (what the beds grow and what feeds them), one complex sentence (*because*), one technical word explained (*compost*).

Q12. Sample letter: *Year 5, Ridge View Primary School / 12 Garden Road, Ridge View / 4 June 2026 / Dear Principal, / We are writing to ask for a shade sail over the sandpit. The sandpit is in the sun all afternoon, and play time gets too hot. A shade sail would keep it cool and safe. We have measured the sandpit and drawn a plan. Thank you for reading our letter. / Yours sincerely, / Year 5.* All seven parts from Figure 10 are there.

Q13. Sample email: *To: office@ridgeview.example / From: year5@ridgeview.example / Subject: A shade sail for the sandpit / Dear office team, / We are writing to ask about a shade sail over the sandpit. The sandpit is in the sun all afternoon, and play time gets too hot. A shade sail would keep it cool and safe. Thank you for thinking about our ask. / Kind regards, / Year 5, Ridge View Primary School.* The subject line says what the email is about; the greeting and sign-off fit the audience.

Checkpoint. Sample outline. Gather: source 1, the council's website (digital); source 2, a class survey (people). Notes: 1. The bird feeder hangs in the gum tree. 2. We fill it each Monday. 3. It helps birds through the cold months. 4. Twelve students take turns to fill it. Plan: Group A, *how we care for the feeder* (notes 2, 4); Group B, *how the feeder helps* (note 3); note 1 joins the opening. Multimodal element: a photo of the feeder in the tree, tied to the opening paragraph. Write: opener *Our class looks after a bird feeder in the gum tree by the gate.*; body paragraphs from the two groups; concluding statement *Small as it is, the feeder gives our school a daily visit from the bush.* The complex sentence and the explained technical word sit in the body paragraphs; the pronouns (*it*, *we*) each point at one clear thing.

Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

Curriculum focus: Literacy strand · Chapter 5 — Literacy: understanding, analysing and creating texts · Section 5E · Owns **VC2E5LY11** · Draws on elaboration **VC2E5LY11.E01**.

VC2E5LY11 — re-read and edit their own texts and the texts of others using agreed criteria for text structures and language features

VC2E5LY11.E01 — re-reading and editing their own and others’ work (which may involve using digital tools) for precision, using negotiated criteria for text structure and meaning, and accuracy of grammar, spelling and punctuation

Achievement standard (Writing, part): “They edit their texts using an agreed set of criteria.”

Last year you learned that writers go back over their writing: they add words, take words away and move parts around to make the meaning better. That was the first step on the road this section walks. Here you will learn to do that work on purpose, with a plan: you will **re-read** your texts and the texts of others, and **edit** them against **agreed criteria** — a list of checks the class agrees on before anyone picks up a pencil.

Builds on (from Level 4, not re-taught here): re-reading and editing for meaning — adding, deleting and moving parts of a text (VC2E4LY11).

Sets up (for Level 6, not taught here): next year, editing grows into exploring *why* a writer made each choice and trying out other choices (VC2E6LY10). This section teaches you to edit against a shared list; that habit is what Level 6 builds on.

Word watch (we define our words before we use them):

- **draft** — the first copy of a text, written to get the ideas down. It is meant to be fixed later.
 - **edit / editing** — the work of re-reading a draft and changing it so it works better: fixing its structure, its meaning and its accuracy.
 - **re-read** — to read a text again, slowly, looking for things the first read did not catch.
 - **criteria** — a short list of things a good text of this kind must have. The content description says “agreed criteria” but does not give one fixed meaning, so in this section *criteria* means this: the checks a class talks over and agrees on before editing, each one answerable with yes or not yet. One check from the list we just call “a check from the list”.
 - **negotiate** — to talk something over until everyone agrees. A class negotiates its criteria together.
 - **precise** — exact. A precise word says exactly what you mean, so the reader can picture it.
 - **peer** — another student in your class. When you edit a classmate’s text, you are a peer editor.
 - **publish** — to finish a text and share it: on the wall, in a class book, on a screen, read aloud to the class.
-

1. Two jobs: get it down, then get it right

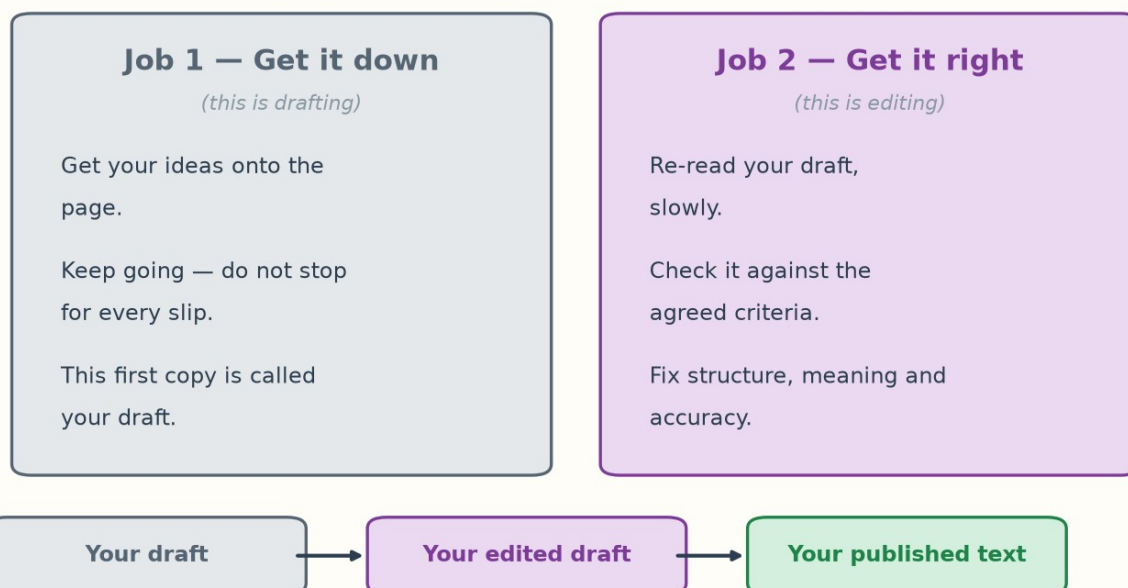
Writing is two jobs, and they do not mix well.

Job 1 is getting your ideas down. You write fast and keep going. If you stop to fix every slip while the ideas are flowing, the ideas dry up.

Job 2 is getting the text right. You come back later, re-read the draft slowly, and fix it against the checks your class agreed on. That second job is editing.

Writers who try to do both jobs at once end up with both jobs half done: the ideas never arrive, and the fixes never happen. So: draft first, edit second.

Figure 1 — Writing and editing are two different jobs



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

Two job cards side by side: Job 1, get it down, which is drafting, with the ideas on the page and no stopping for every slip; and Job 2, get it right, which is editing, with a slow re-read, a check against the agreed criteria, and fixes to structure, meaning and accuracy; a strip below shows your draft becoming your edited draft and then your published text

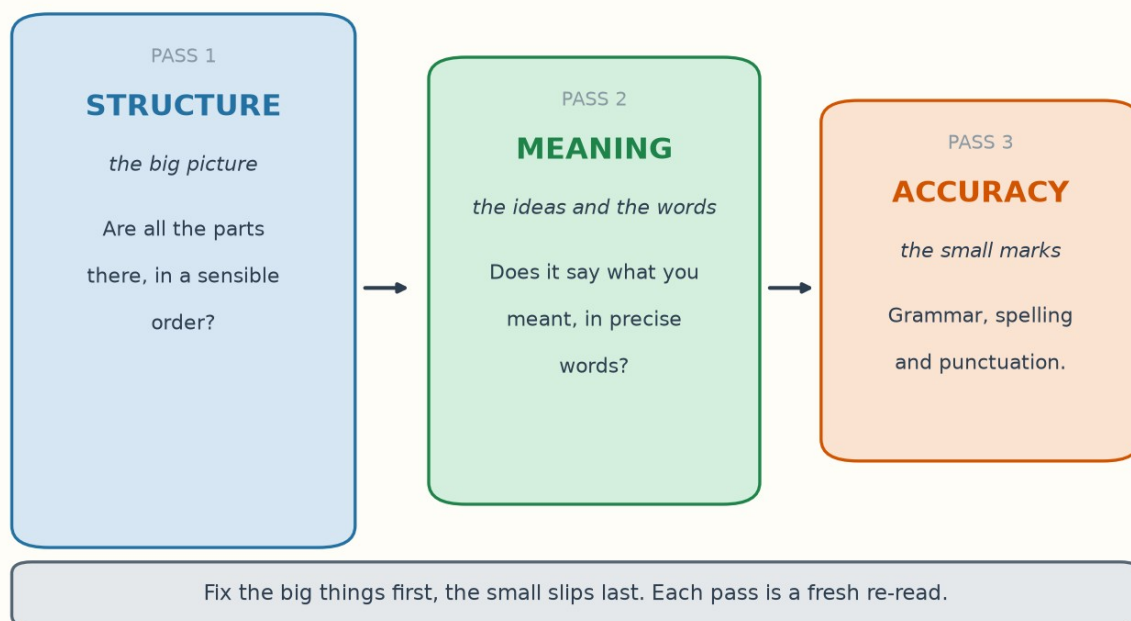
2. The three passes: big things first, small slips last

Good editors do not look for everything at once. They re-read the draft three times, and each time they look for one kind of thing. Each re-read is called a **pass**.

- **Pass 1 — Structure.** The big picture. Are all the parts there? Are they in a sensible order? Does the text open and end the way its text type does? (Section 1C showed you the usual parts of each text type.)
- **Pass 2 — Meaning.** The ideas and the words. Does the text say what you meant? Could a reader who was not there picture it? Are the words precise?
- **Pass 3 — Accuracy.** The small marks. Grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Why that order? Because it would be a waste to fix the spelling of a sentence that Pass 1 deletes. Fix the big things first; hunt the small slips last.

Figure 2 — The three editing passes

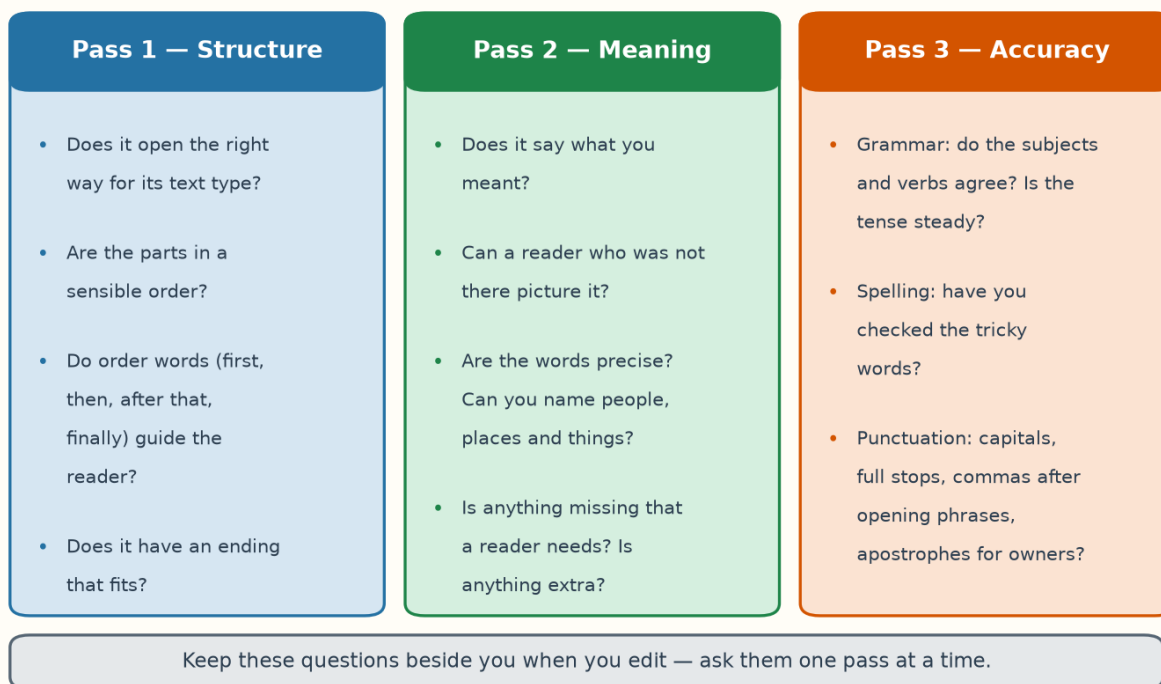


ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

Three cards shaped like shrinking lenses, left to right: Pass 1 Structure, the big picture, asking whether all the parts are there in a sensible order; Pass 2 Meaning, the ideas and the words, asking whether the text says what the writer meant in precise words; and Pass 3 Accuracy, the small marks of grammar, spelling and punctuation; a strip below says fix the big things first and the small slips last, and each pass is a fresh re-read

Each pass asks its own questions. Keep the list beside you when you edit.

Figure 3 — The questions each pass asks



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

Three columns of questions, one per pass: Structure asks whether the text opens the right way for its text type, whether the parts are in a sensible order, whether order words guide the reader, and whether it has an ending that fits; Meaning asks whether the text says what the writer meant, whether a reader who was not there can picture it, whether the words are precise, and whether anything is missing or extra; Accuracy asks whether the subjects and verbs agree and the tense stays put, whether the tricky words are checked, and whether capitals, full stops, commas after opening phrases and apostrophes for owners are right

3. Agreed criteria — the list we check against

A pass tells you *what kind* of thing to look for. The criteria tell you *exactly what to check* for the text type you are writing. Criteria are not a secret rule book; the class **negotiates** them together — talks them over and agrees — before anyone edits. That is what makes them *agreed*.

Here is a set of criteria a class might negotiate for a recount, the text type that tells what happened, in order.

Figure 4 — A model agreed-criteria card for a recount

Our class criteria — Recount

negotiated together before we edit

Structure

- ☐ It opens with when, where and who.
- ☐ The events are in order, with order words to guide us.
- ☐ It ends with a feeling or a looking-forward.

Meaning

- ☐ A reader who was not there can picture the day.
- ☐ The words are precise — events and people are named.

Accuracy

- ☐ Verbs are in the past tense and agree with who or what.
- ☐ Tricky words are spelled the right way.
- ☐ Capitals, full stops, commas after opening phrases and apostrophes for owners.

Criteria change with the text type — negotiate a fresh list for each new kind of text.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

A purple card titled Our class criteria, Recount, negotiated together before we edit, with three coloured groups of tick boxes: Structure, which opens with when where and who, events in order with order words, and an ending with a feeling or a looking-forward; Meaning, a reader who was not there can picture the day, and the words are precise with events and people named; Accuracy, verbs in the past tense that agree with who or what, tricky words spelled the right way, and capitals, full stops, commas after opening phrases and apostrophes for owners; a line below says criteria change with the text type, so negotiate a fresh list for each new kind of text

Three things to notice about good criteria:

1. **Each check is answerable.** You can look at a draft and say yes or not yet. “Is it good?” is not a check. “It opens with when, where and who” is.
2. **They belong to the text type.** A recount opens with when, where and who; a procedure opens with a goal and a materials list; an informative text opens by naming the topic. When the text type changes, negotiate a fresh list.
3. **They cover the three passes.** Some checks watch structure, some watch meaning, some watch accuracy — so the list carries you through all three passes.

The criteria also connect to the language features you already know — the choices a writer makes with words on purpose (Section 5B looked at how features meet purpose). A comma after an opening phrase (Section 2E) and an apostrophe for owners (Section 2E) are accuracy checks. Precise naming (Section 2D) is a meaning check.

4. Worked example — editing Mia’s recount

Here is a draft, written for this section. Mia wrote it fast — Job 1. Our work is Job 2.

Figure 5 — Mia’s draft recount

Our Swimming Carnival

Draft 1, by Mia · one paragraph · written fast

- 1 On Friday our school held its swimming carnival at the town pool.
- 2 First there was a parade and then the races begun.
- 3 My friend Ella and me cheered for our house all day long.
- 4 There was some events and they was really exiting.
- 5 The best part was the relay because our team came first.
- 6 At lunch we all sat in the shade and had watermelon.
- 7 i hope our house wins the cup next year.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

A ruled paper card titled Our Swimming Carnival, Draft 1 by Mia, one paragraph written fast, with seven numbered sentences: On Friday our school held its swimming carnival at the town pool; First there was a parade and then the races begun; My friend Ella and me cheered for our house all day long; There was some events and they was really exiting; The best part was the relay because our team came first; At lunch we all sat in the shade and had watermelon; i hope our house wins the cup next year

Pass 1 — Structure

Reading for structure against the recount criteria: the opening is there (when, where, who — sentence 1), the day’s events follow in order, and the wish at the end fits. But all seven sentences sit in **one block**. A recount reads better in three paragraphs: the opening, the day, and the ending wish. That is our structure fix: split after sentence 1 and after sentence 6.

Pass 2 — Meaning

Reading for meaning, two spots are hard to picture. “some events” does not tell us what Mia saw, and “the relay” does not say which relay. The meaning fix is precise naming: four events, named — and the feeling shown, not just told.

Pass 3 — Accuracy

Reading for accuracy, we hunt the small slips: verbs that do not agree or use the wrong past tense, a spelling slip, a lowercase *i*, and two opening phrases that need their commas (the Section 2E job).

On paper, editors mark these changes with a small set of signs, so the writer can see what to do and where.

Figure 6 — Editing marks for paper drafts

Editing marks for paper drafts

Marks say what to change — the writer still makes the change.

We went to to the pool.	CROSS OUT = take this word out
all We ^ watched the races.	INSERT MARK = add this word here
 home we went	MOVE ARROW = put it here instead
to ^ day we cheered	CLOSE UP = join these — no space

Work in pencil so marks can be rubbed out once the writer has read them.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

Four rows, each with a before example and its meaning: cross out, shown over a repeated word, meaning take this word out; insert mark, with the new word written above the mark, meaning add this word here; move arrow, a curved arrow carrying a word to a new place, meaning put it here instead; and close up, a small bridge under a gap, meaning join these with no space; a line at the bottom says work in pencil so marks can be rubbed out once the writer has read them

Here is Mia's draft after all three passes, with every change keyed and coloured by the pass that found it.

Figure 7 — Mia's recount after editing

Our Swimming Carnival — after editing

① On Friday,② our school held its swimming carnival at the town pool.

First there was a parade and then the races began③. My friend Ella and I④
cheered for our house all day long. We watched four events⑤. The sprints,
the boys' relay and the teachers' race⑥ were so exciting⑦ that we jumped
and clapped. The best part was the boys' relay⑧. Our team came first!

At lunch⑨, we all sat in the shade and had watermelon. ★

I⑩ hope our house wins the cup next year.

Change key — one pass at a time:

Structure

Meaning

Accuracy

- ① Split into three paragraphs: the opening, the day, the wish.
- ② Add a comma after the opening phrase 'On Friday'.
- ③ begun → began (the past tense of begin).
- ④ Ella and me → Ella and I.
- ⑤ was / they was → were / they were; and 'some' → 'four'.
- ⑥ Name the events — now a reader can picture them.
- ⑦ exiting → exciting (spelling).
- ⑧ the relay → the boys' relay, and one sentence became two.
- ⑨ Add a comma after the opening phrase 'At lunch'.
- ⑩ i → I (capital letter).
- ★ keep! The watermelon sentence already paints a picture.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

The edited recount in three paragraphs with small circled numbers at each change: one, split into three paragraphs; two, a comma added after the opening phrase On Friday; three, begun changed to began; four, Ella and me changed to Ella and I; five, was and they was changed to were and they were, and some changed to four; six, the events named, the sprints, the boys' relay and the teachers' race; seven, exiting changed to exciting; eight, the relay changed to the boys' relay and one sentence made two; nine, a comma added after At lunch; ten, lowercase i changed to I; a star beside the watermelon sentence means keep it, it already paints a picture; below, the change key lists each fix in the colour of its pass, blue for structure, green for meaning, orange for accuracy

Notice the star. Editing is not only fixing what is weak. The watermelon sentence was already strong — it paints a picture — so the editor left it alone. **Good editors keep what works.**

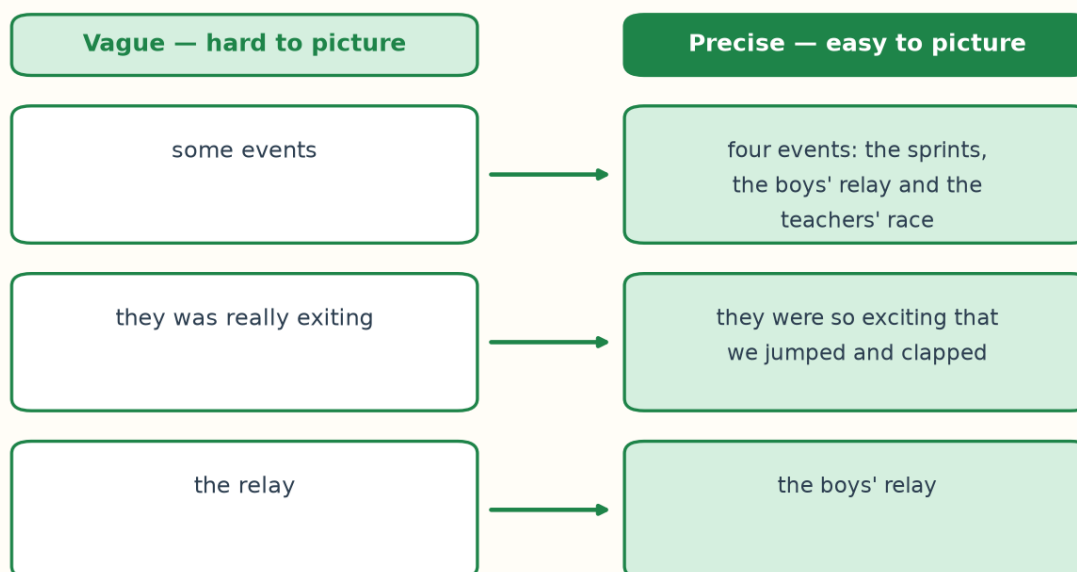
5. The meaning pass in depth: swap vague for precise

The most common meaning fix is a swap: a vague word out, a precise word in. The test is simple — could a reader who was not there picture it?

Figure 8 — Vague words swapped for precise ones in Mia's draft

The meaning pass: swap vague for precise

Test: can a reader who was not there picture it?



Precise naming and showing (not just telling) put the reader at the pool with you.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

A two-column swap chart in green: vague and hard to picture on the left, precise and easy to picture on the right; some events becomes four events, the sprints, the boys' relay and the teachers' race; they was really exiting becomes they were so exciting that we jumped and clapped; the relay becomes the boys' relay; a line below says precise naming and showing, not just telling, put the reader at the pool with you

Precise words come from two places: naming (which events? the sprints, the boys' relay, the teachers' race) and showing (how exciting? we jumped and clapped). Section 2D taught the naming half; the showing half is the same idea one step further — give the reader something to see.

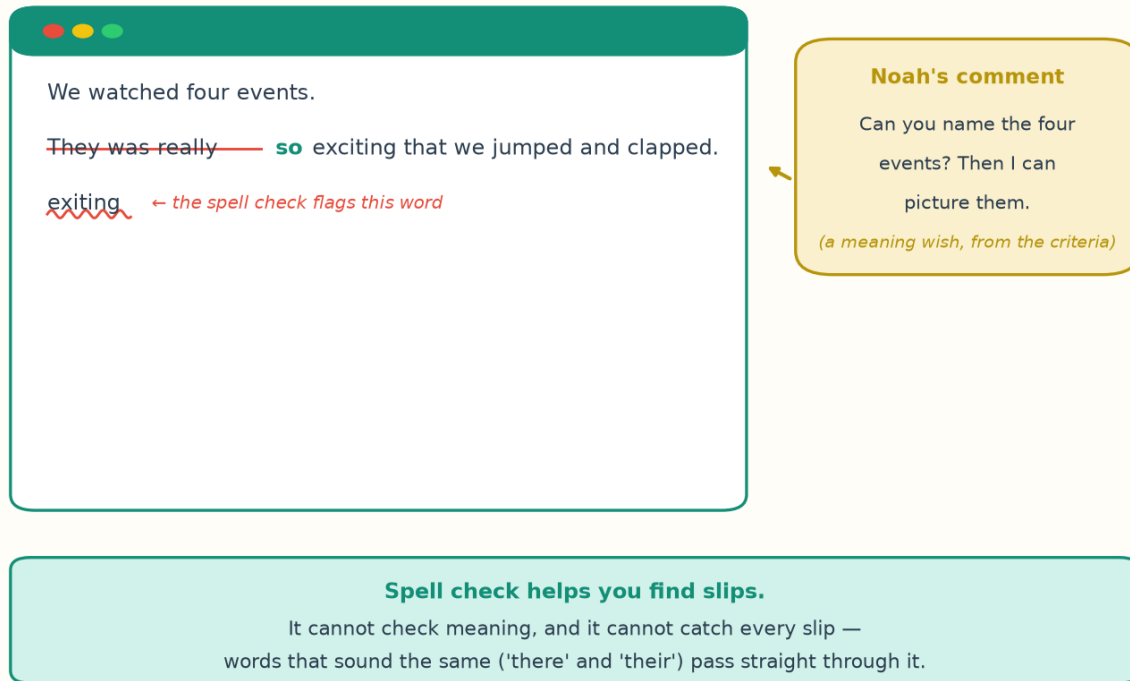
6. Editing on a screen

Editing may use **digital tools**, and most drafts you write at school will live on a screen at some point. On a screen, the three passes are the same, but the marks look different:

- **Tracked changes** show your edits in colour: old words crossed through, new words added, so the writer can see every change and accept or reject it.
- **Comments** sit in the margin, like a peer's sticky note: a star, a wish, a question.
- **Spell check** underlines words it doubts with a wavy line.

Figure 9 — Editing a digital text

Editing a digital text



ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

A simple screen window with three text lines: We watched four events; then They was really crossed through in red and so exciting that we jumped and clapped added in teal as a tracked change; then the word exiting with a red wavy underline and a note that the spell check flags this word; beside the window a comment card from Noah asks can you name the four events, then I can picture them, labelled a meaning wish from the criteria; a box below says spell check helps you find slips, but it cannot check meaning and it cannot catch every slip, because words that sound the same, there and their, pass straight through it

The golden rule of the spell check: **it finds slips, it does not find sense.** It will underline *exiting*. It will not underline *was* where *were* belongs, or *me* where *I* belongs, or *there* where *their* belongs — words that sound the same pass straight through it. Those catches belong to your Pass 3 re-read. The screen is a tool; the editor is still you.

7. Editing someone else's text — peer editing

The content description says you edit **your own texts and the texts of others**. Editing a classmate's draft is a superpower for your own writing: you catch structure, meaning and accuracy moves in their text that you will start catching in yours. But a peer editor's job is to help the writer, not to take over the pen. So peer editing runs on a protocol — an agreed way of working.

Figure 10 — The peer-editing protocol: kind AND useful

Peer editing: kind AND useful

1. Read it all

Read the whole draft once, with no marks. What is it about? What works?

2. Star

Say what already works — and why. A star always comes with a reason.

3. Wish

Pick what to fix next, using the agreed criteria. A wish is an idea, not an order.

4. Hand it back

Talk it through with the writer. The writer listens, asks, and then chooses.

A star, with its reason

'Your watermelon sentence paints a picture — I can see the whole class in the shade.'

A wish, from the criteria

'The meaning box says events are named — could you name the races so I can picture them too?'

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

Four step cards under a banner that reads peer editing, kind and useful: 1 read it all, read the whole draft once with no marks; 2 star, say what already works and why, because a star always comes with a reason; 3 wish, pick what to fix next using the agreed criteria, because a wish is an idea and not an order; 4 hand it back, talk it through with the writer, who listens, asks and then chooses; below, two example bubbles, a star with its reason about the watermelon sentence painting a picture, and a wish from the meaning box asking the writer to name the races so the reader can picture them too

The last step is the one that matters most: **the writer chooses**. A wish is an idea offered, not an order given. The writer listens, asks questions, and decides. That keeps peer editing kind *and* useful — and it keeps every draft its writer's own.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with support: Pass 1 on Mia's draft

Task. Run Pass 1 (structure) over Mia's draft using the recount criteria. Decide what holds up and what needs work.

Working	Comment
Check 1 — opens with when, where and who: <i>On Friday our school held its swimming carnival at the town pool.</i> Yes.	The opening does its job.
Check 2 — events in order with order words: <i>First</i> starts the day, then the parade, the races, lunch. Yes.	Order words guide the reader.
Check 3 — ends with a feeling or a looking-forward: the wish about the cup. Yes.	The ending fits a recount.
But: all three parts sit in one block.	Structure fix — split into three paragraphs after sentence 1 and after sentence 6.

The shape of the answer: run each check, say yes or not yet, and point to the sentence that proves it.

Example 2 — with support: Pass 2 on one sentence

Task. The meaning pass finds “There was some events and they was really exiting.” Fix the meaning (the grammar slips belong to Pass 3).

Working	Comment
Test: could a reader who was not there picture it? <i>some events</i> — no. Which events?	Vague naming.
Swap: name them — <i>the sprints, the boys’ relay and the teachers’ race</i> .	Precise naming puts the reader at the pool.
Test: how exciting? <i>really exiting</i> tells, it does not show.	Vague feeling.
Swap: show it — <i>so exciting that we jumped and clapped</i> .	Showing gives the reader something to see.

Example 3 — a model peer edit

Noah peer-edits Mia’s draft with the protocol. His star: “*Your watermelon sentence paints a picture — I can see the whole class in the shade. Keep it.*” His wish: “*The meaning box says events are named — could you name the races so I can picture them too?*” Then he hands it back.

Three things make this a model peer edit. The star and the wish both come **with reasons**. The wish comes **from the agreed criteria**, not from taste. And Noah **hands the pen back** — Mia decides.

Practice questions

With support

Q1. Match each job to its pass: structure, meaning or accuracy.

- (a) checking that the parts are in a sensible order
- (b) swapping a vague word for one the reader can picture
- (c) fixing a verb that does not agree with its subject
- (d) checking that the ending fits the text type
- (e) checking the tricky spellings
- (f) checking that nothing the reader needs is missing

Q2. Sort these six fixes from Mia’s edit into the three passes.

- (a) split the block into three paragraphs
- (b) *begun* → *began*
- (c) name the four events
- (d) add a comma after *At lunch*
- (e) *they was* → *they were*
- (f) *really exiting* → *so exciting that we jumped and clapped*

Q3. Pass 3 found four grammar slips in Mia’s draft: *the races begun, Ella and me cheered, there was some events, they was*. Copy each one and write the fix.

Q4. Pass 3 also found a spelling slip, a lowercase letter, and two opening phrases that need a comma. Find all four in the draft and fix them.

Q5. Run the meaning test on these two vague lines. Rewrite each with precise words.

- (a) *We had some food at lunch.*
- (b) *The pool was big.*

(Use the sentence starter: *so ... that ...* if it helps.)

Q6. Copy the table. For each check from the recount criteria, write yes or not yet about Mia's **draft**, with the sentence that proves it.

Check	Yes / not yet	Proof
opens with when, where and who		
events are named		
verbs agree with who or what		

Q7. Where should Mia's one block split into three paragraphs? Give the two sentence numbers, and say which part of a recount each paragraph holds.

Q8. Mia typed her draft. The spell check underlined one word. Which word did it catch — and which three slips in the draft did it let through? What does that teach you about spell checks?

On your own

Q9. With a partner, negotiate four checks for a **how-to text** (a procedure): two for structure, one for meaning, one for accuracy. Write them as a criteria card, each one answerable with yes or not yet.

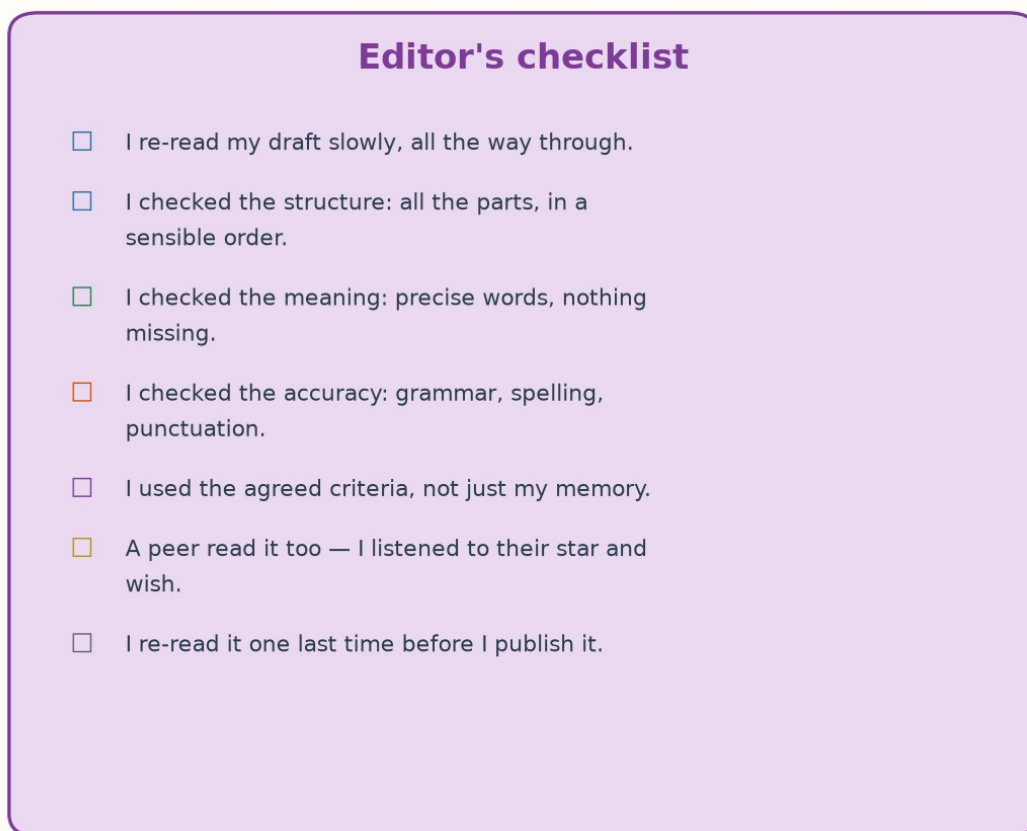
Q10. Take a text you have written — a draft from Section 5D or any piece of your writing. Run the three passes against your class's agreed criteria, and list three changes you made: one from each pass.

Q11. Swap drafts with a peer. Run the protocol: read it all, give a star with its reason, give a wish from the criteria, and hand it back. Then run their star and wish over your own draft and decide what you will change.

Q12. Type up one paragraph of a draft and edit it on screen. Use tracked changes or comments if you can, and the spell check too. Then list: what the spell check caught, and what **you** caught that it did not.

Before you finish, check your work.

Figure 11 — Editor's checklist



Editor's checklist

- ☐ I re-read my draft slowly, all the way through.
- ☐ I checked the structure: all the parts, in a sensible order.
- ☐ I checked the meaning: precise words, nothing missing.
- ☐ I checked the accuracy: grammar, spelling, punctuation.
- ☐ I used the agreed criteria, not just my memory.
- ☐ A peer read it too — I listened to their star and wish.
- ☐ I re-read it one last time before I publish it.

ClassBasics English 5 · Section 5E · Re-reading and editing against agreed criteria

A purple checklist card titled Editor's checklist with seven tick boxes: I re-read my draft slowly, all the way through; I checked the structure, all the parts in a sensible order; I checked the meaning, precise words, nothing missing; I checked the accuracy, grammar, spelling, punctuation; I used the agreed criteria, not just my memory; a peer read it too and I listened to their star and wish; I re-read it one last time before I publish it

Checkpoint 5E

The text. Read this short draft. It is new — written for this checkpoint.

A draft for this checkpoint — an informative text

Worm farms turn food scraps into rich soil. In our class the worm farm lives by the garden shed. Every week we feed it fruit and vegetable scraps. The worms eat there way through the box. Worm farms are great becuae they cut down waste. i think every school should have one.

The agreed criteria (negotiated for an informative text):

1. It has a heading that names the topic. (*structure*)
2. It moves in a clear order: what it is, how it works, why it matters. (*structure*)
3. The words are precise — the reader can picture the farm at work. (*meaning*)
4. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are right, including capital letters, commas after opening phrases, and words that sound the same. (*accuracy*)

Task.

- (a) Run each check from the criteria over the draft and write yes or not yet, with the proof.
- (b) List the edits you would make, grouped under the three passes.
- (c) Rewrite the draft with your edits in place.

Scored against the Level 5 achievement standard. Writing: *students ... edit their texts using an agreed set of criteria.*

What to look for	What it shows
Each check from the criteria judged yes or not yet, with proof from the draft.	Editing against an agreed set of criteria, not against a feeling.
Edits grouped by pass: a structure edit (add a heading), a meaning edit (a precise swap), accuracy edits (there/their, because, a comma, a capital).	Re-reading in passes for structure, meaning and accuracy.
A rewritten text that carries the edits and keeps the strong parts.	Editing that improves the text without losing the writer's voice.

A student may choose different precise words and still meet the standard. Score the checking and the fixing, not the exact wording of the swap.

Answers

Q1. (a) structure; (b) meaning; (c) accuracy; (d) structure; (e) accuracy; (f) meaning. **Q2.** Structure: (a). Meaning: (c), (f). Accuracy: (b), (d), (e). **Q3.** *the races begun* → *the races began*; *Ella and me cheered* → *Ella and I cheered*; *there was some events* → *there were (or we watched) four events*; *they was* → *they were*. **Q4.** Spelling: *exiting* → *exciting*. Lowercase: *i* → *I*. Commas: after *On Friday* and after *At lunch*. **Q5.** Answers will vary. See the worked solutions for one set. **Q6.** Yes — sentence 1; not yet — *some events*, *the relay*; not yet — *begun*, *was/were*, *me*. **Q7.** After sentence 1 and after sentence 6: the opening; the day; the ending wish. **Q8.** It caught *exiting*. It let through *was/were*, *me* and *i* (and every meaning slip). Spell checks find slips, not sense. **Q9–Q12.** Answers will vary. See the worked solutions for models.

Worked solutions

Q1. Order of parts is the big picture, so structure (a). A picture-able word is a meaning fix (b). A verb agreeing with its subject is a small mark, so accuracy (c). An ending that fits the text type is structure (d). Tricky spellings are accuracy (e). A missing piece the reader needs is meaning (f).

Q2. (a) changes the shape of the text — structure. (c) and (f) make the day easier to picture — meaning. (b), (d) and (e) fix verb forms, a comma and agreement — accuracy.

Q3. *The races begun* → *the races began* (the past tense of *begin* is *began*). *Ella and me cheered* → *Ella and I cheered*. *There was some events* → *there were four events*. *They was* → *they were*.

Q4. *exiting* → *exciting*. *i hope* → *I hope*. A comma after the opening phrase *On Friday*, and one after *At lunch* — opening phrases take their comma (Section 2E).

Q5. One set: (a) *We had watermelon and sandwiches at lunch*. (b) *The pool was so big that the far end looked a street away*. The test both pass: a reader who was not there can picture the food and the pool.

Q6. Opens with when, where and who — yes, sentence 1. Events are named — not yet: *some events* and *the relay* never get names. Verbs agree — not yet: *begun*, *was* with *events*, *was* with *they*, and *me* where *I* belongs.

Q7. Split after sentence 1 (the opening: when, where, who) and after sentence 6 (the day's events), leaving sentence 7 as the ending wish.

Q8. The spell check caught *exiting*, a word it does not know. It let through *was* where *were* belongs, *me* where *I* belongs, and the lowercase *i* — all real words, wrongly used. Teaching: a spell check finds slips, not sense; Pass 3 still belongs to you.

Q9. One model card. Structure: it opens with the goal; the steps are in order with order words. Meaning: each step says exactly what to do, with how much or how long. Accuracy: bossy verbs (*fold*, *cut*, *glue*), capitals and full stops checked.

Q10. One model answer: structure — my report had no ending, so I added one; meaning — *some birds* became *three magpies*; accuracy — *their* was *there* twice, now fixed.

Q11. Answers will vary. A strong pair shows: a star with a reason, a wish drawn from the criteria, and a writer who chose what to change.

Q12. One model answer: the spell check caught *becuase*; I caught *was* where *were* belongs and a missing comma after an opening phrase. The screen helped, but my Pass 3 re-read did the real work.

Checkpoint 5E. (a) Check 1 — not yet: the draft has no heading. Check 2 — yes: what it is (sentence 1), how it works (sentences 2–4), why it matters (sentence 5). Check 3 — not yet: *great* tells, it does not show. Check 4 — not yet: *there* for *their*, *becuase*, no comma after *In our class*, lowercase *i*.

- (b) Structure: add a heading — *Our Class Worm Farm*. Meaning: swap *great* for a precise showing — *so useful that our bin is half empty*. Accuracy: *there* → *their*; *becuase* → *because*; a comma after *In our class*; *i* → *I*.
- (c) Model rewrite: **Our Class Worm Farm** — *Worm farms turn food scraps into rich soil. In our class, the worm farm lives by the garden shed. Every week we feed it fruit and vegetable scraps, and the worms eat their way through the box. Worm farms are so useful that our bin is half empty. I think every school should have one.*
The strong bones of the draft — its clear order and its plain, sure voice — stay exactly where they were.

Writing legibly, fluently and automatically

Section 5F · Chapter 5 — Literacy · Owns VC2E5LY12 · Draws on no added VCAA examples (the content description stands alone).

Curriculum focus — quoted exactly as VCAA wrote it. VC2E5LY12: “write legibly, fluently and automatically”. VCAA gives no example dot points for this one. Its exact words are: “Content description does not require elaboration.” So the one-line description is the whole goal, and this section works from that line alone.

Three goal words

This section is about handwriting — how your writing looks on the page, and how it feels when you write. In Year 4 you learned to write joined letters. Now the goal is to make that writing **legible**, **fluent** and **automatic**. Each of those three words has a clear meaning:

- **Legible** means your writing can be read. The letters are clear, they sit on the line, and anyone can read your words without having to guess.
- **Fluent** means your writing keeps moving. Your **pace** — the speed you write at — is steady, with no long stops between words.
- **Automatic** means you can write the letters without thinking about each one. Your hand knows the shapes, so your mind is free to think about what to say.



The three goal words for handwriting in Year 5.

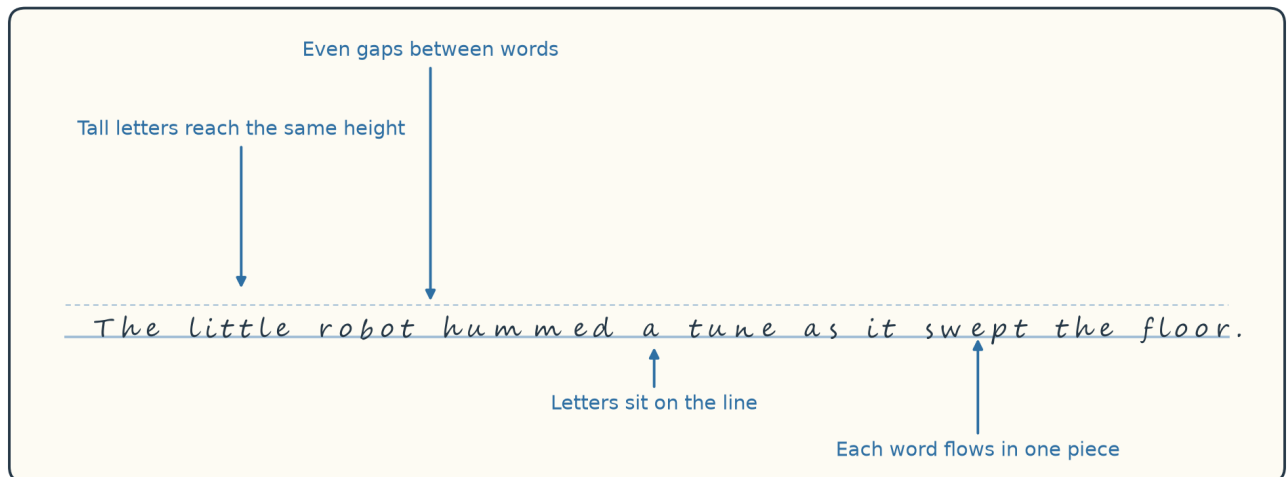
Three goal cards, one for each goal word: *legible* means your reader can read every word, *fluent* means your writing keeps a steady pace, and *automatic* means your hand knows the letters so your mind is free for ideas

One way to hold the three words in your head: **legible** is about your *reader*, **fluent** is about your *pace*, and **automatic** is about your *mind*.

What legible writing looks like

Legible joined writing has a few simple features you can check for yourself. Here is a model sample with the features labelled.

Model sample — joined writing that is easy to read



Every feature here helps one person: the reader.

A model sample of joined writing that reads 'The little robot hummed a tune as it swept the floor', with four labels pointing to its features: letters sit on the line, tall letters reach the same height, gaps between words are even, and each word flows in one piece

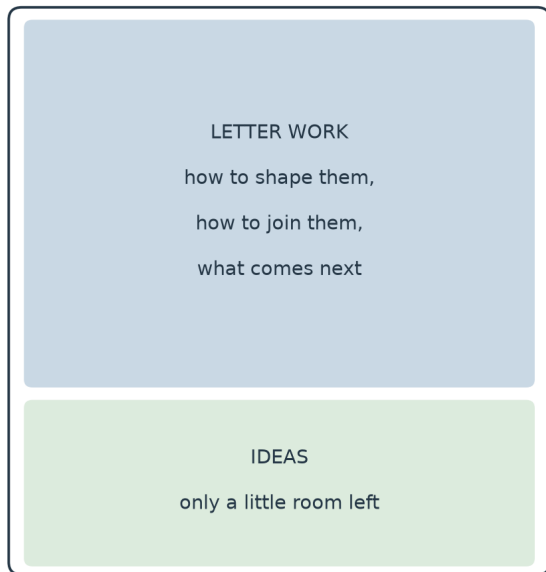
Notice that these features are not about making the writing pretty. They are all about one thing: helping your reader.

Why automatic writing frees your mind

Your mind can only hold a few things at once. When you are still thinking hard about letter shapes — how to make them, how to join them — those letters take up most of the room. There is little room left for ideas.

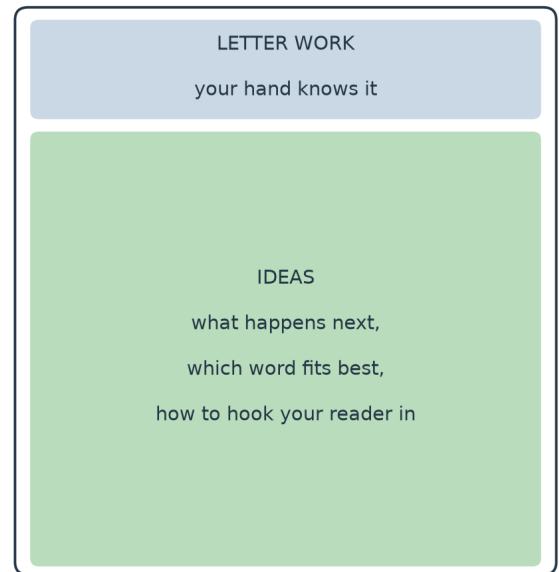
When your writing becomes automatic, the story flips. Your hand does the letter work on its own, and your mind is free for the ideas: what happens next, which word fits best, how to hook your reader in. That is why this section matters for every other kind of writing in this book. When you plan a story or a report, your ideas come fast. Automatic writing lets your hand keep up with your mind.

When letters still take your thinking



*practice
flips this* →

When your writing is automatic



Automatic handwriting frees your mind for the ideas.

Two panels comparing where your thinking goes: in the left panel, letter work takes up most of the room and ideas get a small slice; in the right panel, writing is automatic, so ideas get almost all of the room

Fluent is not fastest

Fluent writing is not a race. There are three paces to watch out for:

- **Too slow.** The letters look neat, but your ideas have to wait — and your hand gets tired before you finish.
- **Too fast.** Letters slip out of shape and bump into each other. Your writing stops being legible, and your reader cannot follow it.
- **Steady pace.** Your writing keeps moving, and every letter stays easy to read. This is the goal: a pace you can keep up without getting tired.

Three paces — only one is the goal

Too slow

The dog ran to the gate.

Neat — but your ideas have to wait.

Steady pace

The dog ran to the gate.

Legible and moving — this is the goal.

Too fast

The dog ran to the gate.

Hard to read — your reader loses the words.

Fluent writing is not the fastest writing you can do.

Three samples of the same sentence at three paces: too slow with wide gaps between the letters, a steady pace with even joined letters, and too fast with letters leaning and crashing into each other

If your writing gets hard to read as you go, slow down a touch. If you keep stopping and starting, pick up your pace a little and let your hand keep moving.

Build it with a daily five-minute workout

Small, regular practice works best: five minutes a day beats one long session a week. Here is a simple workout you can do in your book.

The five-minute daily workout

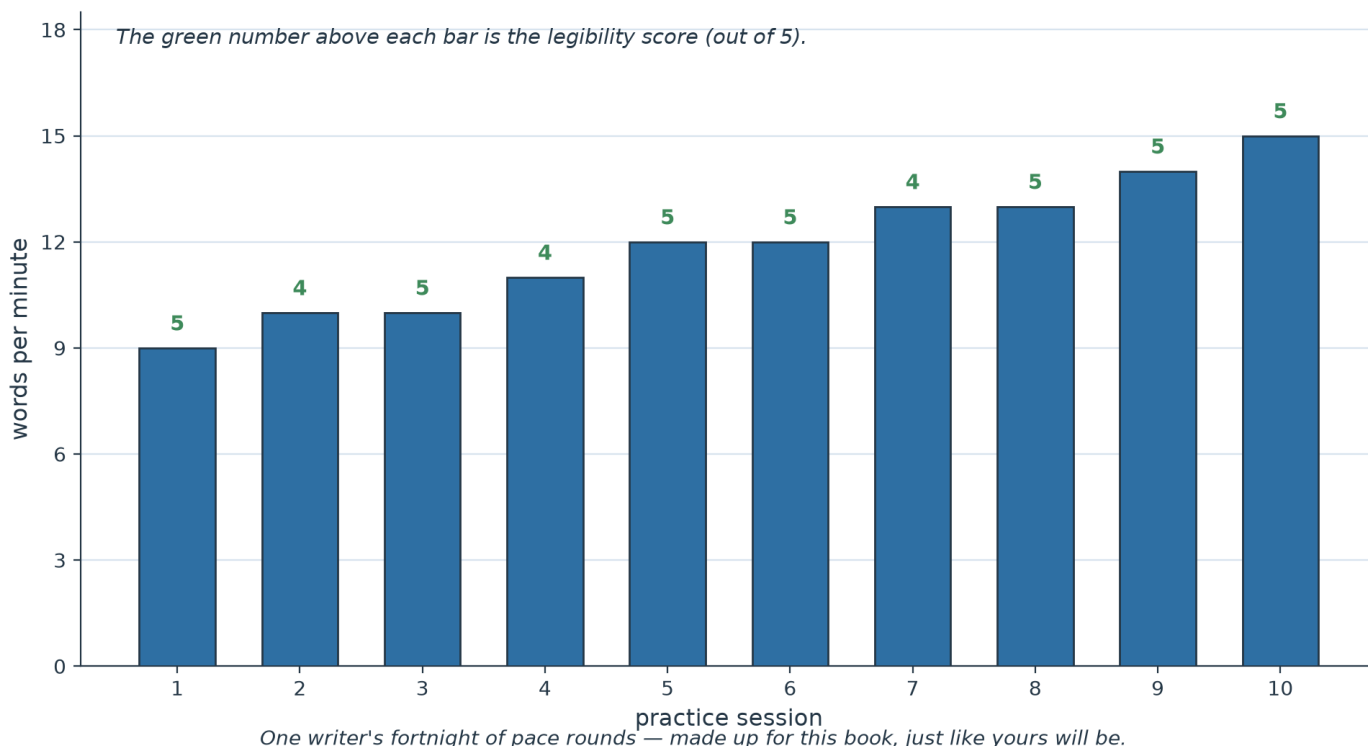
Part	Time	What you do
1. Warm-up	1 minute	Copy one short line of words you know well, to warm up your hand.
2. Pace round	3 minutes	Copy from a card at your steady pace. Count the words you write.
3. Self-check	1 minute	Read your writing back and tick the self-check list.

Five minutes a day beats one long session a week.

A five-minute daily workout plan in three rows: warm-up for one minute, copy a short line you know well; pace round for three minutes, copy from a card at a steady pace and count the words; self-check for one minute, read your writing back and tick the self-check list

Each time you finish a pace round, write your word count on a progress chart. Over a fortnight of practice, you can watch your speed climb — while your writing stays just as easy to read.

Practice pays off: speed climbs, writing stays legible



A bar chart showing words per minute across ten practice sessions: the bars climb from nine words in session one to fifteen words in session ten, and every bar is labelled with a legibility score of four or five out of five

The self-check list below turns the three goal words into questions. Use it after every practice write — and after any writing you do for school.

Self-check list

- ☐ My letters sit on the line.
- ☐ My letters are close to the same size.
- ☐ My words have small, even gaps.
- ☐ Someone else could read every word.
- ☐ I kept going without long stops.

Tick each box after every practice write.

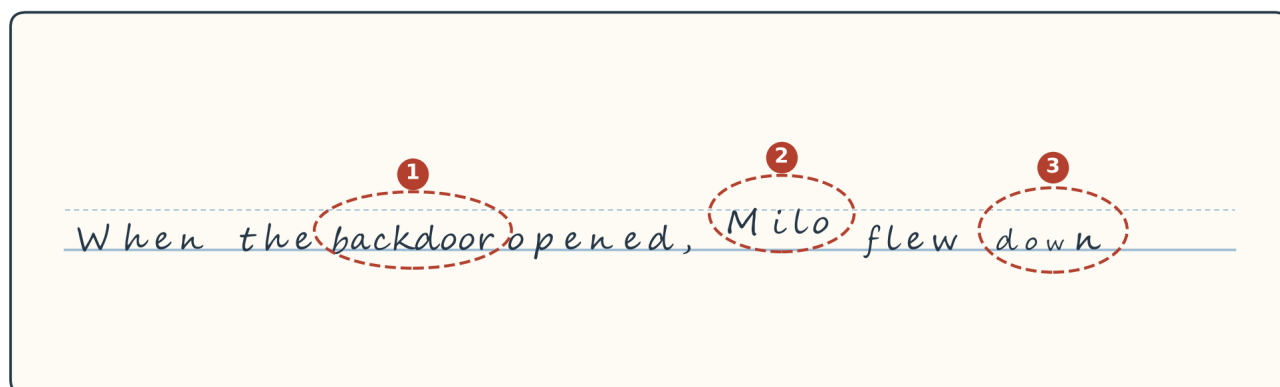
The self-check list with five tick boxes: my letters sit on the line; my letters are close to the same size; my words have small even gaps; someone else could read every word; I kept going without long stops

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — with help: check a sample against the goal

Here is a writing sample from a student called Tara. Three things are getting in the way of her reader. Each one is marked with a number.

Tara's sample — three things get in the reader's way



The numbers match the table in Worked example 1.

A short handwriting sample that reads 'When the back door opened, Milo flew down', with three problems marked: the words back and door are squashed together with no gap, the word Milo floats above the line, and the letters in the word down are different sizes

What you can see	The problem	Tara's fix for next time
1 — <i>back</i> and <i>door</i> are squashed together	With no gap, they read as one long word	Leave a small, even gap between words
2 — <i>Milo</i> floats above the line	The letters do not sit on the line, so the word looks wobbly	Bring every letter down to touch the line
3 — <i>down</i> has mixed-up letter sizes	Big and small letters in one word are hard to read	Use the lines on the page as a guide for letter height

Tara's letters are joined and her ideas are clear — once the sample is easy to read, her reader can enjoy them.

Worked example 2 — with help: check your pace

After a one-minute pace round, you can check your pace with two questions: *how many words?* and *can every word be read?*

Suppose Sam copies 13 words in one minute — but two of the words are too muddled to read.

Step	What you do	What it tells you
1. Count	Count every word Sam wrote: 13.	His speed: 13 words in one minute.
2. Read back	Read each word. Only 11 can be read.	His writing is not easy to read at this speed.
3. Decide	Sam slows down a touch until all his words are easy to read, then builds his speed back up.	The goal is writing that is legible <i>and</i> moving.

The number to chase is not just words per minute — it is **legible** words per minute.

Worked example 3 — on your own: reflect like a writer

After a practice write, write two sentences: one about what went well, and one about what you will work on next. Then compare your sentences with the model reflection below.

Model reflection: *My pace was steady and I kept going the whole time. Next time I will leave bigger gaps between my words.*

The model names one thing that worked and one clear next step. That is all a good reflection needs.

Practice tasks

With help

Q1. Match each clue to one goal word: **legible**, **fluent** or **automatic**.

- a) My hand knows the letters without me thinking about them.
- b) Anyone can read my words without having to guess.
- c) I keep a steady pace, with no long stops.
- d) My letters sit on the line and are easy to read.
- e) I can think about my ideas while I write.

Q2. Copy the passage on the copy card below, in your joined letters, at your steady pace. Work for two minutes. Then answer: how many words did you write? Which boxes on the self-check list can you tick?

Copy card

Copy this passage in your joined letters. Keep your steady pace.

start here →

Milo the magpie sat on the back gate and watched the garden.

When the kitchen door opened, he swooped down, grabbed a warm crumb,

and flew back up to sing.

(30 words)

A copy card with ruled lines and the passage 'Milo the magpie sat on the back gate and watched the garden. When the kitchen door opened, he swooped down, grabbed a warm crumb, and flew back up to sing', with an arrow marking where to start

Q3. Look at the three paces figure again. Which sample is too slow, which is steady, and which is too fast? Which sample shows the goal?

Q4. Copy this table into your book. Do three one-minute pace rounds, copying the copy card each time. Fill in the table after each round.

Round	Words written	All words legible?
1		
2		
3		

Q5. Look at Tara’s sample in Worked example 1 again. For each numbered problem, tell a partner what Tara should do next time — and why it helps her reader.

On your own

Q6. Pick one topic: *My favourite place* or *A stormy night*. Set a timer for three minutes and write until it beeps. Do not stop to rub anything out. Then count your words and run the self-check list. Were you legible? Were you fluent?

Q7. Plan your own practice week. Copy the workout plan figure into your book, and write the line or passage you will copy for each of the five days. Keep it where you will see it.

Q8. Teach it: in two or three sentences, explain to a partner why automatic writing helps your ideas. Use all three goal words — **legible**, **fluent** and **automatic**.

Answers

Q1. a) automatic; b) legible; c) fluent; d) legible; e) automatic. **Q2.** Word counts will vary — a steady Year 5 writer might copy 20 to 30 words in two minutes. Check that the writing is joined, and that the self-check ticks are honest. **Q3.** The first sample is too slow, the middle sample is steady, and the last sample is too fast. The middle sample shows the goal: legible *and* moving. **Q4.** Answers will vary. Look for a small climb in words across the three rounds, with the “All words legible?” column staying yes. **Q5.** Sample answers: for problem 1, leave a small, even gap between words so the reader can see where each word starts; for problem 2, bring the letters down to sit on the line; for problem 3, use the page lines as a guide so letters stay the same height. Each fix helps the reader, not just the page. **Q6.** Answers will vary. The point is three minutes of non-stop writing, then an honest word count and self-check. **Q7.** Answers will vary. Each day should name a short line or passage to copy, short enough to finish in the pace round. **Q8.** Answers will vary. A strong answer says that when the letters are automatic, the mind is free for ideas — and that a steady pace keeps the writing legible for the reader.

Checkpoint

Scored against the Level 5 achievement standard (writing): students “write legibly and fluently.”

Set a timer for five minutes. Pick one topic: *The best part of my week* or *If I had a robot for a day*. Write until the time is up, at a steady pace, without stopping to rub anything out. Then tick the success list below, and hand in your writing with it.

Checkpoint — success list

- ☐ My writing is legible — someone else can read every word.
- ☐ My writing is fluent — I kept a steady pace, with no long stops.
- ☐ My writing feels automatic — my mind was on my ideas, not on each letter.
- ☐ I kept writing for the whole five minutes.

Tick each box as you check your five-minute write.

The checkpoint success list with four tick boxes: my writing is legible — someone else can read every word; my writing is fluent — I kept a steady pace with no long stops; my writing feels automatic — my mind was on my ideas, not on each letter; I kept writing for the whole five minutes

Show what you know: your five-minute write, with your ticked success list.