

English Level 6

Chapter 1 — Language: interacting with others, organising texts

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Formality and social distance: how language choices vary

Chapter 1 · Section 1A · Language strand — Language for interacting with others

Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 6 — VC2E6LA01

“understand how language varies as levels of formality and social distance change”

Elaborations drawn on:

- **E01** recognising language protocols for formal address, for example words used to address principals, heads of state and monarchs
- **E02** discussing levels of language such as slang, colloquial, conversational and formal, and how their appropriateness changes with the situation and audience
- **E03** presenting ideas and opinions at levels of formality appropriate for the context and audience

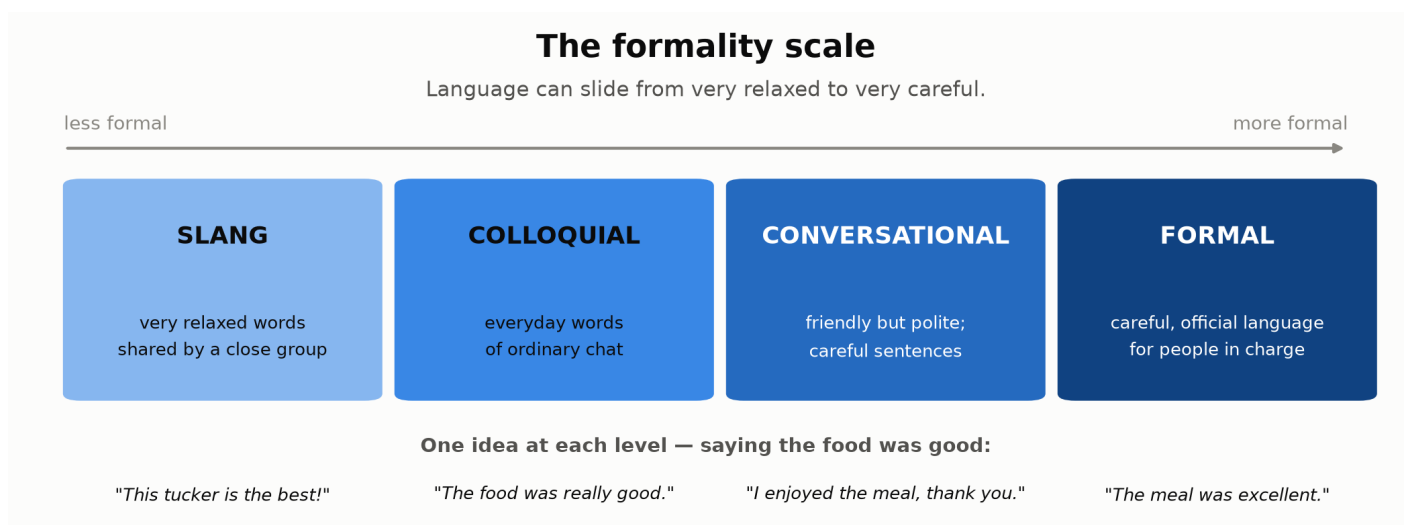
Theory

The same person, different words. It is lunchtime and you yell, *“Oi, hurry up!”* at your best friend. An hour later, in the front office, you say, *“Excuse me, could I have a moment of your time?”* Same you. Different words. In Year 5 you learned to fit your words to the people you were with and the reason for the talk. This section takes that skill further: it looks at *how* your words change when the formality or the social distance changes.

Formality is how careful and official your language is. The Victorian Curriculum uses a second term, *social distance*, but does not define it. This section therefore treats social distance as **how well people know each other and how close they feel**, and every task here is answerable on that meaning alone. A best friend is a small social distance. A judge you have never met is a big one.

The formality scale. Language sits on a scale from very relaxed to very careful (elaboration E02 names four levels on it).

- **Slang** — very relaxed words shared by a close group, often playful: *heaps, reckon, no worries.*
- **Colloquial** — the relaxed everyday words of ordinary chat, like short forms: *arvo, brekkie, barbie.*
- **Conversational** — friendly but polite talk, with full sentences: *“Could you help me with question three, please?”*
- **Formal** — careful, official language for people in charge and people you do not know well: *“I am writing to ask whether our school could start a lunchtime chess club.”*



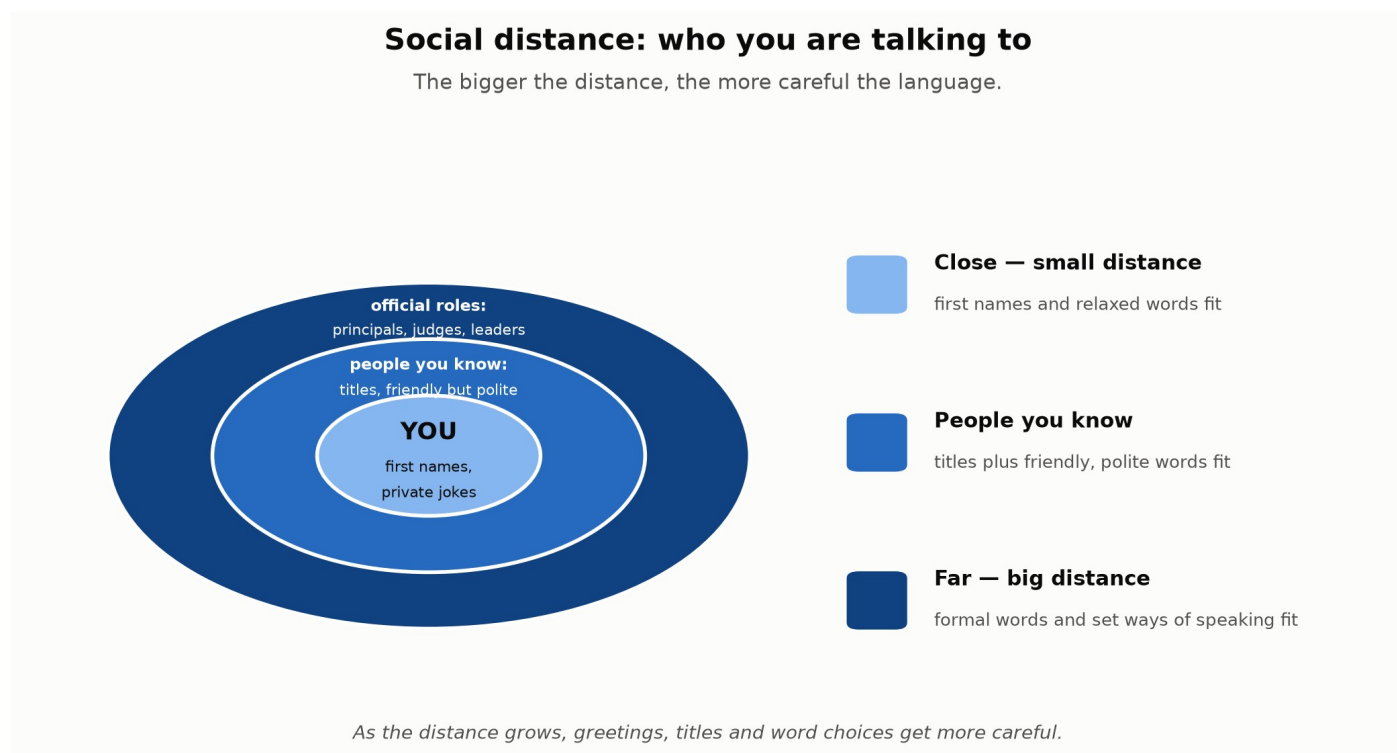
A four-band scale from slang to colloquial to conversational to formal, with an arrow from less formal to more formal and one food example at each level

No level is “bad”. Each one has its place. What changes as you move up the scale?

- **Word choice** — relaxed words swap for careful ones.

- **Greetings and titles** — *hey* becomes *Good morning*, and first names become title + family name.
- **Full words** — *I am* and *I would* replace *I'm* and *I'd*.
- **Polite asking words** — *please*, *could*, *would* and *whether* do a lot of work.
- **Sign-offs** — *see ya* becomes *Yours sincerely*.

Social distance. The second lever is who you are talking to.



Three rings around the word YOU: close people such as family and best friends, people you know such as classmates and teachers, and people in official roles such as principals and judges; the darker the ring, the bigger the distance

The bigger the distance, the more careful the language. With close people, first names and private jokes fit. With people you know, titles and friendly-but-polite words fit. With people in official roles, titles, formal words and set ways of speaking fit.

Protocols for formal address. A **protocol** is a set way of doing things, agreed because a situation is official. To **address** someone is to speak or write to them. Some roles carry set ways of being addressed (elaboration E01).

How do you address people in official roles?

A protocol is a set way of doing things. These are the usual Australian ways to address people.

WHO	HOW YOU ADDRESS THEM	EXAMPLE
Your teacher	Mr, Ms or Mrs + family name	"Good morning, Ms Lee."
Your principal	Title + family name, or 'Principal'	"Thank you, Mr Gupta."
Australia's monarch (the King, who is Australia's head of state)	'Your Majesty' first, then 'Sir'	"Good morning, Your Majesty."
A president (head of state of many other countries)	'Mr President' or 'Madam President'	"Thank you, Madam President."
The Governor-General (acts for the King in Australia)	'Your Excellency' first	"Welcome, Your Excellency."
The Prime Minister (head of government)	'Prime Minister' or title + family name	"Thank you, Prime Minister."

In some schools and families, first names are fine. When you are not sure, title + family name is the safe choice.

A three-column table showing how to address a teacher, a principal, Australia's monarch, a president, the Governor-General and the Prime Minister, with a spoken example for each

Two facts to keep straight: Australia's head of state is the King, and the Governor-General acts for the King in Australia. The Prime Minister is head of *government*, a different role. And in some schools and families, first names are fine — when you are not sure, title + family name is the safe choice.

Fitting the level to the audience and the situation. Before you speak or write, ask two questions: *Who is it for?* (your audience) and *What is the situation, and why?* (elaborations E02 and E03). The answers pick the level for you.

One message, four levels

The same ask — help with maths homework — at each level of the scale.

SLANG

"Oi, give us a hand with this maths, will ya?"

to your best mate at lunch

COLLOQUIAL

"Can you give me a hand with question three?"

to your older sister at home

CONVERSATIONAL

"Could you help me with question three, please?"

to your teacher before class

FORMAL

"Dear Mr Petrov, would it be possible to get
some help with question three? Thank you. — Maya"

in a note to a teacher you do not know

Same message. Same asker. Different audience, different words.

The same request for help with maths homework shown at four levels: slang to a best mate, colloquial to an older sister, conversational to a teacher, and formal in a written message to a teacher the writer does not know

Same message. Same asker. Different audience, different words. And when the level does not match the situation?

Right fit, wrong fit

What happens when the level does not match the situation?



Wrong fit

Situation: writing to the principal

"Yo! Can I borrow
the class book? Cheers."

Slang in an official message
can read as rude, even when
no rudeness is meant.



Good fit

Situation: writing to the principal

"Dear Ms Okafor, may I please
borrow the class book? Thank you."

Formal words and a polite asking
show respect for the role
and the request.

Both messages ask for the same thing. Only the level changed — and with it, how the message lands.

Two panels side by side: a slang message to a principal marked with a cross as a wrong fit, and a formal message to a principal marked with a tick as a good fit

A wrong fit can sound rude even when no rudeness is meant — and sometimes people choose a wrong fit on purpose to be funny, which is a tool authors use for humour. A good fit shows respect for the person, the role and the request.

Word swaps. One easy way to move up the scale is to swap words while keeping the meaning.

Word swaps across the scale

One easy way to move up the scale: swap the words.

LESS FORMAL		MORE FORMAL
hey / hi	→	Good morning / Dear Ms Lee
kids	→	children
heaps	→	a lot / many
reckon	→	think / believe
yeah / nah	→	yes / no
cheers / no worries	→	thank you
ok / sure	→	certainly / of course

The meaning stays the same. The fit changes.

Two columns, less formal and more formal, joined by arrows: hey and hi to good morning, kids to children, heaps to a lot, reckon to think, yeah and nah to yes and no, cheers to thank you, ok and sure to certainly

A fair argument. People disagree about slang. Here are both sides in their strongest forms:

- *Side A — slang hurts you.* The people who hire you, and people in official roles, judge you by your words. A young person who cannot switch to formal language misses out on jobs and interviews, and people may not listen to their ideas. Schools should build the formal habit early.
- *Side B — slang is a skill, not a fault.* Slang is creative, marks who belongs to your group, and renews the language every generation. Most speakers switch levels on their own when the situation changes, so the real skill is choosing, not banning.

Read both sides with care before Q9 asks you to weigh them. In this section, as in every discussion task, you are graded on the quality of your reasoning, not on which side you pick.

Worked examples

Example 1 — modelled analysis (with support)

Two texts, one topic. Text A is a note to a friend. Text B is a letter to the principal. Both are about the same lunchtime chess club.

Text A Hey Sam! Chess club is ON for Friday lunch. Bring your board if you have one. See ya! — Alex

Text B Maya Nguyen Year 6, Rivergum Primary School 4 September 2026

Mrs Okafor Principal

Dear Mrs Okafor,

I am writing to ask whether our school could start a lunchtime chess club. Many students enjoy chess, and a club would give us a quiet place to play and learn new moves.

I would be happy to help run it. Thank you for reading my letter.

Yours sincerely, Maya Nguyen

Which text is formal, and how do you know? Work through the evidence.

Working	Comment
Text A is for a best friend; Text B is for the principal.	The audience decides the level: close friend, small distance; principal, big distance and an official role.
Text A opens “Hey Sam!” and signs off “See ya!”; Text B opens “Dear Mrs Okafor,” and signs off “Yours sincerely”.	Greeting and sign-off name the level first and last.
Text B says “I am writing to ask whether our school could ...”	Full words (not <i>I’m</i>), plus the polite asking words <i>whether</i> and <i>could</i> .
Text B gives sender details, a date, and the reader’s name and role at the top.	A formal letter carries a set layout.

A formal letter, and the choices that make it formal

Maya Nguyen
Year 6, Rivergum Primary School
4 September 2026

Mrs Okafor
Principal

Dear Mrs Okafor,

I am writing to ask whether our school could start a lunchtime chess club. Many students enjoy chess, and a club would give us a quiet place to play and learn new moves.

I would be happy to help run it. Thank you for reading my letter.

Yours sincerely,
Maya Nguyen

Sender's details and date

at the top

Who it is for:

name and role

Greeting: title +

family name

Formal opening:

"I am writing to ask ..."

Full words: "I would" —

no short forms

Sign-off: "Yours sincerely"

and a signature

Two polite asking words do a lot of work here: "whether" and "could".

The letter from Example 1 with six labels pointing at its formal choices: sender details and date, the reader’s name and role, a greeting with title and family name, a formal opening, full words with no short forms, and a formal sign-off with signature

Conclusion: Text B is the formal one. The claim is not a feeling — each level is shown by a named choice: audience, greeting, sign-off, word choice and layout.

Example 2 — modelled composition (with support)

One opinion: *Our school should let students choose one new playground game each term.* Compose it at two levels (elaboration E03). First the two questions:

1. *Who is it for?* Version 1: your friends at lunch. Version 2: the school council.
2. *What is the situation?* Version 1: a chat, so relaxed words fit. Version 2: an official meeting, so formal words fit.

Version 1 — the chat I reckon the school should let us pick one new game for the playground each term. It would be heaps of fun, and way more kids would play outside.

Version 2 — the council talk Good afternoon, Principal and councillors. I believe our school should let students choose one new playground game each term. It would help more students play outside, and it would teach us to make fair choices. Thank you for your time.

Change	Version 1 (chat)	Version 2 (council)
Greeting	no greeting — you just start	<i>Good afternoon, Principal and councillors</i>
Saying the opinion	<i>I reckon</i>	<i>I believe</i>
Naming the group	<i>us, kids</i>	<i>students, us</i>
Size words	<i>heaps of, way more</i>	<i>more, fair choices</i>
Closing	no closing	<i>Thank you for your time</i>

The method: ask the two questions, pick the level, then change the greeting, the words and the closing. The opinion never changes — only the fit does.

Practice questions

With support

Q1. Match each situation to the level that fits best: **slang**, **colloquial**, **conversational** or **formal**. Then give a one-line reason. (Two of the situations honestly fit two levels — say which two and why.)

- (a) texting your best friend about the weekend
- (b) telling your family about your day at dinner
- (c) asking your teacher a question in class
- (d) writing a letter to the principal
- (e) cheering with your footy team after a win
- (f) speaking at whole-school assembly
- (g) phoning your grandma to say thanks
- (h) chatting with the student beside you in the library

Q2. Use the word-swap figure above. For each less-formal word or phrase, write its more formal partner: (a) *hey*; (b) *kids*; (c) *heaps*; (d) *reckon*; (e) *yeah*; (f) *cheers*. Then write one sentence of your own that uses any two of the formal partners.

Q3. Match each person to the way you address them (word bank: *Your Majesty* · *Madam President* · *Your Excellency* · *Prime Minister* · *Ms Lee* · *Mr Gupta*).

- (a) your teacher, whose family name is Lee
- (b) the King, visiting your school as Australia's head of state
- (c) the president of another country, at an official welcome
-

(d) your principal, whose family name is Gupta

(e) the Governor-General, acting for the King

(f) the head of government, opening your school fete

Q4. Sort each feature into the column that fits: **more formal** or **less formal**.

(a) *Yours sincerely*

(b) short forms like *can't* and *I'm*

(c) title + family name

(d) slang like *heaps*

(e) the asking words *please* and *could*

(f) shortened words like *arvo*

(g) emojis

(h) full words like *I am* and *I would*

Q5. Each extract uses a level that does not fit its situation. Name the level used, name the level that would fit, and quote the word that gives it away.

(a) In class, to the teacher: “*Yo, teach, what’s for lunch?*”

(b) In a note to a best friend: “*Dear Jake, I would like to invite you to my party.*”

(c) At a family dinner: “*Good evening, Mother. May I be excused?*” (said every single night)

Q6. Your friend texts you: “*party was heaps good!! catch ya later*”. Their mum — who you have met once — borrows your phone to text back that she will pick your friend up at five. Write her message at a level that fits, using: a greeting, full sentences, and a sign-off.

On your own

Q7. Write the same request twice. You want to borrow a book about sharks.

(a) Ask your best friend to lend you theirs.

(b) Ask the school librarian, who started this week and who you have not met.

Then name two language choices you changed between the versions.

Q8. This letter was sent to a principal. Rewrite it so the level fits the audience, keeping the same two requests. Then explain two of your changes.

Dear Ms Okafor,

heaps of kids reckon the oval is way too muddy after rain. can we get some new mats for the wet days? also the canteen should sell more fruit, yeah?

cheers, Tom

Q9. Return to Side A and Side B from the Theory (“A fair argument”). In two or three sentences each, state the **strongest** version of both sides. Then say which side you think has the better reasons, and why. You are graded on the quality of your reasoning, not on which side you pick.

Q10. Pick one opinion from this list, or use one of your own: *the school should plant a vegetable garden; every class should have a quiet reading corner; students should run one fundraising day a term.* Write an opening for it at **two** levels: (a) a text to a friend; (b) the first two sentences of a class talk. Name the level you chose for each.

Produced outcome

Write a **formal letter to your principal** presenting one idea or opinion you would like the school to take up (elaboration E03). Plan first with the grid, then write 100–150 words.

Plan your letter	
Fill in the right-hand column before you start writing.	
THINK ABOUT	YOUR PLAN
Who are you writing to? Name their role and how you will address them.	
What is your idea or opinion? Say it in one clear sentence.	
What level of formality fits? Name the level and tell why it fits.	
How will you greet them? Use the matching greeting and title.	
What are your two or three reasons? List them in order.	
How will you sign off? Choose a formal sign-off and add your name.	

A good plan answers all six questions before the first word is written.

A six-row planning grid: who you are writing to, your idea in one sentence, the level of formality that fits, your greeting, your two or three reasons, and your sign-off, each with a blank plan column

Your letter must show:

- the layout of a formal letter: your details and the date, the reader’s name and role, a greeting, the body, and a sign-off;
- the correct way to address your principal (elaboration E01);
- a level of formality that fits the audience and the situation (elaboration E02);
- at least three of: full words with no short forms, polite asking words, careful word choices, a formal greeting, a formal sign-off.

Check your letter against the four dot points before you hand it in — that is your agreed set of criteria.

Answers

Q1. Model answers with reasons: (a) slang — closest friend, smallest distance; (b) colloquial — relaxed family chat (conversational also fits, because family talk is polite too); (c) conversational — polite but friendly, and you know the person; (d) formal — big distance and an official role; (e) slang — a close group cheering together (colloquial also fits, for the same closeness); (f) formal — a whole-school, official situation with many people you do not know well; (g) conversational — family, but on the phone, so a little more careful than a shout across the yard (colloquial also fits); (h) conversational — you know each other, but the library calls for quiet, polite talk. The two honest two-level answers are (b)/(e)/(g)-style: closeness lets two relaxed levels both fit, and the reason is what matters.

Q2. (a) *Good morning* (or *Dear ...*); (b) *children*; (c) *a lot / many*; (d) *think / believe*; (e) *yes*; (f) *thank you*. Sample sentence: *Good morning, Ms Lee — I believe many students would join the club.*

Q3. (a) Ms Lee; (b) Your Majesty; (c) Madam President; (d) Mr Gupta; (e) Your Excellency; (f) Prime Minister.

Q4. More formal: (a), (c), (e), (h). Less formal: (b), (d), (f), (g).

Q5. (a) Slang used; conversational fits; *Yo* (or *teach*) gives it away. (b) Formal used; colloquial or conversational fits; *I would like to invite you* gives it away. (c) Formal used; colloquial or conversational fits; *May I be excused* gives it away.

Q6. Sample: *Hello, it's Maya's phone — this is Mrs Ford's mum? Just writing to say I will pick Jamie up at five. Thank you, Mrs Ford.* (Accept any message with a greeting, full sentences and a sign-off at a conversational or formal level.)

Q7. Sample: (a) *Hey, can I borrow your shark book this week?* (b) *Good morning. My name is Maya Nguyen from 6B. May I please borrow the school's book about sharks? Thank you.* Two changes named, for example: greeting (*hey* → *Good morning* + self-naming) and asking word (*can* → *may I please*).

Q8. Sample rewrite: *Dear Ms Okafor, I am writing to ask whether the school could put new mats on the oval for wet days. Many students find the oval too muddy after rain. I would also like to ask whether the canteen could sell more fruit. Thank you for reading my letter. Yours sincerely, Tom.* Two changes explained, for example: *can we get* → *I am writing to ask whether ... could* (polite asking), and *cheers* → *Yours sincerely* (formal sign-off).

Q9. There is no single right side. A strong answer states each side at full strength (see the Theory boxes) and then gives reasons: for example, Side B is stronger *if* most speakers really can switch levels, while Side A is stronger *if* switching has to be taught and practised. Grading is on the reasoning: both sides stated with equal care, reasons named, and a conclusion that follows from them.

Q10. Sample (vegetable garden): (a) text — *our school should really grow a veggie garden, imagine free snacks lol* (slang/colloquial); (b) class talk — *Good morning everyone. I believe our school should plant a vegetable garden, and here is why.* (conversational to formal). Any two levels are accepted if the choices match them.

Sample responses

Produced outcome — a model letter. One way the outcome can look, on a different topic so your own letter stays your own:

Jordan Smith Year 6, Rivergum Primary School 11 September 2026

Mrs Okafor Principal

Dear Mrs Okafor,

I am writing to ask whether every class could have a quiet reading corner. Many students would use it, and it would give us a calm place to read during wet lunchtimes. A corner needs only a rug, a lamp and a box of books, and our class would be happy to collect them.

I believe this small change would help many readers. Thank you for your time and for reading my letter.

Yours sincerely, Jordan Smith

The level is formal throughout: set layout, title + family name, full words (*I am, I would*), polite asking (*whether, could*), and a formal sign-off. The audience is one person in an official role, and the situation is a written request — so formal is the fit.

Objective and subjective language; identifying bias

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, English, Level 6

Owens: VC2E6LA02 — “understand the uses of objective and subjective language, and identify bias”

Draws on: VC2E6LA02.E01 “identifying language choices that evoke emotion and judgements in direct and indirect ways, and how they are used to persuade different audiences to take a position and/or action”

· VC2E6LA02.E02 “understanding when to share feelings and opinions (for example, in a personal recount) and when to remain more objective (for example, in a factual recount)” · VC2E6LA02.E03

“differentiating between reporting facts (for example, in a factual recount or unedited photograph) and providing a commentary (for example, in an editorial)”

Level 6 achievement standard (Speaking and Listening): “They explore objective and subjective language and identify bias.”

Learn

1. Two jobs that language can do

At Level 5 you learned to support your ideas in a discussion, not just state them. In this section you will look at the words themselves, because every sentence you read or write does one of two jobs. It reports what happened, or it shares how somebody feels about what happened.

Defining the terms. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *objective language* and *subjective language* but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as follows, and every question here is answerable on these definitions alone.

- **Objective language** is language that reports what can be checked: facts, events, numbers, times and places. It does not take sides, and it does not tell the reader what to feel. We say it is **neutral** — like a plain window you can see straight through.
- **Subjective language** is language that shares feelings, opinions and judgements. It takes a side, and it often tries to persuade the reader to take that side too.

A **fact** is something that can be checked and found to be true, like “The concert starts at 6 pm”. An **opinion** is what someone thinks or feels, like “The concert will be the best night of the year”. Objective language carries facts. Subjective language carries opinions.

Two jobs that language can do

	Objective language	Subjective language
Its job	Reports what happened, or what is true	Shares feelings, opinions and judgements
Can it be checked?	Yes — a reader can check it	No — it belongs to the person who holds it
Signal words	Names, numbers, dates, times, places	Best, wonderful, terrible, should, must, proud, worried
Example	"The concert starts at 6 pm."	"The concert will be the best night of the year!"
Where you find it	News reports, factual recounts, instructions, reports	Personal recounts, editorials, speeches, advertisements

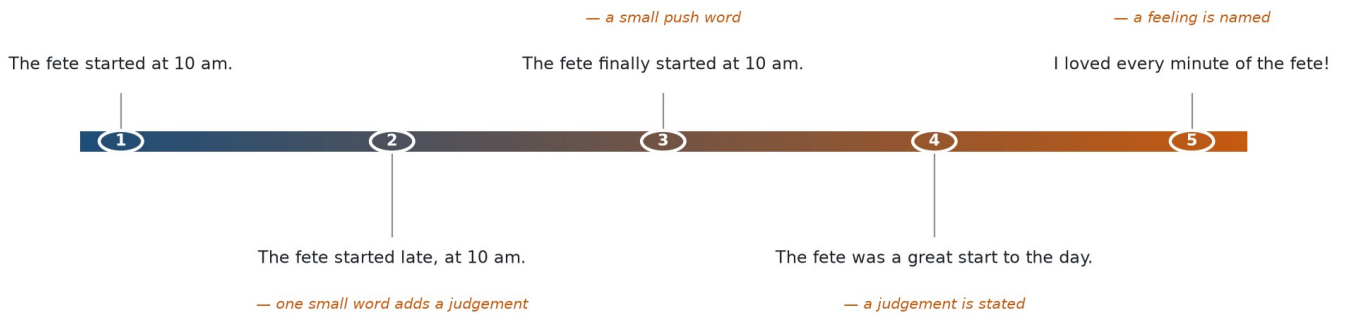
One text can do both jobs. Read sentence by sentence to see which job each one does.

A comparison table setting objective language and subjective language side by side, listing the job each one does, whether it can be checked, its signal words, an example sentence, and where it is usually found.

Some signal words give the job away. Objective sentences are full of names, numbers, dates and times. Subjective sentences reach for words like *best*, *wonderful*, *terrible*, *should* and *must*, and for feeling words like *proud*, *worried* and *cross*.

One warning: the two jobs are not always this easy to sort. A writer can slide a judgement into a sentence with one small word, and a reader who is not watching will miss it. Look at the sentences on the line below. They are all about the same event — a school fete — but each one leans a little further from pure fact towards pure feeling.

How a text can lean from fact to feeling



The objective end — just the facts

The subjective end — all feeling

A horizontal line from the objective end to the subjective end, with five sentences about a school fete placed along it, each leaning further from plain fact towards feeling.

Sentences 2 and 3 are the sneaky ones. The words *late* and *finally* are tiny, but each one adds a judgement: the writer is telling you the start was wrong, without ever saying so out loud. When you read, watch the small words.

2. How feelings and judgements get into a text

Writers can put feelings and judgements into a text in two broad ways: in a direct way, where the feeling is named, or in an indirect way, without saying the feeling out loud.

Direct. The writer names the feeling: “*I felt so proud of our team.*” You cannot miss it, because the feeling word is right there.

Indirect. The writer never names a feeling, but the word choices still push the reader to judge. Three common moves are **loaded words**, **picked facts** and **small push words**.

A **loaded word** is a word that carries a judgement inside it, over and above the plain fact. Compare “The referee gave a free kick” with “The referee made a **shocking** call”. Both report the same event, but *shocking* tells you how to judge it.

Picked facts means choosing which facts to tell — and which to leave out. Compare “Only three students remembered their hats” with “Thirty-seven students brought their hats”. Both could be true of the same class of forty. Each sentence picks the fact that helps one side.

Small push words — *late, finally, only, again, just* — are tiny words that tilt a sentence. “The bus was late **again**” does more work than “The bus was late”.

How feelings and judgements get into a text

The move	What it looks like	Example
Direct — naming the feeling	The writer says the feeling out loud	"I felt so proud of our team."
Indirect — loaded words	A word carries a judgement inside it	"The referee made a shocking call." (Plain fact: "The referee gave a free kick.")
Indirect — picked facts	Which facts are told, and which are left out	"Only three students remembered their hats." (Plain fact: "Three students brought hats.")
Indirect — small push words	Tiny words that tilt a sentence	"The bus was late again." (Plain fact: "The bus was late.")

A table of the direct and indirect ways that feelings and judgements enter a text, each row showing what the move looks like and a worked example sentence.

Writers use these moves to **persuade** different audiences to take a **position** (to agree with one side) or to take an **action** (to do something, like sign a letter or come to a meeting). Whenever a text makes you feel strongly, pause and ask which word did the work.

3. When feelings belong — and when they do not

A **recount** is a text that retells something that has happened. Recounts come in two kinds, and each kind has its own rules about feelings.

- A **personal recount** retells an event from the writer's own life and shares the writer's feelings and opinions about it. Feelings belong here. In fact, they are the point.
- A **factual recount** retells events as they happened, in time order, with details that can be checked. Feelings do not belong here. The reader wants the events, not the writer's reaction to them.

Here is the same day — a school athletics carnival — written both ways. The feeling words in the personal recount are marked.

The same day, written two ways

Factual recount

On Tuesday, our school held its athletics carnival at the local park. Students from Years 3 to 6 competed in running, jumping and throwing events. The day ended with the trophy presentation.

Personal recount

I will **never forget** my race at the athletics carnival. My legs **felt like jelly** as I waited at the starting line. When I crossed the line first, I was **so happy I could burst**. It was the **best day of the year**.

Feeling words and feeling moves are marked in colour in the personal recount. The factual recount keeps to what can be checked.

Two model texts about the same athletics carnival, one a factual recount with plain checkable details and one a personal recount with its feeling words highlighted in colour.

Notice that the factual recount is not cold or empty. It still has life — names, places, times, events. What it does not have is the writer telling you what to feel.

4. Reporting facts and providing a commentary

The same split shows up in the texts you meet outside school. Two of the most common are the **news report** and the **editorial**.

A **news report** tells readers what happened: who was there, what happened, when and where. Its job is to report facts, and a reader of any position should be able to read it and say, “Yes, that is what happened.”

An **editorial** is an article, written by or for the **editor** (the person in charge of a newspaper, newsletter or site), that gives the publication’s opinion about an issue. An editorial provides a **commentary** — that is, it says what the writer thinks about events, rather than just reporting them. Its job is to persuade.

Reporting facts and providing a commentary

	News report	Editorial
Its job	To tell readers what happened	To give an opinion and persuade readers
What is inside	Facts: who, what, when, where	Commentary: what the writer thinks about the facts
Feelings	Kept out	Front and centre
Words	Neutral and checkable	Loaded words and feeling words
The reader's job	Take in what happened	Spot the position, then decide if you agree

Both are honest when they are labelled. Trouble starts when commentary pretends to be news.

A comparison table setting a news report beside an editorial, comparing purpose, what is inside, where feelings sit, the words each one uses, and the job left for the reader.

Here is one event — the opening of a new school vegetable garden — written both ways. Read them side by side and watch how the same facts change job.

Model news report

On Friday, Riverbend Primary School opened its new vegetable garden. Students in Years 5 and 6 planted tomatoes, beans and lettuce. The garden was paid for with money raised at last term's school fete. Principal Ms Chen said every class would use the garden this year.

Model editorial

Friday's garden opening was the best day our school has seen in years. While some schools talk about getting students outside, ours got its hands in the soil. Every class will use the garden this year — and every student will learn that good things grow when people work together. Our school should be proud.

Both texts are honest about the facts. But the editorial tells you what to think about the facts: *best day, while some schools talk, should be proud*. A news report leaves those calls to you.

The same lesson holds for pictures. An **unedited photograph** — one that has not been changed, cut or filtered — shows what was in front of the camera. But the words printed under a picture, called the **caption**, can steer how you read it, and a photographer can choose which moment to shoot and what to leave outside the frame. Below, the same park scene carries three different captions. The picture never changes. The push does.

The same picture, different pushes



The picture never changes. The push does.

Three copies of the same drawing of a park scene with a full rubbish bin and litter on the grass; the first has no caption, and the second and third carry captions that push the reader towards different judgements.

5. Identifying bias

Defining the term. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *bias* but does not define it. This section therefore treats **bias** as a lean in a text that is not made open to the reader: when a text keeps pushing one side of an issue — through its words, its facts, or what it leaves out — without telling the reader it is pushing. Every question in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

Bias is not the same as being wrong. A biased text can be full of true facts. What makes it biased is the hidden push: the reader is led towards a position without being told they are being led. Bias is also not always against something. A text can be biased **for** a person, a plan or an idea, not just against one. Bias leans; the direction of the lean changes, the move stays the same.

And a text that states its position openly is not hiding anything. The model editorial above is clearly taking a side — it tells you so. The texts to watch are the ones that sound like plain reporting while they lean.

To find bias, work through the five questions in the checklist. Use it on anything: a news story, a letter, a poster, a video, a caption.

Spotting bias: five questions to ask

☐	1. Who made this text, and what do they want?
☐	2. Which words carry feelings or judgements?
☐	3. What is left out? What would the other side say?
☐	4. What does the text want you to think, feel or do?
☐	5. Does it show both sides, or does it lean one way?

Use the checklist on anything: a news story, a letter, a poster, a video, a caption.

A checklist titled 'Spotting bias' listing five questions to ask of any text: who made it and what do they want, which words carry feelings or judgements, what is left out, what does it want you to think or feel or do, and does it show both sides or lean one way.

One last tool: swap the loaded words for neutral ones and see what is left. If the sentence still says the same thing, the loaded word was doing the persuading, not the reporting.

Same facts, different push

The fact	Neutral words	Loaded words
The pool needs repairs	The council will close the pool for six weeks of repairs.	The council is shutting our much-loved pool.
The team lost the game	The team lost Saturday's game 3-1.	The team suffered a crushing defeat.
It rained during the fete	It rained for the last hour of the fete.	The rain ruined the last hour of the fete.
There is a new rule	The principal announced the new rule.	The principal pushed through a new rule that nobody wanted.

Same facts. Different push. Swap the loaded words for neutral ones and see what is left.

A table showing the same four facts written twice each, once in neutral words and once in loaded words, so the difference the loaded words make is plain to see.

These skills do more than help you read. They shape how you speak and write with others: knowing when to offer plain facts and when to share your position is the groundwork for arguing well and presenting well (Sections 4A and 4B), and for seeing how texts reflect the world they come from (Section 5A).

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — modelled analysis

Read this short text about a new bus shelter.

The new bus shelter outside Riverbend Primary School was finished this week. The shelter seats eight students. The work took two weeks longer than planned. Some students said the wait felt much longer in the wet weather.

Sort each sentence as objective or subjective, and say how you know.

Sentence	Objective or subjective?	How do you know
The new bus shelter outside Riverbend Primary School was finished this week.	Objective	It reports an event that can be checked. No feeling words.
The shelter seats eight students.	Objective	It gives a number that can be checked.
The work took two weeks longer than planned.	Objective	It can be checked against the plan. Comparing with the plan is not the same as taking sides.
Some students said the wait felt much longer in the wet weather.	Subjective	It reports a feeling — how the wait <i>felt</i> — and feelings cannot be checked like numbers.

Watch the pattern. Three objective sentences and one subjective one, all in the same short text. Real texts mix the two jobs. Your job is to read sentence by sentence, not just get the drift.

Worked example 2 — modelled composition

Now build the same event two ways. The event: on Tuesday, Years 3 and 4 visited the town museum for a mummies workshop; the visit was free; every student got to hold a replica tool; the bus left school at 9 am and returned by lunch.

Plan first: list the checkable facts, then decide which position your commentary will take (here: the visit was a success worth repeating).

Choice	Factual recount	Commentary (short editorial)	Why they differ
Opening	On Tuesday, Years 3 and 4 visited the town museum.	Tuesday's museum visit shows what learning should look like.	One reports the event; the other opens with a judgement.
The hands-on moment	Every student held a replica tool made for the workshop.	Every student got to hold history in their hands.	"Held a replica tool" is checkable; "hold history" stirs a feeling.
Closing	The bus returned to school by lunch.	Our school should book the workshop again next year.	One ends with a time; the other ends with a push to act.

Factual recount

On Tuesday, Years 3 and 4 visited the town museum for a workshop on mummies. The bus left school at 9 am. At the museum, every student held a replica tool made for the workshop. The visit was free, and the bus returned to school by lunch.

Commentary

Tuesday's museum visit shows what learning should look like. Every student got to hold history in their hands — and it cost nothing. Visits like this are the lessons students remember. Our school should book the workshop again next year.

Check both texts against the checklist: the factual recount stays neutral and checkable; the commentary states its position, uses loaded choices (*should look like, hold history, remember*) and ends with an action.

Practice tasks

With support

Q1. (E01) Sort each sentence as **objective** or **subjective**. Write one word or phrase from the sentence that helped you decide.

- a) The Year 6 camp runs from 12 to 14 March.
- b) The camp is the best week of the whole year.
- c) Students will stay at the Lakeside camp site.
- d) I hope the weather stays sunny all week.
- e) Three buses will leave school at 8:30 am.
- f) Nobody can wait for camp to start.

Q2. (E01) Each sentence below contains a loaded word or a small push word. Underline it, then rewrite the sentence using neutral words that keep the fact.

- a) The school concert was a disaster.
- b) The referee made a shocking call that cost us the game.
- c) Only three students remembered their hats.

Q3. (E01) Feelings and judgements can enter a text in a direct way (the feeling is named) or in an indirect way (loaded words, picked facts or small push words do the work). Label each sentence **direct** or **indirect**, and name the move.

- a) We were so proud of our winning team.
- b) The winning team finally got the trophy they deserved.
- c) Just 12 of the 40 seats were taken at the school play.

Q4. (E02) Two students wrote about the same school camp. Text A: *"The camp began with a walk to the lookout. We had lunch by the river. That night, the stars were amazing, and I felt so lucky to be there."* Text B: *"The camp began with a walk to the lookout. Students had lunch by the river. At night, students viewed the stars with a telescope brought by their teacher."* Which text is the personal recount and which is the factual recount? Underline the words in the personal recount that show it.

Q5. (E03) Sort each feature below into the correct column of this table: **news report, editorial, or both**.

Features: tells what happened, when and where · gives the writer's opinion · uses words that carry feelings · names who was there · asks the reader to agree or to act · sticks to what can be checked

Q6. (E03) Look again at the three park scenes in the picture in Section 4. For each caption, write one sentence saying what it pushes the reader to judge — and who or what that judgement points at.

On your own

Q7. (E01, E03) Read this letter, written for the school newsletter.

Do not let the fete fade away

Last Saturday's school fete was more than sausage sandwiches and games. It was the one day of the year when families, teachers and students all come together. Some people say fetes take too much time to plan. But what is a little planning, next to a whole school that knows each other? The fete committee did a great job — and our school should keep the fete going every single year.

Find two language choices in the letter that show bias. For each one, name the choice and explain which way it leans. Then state the letter's overall position in one sentence.

Q8. (E01) Rewrite each sentence as an objective sentence. Keep the fact; drop the push.

- a) The council is shutting our much-loved pool for repairs.
- b) The team suffered a crushing defeat on Saturday.
- c) The rain ruined the last hour of the fete.

Q9. (E02) Write a factual recount of four sentences about a real school event (a concert, a sports day, an assembly). Use at least two checkable details — a number, a date, a place or a name. Then write one sentence explaining what you would add or change if the same event became a personal recount.

Q10. (E01, E03) Apply the five questions from the *Spotting bias* checklist to this letter from the school newsletter. Answer each question in one or two sentences.

Save our library's quiet hour

Our school library is the heart of Riverbend Primary. Yet from next term, the library will close at 3 pm so the room can be used for meetings. Students who finish class late will lose their only quiet reading time. Where will they go? A school that cuts reading time cuts learning. We ask the principal to keep the library open until 4 pm.

Produced outcome

One event, two texts. Choose one real school event you know well (a fete, a concert, a sports day, an excursion). Write both of the following.

- 1. A **factual recount** for the school newsletter (about 80 words). Report the event: who, what, when, where. Keep it neutral and checkable. No feelings, no push.
- 2. A short **editorial** about the same event (about 60 words). Take a clear position — for or against, your choice — and give a commentary. Use at least two of the indirect moves from Section 2 (loaded words, picked facts, small push words).

Then write two sentences of reflection: which exact words keep text 1 neutral, and which exact words make text 2 lean?

Success criteria. Text 1 reports only what can be checked, with at least three checkable details. Text 2 takes a position the reader can name. The reflection points at particular words, not at the texts in general.

Marking note: for every open task in this section, marks are for the quality of your reasoning — how well you name the language choice and show what it does — not for which side of an issue you land on.

Answers

Q1. a) Objective — “12 to 14 March” is a checkable date. b) Subjective — “best” is a judgement. c) Objective — the place can be checked. d) Subjective — “I hope” shares a feeling about what might happen. e) Objective — numbers and a time that can be checked. f) Subjective — “can wait” reports a feeling (the waiting is too hard), and “nobody” turns one person’s feeling into a claim about everyone.

Q2. a) *Disaster* is loaded. Sample: “The school concert did not go as planned.” b) *Shocking* is loaded. Sample: “The referee gave a free kick, and the other team scored from it.” c) *Only* is the push word. Sample: “Three students brought their hats. The rest did not.”

Q3. a) Direct — the feeling is named: “proud”. b) Indirect — loaded words and a small push word: “finally” and “deserved” tell you the win was owed, without naming any feeling. c) Indirect — picked facts and a small push word: “Just” and the choice of 12 against 40 push the reader towards “nobody came”.

Q4. Text A is the personal recount; Text B is the factual recount. In Text A, the feeling words are “amazing” and “I felt so lucky to be there”. Text B reports the same night with checkable details (a telescope, brought by the teacher) and no feelings.

Q5. News report: tells what happened, when and where; names who was there; sticks to what can be checked. Editorial: gives the writer’s opinion; uses words that carry feelings; asks the reader to agree or to act. Both: no feature sits in both columns — a news report can quote feelings from a person it interviews, but the features listed here split cleanly.

Q6. Sample answers. Caption 2 (“Rubbish left behind in Riverbend Park at the weekend”) pushes the reader to judge the visitors — it points at the people who left the rubbish. Caption 3 (“Riverbend Park bins full again — who will fix it?”) pushes the reader to judge whoever runs the park — it points at the council. With no caption, most readers simply see a park that needs a clean.

Q7. Sample: two choices. (i) “More than sausage sandwiches and games” — the writer says the fete is bigger and better than food and fun, which leans for keeping it. (ii) “Some people say fetes take too much time to plan. But what is a little planning, next to a whole school that knows each other?” — the other side is named in a weak form (“some people”, “a little planning”) and brushed aside, while “a whole school that knows each other” loads the other side with warmth. Other fair answers: “did a great job”, “keep the fete going every single year”, “do not let the fete fade away” in the title. Overall position: the school should keep the fete running every year.

Q8. Samples. a) “The council will close the pool for repairs.” (drops “much-loved” and “shutting”) b) “The team lost Saturday’s game 3–1.” (drops “suffered” and “crushing”, adds the score) c) “It rained for the last hour of the fete.” (drops “ruined”)

Q9. Answers will vary. The factual recount should carry at least two checkable details and no feeling words. The final sentence should name what a personal recount adds — feelings, opinions, first-person moments (“how I felt”, “what I thought was the best part”).

Q10. Samples. Who made it, and what do they want? — a group of students or families; they want the library open until 4 pm. Which words carry feelings or judgements? — “the heart of Riverbend Primary”, “Yet”, “lose their only quiet reading time”, “cuts learning”. What is left out? — why the room is needed for meetings, how many students actually stay past 3 pm, or whether another room could be used. What does it want you to think, feel or do? — to feel worried about reading time and to support the request to the principal. Does it show both sides, or lean one way? — it leans one way; the reasons for the change are not given.

Produced outcome. Answers will vary. Check text 1 against the success criteria: neutral words, at least three checkable details, no push. Check text 2: a position the reader can name, and at least two indirect moves. The reflection should point at particular words (for example, “the word *packed* in my editorial makes the hall sound full and exciting; my recount just says *120 people came*”).

How texts are organised into characteristic stages and phases

Curriculum trace — Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, English, Level 6

Owens: VC2E6LA03 — “explain how different types of texts are typically organised into characteristic stages and phases depending on purposes, recognising how authors often adapt text structures and language features”

Draws on: VC2E6LA03.E01 “exploring a range of everyday, community, literary and informative texts, discussing elements of text structure and language features, and comparing the overall structure and effect of authors’ choices in 2 or more texts” · VC2E6LA03.E02 “examining a text to identify strategies such as exaggeration to create humour” · VC2E6LA03.E03 “recognising that texts are organised into stages, such as an introduction, and that introductions may be divided into phases; for example, the introduction stage of a narrative may begin with a phase that is a ‘hook’ or a flashback” · VC2E6LA03.E04 “explaining the characteristic stages and phases in reviews, discussing alternative positions or historical recounts, and identifying any adaptations of typical structures or language features”

Level 6 achievement standard (Reading and Viewing): “They explain how different types of texts, both print and digital, adapt text structures and language features for specific purposes.”

Learn

At Level 5 you learned that different text types are built from characteristic stages. This section goes one level deeper: stages can be split into smaller moves called phases, the stages change with the text’s purpose, and authors are free to adapt the usual shape when it suits them. Every model text below was written for this section, so you can open each one up and see how it is made.

1. Stages, phases, and the job they do

Every text you read has a job to do. A story’s job is to make readers feel something. A review’s job is to help readers decide something. A text’s job — its **purpose** — is why it has the shape it has.

Defining the terms. The Victorian Curriculum uses the words *stage* and *phase* but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as follows. A **stage** is a big part of a text that does one job, such as an introduction. A **phase** is a smaller move inside a stage, such as the ‘hook’ that opens a narrative’s introduction.

Figure 1 shows the idea on a story. The story’s introduction is one stage — but inside it, two smaller moves do different jobs: one grabs the reader, and one jumps back in time.

Stages and phases: the shape of a narrative text

Most stories follow the same big shape. Readers expect it.

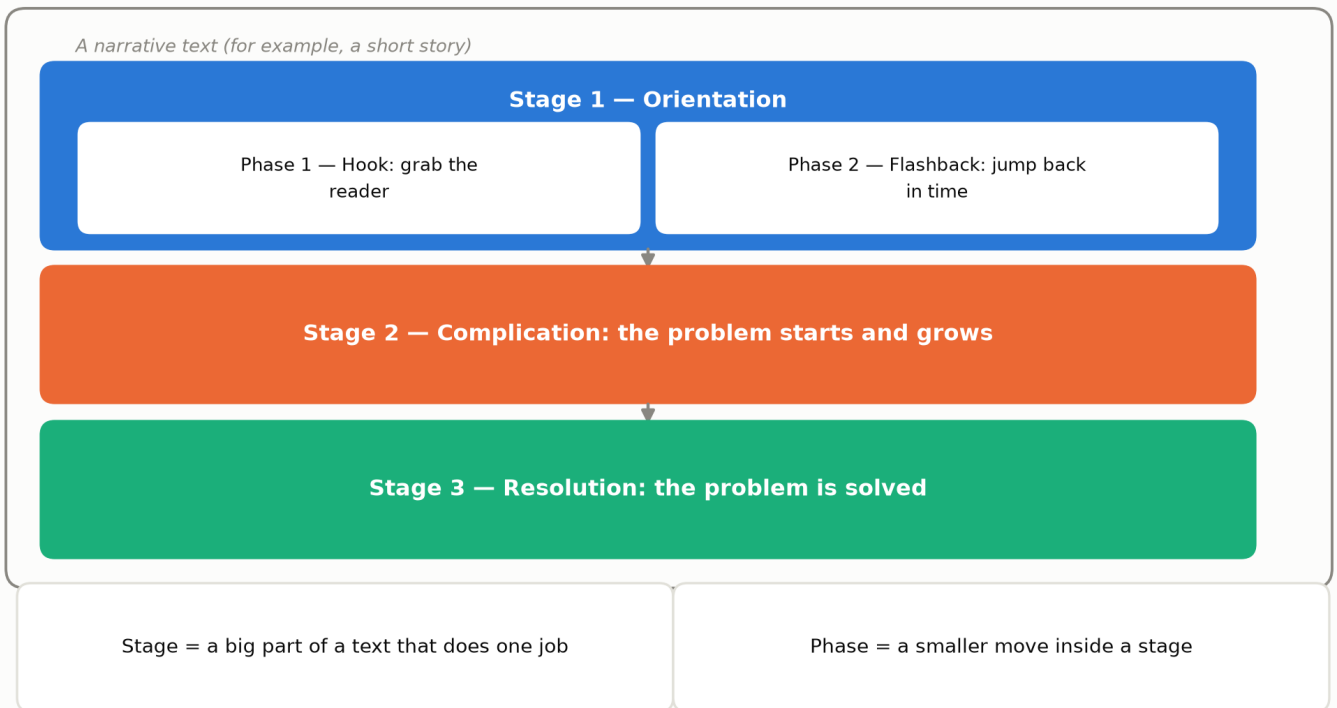


Diagram of a narrative text frame. Stage 1, Orientation, contains phase 1, Hook, and phase 2, Flashback. Stage 2 is Complication and stage 3 is Resolution. A key underneath explains that a stage is a big part of a text that does one job, while a phase is a smaller move inside a stage.

Because purpose decides structure, each text type has its own typical stages. This section covers four: narratives, reviews, discussions and historical recounts.

Purpose decides structure

The job a text is doing is why it has the stages it has.

Purpose	Text type	Characteristic stages
To tell a story and make readers feel	Narrative	Orientation (hook or flashback) then complication, then resolution
To judge a text and help readers decide	Review	Title and verdict, then overview, then evaluation, then recommendation
To weigh both sides of a question	Discussion	Position, then arguments for both sides, then a fair conclusion
To record past events for later readers	Historical recount	Orientation, then events in time order, then significance

Table linking purpose, text type and characteristic stages for four text types. To tell a story and make readers feel, a narrative uses orientation with a hook or flashback, then complication, then resolution. To judge a text and help readers decide, a review uses title and verdict, then overview, then evaluation, then recommendation. To weigh both sides of a question, a discussion uses a position, then arguments for both sides, then a fair conclusion. To record past events for later readers, a historical recount uses orientation, then events in time order, then significance.

2. The shape of a narrative — hooks and flashbacks

A **narrative** is a text that tells a story. Read this one first.

The Relay — an original story written for this section

Mia stood at the end of the track with the baton loose in her hand and the whole school watching. One slip, and the race was gone.

That morning, her team had practised their baton passes twice. “Grip it hard,” Mr Nguyen had said. “And don’t look back.” Mia had laughed. Nothing could go wrong.

Now the race was real. The whistle blew. Legs pumped. Shouts rose. And when Mia reached for the baton, it slid through her fingers and clattered onto the track.

The other teams flowed past. Mia’s chest burned. She wanted to stop.

Then she heard her team — not angry, just loud. “Go, Mia, go!” She grabbed the baton, ran like the wind, and crossed the line last. Her team met her with cheers anyway. Fourth place had never felt so good.

“The Relay” follows the typical shape of a narrative: **orientation** (settling the reader into who, where and when), then **complication** (the problem that drives the story), then **resolution** (how the problem lands). Notice the introduction stage, though. It is split into two phases:

- Paragraph 1 is a **hook** — a phase that grabs readers by dropping them into a tense moment without explaining anything yet. One slip, and the race was gone: readers have to keep reading to find out why.
- Paragraph 2 is a **flashback** — a phase that jumps back in time to an earlier moment. Here it plants Mr Nguyen’s warning, “Grip it hard,” so when the baton drops in paragraph 3, readers feel it coming.

Stage map: “The Relay”

One paragraph at a time: which stage is it doing, and what is its job?

From the story	Stage	Phase	Its job
“Mia stood at the end of the track ... One slip, and the race was gone.”	Orientation	Hook phase	Start on the most nervous moment
“That morning, her team had practised ... Nothing could go wrong.”	Orientation	Flashback phase	Jump back to show how we got here
“... the baton slid through her fingers and clattered onto the track.”	Complication	—	The problem begins
“Mia’s chest burned. She wanted to stop.”	Complication	—	The problem grows
“She grabbed the baton, ran like the wind ... Fourth place had never felt so good.”	Resolution	—	The problem is solved and feelings land

Table mapping the five paragraphs of the story *The Relay* to their stage, phase and job, from the hook phase in paragraph 1 through the flashback phase in paragraph 2, the complication in paragraphs 3 and 4, to the resolution in paragraph 5.

3. The shape of a review

A **review** is a text that judges something — a book, a film, a game, a show — and helps readers decide whether to try it. Its typical stages are different from a narrative’s, because its job is different. The **verdict** is the reviewer’s rating, often shown as stars. The **overview** sums up the text without giving away the ending. The **evaluation** is the stage where the reviewer gives judgements with reasons and examples. The **recommendation** says who will enjoy the text.

The shape of a review

A review judges a text and helps readers decide. Four stages do that job.

Stage 1 — Title and verdict

Name the text and give your rating (4 out of 5 stars)

Stage 2 — Overview

Say what kind of text it is and what it is about — no spoilers

Stage 3 — Evaluation

Give reasons: what works and what does not, with examples from the text

Stage 4 — Recommendation

Say who should read it, and who might skip it

Flow diagram of a review's four stages. Stage 1 is Title and verdict, shown as four out of five stars. Stage 2 is Overview, with no spoilers. Stage 3 is Evaluation, with reasons and examples. Stage 4 is Recommendation, saying who will enjoy it.

Here is a review of the story you just read.

A big race in a small story — our review of “The Relay” — an original review written for this section

★★★★☆

“The Relay” is a short sports story about one girl, one race, and one dropped baton.

What works best is the flashback. Just as the race heats up, the story jumps back to that morning's practice, and readers learn why the dropped baton hurts so much. The ending is honest too: Mia's team comes last, but the story still lands on a warm feeling.

If anything is missing, it is the other runners. We never learn their names.

We give “The Relay” four stars and recommend it to readers who like fast stories with warm endings.

Now compare the two texts. “The Relay” and its review tell the same events — but they have different jobs, so they have different shapes. The narrative opens with a hook and builds to a resolution. The review opens with its verdict and builds to a recommendation. Same story, two texts, two shapes:

One story, two texts, two shapes

"The Relay" and a review of it tell the same events with different jobs to do.

	"The Relay" — narrative	Review of "The Relay"
Its job	Tell the story and make readers feel	Help readers decide: read it or not?
Opening move	Hook: Mia at the track, the baton loose in her hand	Verdict first: 4 out of 5 stars and the story in one line
Middle move	Complication: the baton drops; Mia wants to stop	Evaluation: what works, what does not, with examples
Closing move	Resolution: last across the line, cheered anyway	Recommendation: who will love this story
The reader leaves asking	"What happened to Mia?"	"Should I read this?"

*Comparison table of the narrative *The Relay* and a review of it. Its job: tell the story and make readers feel, against help readers decide whether to read it. Opening move: hook with Mia at the track, against verdict first with four out of five stars and the story in one line. Middle move: complication with the dropped baton, against evaluation of what works and what does not, with examples. Closing move: resolution, last across the line but cheered, against recommendation of who will love the story. The reader leaves asking: what happened to Mia, against should I read this?*

4. The shape of a discussion

A **discussion** is a text that weighs two **alternative positions** — the two sides of a question — before reaching a conclusion. A fair discussion gives each side its strongest reasons, even the side the writer disagrees with. Its typical stages are: a **statement of position** (which names the question and says there are two sides), arguments for each position, and a conclusion that weighs both sides and suggests a way forward.

The shape of a discussion text

A discussion weighs two positions, then finds a fair way forward.

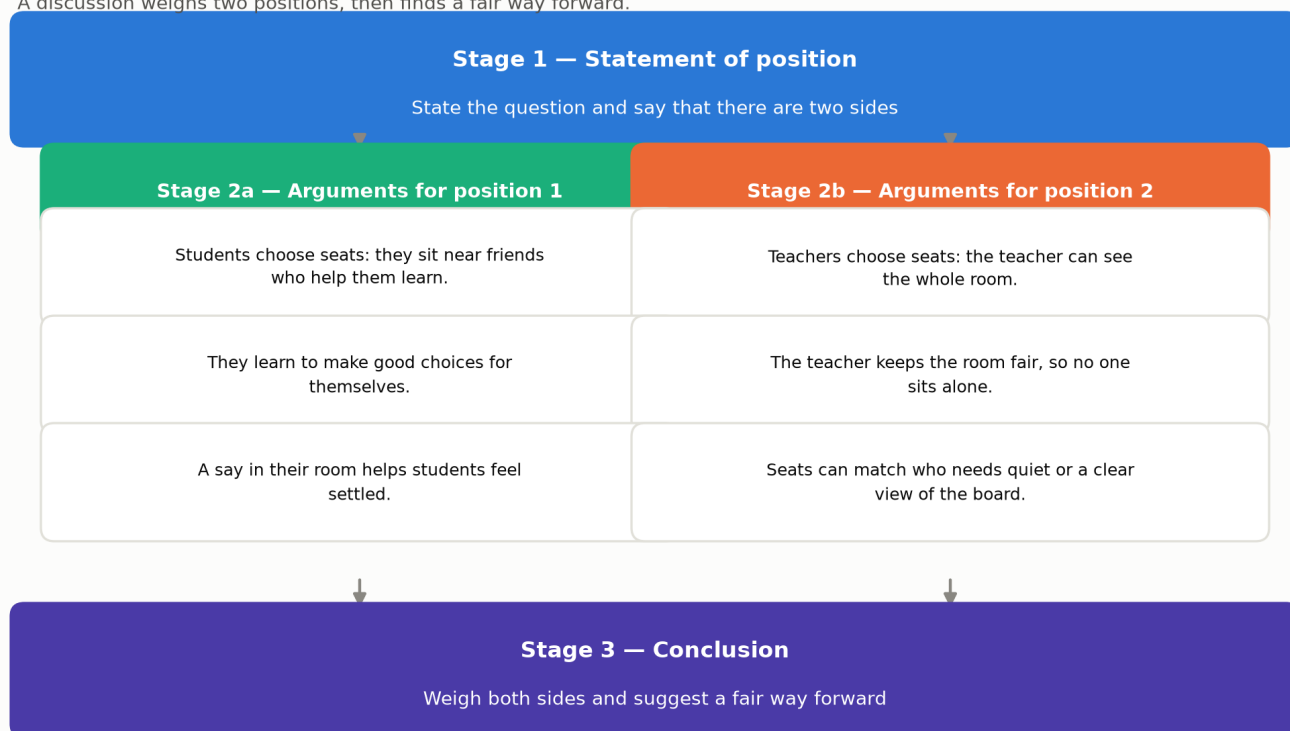


Diagram of a discussion text. Stage 1, Statement of position, states the question and says there are two sides. It splits into stage 2a, Arguments for position 1, students choose seats, and stage 2b, Arguments for position 2, teachers choose seats, each with three reasons. Both flow down into stage 3, Conclusion, which weighs both sides and suggests a fair way forward.

Should students choose their own seats? — an original discussion written for this section

At Riverbend Primary, some classes let students choose their seats, and some do not. There are good reasons on both sides.

Students who choose their own seats often sit near friends who help them learn. Choosing teaches them to make good choices for themselves. And having a say in their room helps students feel settled.

On the other hand, when teachers choose seats, the teacher can see the whole room. Teachers also keep the room fair, so no one sits alone. And seats can match who needs quiet and who needs a clear view of the board.

Both sides want the same thing: a room where everyone can learn. A fair way forward is for the teacher to choose the seats, but to ask students first.

5. The shape of a historical recount

A **recount** is a text that retells something that happened. A **historical recount** retells a past event for readers who were not there. Its typical stages are: the **orientation** (when, where and who), the events in time order held together by **time markers** (words and phrases like *at 10:30 am* and *by midday*), and the **significance** (why the event mattered, and why people still tell it).

The shape of a historical recount

Orientation, then events in time order on a timeline, then significance.



Timeline of a historical recount. An orientation card gives the date 17 June 2011, the place Riverbend Primary, and the people, staff and students. A timeline then shows four events: at 9:40 am the sky turns dark green, at 10:00 am rain drives sideways and the office calls families, at 10:30 am the power fails and classes move to the hall with torches, and by midday the storm passes with the fence down and the yard flooded. A significance card at the end explains what happened next and why people still tell the story.

The storm that closed Riverbend Primary — an original historical recount written for this section

On the morning of 17 June 2011, a wild storm crossed our town. Staff and students of Riverbend Primary School were in class when it hit.

At 9:40 am, the sky turned dark green. By 10:00 am, rain came in sideways, and the office called families to say school would close early. At 10:30 am, the power failed. Teachers moved all classes into the hall and handed out torches and blankets. By midday the storm had passed, but the front fence was down and the yard was under water.

The school stayed closed the next day while crews cleared branches and fixed the power. Years later, students who were there still tell storm stories about the day the hall became a camp.

6. Authors adapt the usual shape

The typical stages you have just seen are starting points, not cages. Authors often **adapt** text structures and language features — they change the usual shape on purpose, for an effect.

One common strategy is **exaggeration**: claiming far more than what really happened, to create humour. Read this recount and notice the gap between the tiny event and the giant telling.

The saddest day in the history of the world — an original humorous recount written for this section

It was the darkest day of my life. It was the day my sandwich dropped.

First, the bread slipped from my hand in slow motion. A thousand eyes watched. The whole yard went silent. Birds stopped singing. Time itself held its breath.

Then it landed — cheese side down — in the only puddle in the whole school. Not near the puddle. In it.

I stood there, the saddest person alive. My friends said it was only a sandwich. Only a sandwich! You might as well say the sun is only a lamp.

In the end, Priya split her roll with me. So I lived to tell the tale. Only just.

What really happened? A sandwich dropped in a puddle. What the author did with it:

Authors adapt the usual shape

One true event, two tellings: same stages, very different language.

A typical recount opening

At lunch today I dropped my sandwich in a puddle. I was hungry and a bit sad.

Adapted for humour

It was the saddest day in the history of the world. Time held its breath. A thousand eyes watched my sandwich fall in slow motion.

the author's choice

What changed? Exaggeration, to make readers laugh:

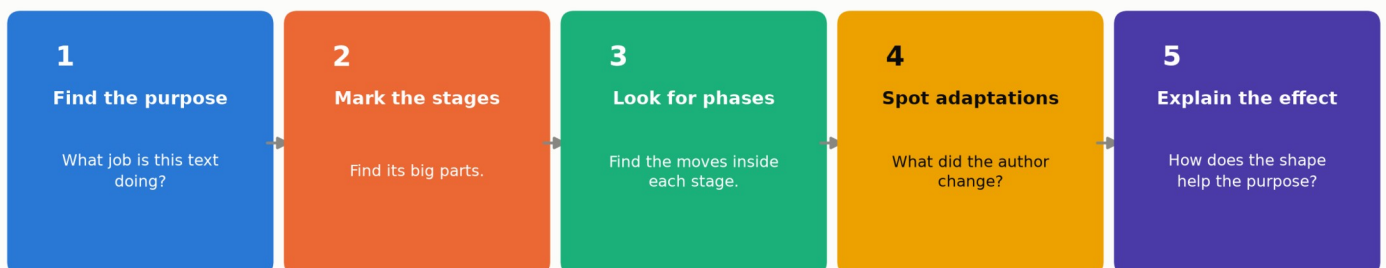
the claim is far bigger than the event · dramatic words for a small moment · slow motion · silly counting

Side-by-side comparison of one event told two ways. The left panel shows a typical recount opening: at lunch today I dropped my sandwich in a puddle, I was hungry and a bit sad. The right panel shows the same event adapted for humour: it was the saddest day in the history of the world, time held its breath, a thousand eyes watched my sandwich fall in slow motion. A band underneath lists what changed to make readers laugh: the claim is far bigger than the event, dramatic words for a small moment, slow motion, and silly counting.

Authors also adapt the order of stages. A story can open at the end and then jump back: “The trophy was already on the shelf when Sam finally believed it had happened. It had all begun three weeks earlier...” Readers now know the result — so they keep reading to learn *how* it happened. Starting with the result is an adaptation; the flashback phase that follows is doing its usual job.

When you analyse any text’s structure, work the same five steps:

How to read like a text detective



Then compare: do the same job on a second text, and ask why its shape is the same or different.

Five steps for analysing text structure. Step 1, find the purpose. Step 2, mark the stages. Step 3, look for phases inside stages. Step 4, spot adaptations of the typical shape. Step 5, explain the effect of each choice. A footer says: then compare, do the same job on a second text, and ask why its shape is the same or different.

These naming words travel with you through the book. Section 1D shows how repetition helps stages hold together, Section 5B asks how text structure and language features work as a team, and Section 4E uses text structure to find information fast.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — modelled analysis

Task. Analyse how “The Relay” is organised into stages and phases. Then compare its structure with the review of it. (E01, E03)

Working. Apply the five steps. Purpose first: the story’s job is to make readers feel something, so expect narrative stages. Then mark the stages and phases, paragraph by paragraph:

Paragraph	Stage and phase	Its job
1	Orientation — hook phase	Drop readers into a tense moment: Mia at the track, one slip from losing
2	Orientation — flashback phase	Jump back to practice and plant the warning: “Grip it hard”
3–4	Complication	The baton drops; Mia wants to stop
5	Resolution	Mia finishes last, cheered anyway; the story lands on a warm feeling

Now check for adaptations: the order is typical, but the flashback phase in paragraph 2 is the author’s special move — it makes the dropped baton hurt, because readers already heard the warning.

Finally, compare with the second text, the review. Same events, different job:

	“The Relay” (narrative)	Review of “The Relay”
Opens with	A hook — tension, no answers	The verdict — four stars and one line
Middle	Complication — the baton drops	Evaluation — judgements with reasons
Closes with	Resolution — cheered in last place	Recommendation — who will love it

Comment. The analysis earns its marks in the last move: it does not just name stages, it explains that the two texts have different shapes because their purposes are different — one makes readers feel, the other helps readers decide.

Worked example 2 — modelled composition

Task. Write a short humorous recount about a small, true-to-life event. Adapt the typical structure or language on purpose, using exaggeration to create humour. (E02, E04)

Working. Plan first. Choose a tiny event (a shoelace snaps at assembly), keep the typical recount stages, and adapt the language at each stage:

Stage	Typical choice	My adapted choice	Why it creates humour
Orientation	Say when, where and who plainly	“The most important assembly of the century”	A huge claim for a small school event
Complication	Tell what went wrong	The lace snaps; “Two hundred eyes followed it. Time held its breath.”	Dramatic words for a small moment
Resolution	Tell how it ended	Tie the knot, salute, collect the award “as if nothing had happened”	Staying calm after all that drama is funny

Now write it:

The shoelace heard round the world

It was the most important assembly of the century, and my shoelace chose that morning to snap in half.

As I walked to the front to collect the reading award, the lace dragged behind me like a fallen rope. Two hundred eyes followed it. The principal paused. Time held its breath.

I tied a knot with shaking hands, saluted the crowd, and collected the award as if nothing had happened. Historians will disagree about what really happened that day. I was just glad to sit down.

Comment. Check against the hallmarks of exaggeration: the claims are far bigger than the event (“the century”, “two hundred eyes”, “historians”), dramatic words do the work of a small moment, and the typical stages are still underneath — orientation, complication, resolution. Adaptations work best when readers can still see the shape being adapted.

Practice tasks

With support

Q1. (E03) These are two openings for the same story about a school concert.

- Opening A: “The lights went out, and the hall went black. Then, from the back row, someone started to sing.”
- Opening B: “It had all begun three weeks earlier, when the choir teacher put up the sign-up sheet.”

Which opening uses a hook phase, and which uses a flashback phase? How do you know?

Q2. (E03) The four parts of a narrative are mixed up.

- A. “At assembly on Friday, the mayor pinned the bravery medal on Ana’s coat.”
- B. “The river was rising fast, and Ana’s dog was still on the far bank.”
- C. “Ana waded in. The current pulled at her legs, and the rope slipped from her hands.”
- D. “That morning, Ana had promised her little brother she would keep the dog safe.”

Write the letters in the order a typical narrative uses them, and name the stage (or phase) each part belongs to.

Q3. (E04) The four stages of this review of the school play are scrambled. Put them in order, and name each stage.

- A. “We recommend it to anyone who loves music and laughs.”
- B. “‘The Garden Song’ is this year’s whole-school play, sung by the Year 4 and 5 cast.”
- C. “★★★★ — a bright, funny night at the school hall”
- D. “The songs are catchy and the cow costumes are comedy gold, though the second act runs a little long.”

Q4. (E04) Our class is discussing the question: *Should we keep a pet fish, or spend the money on new books?* Put each reason on the correct side of the discussion.

1. Feeding time teaches us to care for something.
2. New books would help every reader in the class, every day.
3. Watching a tank is soothing after sport.
4. A fish needs care on weekends and in the holidays.

Which reasons support keeping the fish (position 1), and which support buying books (position 2)?

Q5. (E04) Underline all the time markers in this short historical recount. Then name its three stages and say where each one starts.

In 2015, the back yard of Riverbend Primary was only dirt. In March that year, a parent working group drew a plan for a garden wall. In May, two hundred bricks arrived by truck. Over three weekends, parents and students laid the bricks and planted beds along the wall. The wall still stands today, and every new Year 6 signs their name on its last brick.

Q6. (E02) Underline the exaggerations in this humorous passage. Then write one plain sentence telling what really happened.

The canteen queue was a million kilometres long. I waited for a hundred years. When I finally reached the counter, the last pie was gone. The whole school heard my cry of sadness.

On your own

Q7. (E01, E03) Here are two openings for the same story about a lost dog.

- Opening A: “The gate was open, the lead was on the grass, and Biscuit was gone. Sam’s heart dropped like a stone.”
 - Opening B: “Sam had wanted a dog for three whole years. Every birthday, the same wish: a dog. So when Biscuit arrived last spring, Sam promised to never let the gate hang open.”
- (a) Name the phase each opening uses. (b) Explain the effect each phase has on readers. (c) Which opening would you choose for your own story, and why?

Q8. (E04) This discussion is missing its conclusion. Read it, then write the conclusion stage yourself. Weigh both sides, and suggest a fair way forward.

Should our class keep a pet fish?

Our class has been asked to choose: keep a pet fish in the room, or spend the money on new books. There are good reasons on both sides.

A class fish teaches us to care for something. Feeding time is calm and quiet, and watching a tank is soothing after sport. A fish costs little to keep.

On the other hand, new books would help every reader in the class, every day. A fish needs care on weekends and in the holidays, and if it dies, the room feels sad.

Q9. (E02, E04) Read this humorous recount.

The Great Sausage Roll Escape

At lunch on Tuesday, a seagull stole Marcus’s sausage roll. It was the boldest crime in the history of the school. The gull swooped like a jet fighter. The whole canteen went quiet. Marcus watched his lunch fly over the oval, heading for a five-star nest on the roof. Scientists will study this moment for years. The gull has not been seen since. Marcus says he respects it.

- (a) Find two examples of exaggeration and explain how each one creates humour. (b) Identify one adaptation of typical recount structure or language. (c) Would you use these strategies in a serious historical recount? Explain why or why not.

Q10. (E01) Look back at “The Relay” and the review of it. In three or four sentences, explain why the two texts have different shapes even though they tell the same story. Use the words *purpose*, *stage* and *phase* in your answer.

Produced outcome

Plan and write your own text with a deliberate shape.

1. Choose one purpose and the text type that does it: tell a story (narrative), help readers decide (review), weigh two positions (discussion), or record a past event (historical recount).
2. Plan the structure before you write. Copy this planner and fill it in:

Stage	Phase inside it (if any)	Its job	Any adaptation I will make
1.			
2.			
3.			

3. Include at least one phase (a hook or a flashback if you chose a narrative), and at least one deliberate adaptation of typical structure or language.
4. Write 120–150 words.
5. Under your text, write one sentence explaining the effect of your adaptation.

Success criteria.

- My text's stages match its purpose.
- At least one stage is divided into phases, and I can name them.
- I adapted a typical structure or language feature on purpose, and I can explain the effect.
- A reader who has never seen my text could follow it from start to finish.

Marking note: marks are for how well your structure and your explanation of it match your purpose — not for which text type you pick.

Answers

A1. (E03) Opening A uses a hook phase: it drops readers into a tense moment — the hall is dark and someone is singing — without explaining anything. Opening B uses a flashback phase: “It had all begun three weeks earlier” jumps back in time to show how the concert started.

A2. (E03) B → D → C → A. B is the orientation (a hook: the river is rising and the dog is stranded). D is a flashback phase inside the orientation (jumping back to that morning’s promise). C is the complication (Ana wades in and the rope slips). A is the resolution (the medal at assembly).

A3. (E04) C, B, D, A. C is the title and verdict (stars plus one line). B is the overview (what the play is, with no spoilers). D is the evaluation (judgements with reasons: catchy songs, funny costumes, a second act that runs long). A is the recommendation (who will enjoy it).

A4. (E04) Position 1, keep the fish: reasons 1 and 3. Position 2, buy books: reasons 2 and 4. Each side is given its strongest reasons before the conclusion weighs them.

A5. (E04) Time markers: *In 2015, In March that year, In May, Over three weekends, and still ... today* (accept *today* on its own). Stages: orientation (sentence 1 — when and where), sequence of events (sentences 2–4 — the plan, the bricks, the building, held together by the time markers), and significance (sentence 5 — why the wall still matters).

A6. (E02) The exaggerations are: “a million kilometres long”, “I waited for a hundred years”, and “The whole school heard my cry of sadness.” Sample plain sentence: The canteen queue was long, and by the time I reached the counter the pies had run out, which made me sad.

A7. (E01, E03) (a) Opening A uses a hook phase; Opening B uses a flashback phase. (b) The hook drops readers straight into the moment Biscuit is missing, so they feel Sam’s panic and read on to find out what happened. The flashback jumps back to show how much Biscuit means to Sam, so readers understand why the loss matters before the search begins. (c) Sample reasoning: choose the hook to start with tension and surprise, or the flashback to build feeling first. Marks are for the reasoning, not the choice.

A8. (E04) Sample conclusion: Both sides offer good reasons. A fish would teach us care and calm, while new books would help every reader every day. A fair way forward is to buy the books now, and ask families to donate a tank and fish next term, so the class gains both. Any conclusion earns full marks if it weighs both sides and suggests a fair way forward.

A9. (E02, E04) (a) Sample exaggerations: “the boldest crime in the history of the school” (a stolen lunch becomes a historic crime) and “Scientists will study this moment for years” (a lunchtime moment becomes world news). The humour comes from the gap between the tiny event and the giant claim. (b) Sample adaptation: the ending, “Marcus says he respects it,” gives the recount a significance stage that honours the thief instead of the victim — an adaptation of what a significance stage usually does. (c) No — a serious historical recount’s purpose is to record what really happened for later readers, and exaggeration would break that job. These strategies suit a text whose purpose is to make readers laugh.

A10. (E01) Sample answer: The two texts have different purposes, so they need different stages and phases. The narrative’s purpose is to make readers feel, so it opens with a hook phase and moves through complication to resolution. The review’s purpose is to help readers decide, so it opens with a verdict and moves through evaluation to a recommendation. Same events, two jobs, two shapes.

Sequence and cohesion through intentional repetition

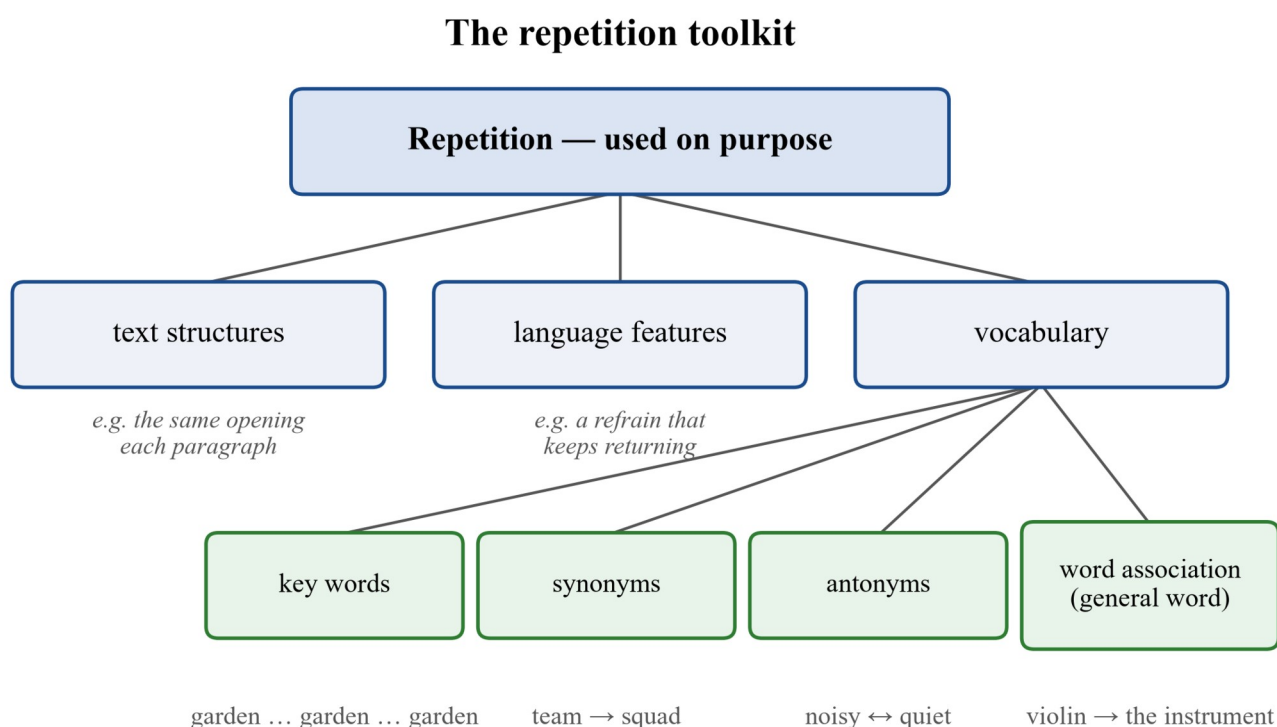
A text sticks together when the writer leaves ties between its sentences. A reader can follow because words repeat, synonyms and antonyms echo back, and general words stand for specific words already named. That stuck-togetherness is called **cohesion**. The order the ideas come in is the **sequence**. Both are built by **repetition used on purpose** — and that is what this section is about.

How this section works: some questions give you steps and hints to walk you through; others ask you to try everything yourself.

VC2E6LA04 — understand that sequence and cohesion can be created by the intentional use of repetition of text structures, language features and vocabulary

.E01 — noting how a general word is often used for a more specific word already mentioned (word association), for example ‘Look at those apples. Granny Smiths are my favourite.’

.E02 — recognising how cohesion can be developed through repeating key words or by using synonyms or antonyms



One idea, said again in different ways, holds a text together.

A map of the repetition toolkit: “Repetition — used on purpose” splits into three branches — text structures, language features and vocabulary — and the vocabulary branch splits again into key words (garden ... garden ... garden), synonyms (team → squad), antonyms (noisy ↔ quiet) and word association (violin → the instrument).

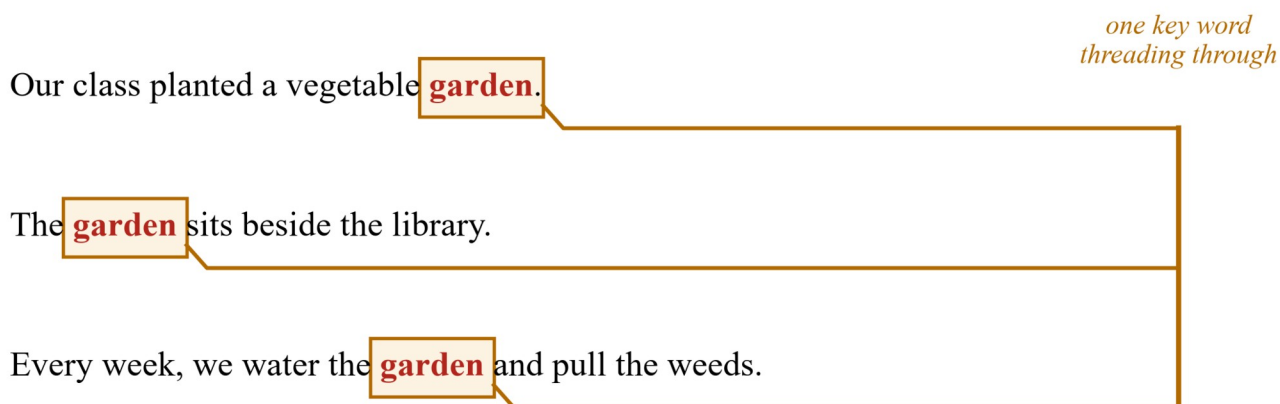
Theory

Work through these four steps in order.

1. **See the ties.** Read each short model text below aloud and notice what comes back.
2. **Name the ties.** Learn the toolkit names: key word, synonym, antonym, word association, refrain.
3. **Order the ideas.** See how time words and repeated sentence starts put ideas in a clear order.

4. **Use the ties yourself.** Follow the worked examples, then the practice questions, and then write your own short text.

Key words. A **key word** is a content word the writer repeats so the reader never loses the topic.

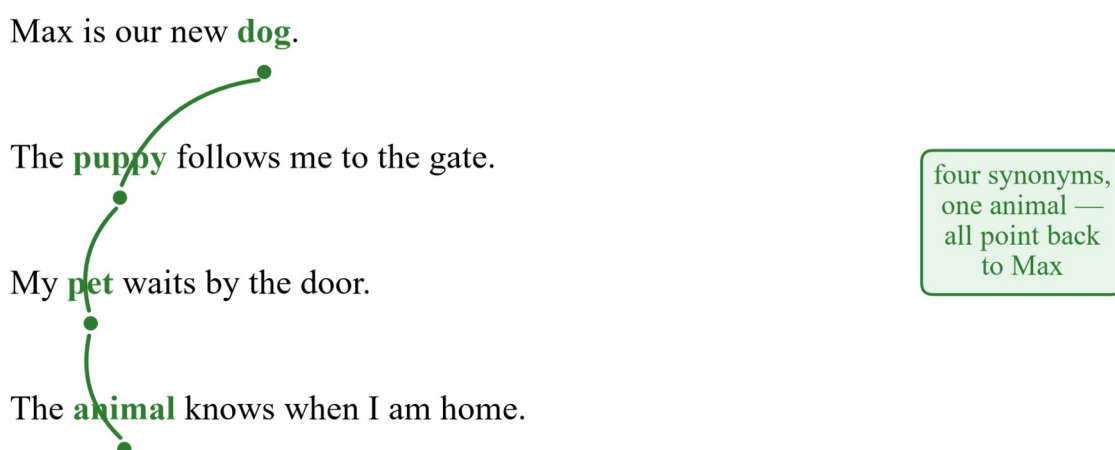


The key word “garden” is repeated, so the reader never loses the topic.

Three sentences about a class vegetable garden — “Our class planted a vegetable garden. The garden sits beside the library. Every week, we water the garden and pull the weeds.” — with the key word “garden” boxed in each sentence and the three boxes joined to one line, showing one key word threading through.

The key word “garden” sits in every sentence, so the reader always knows what the writing is about.

Synonyms. **Synonyms** are different words with nearly the same meaning. A chain of synonyms can keep pointing back to one named thing.

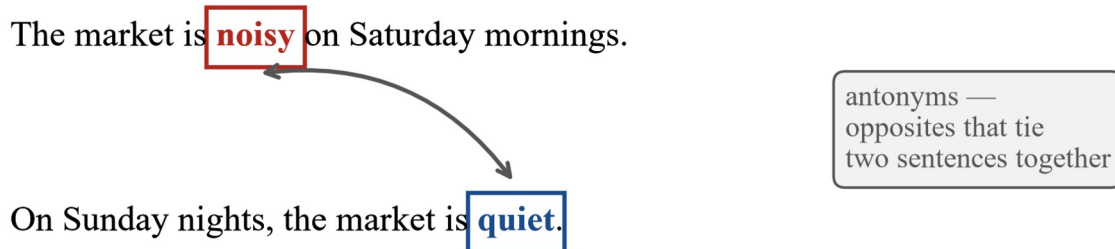


Repeating the same noun is one option; a chain of synonyms does the same job with more variety.

Four sentences about a new dog — “Max is our new dog. The puppy follows me to the gate. My pet waits by the door. The animal knows when I am home.” — with dog, puppy, pet and animal highlighted and joined by a chain, four synonyms all pointing back to Max.

Four different words, one dog. The reader follows because each synonym points back to Max.

Antonyms. **Antonyms** are words with opposite meanings. An antonym pair ties two sentences together — and it often marks a change, such as a change in time.



“Noisy” sets up “quiet”: the contrast links the two sentences and shows a change.

Two sentences — “The market is noisy on Saturday mornings. On Sunday nights, the market is quiet.” — with the antonyms noisy and quiet joined by a two-way arrow.

Noisy and quiet are opposites, so the second sentence clicks onto the first. The pair also marks the change from Saturday to Sunday.

Word association. Sometimes a writer uses a general word for a more specific word already named. This is called **word association**.

Word association — a general word stands for a specific one

specific word — named first

general word — used next



Ruby practises the violin every day. The instrument lives in her room.



Leo plays soccer on weekends. The sport keeps him fit.



The storm hit late at night. By morning the weather had cleared.

The reader still knows what is meant, and the writing avoids saying the same word again.

Three examples of word association. “Ruby practises the violin every day. The instrument lives in her room.” (the violin → the instrument). “Leo plays soccer on weekends. The sport keeps him fit.” (soccer → a sport). “The storm hit late at night. By morning the weather had cleared.” (the storm → the weather).

The general word (*the instrument, a sport, the weather*) still points at the specific thing already named, so the sentences stay tied — and the writing avoids saying the same word again.

Refrains and text structure. A **text structure** is the way a text is put together — the shape of it. A **language feature** is a tool a writer chooses, such as a repeated word or a repeated line. A line that comes back again and again in a poem or song is called a **refrain**.

First we turned the soil and planted seeds.

Step by step, row by row, our garden grows.

Then the green shoots pushed up through the dirt.

Step by step, row by row, our garden grows.

Now we share the beans we grew ourselves.

Step by step, row by row, our garden grows.

the same line
comes back
after every verse

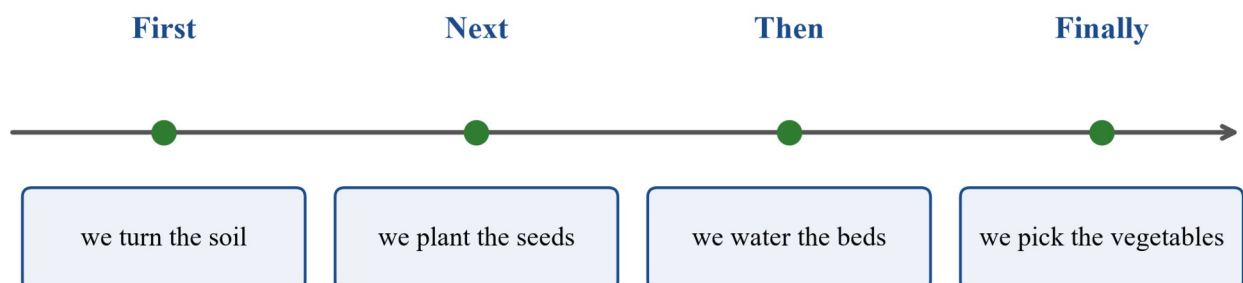
The returning line is called a refrain. Repeating it is a choice about language features — it gives the poem its shape and a beat readers can join in with.

A three-verse poem — “First we turned the soil and planted seeds.” / “Then the green shoots pushed up through the dirt.” / “Now we share the beans we grew ourselves.” — each verse followed by the same highlighted refrain, “Step by step, row by row, our garden grows.”, with a bracket showing the same line comes back after every verse.

Repeating the refrain is a choice about language features; repeating the verse-and-refrain shape is a choice about text structure. Together they give the poem its shape and a beat readers can join in with.

Sequence words. **Sequence** is the order ideas or events come in. Time words such as *first*, *next*, *then* and *finally* show that order. Repeating the same sentence start is another tie.

Putting ideas in order with sequence words



The steps follow in time order — and each one opens the same way (“we ...”), repeating the sentence start.

A timeline with an arrow across the page and four stops labelled First, Next, Then and Finally; under each stop a box repeats the same opening — “we turn the soil”, “we plant the seeds”, “we water the beds”, “we pick the vegetables”.

The steps follow in time order, and each one opens the same way (“we ...”), so the repeated sentence start ties the steps together as well.

In Level 5 you began sorting out how texts hang together; here you name the ties and use them on purpose. In Level 7 you will track cohesion across whole texts.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Analyse a short text: find the ties and say what they do.

Read this model text aloud.

Last term, our class built a bee hotel. The hotel hangs on the north fence, in the morning sun. Native bees soon moved in, and the tiny visitors have filled half the rooms.

Step 1 — Find the repeated key word. Look for a content word that comes back. *Hint: what is the text about?* The repeated key word is *hotel* (a bee hotel → the hotel). It keeps the topic in view.

Step 2 — Find a general word standing for a specific word. *Hint: which words in the last sentence still mean “the bees”?* *The tiny visitors* stands for *Native bees*. That is word association: the reader still knows who is meant.

Step 3 — Find the time words. *Hint: when did each thing happen?* *Last term* and *soon* put the events in order.

Step 4 — Say what the ties do. The repeated key word keeps the topic in view; the word association adds variety without losing the tie; the time words set the sequence. A reader can follow without guessing.

The finished tie table:

Tie	Where it sits	Job it does
Repeated key word: <i>hotel</i>	Sentences 1–2	Keeps the topic in view
Word association: <i>the tiny visitors</i> for <i>Native bees</i>	Sentence 3	A general word stands for the specific word already named
Time words: <i>Last term</i> , <i>soon</i>	Sentences 1 and 3	Sets the sequence

Example 2 — unscaffolded

Watch a vague draft get rewritten with deliberate ties.

Here is a first draft about a storm. It uses vague words — *it*, *things*, *stuff* — and no ties.

It started at night. Things went wrong. People did stuff. It finished in the morning.

The think-aloud choices made while rewriting:

- **Name the something.** Not *it* — *the storm*.
- **Name the who.** Not *people* — *families*; not *things* — *houses*.
- **Repeat a key word.** *The storm* hit late at night ... *the storm* passed.
- **Add a general word at the end.** *The weather* stands for the storm (word association).
- **Set the time order.** *Late at night* first, *by morning* last.

The rewrite:

The storm hit late at night. Houses lost power. Families lit torches to see. The storm passed, and by morning the weather cleared.

Before — vague words, no ties

?

It started at night.

Things went wrong.

People did **stuff**.

It finished in the morning.

Who? What? Which things?
The reader has to guess.

After — ties chosen on purpose

The **storm** hit late at **night**.

Houses lost power.

Families lit torches to see.

The **storm** passed, and by

morning the **weather** cleared.

■ **storm ... storm** — the repeated key word

■ **storm → weather** — word association

■ **night ... morning** — time order

Same events, told twice: the version with deliberate ties is the one a reader can follow.

Two panels telling the same events twice. Left panel, “Before — vague words, no ties”: “It started at night. Things went wrong. People did stuff. It finished in the morning.”, with question marks over It, Things and stuff. Right panel, “After — ties chosen on purpose”: the rewritten storm text with storm ... storm boxed as the repeated key word, storm → weather boxed as word association, and night ... morning boxed as time order.

Same events, told twice. The version with deliberate ties is the one a reader can follow.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

S1 — Repeated key word. Read: “My grandma keeps a button tin. The tin also holds needles and thread.” (a) Write down the key word that repeats. (b) Finish the sentence: “Repeating this word helps the reader keep track of ...”

S2 — Synonyms. Read: “By lunchtime we reached the peak. The top was windy, but the view was worth the climb.” (a) Write down the two words that mean nearly the same thing. (b) What name do we give a word pair like that?

S3 — Antonyms and time words. Read: “Before the show, the hall was full. After the show, the hall was empty.” (a) Write down the antonym pair. (b) Write down the two time words that set the sequence.

S4 — Word association. Read: “My brother chose the trumpet. The instrument is louder than my doorbell.” (a) Which words stand for *the trumpet*? (b) Why might the writer do this instead of saying *the trumpet* again?

S5 — Putting steps in order. These steps are out of order. Number them 1–4, then start each step with *First*, *Next*, *Then* or *Finally*. - ... we water the pot - ... we push the seed into the soil - ... we fill the pot with soil - ... we put the pot on the sunny windowsill

S6 — Refrain. Read: “We left the beach with sandy feet, and the sea went on and on. We went home slow with salty hair, and the sea went on and on.” (a) Copy the line that comes back. (b) What is a returning line called? (c) What does repeating it give the poem?

Un scaffolded

U1 — Find every tie. Read: “The fete began with a parade. The parade looped twice around the oval. Loud drums led the parade, and the noise drew every teacher to the windows. By the end, the yard was quiet again.” (a) the repeated key word (b) the general word that stands for *drums* (c) one antonym pair (d) what *By the end* tells the reader

U2 — Rewrite a vague text. A friend sent this message about a very hot day: “It was hot. We went in. It was cold in there. We got some. They were good.” Rewrite it (4–5 sentences) so a reader can follow. Use: a named something (not *it*), a repeated key word, and at least one time word. Then underline your ties.

U3 — Keep it going. Here is the opening of a paragraph: “A dragonfly landed on my hand.” Write two more sentences that stay tied to it. Underline the tie in each sentence.

U4 — Judge two openings. Two openings tell the same idea. Which one sticks together better? Name two ties in the better one. A: “A boat was on the water. It was old. It had a red sail. The sail was torn.” B: “An old boat rocked on the water. The boat had a red sail, and the sail was torn.”

Produced outcome

Write a short text (6–8 sentences) about something you really did this term — a game, a job, a visit, a lesson. Build cohesion and sequence on purpose.

Checklist — in your text:

- ☐ name your topic early;
- ☐ repeat a key word at least twice;
- ☐ use a synonym or a general word (word association) at least once;
- ☐ use an antonym pair at least once;
- ☐ use two or more time or sequence words;
- ☐ read it aloud: could a reader follow without asking “who? what? which one?”

Stretch: or write a two-verse poem with a refrain that comes back after each verse, and tick the ties you used.

Answers

S1. (a) *tin*. (b) ... what the sentences are about (the topic). **S2.** (a) *peak* and *top*. (b) synonyms. **S3.** (a) *full* and *empty*. (b) *Before* and *After*. **S4.** (a) *The instrument*. (b) To avoid saying the same words again while still pointing at the trumpet — variety, and the tie stays. **S5.** 1 we fill the pot with soil. 2 we push the seed into the soil. 3 we water the pot. 4 we put the pot on the sunny windowsill. With sequence words: *First*, we fill the pot with soil. *Next*, we push the seed into the soil. *Then*, we water the pot. *Finally*, we put the pot on the sunny windowsill. **S6.** (a) “and the sea went on and on.” (b) A refrain. (c) Shape and a beat — something readers can join in with — and it ties the verses together. **U1.** (a) *parade*. (b) *the noise*. (c) *loud / quiet* (or *began / end*). (d) The time order — it tells the reader when the yard went quiet, closing the sequence that *began* opened. **U2.** Sample: “The afternoon was hot, so we went into the library. The library was cool and quiet. We chose three books. The books were good.” Ties: *library* repeated, *books* repeated, *hot / cool* (opposites), *The afternoon* sets the time. **U3.** Sample: “A dragonfly landed on my hand. The little visitor stayed very still. Its wings shone like glass.” Ties: *the little visitor* stands for the dragonfly (word association); *Its wings* keeps pointing at the dragonfly. **U4.** B. Ties: *boat* repeated and *sail* repeated. B avoids the vague *It ... It* chain, so every sentence clicks onto the one before. **Outcome.** Check your text against the checklist. A sample text with a full tie check sits in the solutions at the end of this section.

Fully-worked solutions

U1 — thinking it through. - Read once for sense, once for ties. - Key word: *parade* comes back in sentences 1, 2 and 3 — that is the topic kept in view. - Word association: *Loud drums* are named, then *the noise* stands for them — a general word for a specific thing already named. - Antonyms: *loud ... quiet* (the noise against the quiet yard); *began ... end* works too. - *By the end* is a time word: it tells the reader when the quiet yard happened, closing the sequence that *began* opened.

U2 — rewriting step by step. 1. Name the something: *it* becomes *the afternoon* and *the library*. 2. Repeat a key word: *library ... library*, *books ... books*. 3. Set the time: *The afternoon* comes first. 4. Keep an opposite for the change: *hot ... cool*.

Result: “The afternoon was hot, so we went into the library. The library was cool and quiet. We chose three books. The books were good.”

U3 — why the sample works. “The little visitor” stands for the dragonfly, so sentence 2 ties to sentence 1 without repeating the long word; “Its wings” keeps pointing at the dragonfly. Each new sentence carries one tie back.

U4 — comparing. Opening A chains *It ... It*, and *it* could be the boat or the water — the reader has to guess. Opening B repeats the key words *boat* and *sail*, so every sentence clicks onto the one before. B sticks together better.

Outcome — a sample text.

On Friday our class ran a sausage sizzle. The sizzle was the talk of the yard. First we cooked the sausages; next we toasted the bread. The smell drew hungry students, and the noisy queue went quiet when the food ran out. By the end, the crowd had raised two hundred dollars for new books.

Tie check: key word *sizzle* twice; word association — *hungry students* then *the crowd* (a general word for the specific people already named); antonym pair *noisy / quiet*; sequence words *First*, *next*, *By the end*. Read aloud, no one has to ask “who? what? which one?” — that is cohesion doing its job.

English Level 6 — Construction task C1

This is a school-designed check. It is not a VCAA instrument. Achievement in the Victorian Curriculum is reported against the Level 6 English achievement standard, not against a mark on this paper.

Construction task C1 — Narrative construction

English 6 (Year 6) · Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · Assessment booklet · Task C1

Topic coverage: Narrative — sentence structure to expand ideas · sequence and cohesion · vivid character and setting detail · plot structure and theme

Codes assessed: VC2E6LY09 (developed, organised ideas) · VC2E6LE05 craft (vivid vocabulary and literary devices)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Total marks

15 (each item is worth 1 mark)

Section structure

Section A — Sentences with embedded clauses (4 marks) · Section B — Ordering the events (3 marks) · Section C — Connectives and time phrases (3 marks) · Section D — Vivid character and setting detail (3 marks) · Section E — The resolution (2 marks)

Timing guidance

20 minutes — about 1 minute per item, plus time to read the story opening. This is a classroom check, not an exam. There is no strict time limit; your teacher will let you finish.

Permitted materials

A pen or pencil. No other equipment is needed.

Conditions

This task builds one story. Read the story opening first, then answer every item in order. Every item is about the same story. Your teacher may read any item to you. The story opening was written for this task.

The story opening (read this first)

Maya stood at the camp gate with her group, and the morning air smelled of pine. Today was the last walk of camp. The group would go three kilometres to the lookout and back before lunch. That morning, Maya's grandfather had given her a small brass compass. 'Hold it flat and trust the needle,' he had said. The track started as a wide, dusty road. Leo ran ahead before the guide finished speaking.

Section A — Sentences with embedded clauses (4 marks)

Q1 (1 mark) Combine these two sentences. Embed one inside the other, so the extra detail sits in the noun group. Circle the letter.

Sentence 1: 'Maya held a small brass compass.'

Sentence 2: 'Her grandfather had given it to her.'

- A. 'Maya held a small brass compass, and her grandfather had given it to her.'
- B. 'Maya held the small brass compass that her grandfather had given her.'
- C. 'Her grandfather had given Maya a small brass compass to hold.'
- D. 'Maya held a small brass compass. Her grandfather had given it to her.'

Q2 (1 mark) Choose the relative pronoun that fits the gap. Write it on the line.

‘The guide, _____ voice stayed calm, pointed back to the wide track.’

Q3 (1 mark) This sentence has a dropped embedding — the describing words have slipped off the noun they belong to. Which option repairs it? Circle the letter.

Broken sentence: ‘The group drank the water from the creek that was cold and muddy.’

- A. ‘The group drank the water from the creek that was cold and muddy.’
- B. ‘The group, that was cold and muddy, drank the water from the creek.’
- C. ‘The group drank the cold, muddy water from the creek.’
- D. ‘The creek was cold and muddy, and the group drank water.’

Q4 (1 mark) Build a sentence with an embedded clause. Drag each part from the box into the correct slot. One part stays in the box.

‘The track confused the group.’

Box: that split into two who

Section B — Ordering the events (3 marks)

Q5 (1 mark) These four cards are the story’s complication, mixed up. Drag them into the order that makes the problem arrive and grow. Write 1–4 in the boxes.

Card	Order
‘Before they could choose, clouds came down low, and the trees all began to look the same.’	
‘The group hurried after Leo and left the wide track for a narrow one.’	
‘So Kim unfolded the map — and the wind took it up over the trees.’	
‘The narrow track split into two, and nobody knew which one to take.’	

Q6 (1 mark) The writer wants to add this flashback. ‘Two summers ago, Maya’s grandfather had taught her to read a compass on the back verandah.’ Where does it work best? Circle the letter.

- A. In the middle of the climax, while the needle is settling
- B. As the very last line of the resolution
- C. Before the first sentence, before the reader knows anyone
- D. In the opening, right after the reader first meets the compass

Q7 (1 mark) These three cards are the story’s climax, mixed up. Drag them into order. Write 1–3 in the boxes.

Card	Order
“‘The creek runs that way,” she said, “and the lookout sits above the creek.”’	☐
‘Maya took the brass compass out of her pocket and held it flat in her hand.’	☐
‘The needle settled, and Maya pointed to a gap in the trees.’	☐

Section C — Connectives and time phrases (3 marks)

Q8 (1 mark) Choose the time phrase that fits the gap. Write it on the line.

Choose from: at last · long ago · meanwhile · first

‘ _____, the trees opened, and the lookout stood in front of the group.’

Q9 (1 mark) The writer wants the reader to never lose the thing Maya is holding. Which word repeats the key word so the two sentences stay tied? Circle the letter.

‘Maya kept her hand on the compass. When the track split, she held the _____ tight.’

- A. compass — the key word comes back, so the reader never loses the thing
- B. map — a new thing, and the map is already gone
- C. stone — a new thing the story never mentioned
- D. boot — a new thing with no tie to the first sentence

Q10 (1 mark) Choose the time phrase that fits the gap. Write it on the line.

Choose from: before long · at last · last year · meanwhile

‘The group hurried after Leo and left the wide track. _____, the narrow track split into two.’

Section D — Vivid character and setting detail (3 marks)

Q11 (1 mark) The writer wants the forest to feel like it is closing in. Which sentence builds that setting best? Circle the letter.

- A. ‘There were many trees on both sides of the track.’
- B. ‘The forest was green, and the birds sang happily.’
- C. ‘The trees stood closer together, and the track grew thin as a thread.’
- D. ‘It was a nice place for a walk with friends.’

Q12 (1 mark) Which detail shows that Leo is impatient, without saying ‘Leo was impatient’? Circle the letter.

- A. ‘Leo was the most impatient person in the group.’
- B. ‘Leo liked to be first in everything.’
- C. ‘Leo stood still and listened to every word.’
- D. ‘Leo’s boots kept moving, even while the guide was still talking.’

Q13 (1 mark) The climax needs to feel quiet. Which line fits the hush of the moment? Circle the letter.

- A. 'The mountain cheered as loudly as a crowd at the footy.'
 - B. 'The whole group went quiet, and the only sound was the needle's small click.'
 - C. 'Everyone laughed so hard that the birds flew away.'
 - D. 'A million thoughts exploded in Maya's head.'
-

Section E — The resolution (2 marks)

The story's theme is this: steady thinking beats rushing.

Q14 (1 mark) Which resolution fits the theme? Circle the letter.

- A. 'A rescue helicopter flew the group to the lookout, and nobody walked the last bit at all.'
- B. 'Maya raced ahead alone and won a medal for being the fastest.'
- C. 'The group reached the lookout just before lunch. "Next time," Leo said, "we follow the compass before my feet."'
- D. 'The group went home, and nobody spoke about the walk again.'

Q15 (1 mark) Which closing line lands the theme best? Circle the letter.

- A. 'Being first is the best feeling in the world.'
- B. 'Maps are useless, so always trust your feet.'
- C. 'Camp should last twice as long.'
- D. 'Maya put the compass back in her pocket. Some things, she thought, are better found slowly.'

End of Construction task C1 — 15 marks

English Level 6 — Construction task C1: Solutions

Construction task C1 — Narrative construction · 15 marks

English 6 (Year 6) · Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · Assessment booklet · Task C1

Codes assessed: VC2E6LY09 (developed, organised ideas) · VC2E6LE05 craft (vivid vocabulary and literary devices)

Teacher copy. Every item scores 1 mark for the keyed response. Every item is objectively markable (P1).
The construction items carry the full model narrative and one alternative model below (P2).

Full answer key

Item	Section	Key	Notes and accepted variants
Q1	A	B	One sentence, with the grandfather detail embedded inside the noun group: ‘the small brass compass that her grandfather had given her.’ A joins with <i>and</i> — combining, not embedding; C changes which idea leads and drops the embedding; D leaves two separate sentences.
Q2	A	whose	Accept <i>whose</i> (any capitalisation). <i>Whose</i> is the relative pronoun for belonging — the guide’s voice. <i>Who/that/which</i> cannot own the noun that follows.
Q3	A	C	The repair moves the describing words next to the noun they belong to: ‘the cold, muddy water’. A keeps the break; B hangs the description off the group and misuses the comma; D drops what the group drank from.
Q4	A	that + split into two	‘The track that split into two confused the group.’ The part <i>who</i> stays in the box — <i>who</i> is for people, and the track is a thing.
Q5	B	1 hurried after Leo · 2 track split · 3 clouds came down · 4 map flown away	1 mark for all four in order. The group leaves the wide track (1); the narrow track splits (2); ‘Before they could choose’ ties the clouds to the split (3); ‘So Kim unfolded the map’ ties the last try to the growing problem (4).
Q6	B	D	A flashback is a phase inside the orientation stage: it jumps back to plant something that pays off later. Planted right after the reader meets the compass, it plants the skill Maya uses in the climax. A stops the tensest

Item	Section	Key	Notes and accepted variants
			moment; B arrives too late to plant anything; C starts before the reader knows anyone.

Item	Section	Key	Notes and accepted variants
Q7	B	1 compass out · 2 needle settles · 3 creek line	1 mark for all three in order. The compass comes out flat (1); the needle settles and points (2); only then can Maya speak the way (3). Each card causes the next.
Q8	C	at last	Accept <i>at last</i> (any capitalisation). The lookout arrives after the long, hard walk. <i>Long ago</i> is the wrong time; <i>meanwhile</i> is somewhere else; <i>first</i> is the start of an order, not an arrival.
Q9	C	compass	The key word comes back, so the reader never loses the thing Maya is holding. <i>Map</i> is already gone; <i>stone</i> and <i>boot</i> were never in the story — a new thing breaks the tie.
Q10	C	before long	Accept <i>before long</i> (any capitalisation). The split follows soon after the group leaves the wide track. <i>At last</i> belongs to an arrival much later; <i>last year</i> is the wrong time; <i>meanwhile</i> does not join these two events.
Q11	D	C	‘Stood closer together’ and ‘thin as a thread’ build the closing-in feeling — a simile doing the work. A states a flat fact; B builds the wrong mood; D is an opinion, not a setting.
Q12	D	D	Moving boots while the guide is still talking <i>shows</i> impatience through action. A and B tell the trait outright; C shows the opposite trait.
Q13	D	B	One small sound against the quiet — the needle’s click — makes the hush. A personifies the mountain at full volume; C brings laughter; D brings hyperbole; all three break the hush.

Item	Section	Key	Notes and accepted variants
Q14	E	C	The rushing character learns — Leo lets the compass lead next time, so steady thinking beats rushing on the page. A's rescue erases the lesson; B rewards speed and flips the theme; D ends with no resolution at all.
Q15	E	D	'Some things, she thought, are better found slowly' lands the theme in Maya's own voice. A and B say the opposite of the theme; C drifts off it.

Total: 15 marks.

Model narrative (P2)

Full model text assembled from the keyed choices. The supplied opening gives the orientation. Each keyed choice is woven in where the item places it; the item numbers in brackets show where each keyed choice lands.

The Last Walk

Maya stood at the camp gate with her group, and the morning air smelled of pine. Today was the last walk of camp. The group would go three kilometres to the lookout and back before lunch. That morning, Maya's grandfather had given her a small brass compass. Maya held the small brass compass that her grandfather had given her [Q1]. 'Hold it flat and trust the needle,' he had said. Two summers ago, Maya's grandfather had taught her to read a compass on the back verandah [Q6 — the flashback planted in the orientation, right after the reader meets the compass]. The track started as a wide, dusty road. Leo ran ahead before the guide finished speaking. Leo's boots kept moving, even while the guide was still talking [Q12].

The group hurried after Leo and left the wide track for a narrow one [Q5, card 1]. Before long, the narrow track split into two, and nobody knew which one to take [Q10; Q5, card 2]. Maya kept her hand on the compass. When the track split, she held the compass tight [Q9]. Before they could choose, clouds came down low, and the trees all began to look the same [Q5, card 3]. The trees stood closer together, and the track grew thin as a thread [Q11]. So Kim unfolded the map — and the wind took it up over the trees [Q5, card 4].

The whole group went quiet, and the only sound was the needle's small click [Q13]. Maya took the brass compass out of her pocket and held it flat in her hand [Q7, card 1]. The needle settled, and Maya pointed to a gap in the trees [Q7, card 2]. 'The creek runs that way,' she said, 'and the lookout sits above the creek' [Q7, card 3].

At last, the trees opened, and the lookout stood in front of the group [Q8]. The group reached the lookout just before lunch. 'Next time,' Leo said, 'we follow the compass before my feet' [Q14]. Maya put the compass back in her pocket. Some things, she thought, are better found slowly [Q15].

Construction principles named (per item, against the achievement standard's Writing sentences).

Items	Construction principle evidenced
Q1–Q4	Sentence structure to expand ideas — an embedded clause tucks the extra detail inside the noun group, so one sentence carries two ideas (Q1 combine, Q2 relative pronoun, Q3 repair of a dropped embedding, Q4 drag-built embedding).
Q5–Q7	Text structure for sequence — the complication’s problem arrives and grows one event at a time; the flashback is planted in the orientation to pay off in the climax; the climax follows its cause chain (Q5, Q6, Q7).
Q8–Q10	Sequence and cohesion through repetition and time phrases — the repeated key word keeps the reader holding the compass; the time phrases place each event in the walk (Q9, Q8, Q10).
Q11–Q13	Vivid, emotive vocabulary and literary devices — setting built with a simile, character shown through action, a sound device chosen to fit the feeling of the moment (Q11, Q12, Q13).
Q14–Q15	Adapting plot structure and ideas to the theme — the resolution and the closing line both land the idea underneath the story: steady thinking beats rushing (Q14, Q15).

One alternative model (P2). Genuine variation is allowed in the resolution and the closing line, provided both stay consistent with the theme. One acceptable alternative ending:

The group came down from the lookout with ten minutes to spare, and Leo walked at the back, letting the compass lead. Maya looked back at the narrow track. Rushing had lost them the morning. The needle had found the way.

The drag-built sentence from Q4 also works as an alternative first line of the complication: ‘The track that split into two confused the group.’

Marks by content description

CD	Items	Marks
VC2E6LY09 (5D — create texts with developed and organised ideas)	Q1–Q10	10
VC2E6LE05 craft (3E — adapt plot structure and ideas; experiment with vocabulary and literary devices)	Q11–Q15	5

Per-item CD and H5P family mapping

Item	CD	§7 family	H5P type
Q1	VC2E6LY09	Sentence combining/repair with embedded clauses	Multiple Choice (combine by embedding)
Q2	VC2E6LY09	Sentence combining/repair with embedded clauses	Fill in the Blanks (relative pronoun)
Q3	VC2E6LY09	Sentence combining/repair with embedded clauses	Multiple Choice (repair a dropped embedding)
Q4	VC2E6LY09	Sentence combining/repair with embedded clauses	Drag the Words (build a sentence with an embedded clause)
Q5	VC2E6LY09	Ordering events into a complication, flashback an option	Drag and Drop (complication cards into order)
Q6	VC2E6LY09	Ordering events into a complication, flashback an option	Multiple Choice (flashback placement)
Q7	VC2E6LY09	Ordering events into a complication, flashback an option	Drag and Drop (climax cards into order)
Q8	VC2E6LY09	Connective and time-phrase choice incl. repetition for cohesion	Fill in the Blanks (time phrase)
Q9	VC2E6LY09	Connective and time-phrase choice incl. repetition for cohesion	Multiple Choice (repeated key word)
Q10	VC2E6LY09	Connective and time-phrase choice incl. repetition for cohesion	Fill in the Blanks (time phrase)
Q11	VC2E6LE05	Vivid character and setting detail	Multiple Choice (setting that closes in)
Q12	VC2E6LE05	Vivid character and setting detail	Multiple Choice (showing a trait through action)
Q13	VC2E6LE05	Vivid character and setting detail	Multiple Choice (device that fits the feeling)
Q14	VC2E6LE05	Theme-consistent resolution	Multiple Choice (resolution that fits the theme)
Q15	VC2E6LE05	Theme-consistent resolution	Multiple Choice (closing line that lands the theme)

Achievement-standard mapping (sentences quoted verbatim from TOC §1)

- Sections A, B and C (VC2E6LY09) evidence Writing: *“They use text structures, including repetition, to create sequence and cohesion, sentence structure to expand ideas, and punctuation to create clarity.”* — here by embedding clauses inside noun groups, ordering the complication and the climax, planting a flashback that pays off, and repeating the key word to hold sentences together.

- Section D (VC2E6LE05) likewise evidences Writing: “*They use vivid, emotive vocabulary. They experiment with language features and literary devices.*” — here by choosing the simile that closes the forest in, the action that shows impatience, and the small sound that makes the hush.
- Section E (VC2E6LE05) likewise evidences Writing: “*When creating written and spoken texts for specific purposes and audiences, students explore ideas and experiment with textual details from texts*” — here by choosing a resolution and a closing line consistent with the story’s theme.
- The mode map in TOC §7.7 places the C tasks under Writing.

Score box

Section A /4	Section B /3	Section C /3	Section D /3	Section E /2	Total /15
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