

English Level 6

Chapter 4 — Literacy: speaking, words and fluency

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Interaction skills: paraphrasing, questioning, clarifying, arguing, sharing and evaluating

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

Owns: VC2E6LY01 — “use interaction skills and awareness of formality when paraphrasing, questioning, clarifying and interrogating ideas; developing and supporting arguments; and sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions”

Draws on: VC2E6LY01.E01 “participating in pair, group, class, school and community speaking and listening situations, including informal conversations, discussions, debates and presentations” · VC2E6LY01.E02 “using strategies (for example, pausing, questioning, rephrasing, repeating, summarising, reviewing and asking clarifying questions) when discussing topics” · VC2E6LY01.E03 “recognising that closed questions ask for precise responses, while open questions prompt a speaker to provide more information”

Level 6 achievement standard (Speaking and Listening): “When interacting with others, students use vivid vocabulary, select language to acknowledge formality and social distance, and use appropriate strategies such as paraphrasing and questioning.”

The elaborations are VCAA’s examples of what teaching this content description may involve. This section is organised around the content description itself.

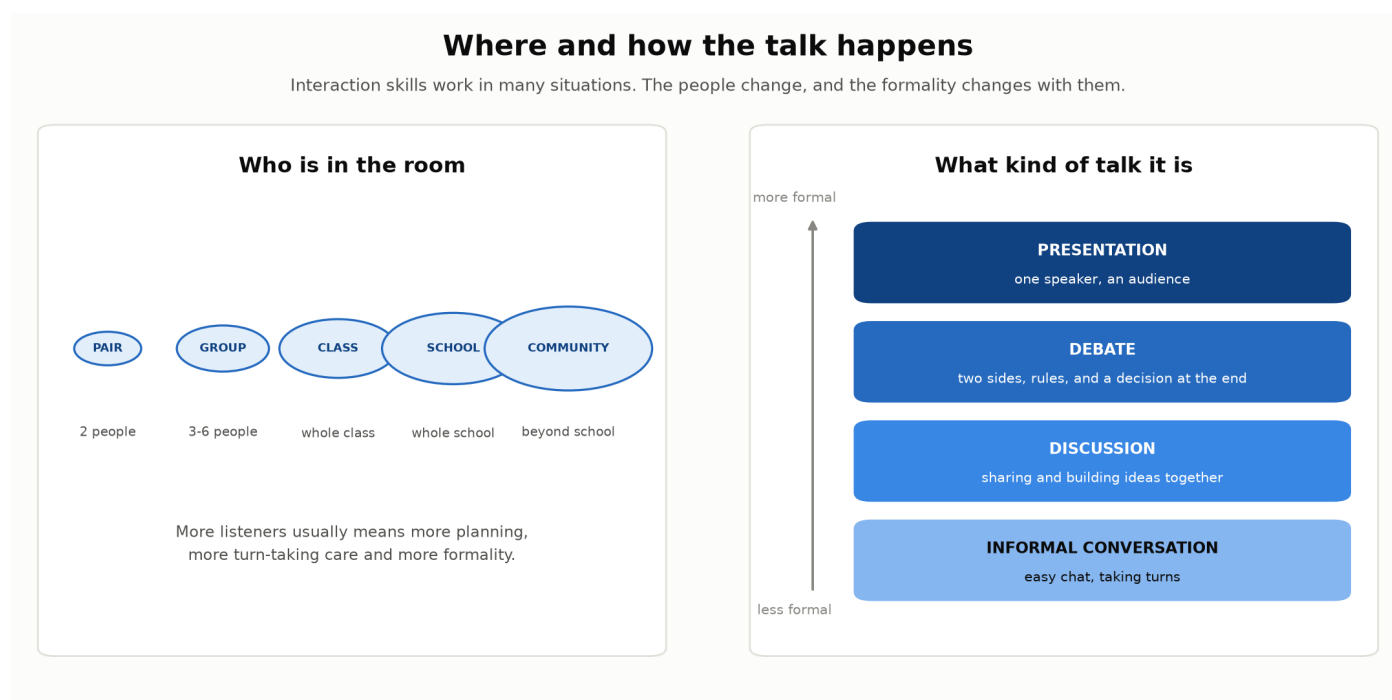
Learn

1. Talk is a skill

At Level 5 you practised keeping a talk going and adding to what other people said. This section turns that talk into skills you can choose on purpose.

Interaction skills are the moves you use when you talk with people and listen to them: how you say your part, how you check you understood their part, and how you fit both to the moment. The “fit the moment” part is **awareness of formality** — the same move is dressed in a different way for a friend, a teacher and the whole school. Section 1A teaches the formality scale itself; here it rides along with every skill.

Speaking and listening happen in many situations, from two friends at a bus stop to a speaker at a school assembly. Figure 1 shows the two things that change: who is in the room, and what kind of talk it is.



A figure with two panels. The left panel shows five circles growing bigger — pair, group, class, school, community — with a note that more listeners usually means more planning and more formality. The right panel shows four bands on

a formality ramp, from informal conversation (least formal) through discussion and debate to presentation (most formal).

Four names you will use a lot in this section:

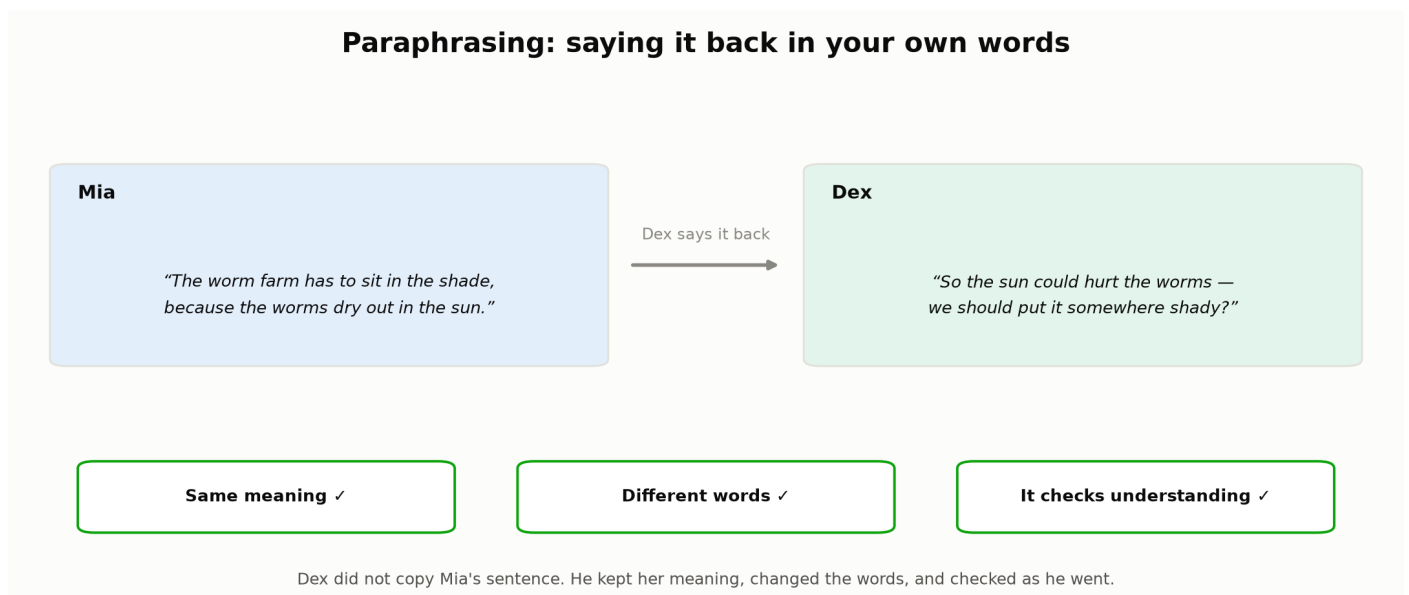
- An **informal conversation** is easy chat. Turns pass back and forward with no plan.
- A **discussion** is talk where people share and build ideas together, usually to reach a shared view or a decision.
- A **debate** is talk where two sides argue for and against the same claim, with rules, a **chair** (the person whose job is to keep the talk fair and in order) and a decision at the end.
- A **presentation** is one speaker talking to an audience. Section 4B is all about it.

Every one of these situations runs on the same small set of skills. That set is the rest of this section.

2. Paraphrasing: saying it back in your own words

To **paraphrase** is to say someone's meaning again in your own words. It is the single most useful listening move there is, because it does two jobs at once: it proves you were listening, and it checks you understood.

A good paraphrase passes three checks: it keeps the **same meaning**, it uses **different words**, and it **checks understanding** — usually by ending as a question, so the speaker can fix you if you got it wrong. Figure 2 shows a paraphrase passing all three.



A figure showing a paraphrase in action. Mia says, "The worm farm has to sit in the shade, because the worms dry out in the sun." An arrow points to Dex, who says, "So the sun could hurt the worms — we should put it somewhere shady?" Three checks sit underneath: same meaning, different words, it checks understanding.

Watch what Dex did **not** do. He did not copy Mia's words (copying is not paraphrasing), and he did not shrink her idea to its headline (that is a **summary**, a different move you will meet in part 3 below). He kept her whole meaning and wore it in his own words.

Paraphrasing is also the polite way to catch a mix-up early. If you have the meaning wrong and say it back, the speaker hears the mistake at once and fixes it — instead of the group making a plan from a meaning nobody shared.

3. The discussion toolkit: seven strategies

When a discussion is working, the people in it reach for a small set of strategies on purpose. Figure 3 shows the seven this section uses, with what each one is and when it earns its keep.

The discussion toolkit — seven strategies

Strategy	What you do	When to use it
PAUSE	stop talking and give everyone — including you — time to think	<i>before a big answer; when talk is racing</i>
QUESTION	ask for more	<i>when a point is unclear, or worth digging into</i>
REPHRASE	say the same idea again in different words	<i>to check you understood; to make an idea clearer</i>
REPEAT	say the key point one more time	<i>when an important idea is about to get lost</i>
SUMMARISE	squeeze the main points into a few words	<i>after a long talk; just before a decision</i>
REVIEW	look back over what the group has said and decided	<i>when the group is stuck, or has lost the thread</i>
CLARIFY	ask a small question to clear up a mix-up	<i>when a word or plan could mean two things</i>

Seven moves you can reach for in any discussion. Each one is something you do on purpose.

A table of seven strategies for talking and listening. Pause: stop talking and give everyone time to think. Question: ask for more. Rephrase: say the same idea again in different words. Repeat: say the key point one more time. Summarise: squeeze the main points into a few words. Review: look back over what the group has said and decided. Clarify: ask a small question to clear up a mix-up. Each row also says when to use the strategy.

Two of the seven need a closer look.

A **clarifying question** is a small question aimed at one unclear word or plan: “*When you say ‘corner’, do you mean the side by the gate or the side by the fence?*” It does not challenge the idea; it just clears the fog so the idea can be heard clearly. Asking one is a sign of good listening, not of doubt.

Rephrasing is the paraphrase you met in part 2 doing its job inside a discussion. **Pausing** is the quiet one: a two-second stop before you answer gives your thinking time to catch up with your mouth, and it hands space to the quieter people in the room.

4. Open and closed questions

Not all questions do the same job. The curriculum draws the line like this: **closed questions** ask for a precise response; **open questions** prompt a speaker to provide more information. Figure 4 puts the two side by side.

Two kinds of questions

The question you choose decides the answer you get.

CLOSED QUESTIONS

ask for a precise response

"Did you enjoy the excursion?"

→ "Yes."

"What time does the bus leave?"

→ "9 am."

"How many worms are in the farm?"

→ "About two hundred."

Often answered in a word or two.
Good for facts, times and numbers.

OPEN QUESTIONS

invite the speaker to give more information

"What was the best part of the excursion?"

→ a story, with details

"Why should our class keep a worm farm?"

→ reasons and evidence

"How did the worms change the garden?"

→ an explanation

Often start with what, why or how.
Good for ideas, stories and reasons.

A figure with two panels. The left panel, "Closed questions — ask for a precise response", shows three questions with one- or two-word answers: "Did you enjoy the excursion?" (Yes), "What time does the bus leave?" (9 am), "How many worms are in the farm?" (About two hundred). The right panel, "Open questions — invite the speaker to give more information", shows three questions with fuller answers: "What was the best part of the excursion?", "Why should our class keep a worm farm?", "How did the worms change the garden?"

A closed question is not a bad question. It is the right tool when you want a precise answer — a time, a number, a yes or no. The mistake is using closed questions when you want the speaker to open up: "Did you like the book?" hands the talk a full stop. "What did the book do for you?" hands it a door.

Open questions most often begin with **what**, **why** or **how**, or with "tell me about...". If you notice your questions keep getting one-word answers, the fix is usually to flip the question. Figure 5 shows three flips on the same topics.

Flipping a closed question into an open one

Same topic — but the flipped question hands the floor to the speaker.

CLOSED

"Do you want a worm farm at our school?"

CLOSED

"Did the garden club meet last week?"

CLOSED

"Is the compost bin full?"

OPEN

"What would a worm farm change at our school?"

OPEN

"What happened at garden club last week?"

OPEN

"How full is the compost bin, and what fills it up fastest?"

A closed question is not a mistake — it is the right tool for a precise answer.
Flip it when you want the speaker to open up instead.

A figure showing three closed questions flipped into open questions on the same topics: "Do you want a worm farm at our school?" becomes "What would a worm farm change at our school?"; "Did the garden club meet last week?" becomes "What happened at garden club last week?"; "Is the compost bin full?" becomes "How full is the compost bin, and what fills it up fastest?"

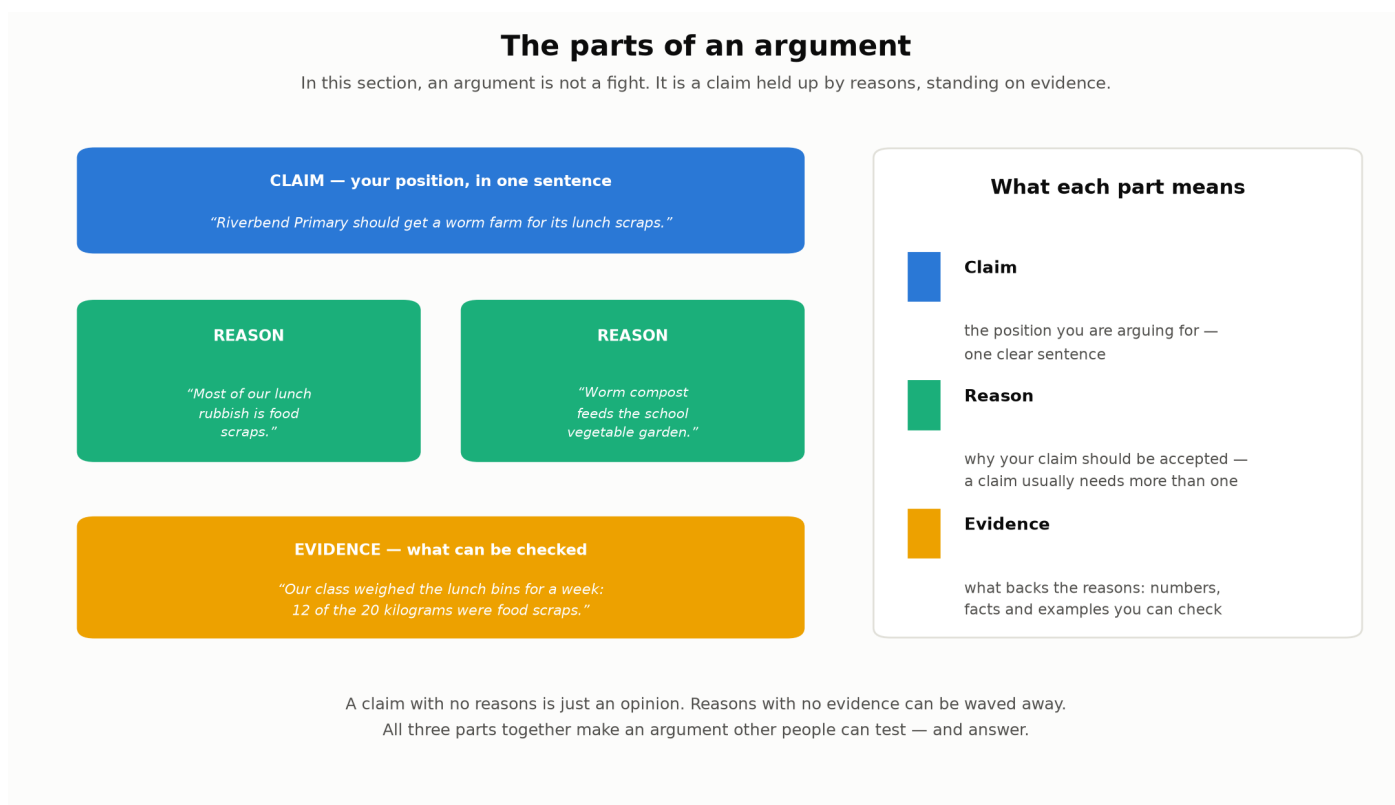
Interrogating ideas. The curriculum also uses the phrase *interrogating ideas*. In this section, to **interrogate** an idea means to press it politely with questions — not to attack the person holding it. Three questions do most of the work: “What do you mean by that?” (clarify), “How do we know it’s true?” (check), and “What would change your mind?” (test). Interrogating an idea is a form of respect: it treats the idea as worth real thought.

5. Arguing: claims, reasons, evidence

In everyday talk, “argument” often means a fight. In this section it means the other, more useful thing: **an argument is a claim held up by reasons, standing on evidence.**

- The **claim** is your position — the thing you are arguing for — in one clear sentence.
- A **reason** says why the claim should be accepted. A claim usually needs more than one.
- **Evidence** is what backs the reasons up: numbers, facts and examples — anything another person can check.

Figure 6 builds the three parts into one structure, filled in with a worked example.



A figure showing the parts of an argument as a structure. A blue CLAIM box on top (“Riverbend Primary should get a worm farm for its lunch scraps”) rests on two green REASON pillars (“Most of our lunch rubbish is food scraps” and “Worm compost feeds the school vegetable garden”), which stand on a yellow EVIDENCE base (“Our class weighed the lunch bins for a week: 12 of the 20 kilograms were food scraps”). A side panel defines claim, reason and evidence.

A claim with no reasons is just an opinion said louder. Reasons with no evidence can be waved away. All three parts together make an argument other people can test — and answer. (Section 1B taught you which words report checkable facts and which words carry feelings; that sorting is exactly how you build the evidence base and keep the reasons honest.)

Steelman the other side. Before you answer the other side of an argument, build it as strong as you honestly can — then answer *that*. Figure 7 shows the same other side twice, weak and strong. Building the strongest fair version of the other side is called **steelmanning**, and it is the opposite of making the other side look silly on purpose. An argument that only beats a weak version of the other side has not beaten anything.

Steelman the other side

Topic: "Our class should get a worm farm." Here is the other side — twice.

X

WEAK FORM

*"Worm farms are gross,
and nobody would feed them."*

No reason, no evidence — easy to
brush aside. Answering this one
proves nothing.

✓

STRONG FORM

*"A worm farm needs feeding every day,
even in the holidays, and it can
smell if it is overfed."*

A real reason, and something to answer.
If your argument can answer this,
it is ready.

Before you answer the other side, build it as strong as you honestly can — then answer that.

In this book, building the strongest fair version of the other side is called steelmanning.

A figure with two panels on the topic "Our class should get a worm farm." The left panel shows the other side in a weak form — "Worm farms are gross, and nobody would feed them" — labelled as easy to brush aside. The right panel shows the same side in a strong form — "A worm farm needs feeding every day, even in the holidays, and it can smell if it is overfed" — labelled as the form worth answering.

Notice what the strong form gives you that the weak form does not: a real reason, and something your argument can answer — for example, *"so we will make a feeding plan that covers the holidays"*. Answering the strong form is also how you win over the people in the middle who were not sure.

The same rule works both ways. Steelman positions you disagree with, and hold your own position up to the same questions — an argument you would not apply to your own side is not a test, it is a cheer.

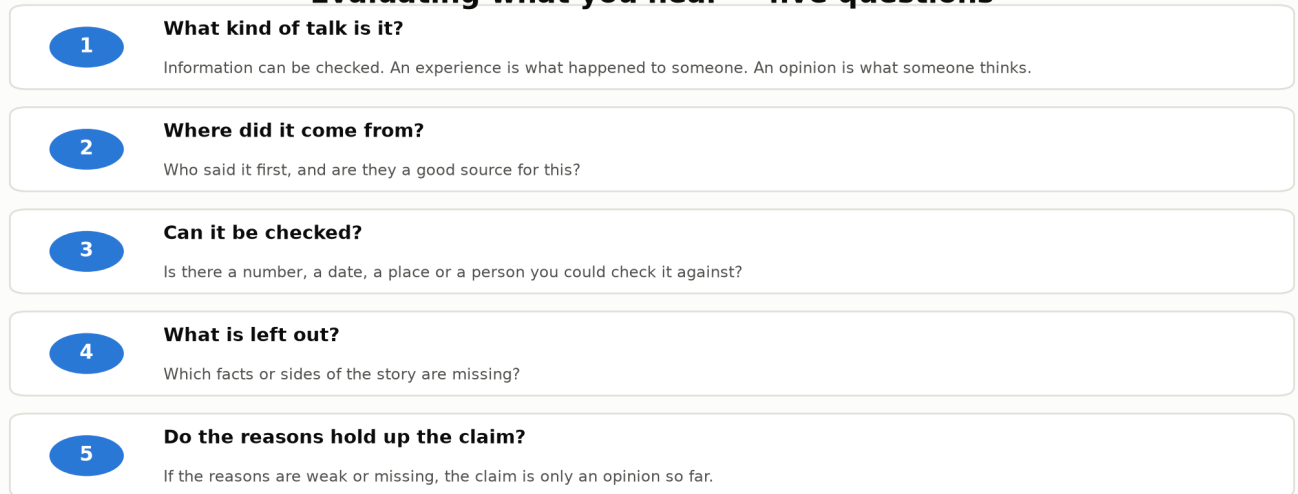
6. Sharing and evaluating

The last skill pair in this content description is **sharing and evaluating** information, experiences and opinions. Sharing is the easy half to describe: say what kind of thing you are sharing, and keep it honest.

- **Information** is the checkable kind: numbers, dates, places, events.
- An **experience** is what happened to you or to someone you heard directly.
- An **opinion** is what someone thinks or feels about either of those. (Section 1B: facts can be checked; opinions are owned by the person holding them.)

Evaluating is the listening half: judging what you hear before you accept it. It is not the same as disagreeing — you can evaluate a claim you agree with, and you should. Figure 8 gives you five questions to run through your head whenever someone shares something worth testing.

Evaluating what you hear — five questions



When someone shares information, an experience or an opinion, run it through these before you accept it.

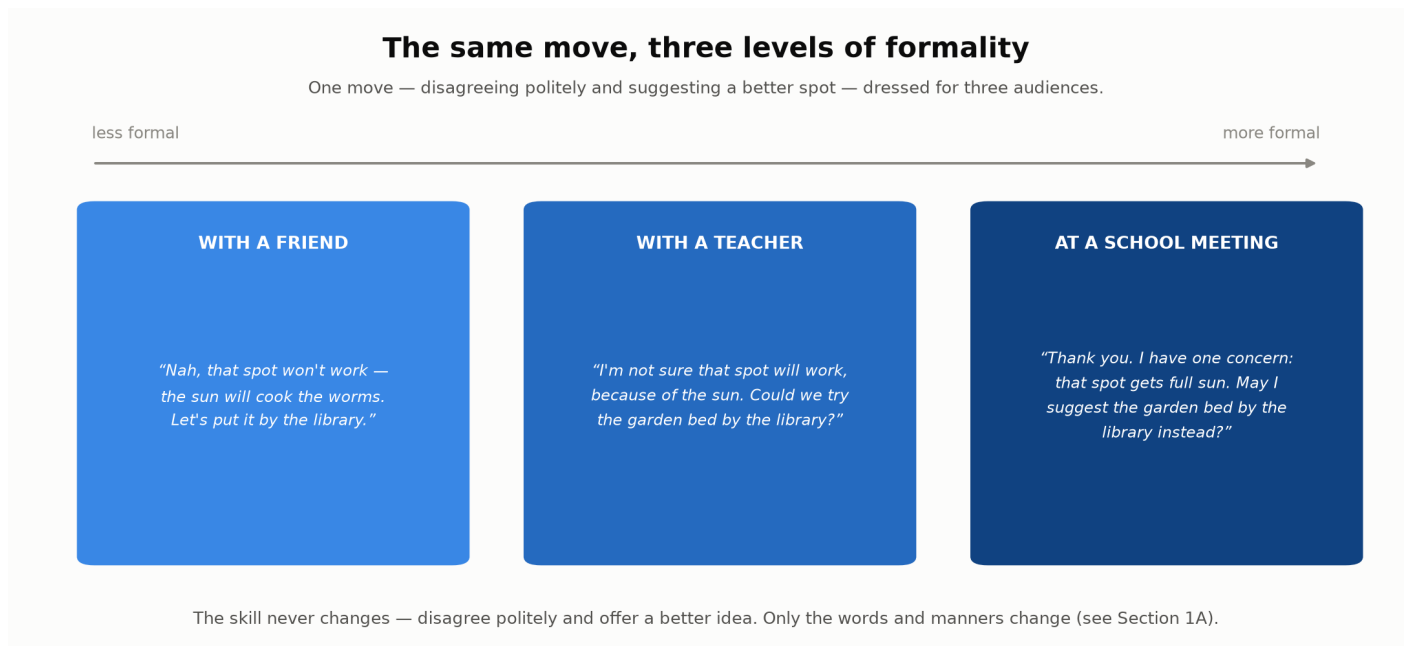
You do not have to disagree with the speaker to evaluate — checking carefully is a form of respect.

A checklist figure titled “Evaluating what you hear — five questions”: 1 What kind of talk is it — information, experience or opinion? 2 Where did it come from, and is that a good source? 3 Can it be checked, and how? 4 What is left out? 5 Do the reasons hold up the claim?

The fifth question in Figure 8 joins this skill to the arguing work in part 5: a claim whose reasons do not hold it up is, so far, only an opinion.

7. The same skills, dressed for the moment

Every skill in this section changes its clothes with the formality of the moment. Figure 9 takes one move — disagreeing politely and suggesting a better idea — and dresses it for three audiences.



A figure showing the same polite disagreement and suggestion at three levels of formality on a ramp from less formal to more formal: with a friend, “Nah, that spot won’t work — the sun will cook the worms. Let’s put it by the library.”; with a teacher, “I’m not sure that spot will work, because of the sun. Could we try the garden bed by the library?”; at a school meeting, “Thank you. I have one concern: that spot gets full sun. May I suggest the garden bed by the library instead?”

The skill underneath never changes: disagree with the idea, not the person, and bring a better one. What changes is the dressing — more careful words, more polite framing, more room given to the other speaker. When the audience is the whole school or the community, that dressing is the difference between being heard and being noise.

These are the skills a debate, a discussion and a presentation all stand on. Section 4B takes them onto a stage; Section 5C puts the questioning side to work on reading. For now, they are yours to practise in the tasks below.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — modelled analysis

Read this short group discussion. Three students are choosing a spot for the class worm farm.

Mia: I say the sunny corner by the bike shed.

Dex: Let me check I heard you — you want the bike shed corner because it's sunny?

Mia: Yes.

Priya: Sorry, which corner? The side by the gate, or the side by the fence?

Mia: The side by the fence.

Priya: Worms dry out in full sun, so that corner could hurt them. How much sun does it actually get?

Dex: Did anyone measure the sun there?

Mia: Yes — the garden club did, last term.

Dex: So: the bike shed corner gets full sun, and full sun is bad for worms. Let's look at shadier spots.

Sort the talk move by move.

Turn	Strategy	What it did
Dex, turn 1	Paraphrase (rephrase)	Said Mia's meaning back in his own words, as a question, to check it.
Priya, turn 1	Clarifying question	Cleared up one unclear word — "corner" — before arguing about the idea.
Priya, turn 2	Open question	"How much sun does it actually get?" prompts Mia to provide more information.
Dex, turn 2	Closed question	The right tool here: it asks for a precise answer (yes or no), and gets one.
Dex, turn 3	Summarise	Squeezed the talk so far into the two facts the group now agrees on, and pointed it at the next step.

Watch the pattern. Nobody talked over anyone, and no idea was argued against before it was understood. The group checked first (paraphrase, clarify), asked for what it needed (open and closed questions), and tied the talk down (summarise). That is the toolkit doing its job in nine lines of talk.

Worked example 2 — modelled composition

Now build a spoken argument for a class discussion. The topic: *Riverbend Primary should get a worm farm for its lunch scraps*. Plan it as a structure first — claim, reasons, evidence, then the steelman — and only then write the talk.

Part	What goes in it
Claim	Riverbend Primary should get a worm farm for its lunch scraps.

Part	What goes in it
Reason 1	Most of our lunch rubbish is food scraps.
Evidence for reason 1	Our class weighed the lunch bins for a week: 12 of the 20 kilograms were food scraps.
Reason 2	Worm compost feeds the school vegetable garden.
Evidence for reason 2	The garden club's compost bin ran empty this term; the worms would refill it.
Steelman of the other side	A worm farm needs feeding every day, even in the holidays, and it can smell if it is overfed.
Answer to the steelman	So the class should make a feeding plan that covers holiday weeks, and a "feed less, not more" rule — then the strongest worry is answered.

Now the talk, dressed for a class discussion:

I'm arguing that Riverbend Primary should get a worm farm for its lunch scraps. First, most of our lunch rubbish is food scraps — our class weighed the bins for a week, and 12 of the 20 kilograms were scraps. Second, worm compost feeds the vegetable garden, and the garden club's compost bin ran empty this term. Now, the strongest point against us is a fair one: a worm farm needs feeding every day, even in the holidays, and it can smell if it is overfed. So here is our answer before you ask it: a feeding plan that covers the holiday weeks, and a "feed less, not more" rule. If the strongest worry is answered, the farm is worth starting.

Check it against the parts: one claim, two reasons with checkable evidence, the other side built in its strong form, and an answer to that strong form. That is what "developing and supporting arguments" looks like out loud.

Practice tasks

With help

Q1. (E01) For each situation below, name (a) who is in the room — **pair, group, class, school** or **community** — and (b) what kind of talk it is — **informal conversation, discussion, debate** or **presentation**.

- You and a friend chatting at the bus stop after school.
- Five students at one table planning a poster for the fete.
- Two teams in front of the class, one for and one against longer lunch breaks, with a chair and a timekeeper.
- You telling the whole assembly the results of the recycling drive.
- You helping at a stall at the weekend market, talking to people from your street.

Then answer: which of the five needs the most formality, and why?

Q2. (E02) Each situation below calls for one strategy from the toolkit in Figure 3. Write the strategy's name next to it.

- The talk is racing along and nobody has stopped to think about the big question.
- Someone said "the tank thing" and nobody knows which tank they mean.
- The group talked for ten minutes and has forgotten what it was deciding.
- A useful idea was said quietly and is about to be lost.
- The chair needs to end the talk, tie down what was agreed, and call the vote.

Q3. (E02) Paraphrase each line below. Keep the whole meaning; change the words; end as a question so the speaker can check you.

- "The excursion bus leaves at nine, so be at school by ten past eight."

- b) “Worms hate light and heat, so keep the farm lid shut.”
- c) “Everyone in the group must speak once before anyone speaks twice.”

Q4. (E03) Label each question **open** or **closed**.

- a) Do you like the new library hours?
- b) What should we grow in the garden this term?
- c) How many books did you read in reading week?
- d) Why did the worm farm smell last week?
- e) Is the fete on Friday or Saturday?
- f) Tell me about your favourite part of the camp.

Q5. (E03) Flip each closed question into an open question on the same topic, so the speaker can give more information.

- a) Did the canteen add fruit boxes?
- b) Is your group finished?
- c) Do worms eat paper?

Q6. (E02, E03) Read this short discussion about painting the worm farm box.

Aisha: I think we should paint the box.

Ben: So you want the box painted, not left as plain wood?

Aisha: Yes.

Talia: Painted how — one colour, or a picture?

Ben: The vote is at 2 pm, so let’s list the two choices now.

- a) Name the strategy Ben uses in his first turn.
- b) Name the strategy Talia uses.
- c) Write one open question you could add to this talk.

On your own

Q7. (E01–E03) The topic for a class debate is: *The school should run a swap-stall where students trade outgrown uniforms and sports gear*. Build one side of it as a structure (like Worked example 2): one **claim**, two **reasons**, one piece of **evidence** you could check or collect at your school, and a **steelman** of the other side with an answer to it. Do not write the full speech — the structure is the task.

Q8. (E02) This discussion is broken. Rewrite it as a real discussion, using at least three strategies from the toolkit. Name each strategy in brackets after the turn that uses it.

Sam: The library should close at lunch. Too noisy.

Kim: No it shouldn’t.

Sam: Yes it should.

Kim: No.

Q9. (E01, E02) The class wants to use the art room for a games afternoon. You disagree with that idea and want to suggest the hall instead. Write the same move — disagree politely, suggest the hall — three times: (a) to a friend, (b) to your teacher, (c) to the principal at a school meeting. The skill underneath must stay the same; only the dressing changes.

Q10. (all three) A student standing for the school council shares this in a speech:

Vote for me and I will make every Friday a free-choice day. I asked my brother, who was in Year 6 last year, and he said free-choice days are the best. Any school with free-choice days is a good school.

Run it through the five evaluating questions from Figure 8. Answer at least three of the five about this speech, then say: which part would you accept as it stands, and which part would you check before believing it?

Produced outcome

Discussion ready. Take part in a class discussion on one of these topics:

1. Our class should start a worm farm.
2. The school should run a swap-stall for outgrown uniforms and sports gear.
3. Lunch breaks should be ten minutes longer.

Prepare notes first (a claim, a reason, some evidence, and your steelman of the other side). Then, in the discussion itself, show all four moves:

1. a **paraphrase** of a speaker who went before you;
2. one **open question** for another speaker;
3. your own **claim** with at least one reason and one piece of evidence;
4. a **steelman** of the side you disagree with, and your answer to it.

Dress your talk for a class discussion — polite, ordered, and ready to be interrupted by good questions.

Success criteria. All four moves appear and can be pointed at. The claim is one sentence; the reasons say why; the evidence can be checked. The steelman is the strongest fair version of the other side, not the weakest. The paraphrase keeps the earlier speaker's meaning.

Marking note: marks are for the quality of your reasoning — how well you build, check and answer arguments — not for which side of the topic you land on. The same tools apply to your own side as to the side you oppose.

Answers

Q1. a) Pair; informal conversation. b) Group; discussion. c) Class; debate. d) School; presentation. e) Community; informal conversation. Most formality: (d) — a presentation to the whole school has the biggest audience and the least give-and-take, so the talk needs the most planning and the most careful words. (c) runs it close: a debate has rules and a chair, which is its own kind of formality.

Q2. a) Pause. b) Clarify (ask a clarifying question). c) Review. d) Repeat. e) Summarise.

Q3. Samples. a) “So we need to be at school by 8:10, because the bus goes at 9?” b) “So light and heat are bad for worms — the lid should stay shut?” c) “So each of us gets one turn before anyone gets a second?”

Q4. a) Closed. b) Open. c) Closed — it asks for a precise number. d) Open. e) Closed. f) Open — “tell me about” invites information just as what/why/how do.

Q5. Samples. a) “What has the canteen changed, and what do students think of it?” b) “What does your group still need to finish?” c) “What do worms eat, and how much of it?”

Q6. a) Paraphrase (rephrase) — Ben says Aisha’s idea back in his own words, as a question, to check it. b) Clarifying question — Talia clears up one unclear word (“painted how?”) before the group argues about paint. c) Sample: “What would a picture on the box say about our class?” Any open question on the topic is fine.

Q7. Sample structure. Claim: the school should run the swap-stall. Reason 1: outgrown uniforms and sports gear cost families money to replace. Evidence (collectable): a survey of two classes asking what they replaced this year and what it cost. Reason 2: usable gear currently goes to the bin. Evidence (checkable): a week of checking the uniform bin at the office. Steelman of the other side: a swap-stall needs sorting, storage and rules about fair trades, and someone has to run it. Answer: run it twice a term, not weekly, with the student council sorting donations the day before. Other fair structures are possible; the check is that every part of the structure is present and the steelman is strong, not weak.

Q8. Sample. **Sam:** The library should close at lunch, because it gets too noisy for reading. **Kim:** Let me check — you want it closed for everyone, or just quieter rules? (*clarify*) **Sam:** Quieter rules would do. (*answer*) **Kim:** So the real problem is noise, not the library being open. What if we made the back half a quiet zone at lunch? (*paraphrase, then an open suggestion*) **Sam:** That could work. Let’s list both choices and ask the library teacher. (*summarise*) Any rewrite that uses at least three named strategies and turns the clash into a real talk passes.

Q9. Samples. a) “Nah, the art room’s too small for games — the hall’s way better.” b) “I’m not sure the art room will work, with the tables and the paint. Could we try the hall instead?” c) “Thank you, Principal. I have one concern: the art room is crowded and hard to clean after games. May I suggest the hall instead?” The check: same move underneath (disagree politely, suggest the hall), different dressing each time.

Q10. Sample. *What kind of talk is it?* Most of it is opinion and a promise; the only near-fact is what the brother said. *Where did it come from?* The brother, one person with a reason to please his sibling — a thin source for “every Friday”. *Can it be checked?* The claim about “any school with free-choice days” could be checked by asking other schools; nothing in the speech has been. *What is left out?* Cost, lost learning time, and what other students want. *Do the reasons hold up the claim?* No — one brother’s liking does not hold up a promise about every Friday. Accept as it stands: that this student believes free-choice days matter (opinion, honestly owned). Check first: that other students want it, and that the school week has room for it.

Produced outcome. There is no single answer. Check your talk against the success criteria: four moves present and pointable, a one-sentence claim, reasons that say why, evidence that can be checked, a steelman in strong form, and a paraphrase that kept the earlier speaker’s meaning.

Delivering structured spoken and multimodal texts to an audience

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

Owens: VC2E6LY02 — “*deliver structured spoken and multimodal texts to an intended audience for a specific purpose, using appropriate features of voice*”

Draws on: VC2E6LY02.E01 “*experimenting with voice effects such as tone, volume, pitch and pace in formal presentations and recognising the effects these have on audience understanding*” ·

VC2E6LY02.E02 “*presenting an argument about an issue from learning area content, which includes claims supported with evidence and examples, careful use of topic-specific vocabulary and selection of persuasive techniques appropriate for audience*” · VC2E6LY02.E03 “*setting goals for a presentation and monitoring development in a written or digital journal*”

Level 6 achievement standard (Speaking and Listening): “*When speaking to an audience, students deliver structured spoken texts, exploring topics and text types, including multimodal or digital elements. They select language appropriate for purpose and audience and use appropriate features of voice.*”

Learn

1. A talk is a text you build

At Level 5 you planned and gave short talks and tried out what your voice can do. This section builds on that: how to put a spoken text together on purpose, and how to give it so an audience understands it.

A talk is a text. Like every text, it is built for a **purpose** (what it is meant to do) and an **audience** (the people who hear it). And like every text, it can be planned in parts, and it can be carried by more than one mode.

Defining the terms. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *structured*, *multimodal* and *features of voice* but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as follows, and every question here is answerable on these definitions alone.

- A **structured** spoken text is one that is planned in parts — an opening, a body and a close — so the audience can follow it.
- A **multimodal** text carries its message in more than one **mode** (a way of carrying meaning). A talk with a poster, a map or an object you hold up is multimodal.
- **Features of voice** are the things you can change about your voice when you speak: **tone** (the feeling your voice carries), **volume** (how loud or soft you are), **pitch** (how high or low your voice sounds) and **pace** (how fast or slow you speak).

Before you write a single line of a talk, answer five questions. They are the frame of every talk in this section. This year, one student — Ruby, from Riverbend Primary — will be our example. Her purpose: to ask the school council to plant five shade trees beside the playground.

Five questions before you start

Answer these first, and your talk plans itself.

Question	Why it matters	Example: Ruby's talk
Purpose — what job must my talk do?	It picks your words, your voice and your ending.	To persuade the school council to plant five shade trees.
Audience — who will hear it?	Different audiences need different words, voice and visuals.	The school council — adults, so a formal tone.
Structure — what are my key points?	Two or three clear points are easy to follow; ten are not.	Three points: the heat, the crowding, the cost answered.
Voice — where will I use tone, volume, pitch and pace?	Your voice tells the audience what matters most.	Slow down for the numbers; pause after the big ask.
Multimodal — what will I show as well as say?	A well-chosen image can do work that words cannot.	A map of the playground with the five tree spots marked.

The same five questions work for every talk: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.

A planning frame table with five questions for planning a talk — purpose, audience, structure, voice and multimodal — each shown with why the question matters and the answers Ruby wrote for her shade-tree talk.

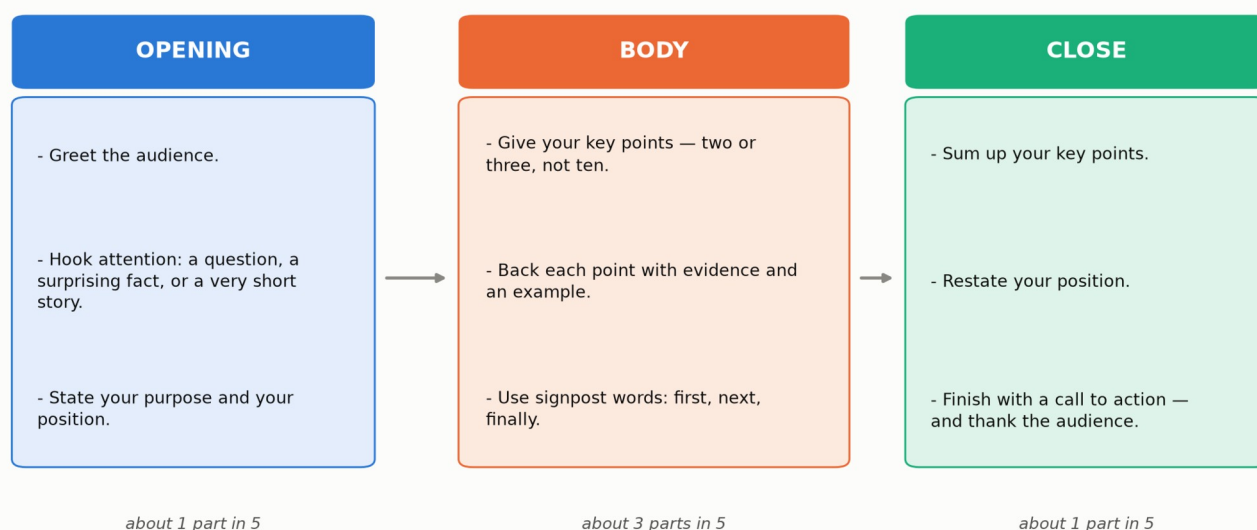
Every choice in a talk hangs on the first two answers. Ruby's voice choices and her map only make sense because she knows **who** she is talking to and **what** she wants them to do.

2. Opening, body, close

A structured talk has three parts, and each part does one job.

The three parts of a talk

Every part has a job. If a part is missing its job, the audience feels it.



A talk that is all opening never says anything. A talk that is all body never lands.

A diagram of the three parts of a talk — opening, body and close — with arrows running left to right; each part is a panel listing its jobs: the opening greets, hooks and states the claim; the body carries the evidence and examples in order and is fair to the other side; the close sums up, restates the claim and thanks the audience.

The **claim** is the one sentence you are asking the audience to agree to. Ruby's claim: *Our school should plant five shade trees beside the playground.* Say it in your opening, hold it up in your body, and bring it home in your close. If the audience can repeat your claim afterwards, the structure worked.

3. What your voice does

The same words, said in two different voices, give the audience two different understandings. That is why the curriculum names four features of voice to experiment with.

The four features of voice

What you say carries the facts. How you say it carries the meaning.

Feature	What it is	What it does for the audience	Watch out
Tone	the feeling your voice carries: warm, serious, excited, calm	tells listeners how to feel about your words	a flat tone makes even exciting news sound dull
Volume	how loud or soft your voice is	makes sure every listener can hear; a softer voice can pull listeners in	too loud hurts; too soft loses the back row
Pitch	how high or low your voice sounds	a rise can signal a question or surprise; staying low sounds serious	one unchanging pitch sends listeners to sleep
Pace	how fast or slow your words go	slowing down says: this part matters	rushing blurs your best points

A pause is part of pace: a beat of silence after a big idea lets it sink in.

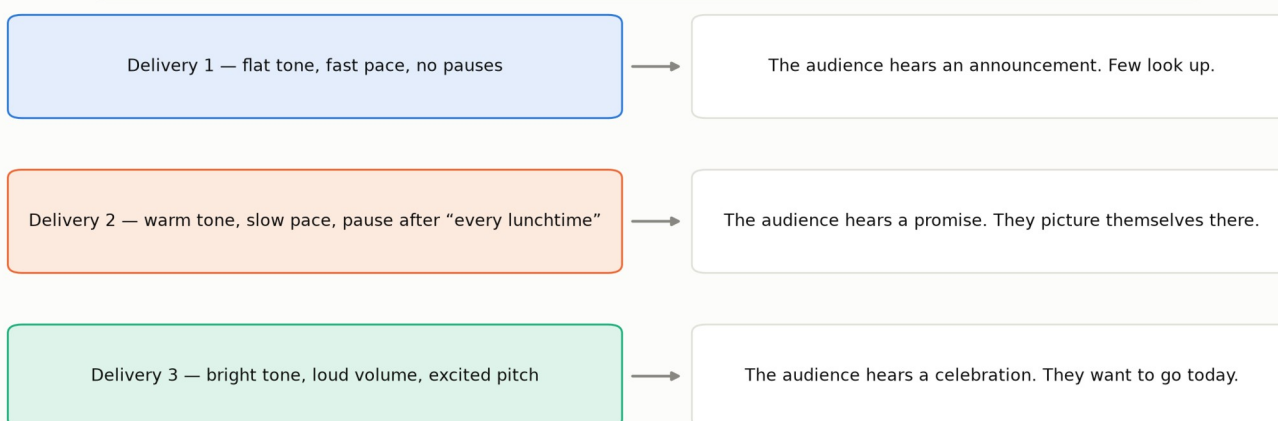
A table of the four features of voice — tone, volume, pitch and pace — each row giving what the feature is, what it changes for the audience, and one move to try, with a footer note that a pause, placed on purpose, is a fifth tool.

Look at what one line can do. The words never change; the voice changes, and the audience's understanding changes with it.

One line, three voices, three meanings

The words never change. The voice does the changing.

The line: "The garden will be open every lunchtime."



Same words. Three different messages.

The same sentence — 'The garden will be open every lunchtime.' — delivered three different ways with three different voice choices, beside the different thing the audience understands each time.

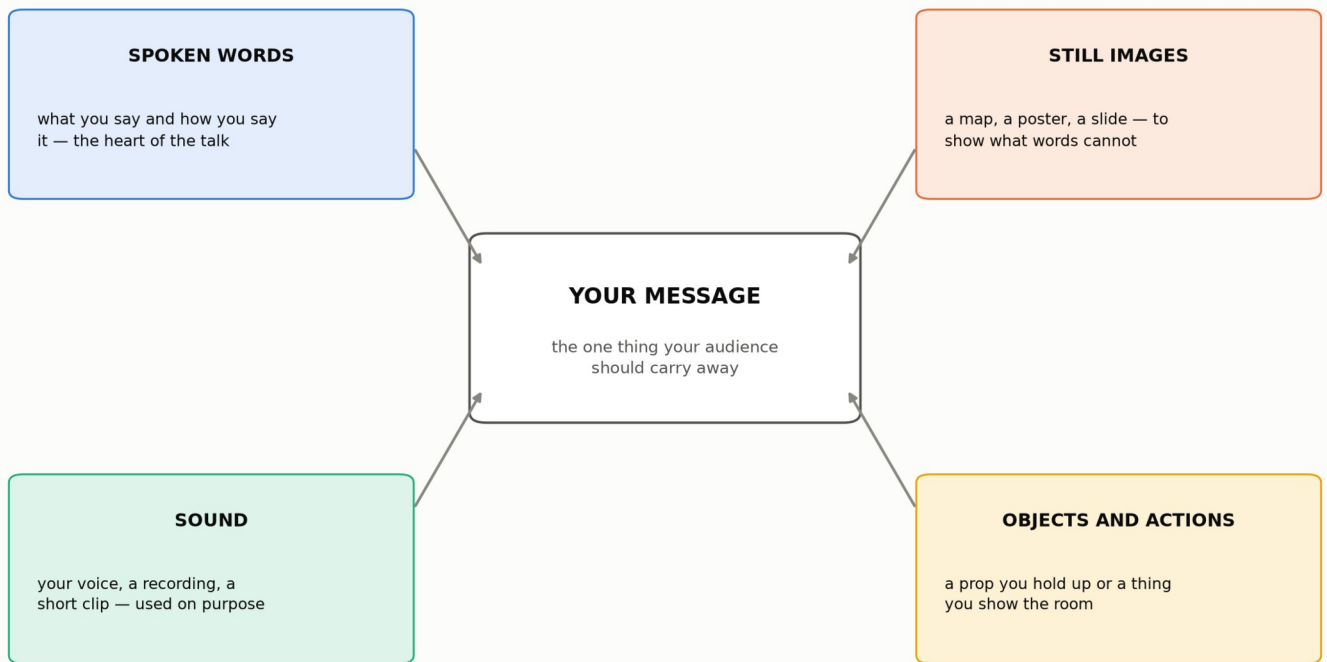
When you plan a talk, write your voice choices into your notes, the way Ruby did: *slow down for the numbers, pause after the question, bigger voice for the close*. A voice choice you have planned is a voice choice you will actually make.

4. More than one mode

A talk becomes **multimodal** when a mode other than spoken words carries part of the message: a still image (a map, a poster, a slide), sound (a recording, a short clip), or objects and actions (a **prop** — an object you hold up for the room to see).

More than one mode: what makes a talk multimodal

Each mode must carry part of the message — or it should not be there.



Good test for every mode: if I took it away, would the talk be weaker?

A hub-and-spoke diagram with 'your message' at the centre and four mode panels pointing inwards — spoken words, still images, sound, and objects and actions — each with a short note, and a footer test: if I took it away, would the talk be weaker?

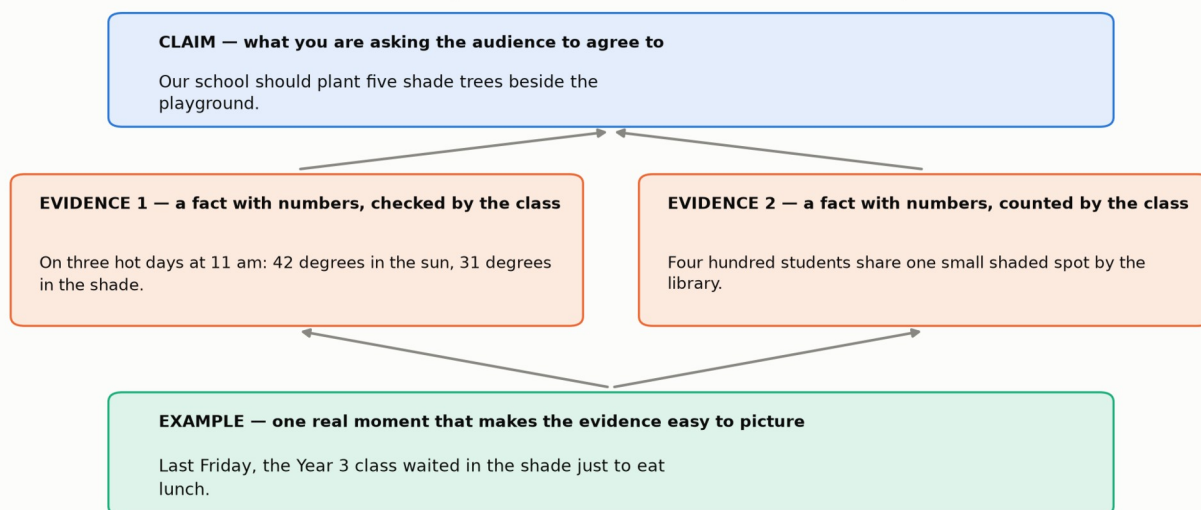
The test at the bottom of the picture is the whole rule. Ruby's map passes it: the council can *see* where the five trees would go, which words alone cannot show. A picture that repeats what your words already say is decoration, not a mode.

5. The argument inside the talk

A persuasive talk is an argument you can hear. An argument, here, is not a fight. It is a **claim** held up by **evidence** (facts that can be checked, often with numbers) and brought to life by **examples** (one real moment the audience can picture).

An argument is a tower, not a shout

The claim sits on top of the evidence. The evidence sits on real examples.



evidence holds up the claim

If the claim had no evidence under it, it would be a wish, not an argument.

A tower diagram: a claim box — 'Our school should plant five shade trees beside the playground.' — sits on top; two evidence boxes with facts and numbers hold it up; an example box about the Year 3 class waiting in the shade to eat lunch holds up the evidence.

Section 1B showed you how words push in texts, and how bias hides the push. A persuasive talk is the honest twin of that: your position is out in the open, and you are fair to the other side instead of hiding it. Being fair to the other side — and answering it — builds trust.

The words matter too. E02 asks for *careful use of topic-specific vocabulary*: the precise words of the learning area your topic comes from (→ 2D). For Ruby's science-measured evidence, that is *measured, degrees, at 11 am* — words the council can check.

Finally, choose your techniques for the audience.

Persuasive techniques, chosen for the audience

A technique is only persuasive if it fits the people listening.

Technique	What it looks like	When it works best
Claim first	State your position in your opening: 'Our school should plant five shade trees.'	Always. Your audience deserves to know where you stand.
Facts and numbers	'42 degrees in the sun, 31 in the shade.'	When the audience wants something they can check.
A question to think about	'Where can you sit on a hot day?' — asked for effect, not for a raised hand.	To pull the audience into your talk.
Words that include everyone	'We' and 'our' make it the whole school's plan, not just yours.	When you want the audience to feel part of it.
Repeat the key word	Say 'shade' again and again until it sticks.	When one idea must stay with the audience.
Be fair to the other side	'Some say trees cost money. True — but the school sets money aside for the grounds each year.'	To show you have thought about both sides. It builds trust.

Choose two or three techniques and do them well. A talk that tries all of them at once sounds like a trick.

A table of six persuasive techniques chosen for the audience — claim first, facts and numbers, a question to think about, words that include everyone, repeat the key word, and be fair to the other side — each with what it looks like and when it works best.

6. Goals and the journal

The last skill in this section is the quiet one: getting better between practice runs. The curriculum's answer is **goals** and a **journal**.

A goal is only a goal if you can check it. "Do better" is not a goal — you could never tick it off. "Slow down for my numbers" is a goal: afterwards, you know if you did it.

A presentation journal — Ruby's page

Two goals, three practice runs. The journal keeps score.

Entry 1 — Tuesday 4 August

My goals: (1) slow down for my numbers. (2) pause after my question.

What I practised: my opening and my body, twice, out loud, standing up.

What worked: the pause after the question felt long to me, but my sister said it felt strong.

Next time: bigger voice for my close, and look up at the room.

Goal check: goal 1 met, goal 2 met.

Entry 2 — Thursday 6 August

My goals: (1) bigger voice for the close. (2) look up at the room.

What I practised: the whole talk, once to my family, once on my own.

What worked: my close was loud and clear. I only looked at my notes twice.

Next time: smile when I say thank you.

Goal check: both goals met. Ready for Friday.

A goal you can check is a goal you can meet. 'Do better' is not a goal.

Two dated entries from Ruby's presentation journal, each listing her two goals, what she practised, what worked, what she will change next time, and a goal check; entry 2's goals are exactly entry 1's 'next time' lines.

Notice the chain: each entry's *next time* lines become the next entry's goals. The journal is not a diary; it is how a talk improves one checkable goal at a time.

Run the whole thing — plan, practice, give the talk, write — against this checklist.

The delivery checklist

Run it before, during and after your talk.

BEFORE

- Know your opening and close by heart.
- Practise out loud, standing up, at least twice.
- Set your two goals and write them down.
- Check your visual is big and clear from the back row.

DURING

- Greet the audience and start with your hook.
- Slow down for your numbers and your claim.
- Pause after your big question.
- Look at your audience, not your notes.
- Show your visual when you talk about it.

AFTER

- Say one thing that went well.
- Check your goals: met, or nearly?
- Write your journal entry.
- Set one goal for next time.

A talk is built in practice. The audience only sees the last run.

A three-column checklist for a talk — before, during and after — with short to-do lines in each column, from knowing your opening by heart to writing the journal entry and setting one goal for next time.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — modelled analysis

Ruby gave her talk to the school council. The picture below shows it part by part; the table walks the same talk and asks *why each part earns its place*.

Ruby's talk, taken apart

One argument, one audience, one purpose. The labels show why each part earns its place.

Good morning, members of the school council. My name is Ruby, and I am in Year 6. Today I am asking you to help us plant five shade trees beside the playground.

On hot days, the ground beside the playground is too hot to sit near. Last February, our class measured it at 11 am on three hot days. In the sun it was 42 degrees. In the shade of the big tree it was 31 degrees.

Shade trees also give us a quiet place to read and talk. Right now, only twenty students fit in the small shaded area by the library. We have four hundred students.

Some will say that new trees take years to grow and cost money. That is true — but the school sets money aside for the grounds every year, and fast-growing trees give shade in three years.

We are not asking for a forest. We are asking for five trees, planted this winter, so the students of today — and every year after us — can sit, read and play in the shade. Thank you for listening. I have brought a map of the playground showing where the five trees could go.

OPENING + CLAIM

greet, then ask for exactly what you want

EVIDENCE

numbers the class measured and counted

VOICE PLAN

slow down for the numbers; pause before the ask

OTHER SIDE

named in a fair way, then answered

CLOSE + MULTIMODAL

sum up, thank — and let the map do the showing

Ruby's model talk to the school council about planting five shade trees, set out in five colour-barred paragraphs, each linked to a label on the right: opening and claim, evidence, voice plan, other side, and close with a multimodal map.

Part	What it does	Voice and mode choices
Opening + claim	Greets the council, then asks for exactly five trees. In two sentences the audience knows the purpose.	Steady and clear, a little louder than talk-time volume. No mode yet — the words carry it.
Evidence 1: the heat	Numbers the class measured: 42 degrees in the sun, 31 in the shade, at 11 am on three hot days. Checkable.	Slow down for the numbers so the council can hold them.
Evidence 2: the crowd	Twenty students fit in the shade; the school has four hundred. The gap does the arguing.	Slow and clear on “four hundred students”.
Other side	Names cost and waiting time in a fair way, then answers: grounds money is set aside each year; fast-growing trees give shade in three years.	Even tone — the other side is answered, not mocked.
Close + multimodal	Sums up the ask (“five trees, planted this winter”), thanks the council, and brings out the map.	Bigger voice for the close; the map shows what words cannot.

Watch the pattern. Every part does one job, and the voice and mode choices serve the job: slow for numbers, a pause before the ask, a map at the moment words run out. Nothing in the talk is decoration.

Worked example 2 — modelled composition

Now build one. The task: persuade your classmates that **our class should start a compost bin for fruit scraps** (a **compost** bin is a bin where food scraps break down into food for soil). The evidence you measured: in one week, the class threw away 4 kilograms of fruit scraps, and the school garden needs good soil.

Plan first — part by part, with a voice note for each.

Part	Talk line	Voice and mode note
Opening	“Friends, look at this jar.”	Hold up the jar of scraps (object mode). Pause while the room looks.
Evidence	“In one week, our class threw away 4 kilograms of fruit scraps.”	Slow down for “4 kilograms”.
Other side	“Some will say a compost bin smells. A closed bin with the right leaves in it smells like a garden.”	Even tone — answered, not mocked.
Claim + close	“Our class should start a compost bin. Where will your apple core go next week — in the bin, or into the soil? Thank you.”	Pause after the question. Smile on the thank-you.

The talk

Friends, look at this jar. In one week, our class threw away 4 kilograms of fruit scraps — that is what this jar holds. Those scraps do not have to be rubbish. In a compost bin, they break down into food for soil, and our school garden needs good soil. Some will say a compost bin smells. A closed bin with the right leaves in it smells like a garden, not a rubbish tip. So here is my claim: our class should start a compost bin for our fruit scraps. Where will your apple core go next week — in the bin, or into the soil? Thank you.

The goals (set before practice, checked after): (1) *I will look at my audience when I give the numbers.* (2) *I will pause after my question.* Journal line after the first practice run: “Goal 1 nearly — I looked up for the kilograms but not the week’s total. Goal 2 met; the pause felt long but Sam said it felt strong.”

Check the talk against the plan: the jar carries the opening (mode), the numbers are slowed (pace), the other side is named in a fair way, and the claim is said in the close exactly as it was promised in the plan.

Practice tasks

With support

Q1. (E02) These five sentences are a talk asking the class to support a rain tank for the garden, but they are out of order. Put them in a working order, then label each sentence **opening**, **body** or **close**.

- “Thank you for listening.”
- “Our class should get a tank to catch rain from the roof.”
- “Good morning, 6B.”
- “Last term the garden drank forty watering-cans of water; a tank would catch most of that for free.”
- “Some will say tanks cost money — true, but the canteen recycling fund has money set aside.”

Q2. (E01) Match each job to the feature of voice that does it: **tone, volume, pitch, pace.**

- a) The hall holds four hundred students and the back row must hear every word.
- b) You reach the sad part of the story, and the room should feel that it matters.
- c) You give the two numbers the audience must remember.
- d) You reach the scary line, and you want the room to lean in.

Q3. (E01) One line, two deliveries. For each delivery, say what the audience understands, and which feature of voice did the work.

- a) “We won the grand final!” — said fast, loud, with a wide smile.
- b) “The library is closed today.” — said slowly, softly, with a low voice.

Q4. (E02) Label each sentence from the compost talk as **claim, evidence** or **example**, and put a star next to the one the audience could check with a scale and a week.

- a) “Our class should start a compost bin for our fruit scraps.”
- b) “In one week, our class threw away 4 kilograms of fruit scraps.”
- c) “Look at the jar — that is our apple cores from Monday.”

Q5. (E02) Two versions of the same evidence sentence. Circle the topic-specific words in B, then say in one sentence what they add for the audience.

A: “The water got hotter in the black cup.”

B: “The temperature of the water rose 6 degrees in the black cup.”

Q6. (E03) These three goals cannot be checked. Rewrite each one so that, after your talk, you could say *met* or *not met*.

- a) “Speak better.”
- b) “Don’t be boring.”
- c) “Remember everything.”

On your own

Q7. (E01, E02) Here is the opening of a talk asking the class to join a walking bus (a group of students who walk to school together). Add **two** voice cues in the margins — choose from *slow down, pause, louder, softer* — and give a reason for each.

Good morning, 6B. Last Tuesday, eleven students walked to school together from the north gate. We counted six magpies, two horses and one very wet teacher, because it rained the whole way. The walking bus leaves the north gate at 8:15 every morning, rain or shine. I am asking you to join it.

Q8. (E02) Choose a topic from one of your learning areas (for example: science — sound or plants; humanities — a local place; health — lunchbox food). Write one **claim**, **two evidence** sentences (at least one with a number you could really measure or count), and one **example** sentence. Circle the topic-specific words.

Q9. (E02) Take your claim from Q8 (or the compost claim). Write the opening twice: once for a **Year 3 class**, once for the **principal**. Then write two sentences saying what you changed and why — words, technique, or both.

Q10. (E01, E03) Plan a one-minute talk asking your class to start a lunchtime running club, for an audience of your classmates. Fill in the five-question frame from Section 1 (one line per answer), write two voice choices with a reason each, and set two checkable goals. Then write the first line of the journal entry you would write after your first practice run.

Produced outcome

Your turn on the stage. Plan and give a persuasive talk of one to two minutes to your class.

1. **Argument.** One claim, said in your opening and again in your close; at least two evidence sentences (one with a number you measured or counted yourself); at least one example the audience can picture.
2. **Words and techniques.** Careful, topic-specific vocabulary from the learning area your topic comes from, and at least two persuasive techniques chosen for your audience.
3. **Multimodal.** At least one mode besides spoken words — a still image, a sound, or an object — that passes the test: *if I took it away, would the talk be weaker?*
4. **Voice.** At least two planned voice choices, written into your notes with a reason each.
5. **Goals and journal.** Before practising, set two checkable goals. After each practice run, write a short journal entry (goals / practised / worked / next time). After the talk, write one final line: which goals you met, and the one goal you will carry into your next talk.

Success criteria. The audience can repeat your claim when you sit down. Every piece of evidence can be checked, and every mode carries part of the message. Your journal shows two goals set before practice and checked after. Your two voice choices can be heard in the giving, not just read in the plan.

Marking note: for every open task in this section, marks are for the quality of your reasoning — how well your choices serve your purpose and audience — not for which side of an issue you land on.

Answers

Q1. Working order: c, b, d, e, a. Labels: c (“Good morning, 6B.”) opening; b (the claim) opening; d (the measured evidence) body; e (the other side, named and answered) body; a close. The claim goes in the opening so the class knows the ask at once; the evidence and the other side build the body; the thank-you closes.

Q2. a) Volume — four hundred students means a louder voice so the back row hears. b) Tone — the feeling in the voice tells the room the sad part matters. c) Pace — slow down so the two numbers land and stay. d) Pitch — dropping the voice low on the scary line pulls the room in. (A pause after it would help too; the question asked for the feature, and pitch does the leaning-in.)

Q3. a) The audience understands great, excited news — the fast pace, loud volume and smiling tone carry the joy; the words alone only report a win. b) The audience understands sad or serious news — the slow pace, soft volume and low pitch say “this is bad news” before anyone explains why.

Q4. a) Claim — it is the sentence the audience is asked to agree to. b) Evidence — a fact with a number; this one gets the star, because the class could check it with a scale and a week. c) Example — one real moment (Monday’s apple cores in the jar) that makes the evidence easy to picture.

Q5. The topic-specific words are *temperature* and *degrees* (and the precise verb *rose*). They add the measuring words of science: the audience knows exactly how much hotter, and knows the heat was measured, not guessed — so the evidence can be checked.

Q6. Samples. a) “Say every sentence loud enough for the back row to hear.” b) “Look up at the audience at least once in each part.” c) “Know my opening and my close by heart.” Each one can be ticked *met* or *not met* afterwards; the originals could not.

Q7. Samples, with reasons. After “six magpies, two horses and one very wet teacher” — *pause*, so the room has time to laugh and picture it. On “rain or shine” — *slow down*, so the promise (we walk in all weather) lands. On “I am asking you to join it” — *louder and slower*, because it is the claim. Any two with reasons that serve the purpose and audience are right.

Q8. Answers will vary. Check: one claim sentence; two evidence sentences, at least one with a measurable or countable number; one example sentence the audience can picture; topic-specific words circled (for a sound topic, for example: *vibrate*, *volume*, *pitch* — the same words this section uses for your voice are science words too).

Q9. Samples of fair changes. For the Year 3 class: shorter words, a question to think about, and a prop or picture (“Where does your apple core go?”), because Year 3 students follow a picture and a story. For the principal: the claim first, measured numbers and topic words, and the other side named in a fair way, because the principal will ask about cost, smell and time. The two sentences must point at real changes in the two openings, not at the audiences in general.

Q10. Answers will vary. Check against the frame: purpose (to win classmates for the running club), audience (classmates — what they care about: fun, friends, not being last), structure (opening claim, body evidence and example, close with the ask), voice (two choices with reasons, e.g. *faster pace on the fun parts*, *slower on the numbers*), multimodal (one mode that passes the take-it-away test). The two goals must be checkable (“look up during my close”, not “be confident”), and the journal line must be written as if the practice run already happened.

Produced outcome. Answers will vary. Judge against the success criteria: the claim is repeatable; the evidence is checkable; the mode passes the take-it-away test; the voice choices are heard in the giving; the journal shows goals set before and checked after. A strong reflection points at exact moments (“I slowed down for my kilograms and I saw people nod”) rather than at the talk in general.

Combined phonological, morphological and vocabulary knowledge for complex words

Curriculum — Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 6 Code: VC2E6LY03 · Strand: Literacy · Sub-strand: Phonic and word knowledge Content description (verbatim): *use combined phonological, morphological and vocabulary knowledge to read and write increasingly complex words*. Draws on elaboration VC2E6LY03.E01 — *using phonic generalisations to read and write complex words with uncommon letter patterns, for example 'pneumonia', 'resuscitate' and 'vegetation'.*

Before we start

You already read and spell by using what you know about sounds, word parts and word meanings. At Level 5 you used these to work out new words. This section does the same job with **harder, longer words** — the kind with letter patterns you do not see every day. The trick is that you do not use one clue on its own. You **combine** your clues.

Three big words name the three clues. Each is defined here before we use it:

- **Phonological knowledge** (say it *fon-uh-LOJ-ik-ul*) is what you know about the **sounds** in words and the **letters** that spell those sounds.
- **Morphological knowledge** (say it *mor-fuh-LOJ-ik-ul*) is what you know about the **meaningful parts** inside words.
- **Vocabulary knowledge** is the store of **words you already know**, what they mean and how they are related.

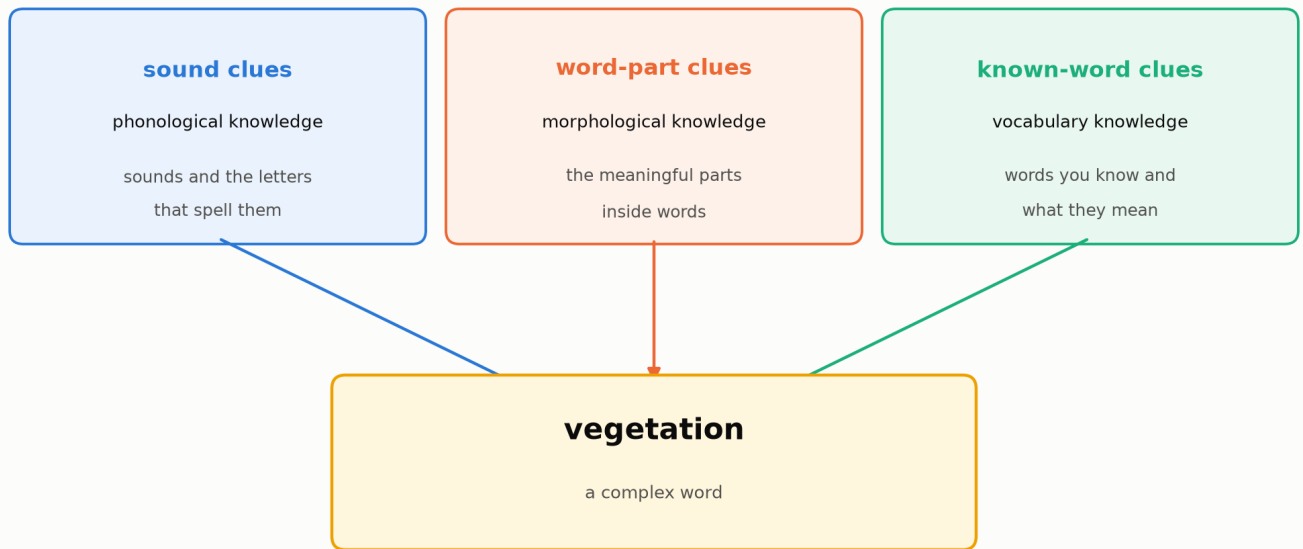
A **complex word** here just means a long or tricky word — one with an **uncommon letter pattern**, which is a letter pattern you do not meet very often.

Learn: one word, three clues

When a word is long or strange, one clue is often not enough. You might sound it out and still be unsure. You might spot a part you know but not be sure of the sounds. So you bring all three clues together, like three friends helping you lift something heavy.

One word, three clues

A complex word is easier when you combine what you know.



Break it, sound it, check it — the three clues work together.

A labelled diagram showing three knowledge sources — sounds, word parts and known words — joining together to unlock one complex word

- **Phonological clue** — use what you know about sounds and letters.
- **Morphological clue** — use the meaningful parts of the word.
- **Vocabulary clue** — use words you already know and what the word must mean.

The rest of this section looks at each clue, then shows you a simple plan for combining them.

Learn: the phonological clue — sounds and uncommon letter patterns

A **phonic generalisation** is a rule about letters and sounds that works **most of the time**, not always. You already know many, such as *a silent e at the end makes the vowel say its name*. Complex words often use letter patterns that break the easy rules, so you need a few extra generalisations.

1. Silent letters. Some letters are written but not spoken.

Silent letters: written but not spoken

Say each word aloud. One letter is there, but you never hear it.

Pattern	The silent letter	Example words
kn- at the start	k	knee, knife, knock, knot
wr- at the start	w	wrist, write, wrong, wrap
-mb at the end	b	thumb, lamb, comb, climb
-gh in the middle	gh	night, light, sigh
-stle and -sten	t	castle, whistle, listen, often

A silent letter stays put when you spell — listen to the sounds, then check the letters.

A table of common silent-letter patterns with example words for each: kn in knee, wr in wrist, mb in thumb and comb, gh in night, and t in castle and listen

2. Letter teams with a surprise sound. Some letter pairs make a sound you would not guess.

Letter teams with a surprise sound

These letters work as a team and make a sound you might not guess.

Letter team	The sound	Example words
ph	says /f/	phone, photo, graph, dolphin
ch	can say /k/	chorus, school, echo, stomach
c before e or i	soft c says /s/	the c in resuscitate
g before e or i	soft g says /j/	vegetable, garden

Most of the time c says /k/ and g says /g/. Before e or i they go soft.

That is a generalisation: a rule that works most of the time, not always.

A table showing that ph makes the f sound in phone and photo, that ch can make the k sound in chorus and school, and that c and g can be soft or hard

3. The same letters, different sounds. The pattern **ough** is famous for this. The letters are the same, but each word says them a different way.

The ough family: same letters, different sounds

Every word below spells ough — but each one says it a different way.

Word	The ough says	It rhymes with
cough	/off/	off
rough	/uff/	stuff
tough	/uff/	stuff
through	/oo/	too
dough	/oh/	go

When a pattern can say more than one thing, use the meaning of the sentence to help you choose.

A table of the ough word family showing that cough, rough, tough, through and dough all spell ough but say it a different way

These are generalisations, not perfect rules. They give you a strong first try. Then you check with the other two clues.

Learn: the morphological clue — break the word into parts

A **morpheme** is the smallest part of a word that carries a meaning. Long words are often built from smaller parts you already know. When you split a long word into parts, it stops being one big mystery and becomes a few small, familiar pieces.

Syllables are one way to split: a syllable is a beat in a word you can clap. *Resuscitate* has four beats — *re-sus-ci-tate*.

You can also split by meaning. In *resuscitate*, the part **re-** at the front is a **prefix**, a small part added to the start of a word to change its meaning. Section 4D looks at prefixes, suffixes and where words come from. Here, we simply use the parts you already know as one of our three clues.

Break it into parts: resuscitate

One long word becomes four short beats you can clap.



a prefix — a small
part at the front

beat 2

soft c before i
says /s/

rhymes with gate

say the beats: ri-SUS-i-tate

To help someone breathe and come back to life — the lifeguard resuscitated the swimmer.

A labelled breakdown of the word resuscitate split into syllables re sus ci tate, with the prefix re and the soft c marked

Say the beats as *ri-SUS-i-tate*. Notice the soft **c** in *resuscitate*: because **c** is followed by **i**, it says /s/, not /k/. That is a phonological clue working inside a morphological split. The clues team up.

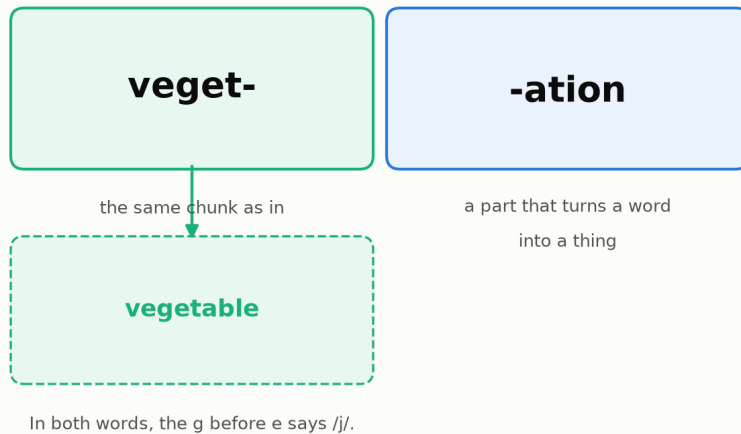
Learn: the vocabulary clue — use words you already know

Words come in families. If you know one member of a family, it can help you read and spell its relatives. You also use what a word must **mean** to check you have read it right.

Look at **vegetation**. You probably already know the word **vegetable**. The two words are related and share the opening chunk **veget-**. The ending **-ation** is a part that turns a word into a thing. Knowing *vegetable* and the ending **-ation** gives you a strong way in.

Use a word you know: vegetation

Words come in families. A known word is a strong clue.



vegetation = the plants growing in a place

Sound clue + part clue + known-word clue = one word worked out.

A labelled breakdown of the word vegetation showing the link to the known word vegetable and the ending ation

The meaning check matters too. *Vegetation* means the plants growing in a place. If you sounded out a word and it did not fit the sentence about plants, you would know to try again. Meaning is a powerful clue.

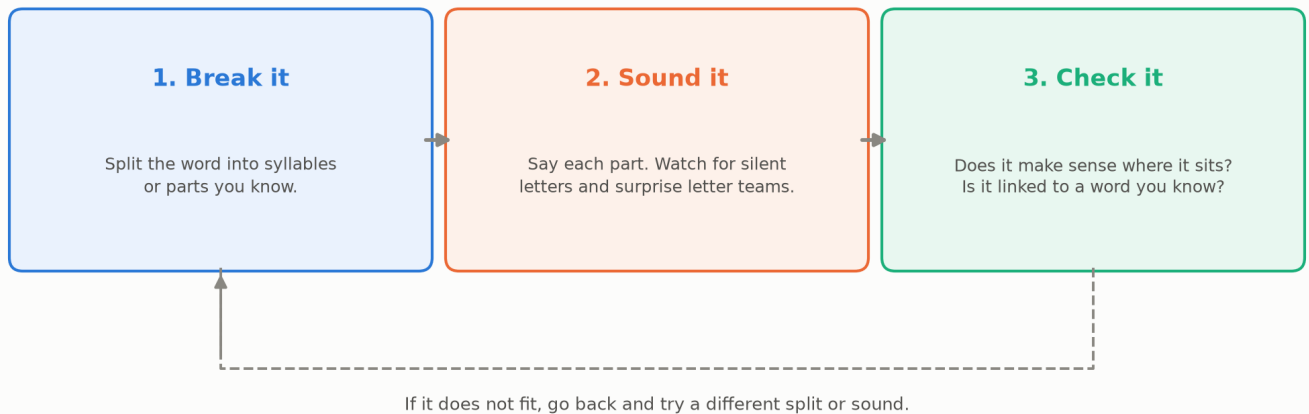
One warning. In word families, a silent letter usually stays silent — the **b** in *climb* is still silent in *climbing*. But not always: the **g** in *sign* is silent, yet you say the **g** in *signal*. That is why you never trust one clue alone. Generalisations work most of the time, and the other clues are there to check them.

Learn: a plan for combining the three clues

Here is a simple three-step plan you can use on any complex word, for reading and for spelling.

The three-step plan for a complex word

Use it for reading a word and for spelling one.



Break it. Sound it. Check it.

A three-step word-attack flow chart: break the word into parts, sound out each part and check the word against meaning and known words

1. **Break it.** Split the word into syllables or meaningful parts you know.
2. **Sound it.** Say each part, using your phonic generalisations. Watch for silent letters and surprise letter teams.
3. **Check it.** Does the word make sense where it sits? Is it related to a word you already know? If not, go back and try a different split or sound.

Let us use the plan on a hard word from the curriculum.

Word attack: pneumonia

Break it, sound it, check it — all three clues together.



the p is silent —
start with /n/

says moh

says nee-uh

say the beats: noo-MOH-nee-uh

check: pneumonia is an illness of the lungs — it fits a sentence about being sick

A full word-attack walkthrough of the word pneumonia, broken into syllables with the silent p marked and the word checked against meaning

Pneumonia is an illness of the lungs. Break it into beats — *pneu-mo-nia*. The **p** at the front is **silent**, so the word starts with the /n/ sound. Sound each beat, then check: it is a word about being sick, so it fits a sentence about illness.

Worked examples

Example 1 — modelled analysis

Read this short passage. Then look at how we work out the word **resuscitate**.

The swimmer was pulled from the pool, still and quiet. The lifeguard began to resuscitate him while someone called for help. Within a minute he coughed and took a breath.

Step	What we do	What it tells us
Break it	Split into beats: <i>re-sus-ci-tate</i> . Spot the part re- at the front.	It is a long word made of four smaller beats.
Sound it	Say each beat. The c before i is soft, so it says /s/.	We hear <i>ri-SUS-i-tate</i> .
Check it	The passage is about helping someone breathe again.	The meaning fits — to bring someone back to breathing.

All three clues worked together: sounds told us how to say it, parts told us how it was built, and meaning told us we had it right.

Example 2 — modelled composition

Now we go the other way: we **write** a complex word. Suppose we want to spell **vegetation** for a sentence about a garden.

Step	What we do	What it tells us
Break it	Think of the word family. We know vegetable . The ending is -ation .	The word starts with the chunk veget- we already know.
Sound it	Say the chunks slowly: <i>veget-ation</i> . Listen for the soft g (it says /j/).	We write veget , then -ation .
Check it	Read it back: <i>vegetation</i> . Does it mean the plants in a place?	Yes — it fits our garden sentence.

Our sentence could be: *The vegetation in the school garden grew thick after the rain.*

Practice questions

Guided practice

Q1. The word **thumb** has a silent letter. Which letter is written but not spoken? Say the word out loud first, then look at the letters.

Q2. Break **knife** into the sound you hear and the letters you write. Which letter is silent?

Q3. The word **cough** ends in **ough**. Does the **ough** in *cough* sound the same as the **ough** in *through*? Use the ough family to explain your answer.

Q4. Work out the word **island** using the three clues. Which letter is silent? Then check: does *island* mean a piece of land with water all around it?

Q5. Split **elephant** into beats, then find the letter team that makes the /f/ sound. Write the word and underline that team.

Q6. You know the word **climb**. Use it to help you read **climbing**. Which letter stays silent when **-ing** is added?

Independent practice

Q7. Use the three-step plan to work out the word **whistle**. Write the beats, name the silent letter, and tell what a whistle is to check the meaning.

Q8. Spell this word for a sentence about a sick child: **pneumonia**. Show your split into beats and mark the silent letter. Then write one sentence using the word.

Q9. Choose the correct spelling and say why, using a word you already know: *vegetation*, *vegetation* or *vegetasion*. (Hint: think of the word family.)

Q10. Pick one complex word from this section that you have not used before. Show all three clues at work on it: break it, sound it and check it against meaning. Write a sentence using it.

Your writing task

Write a short paragraph of 3 to 5 sentences about a time someone was helped — it could be at home, at school, in sport or in a garden. Include **at least two complex words** from this section (for example *resuscitate*, *vegetation*, *cough*, *whistle* or *signal*). Under each complex word you use, draw a short note showing one clue you used to spell it: a sound clue, a part clue or a known-word clue.

Use the checklist to build and then check your paragraph.

Checklist: my paragraph with complex words

Tick each box as you build and then check your paragraph.

☐

I picked a topic about a time someone was helped.

☐

I wrote 3 to 5 sentences.

☐

I used at least two complex words from this section.

☐

Under each complex word, I showed one clue I used to spell it.

☐

My clue is a sound clue, a part clue or a known-word clue.

☐

I read my paragraph back — every word makes sense where it sits.

Finished? Read your paragraph to a partner and say which clue helped you most.

A writer's checklist for using complex words, from picking a word and breaking it into parts to checking it against meaning

Answers

Q1. The **b** is silent. **Q2.** The **k** is silent; you hear /n/ but write *kn*. **Q3.** No — *cough* says /off/ while *through* says /oo/. Same letters, different sounds. **Q4.** The **s** is silent; yes, an island is land with water all around it. **Q5.** Beats *el-e-phant*; the team **ph** makes /f/. **Q6.** The **b** stays silent. **Q7.** Beats *whis-tle*; the **t** is silent; a whistle makes a high sound. **Q8.** Beats *pneu-mo-nia*; the **p** is silent; sample sentence: *The doctor said he had pneumonia*. **Q9. vegetation** — it shares the chunk **veget-** with *vegetable*. **Q10.** Answers will vary; a correct answer breaks the word, sounds it and checks meaning.

Worked answers

Q1. Say *thumb* aloud: you hear /thum/. The letters are *t-h-u-m-b*. The final **b** is written but not spoken, so **b** is the silent letter. This is the **-mb** pattern.

Q2. Say *knife* aloud: it sounds like *nife*. The **k** at the front is silent — you hear /n/ but write **kn**. This is the **kn-** pattern, like *knee* and *knock*.

Q3. In *cough* the **ough** says /off/, so *cough* rhymes with *off*. In *through* the **ough** says /oo/, so *through* rhymes with *too*. The letters are the same but the sounds differ — that is why **ough** is an uncommon, tricky pattern.

Q4. Say the word: it sounds like *eye-land*. The **s** is written but not spoken. Checking meaning: an island is land with water all around it, so the word fits. All three clues agree.

Q5. Clap the beats: *el-e-phant*. The /f/ sound at the end is spelled by the letter team **ph**, not by *f*. Underline **ph** in *elephant*. This is the **ph = /f/** pattern, like *phone* and *photo*.

Q6. Say *climb*: the **b** is silent — *climb* rhymes with *time*. In *climbing*, the same **b** stays silent even though **-ing** has been added. Knowing *climb* helps you read and spell *climbing*. This is the vocabulary clue: a known word helps a new one.

Q7. Break it: *whis-tle*. Sound it: you hear *wiss-ul*, so the **t** is silent. Check it: a whistle is something that makes a high sound, which fits. Break, sound, check.

Q8. Break it: *pneu-mo-nia*. The **p** is silent, so the word begins with /n/. Sound the beats and write *pneumonia*. Sample sentence: *The doctor said he had pneumonia and needed rest*. The meaning (an illness) checks out.

Q9. The correct spelling is **vegetation**. The word family gives the clue: *vegetable* starts with **veget-**, and the ending is **-ation**. *Vegitation* and *vegetasion* do not match the known word, so they are wrong.

Q10. Model answer using **dolphin**: Break it — *dol-phin*, two beats. Sound it — the team **ph** says /f/, so the word sounds like *DOL-fin*. Check it — a dolphin is a clever sea animal, which fits a sentence like *We saw a dolphin leap near the boat*. Your own word will be different; check that all three clues are shown.

Spelling new and technical words: base words, affixes, letter patterns, word origins

Curriculum link — Victorian Curriculum 2.0, English, Level 6

Strand: Literacy · Sub-strand: Phonic and word knowledge

Content description VC2E6LY04: use their knowledge of known words, base words, prefixes, suffixes, letter patterns, spelling generalisations and word origins (etymology), including some Latin and Greek roots, to spell new words, including technical words

This section draws on elaborations **VC2E6LY04.E01**, **VC2E6LY04.E02**, **VC2E6LY04.E03**, **VC2E6LY04.E04** and **VC2E6LY04.E05**:

- **E01** using a dictionary to explore word origins, including some Greek roots, in order to spell words; for example, the Greek root ‘ath’ meaning ‘contest’ or ‘outstanding skill’, ‘pent’ meaning the number 5 and ‘dec’ meaning the number 10 inform the spelling and meaning of the words ‘athlete’, ‘pentathlon’ and ‘decathlon’
- **E02** applying accumulated knowledge of a wide range of letter patterns and spelling generalisations to spell new words, for example ‘ratio’ and ‘synthesis’
- **E03** expanding knowledge of prefixes and suffixes, and exploring meaning relationships between words, for example ‘disappearance’, ‘submarine’, ‘subterranean’, ‘poisonous’ and ‘nervous’
- **E04** applying accumulated knowledge of a wide range of letter patterns and spelling generalisations to spell new words; for example, knowing how and why these words are spelt as follows: ‘reliability’, ‘handkerchief’, ‘receive’, ‘lollies’, ‘trolleys’, ‘climbing’, ‘designed’ and ‘emergency’
- **E05** spelling technical words by applying morphemic knowledge, for example ‘metaphorical’, ‘biology’ and ‘biodegradable’

The elaborations are VCAA’s examples of what teaching this content description may involve. This section is organised around the content description itself.

Theory

You have been spelling since your first year of school, and you already know thousands of words. This section is about what happens when a brand-new word walks in — a word from science, from sport or from history — and you have never spelled it before. You do not need to have seen the word. You need tools, and you already own most of them.

Each term in this section is defined the first time it appears, and every task is answered on those definitions.

1. The speller’s toolkit

The content description at the top of this section lists the knowledge you can spell from. Figure 1 lays it out as a toolkit of six cards, grouped here into four families.

- **Known words and base words** — words you can already spell are hiding inside words you cannot spell yet.
- **Prefixes and suffixes** — small parts added to the start or end of a base word. They change the meaning, and once you know them you can spell them the same way every time.
- **Letter patterns and spelling generalisations** — letters in English team up in patterns you have seen before. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *spelling generalisations* but does not define it; in this section it means guides that tell you what usually happens when you spell. A generalisation works most of the time, not every time — so the plan in part 7 always ends with a dictionary check.
- **Word origins** — where a word came from explains why its letters are there.

A speller's toolkit — six things you already know



Every tool here comes from the content description for this section.

A grid of six cards making up a speller's toolkit — known words, base words, prefixes and suffixes, letter patterns, spelling generalisations and word origins — with a short note on each card.

2. Base words and affixes

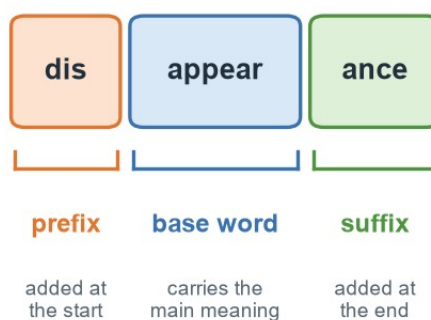
A **base word** is a word that can stand on its own and carries the main meaning. *Appear* is a base word. *Play* is a base word.

Long words are often a base word with small parts added to it. These small parts are called **affixes** — an affix is a letter part added to a base word. An affix added at the start is a **prefix**; an affix added at the end is a **suffix**. Figure 2 splits one long word so you can see its three pieces.

Disappearance looks hard until you split it: *dis-* (not, or the opposite) + *appear* (the word you already know) + *-ance* (a suffix that turns the doing word into a thing). If you can spell *appear*, you can already spell the heart of the word — the affixes just wrap around it.

The known-word tool does more than build new words. It also protects letters you cannot hear: in *climbing* you never say the *b*, but the base word *climb* keeps it there. Silent letters like that one are the subject of part 4.

One word, three parts: disappearance



dis-, -ance are both affixes.

An affix is a small letter part added to a base word.

Prefixes go at the start. Suffixes go at the end.

dis + appear + ance = disappearance

A diagram splitting the word 'disappearance' into three coloured parts — the prefix dis, the base word appear and the suffix ance — with a card below defining affix, prefix and suffix and showing the word sum dis + appear + ance.

3. Prefixes and suffixes change the meaning

Affixes are not just spelling helpers — they carry meaning, and that meaning links whole families of words together. Elaboration **E03** calls these meaning relationships.

Figure 3 lists five common prefixes. Spot the prefix, and you already know part of the spelling and part of the meaning: if *sub-* means *under*, a *submarine* is something that works under the sea.

Prefixes: small parts at the start that change the meaning

Prefix	What it means	Words it builds
dis-	not, or the opposite	disappear, dislike
sub-	under	submarine, subterranean
re-	again	replay, rewrite
un-	not	unhappy, unpack
pre-	before	preview, prepare

*Spot the prefix, and you already know part of the spelling —
and part of the meaning.*

A table of five prefixes — dis, sub, re, un and pre — with what each one means and two words it builds.

Figure 4 lists five common suffixes. Notice that the base word is still in there, so the safest move is to spell the base word first, then add the suffix. Sometimes the join needs a small letter change: *nerve* + *-ous* becomes *nervous* — the silent *e* drops when the suffix starts with a vowel.

Suffixes: small parts at the end that change the word

Suffix	What it means	Base word → new word
-ous	full of	poison → poisonous
-ness	a state or quality	kind → kindness
-ful	full of	hope → hopeful
-able	able to be	comfort → comfortable
-ly	in that way	quick → quickly

*The base word is still in there — spell the base first,
then add the suffix.*

A table of five suffixes — ous, ness, ful, able and ly — with what each one means and a base word turned into a new word.

4. Letter patterns and spelling generalisations

A **letter pattern** is a group of letters that teams up to make a sound you have seen before — the *igh* in *night*, the *ay* in *play*. When you meet a new word, you are almost never starting from zero; you are matching its sounds against patterns you already own.

Spelling generalisations tell you what usually happens at the joins. Figure 5 collects four that do a lot of work when you add endings.

Spelling generalisations for adding endings

1. Drop the silent e before -ing or -ed

make + ing = making

The e is silent, and the suffix starts with a vowel.

2. Double the last letter after a short vowel

run + ing = running

One vowel, one letter after it? Double that letter.

3. Change y to i before a suffix

happy + ness = happiness

Keep the y when a vowel sits in front of it: play + ed = played.

4. Plurals: y after a consonant becomes ies

lolly + s = lollies

Keep the ys when a vowel sits in front: trolley + s = trolleys.

Generalisations work most of the time — always check a word you are unsure of.

Four spelling generalisations for adding endings — drop the silent e, double the last letter after a short vowel, change y to i before a suffix, and y after a consonant becomes ies in plurals — each with an example and a note.

One more generalisation is worth owning because it settles a famous argument. *I before e, except after c*: write *ie* in *chief, piece, field* and *friend*, but write *ei* when a *c* comes first, as in *receive* and *ceiling*. Figure 6 sorts the words into the two teams — and names the exception.

i before e — except after c

ie — no c in front	ei — a c in front
chief	receive
piece	ceiling
field	
friend	

weird — the exception that breaks the rule. Learn it your own way.

Two columns of words sorted by the *ie* and *ei* pattern — *chief, piece, field* and *friend* with *ie*, *receive* and *ceiling* with *ei* after *c* — and a note that *weird* is the exception.

Some letters are written but never said. These **silent letters** look unfair until you see the reason: the sound is gone, but the letter stays because of the word's history or its base word. You write the *b* in *climbing* because *climb* has one; you write the *g* in *designed* because *design* has one. Figure 7 shows five words with their silent letters crossed out — write them, but do not say them.

Silent letters: write them, but do not say them

clim ~~b~~ ing

silent b

desi ~~g~~ ned

silent g

han ~~d~~ kerchief

silent d

~~k~~ nife

silent k

cas ~~t~~ le

silent t

The sound is gone, but the letter stays. Knowing the word's parts helps you remember it.

Five words with their silent letters ghosted and crossed — climbing, designed, handkerchief, knife and castle — and a note that the sound is gone but the letter stays.

The last job letter patterns do is helping you with long words that have no friendly base word. Say the word in beats — each beat is a **syllable** — and spell one beat at a time. Elaboration **E02** offers two good practice words:

- **ratio** — three beats, *ra-ti-o*. Each beat is spelled the way it sounds, and the *ti* says *sh*, a pattern you already know from *station* and *nation*.
- **synthesis** — three beats, *syn-the-sis*. The *y* says short *i* as in *gym*, and the ending *-sis* sounds like the end of *this*.

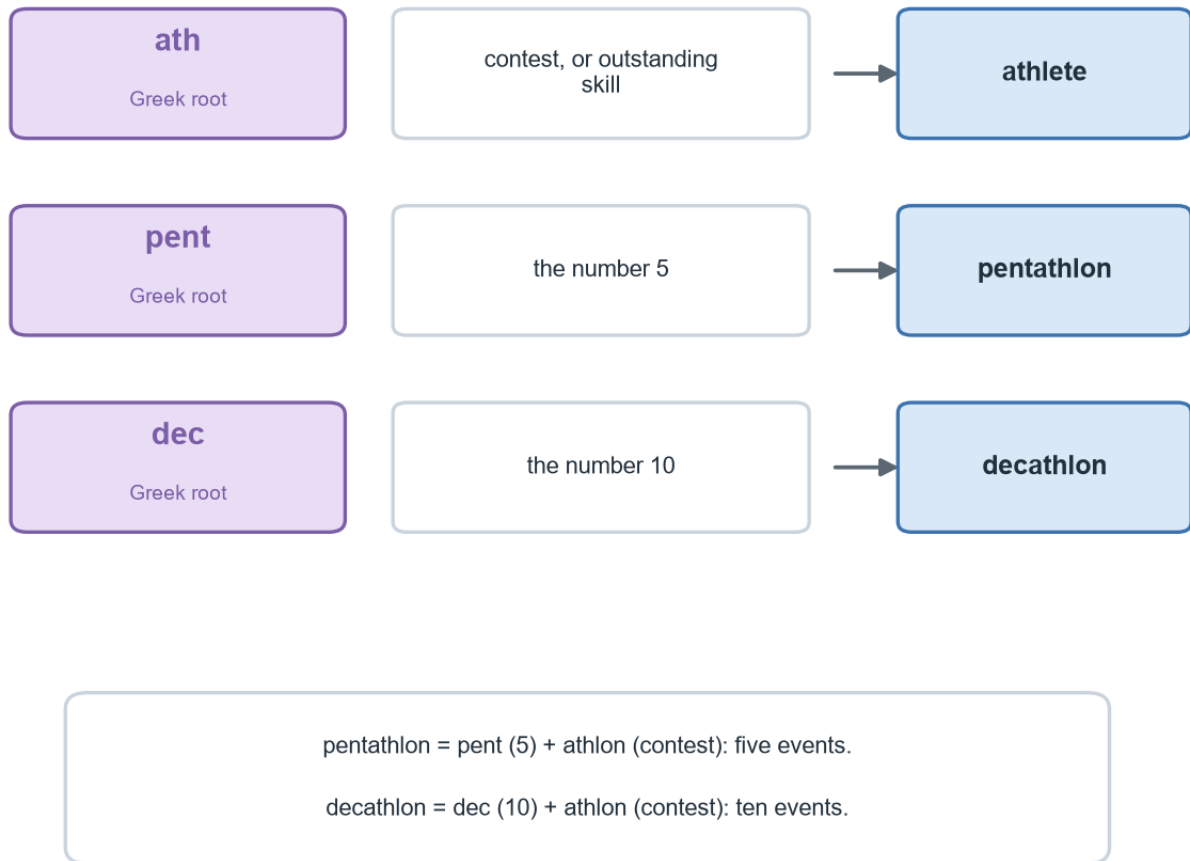
Both words also have a history, which is the next tool: *ratio* came into English from a Latin word for counting, and *synthesis* came from Greek parts meaning *together* and *to put or place* — which is why it starts with *syn-*, the together part.

5. Word origins: where words come from

The long name for word origins is **etymology** (say it *ee-tuh-MOL-uh-jee*). A word's origin is the story of where it came from and what its parts meant back then. Origins are a spelling tool because old parts keep their letters: if you know the part, you know the spelling.

Start with Greek. Elaboration **E01** names three Greek roots that live inside sport words: *ath*, meaning contest or outstanding skill; *pent*, meaning the number 5; and *dec*, meaning the number 10. Figure 8 shows the words they build. A *pentathlon* is *pent* (5) plus *athlon* (contest) — five events. A *decathlon* is ten events. An *athlete* is a person who trains for contests.

Greek roots hiding in sport words

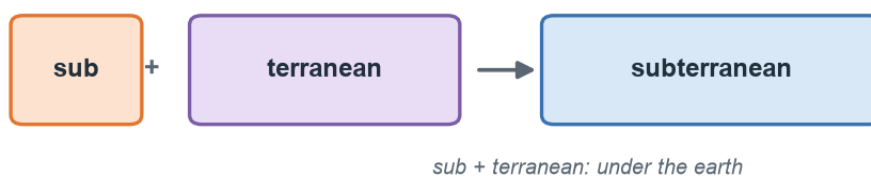
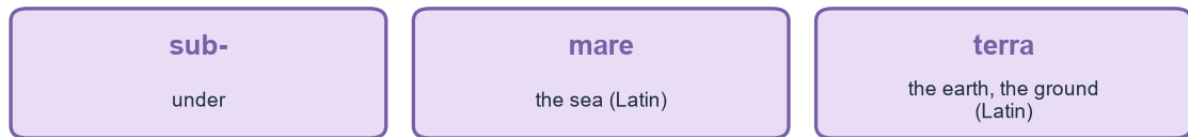


Three Greek roots — ath, pent and dec — with their meanings and the words they build: athlete, pentathlon and decathlon, with word sums showing pent plus athlon and dec plus athlon.

How do you find an origin? You use a dictionary — elaboration **E01** makes dictionary work part of spelling. A good dictionary entry tells you where a word came from, often with a language name like *Greek* or *Latin* and the older word it grew from. Looking a word up is not cheating; it is the final step of the plan in part 7.

English is full of Latin parts too. Figure 9 shows the Latin pieces inside two big words: *sub-* (under), *mare* (the sea) and *terra* (the earth, the ground). A *submarine* works under the sea; something *subterranean* is under the earth.

Latin parts inside two big words



A root is a word part that carries meaning.

Some roots come from Latin or Greek and live inside many English words.

Three Latin word parts — *sub* meaning under, *mare* meaning the sea and *terra* meaning the earth — with word sums building *submarine* and *subterranean*, and a card defining a root.

A **root** is a word part that carries meaning. Some roots, like *sub-*, *mare*, *terra* and the Greek ones above, come from Latin or Greek and live inside many English words.

The word-origin notes in this section are checked against the *Online Etymology Dictionary* (Douglas Harper), retrieved 24 August 2026. They include ‘athlon’ (contest), ‘sub-’ (under), ‘mare’ (sea), ‘terra’ (earth, ground), ‘bios’ (life), ‘-logy’ (study of), ‘ratio’ (from a Latin word for counting) and ‘synthesis’ (from Greek parts meaning ‘together’ and ‘to put’).

6. Technical words are built from parts

A **technical word** is a word that belongs to a particular learning area or field — *biology* in science, *metaphorical* in English, *biodegradable* in sustainability. Technical words look long, but they are built the same way as every other word in this section: from parts that carry meaning.

The smallest part of a word that carries its own meaning is called a **morpheme** — elaboration **E05** calls this kind of knowledge *morphemic*. In *biodegradable*, the morpheme *bio* means life and the morpheme *able* means able to be; spell each part and the long word falls into place. Figure 10 builds three technical words from their parts.

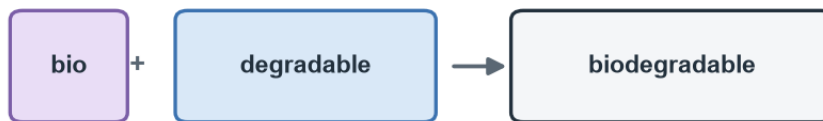
Technical words are built from parts too



a word you know, plus the suffix -ical



bio = life; logy = the study of; the study of life



able to break down in living things

Spell each part, and you spell the whole technical word.

metaphor → metaphorical · bio + logy → biology

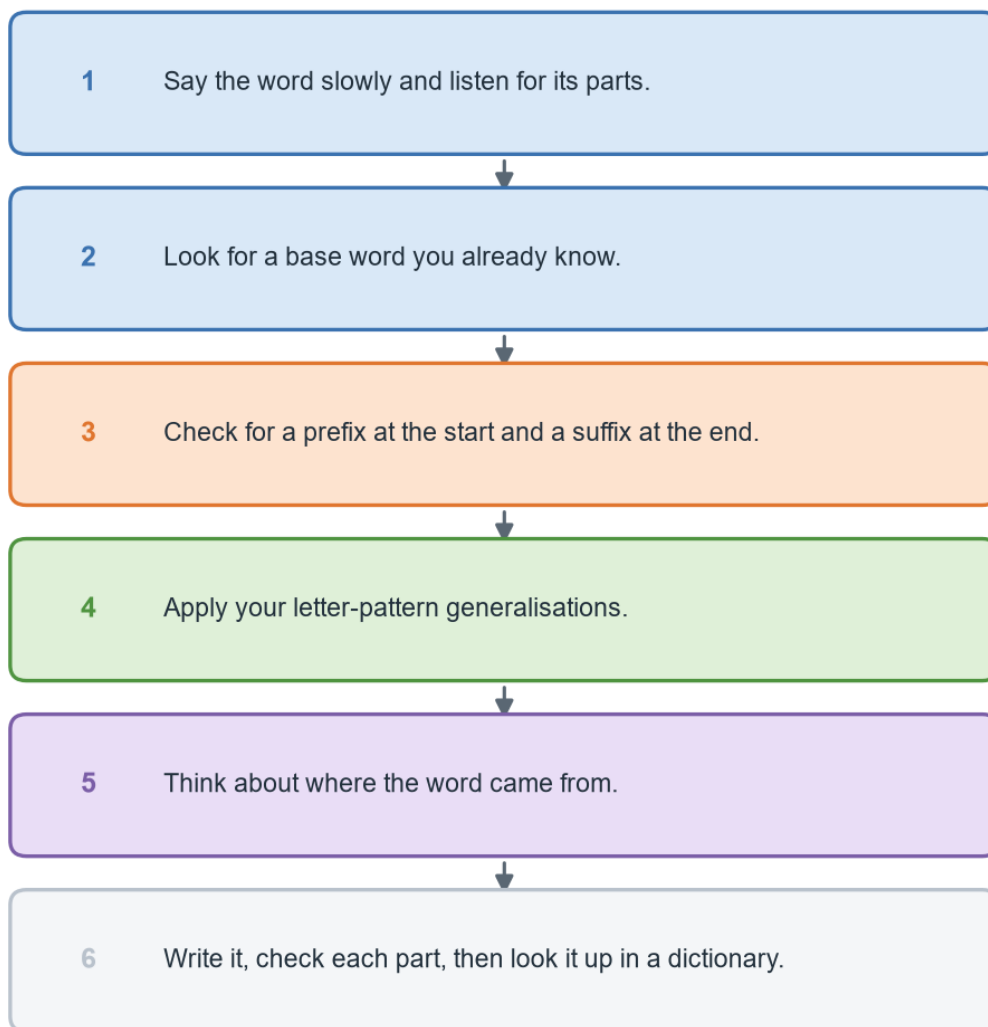
Three technical words built from parts — metaphor plus ical making metaphorical, bio plus logy making biology, and bio plus degradable making biodegradable — with a note to spell each part to spell the whole word.

Section 4C builds your knowledge of complex words for reading; this section hands you the spelling side. The technical words you learn to spell here will go back to work when you create your own texts in section 5D.

7. Your attack plan

Six tools, one order. When a word is new to you, work down the plan in Figure 11.

Your plan for a word you have not spelled before



You do not need to know the word first. You need a plan.

A six-step plan for spelling an unfamiliar word — say it slowly, look for a base word, check for a prefix and a suffix, apply letter-pattern generalisations, think about where the word came from, then write it, check each part and look it up in a dictionary.

You do not need to know the word first. You need a plan — and now you have one. The two worked examples below run the plan all the way through.

Worked examples

Example 1 — modelled spelling (with support)

A student is writing this sentence for the school newsletter:

You can count on the reliability of our reading buddies.

They have never spelled **reliability** before. Watch the plan work, one step at a time.

Step	Decision	Result
1. Say it slowly	Six beats: <i>re-li-a-bil-i-ty</i> .	The shape of the word is in my ear

Step	Decision	Result
		before my pen moves.
2. Look for a known word	Inside it I can hear <i>rely</i> — a word I spell every week.	Base word found.
3. Apply a generalisation	When a suffix follows <i>rely</i> , the <i>y</i> changes to <i>i</i> : <i>rely</i> becomes <i>reli</i> -.	The start is settled: <i>reli</i> .
4. Add the suffix <i>-able</i>	<i>reli</i> + <i>able</i> = <i>reliable</i> — a new word I can now spell.	One step closer.
5. Add the ending <i>-ity</i> , beat by beat	Listen: <i>a-bil-i-ty</i> . The <i>-able</i> sound becomes <i>-abil-</i> before <i>-ity</i> .	<i>reliable</i> → <i>reliability</i> .
6. Check the dictionary	Look it up: <i>r-e-l-i-a-b-i-l-i-t-y</i> .	Confirmed — every letter accounted for.

Three tools did the work: a known word (*rely*), a spelling generalisation (the *y* → *i* change) and letter patterns beat by beat (*-ability*). No part of the word was guessed.

Example 2 — modelled editing (with support)

A writer's first draft reads:

Today our school held a fire drill. The alarm rang, and we walked out calmly. Our teacher said the drill is desinged to keep us safe. I hope we never recieve a real emergency, but now we know what to do.

Three words are misspelled. Watch the tools find and fix each one.

Misspelling	Fix	The tool that fixed it
<i>desinged</i>	designed	Base word: <i>design</i> keeps its silent <i>g</i> when <i>-ed</i> is added — write it, do not say it.
<i>recieve</i>	receive	Generalisation: <i>i</i> before <i>e</i> , except after <i>c</i> — a <i>c</i> comes first, so the <i>ei</i> team goes in.
<i>emergeney</i>	emergency	Letter patterns beat by beat: <i>e-mer-gen-cy</i> . The word ends in the <i>-cy</i> sound, so the <i>y</i> comes last, after the <i>c</i> .

The corrected draft:

Today our school held a fire drill. The alarm rang, and we walked out calmly. Our teacher said the drill is designed to keep us safe. I hope we never receive a real emergency, but now we know what to do.

Three fixes, and not one of them needed the writer to know the word by heart — each fix had a tool behind it.

Practice tasks

With support

Q1. Copy the table and fill in the missing parts. For each word, name the prefix or suffix and the base word.

Word	Prefix or suffix	Base word
disappearance		
replay		
kindness		
hopeful		
submarine		

Q2. Match each prefix to its meaning, then write one more word that uses the prefix.

Prefixes: **(a)** *dis-* · **(b)** *sub-* · **(c)** *re-* · **(d)** *un-* · **(e)** *pre-*

Meanings: **(i)** under · **(ii)** again · **(iii)** before · **(iv)** not · **(v)** not, or the opposite

Q3. Add the ending and write the new word. Then name the generalisation you used: *drop the silent e*, *double the last letter*, *change y to i*, *keep the y*, or *y becomes ies*.

(a) make + ing · **(b)** run + er · **(c)** happy + ness · **(d)** play + ed · **(e)** stop + ed · **(f)** lolly + s · **(g)** trolley + s

Q4. Each word below is missing its vowel team. Choose *ie* or *ei* for the gap, then write the whole word.

(a) ch(ie/ei)f · **(b)** p(ie/ei)ce · **(c)** rec(ie/ei)ve · **(d)** f(ie/ei)ld

(e) Which word in Figure 6 breaks the generalisation on purpose?

Q5. Rewrite each word and underline the silent letter.

(a) climbing · **(b)** designed · **(c)** handkerchief · **(d)** knife · **(e)** castle

(f) Why does *climbing* keep the letter *b* even though you never say it?

Q6. Greek roots:

(a) Match each root to its meaning: *ath*, *pent*, *dec* — contest or outstanding skill, the number 5, the number 10.

(b) Use the roots to say what *pentathlon* and *decathlon* mean.

(c) What does the root *ath* tell you about an *athlete*?

On your own

Q7. Word sums. Write each word, then use it in a sentence of your own.

(a) dis + appear + ance · **(b)** sub + marine · **(c)** poison + ous · **(d)** nerve + ous

(Hint for (d): what happens to the *e* of *nerve* when the suffix starts with a vowel?)

Q8. The passage below has three misspelled words. Find them, write them correctly, and name the tool that fixed each one.

On Saturday I went to the market with my nan. I tried the climing wall, and nan bought a bag of lollys. The stall holder said if we come back next week, we will recieve a discount.

Q9. Build and spell each technical word from its parts.

(a) metaphor + ical · **(b)** bio + logy · **(c)** bio + degradable

Choose one of the three, use it in a sentence, and underline the part of the word that helped you most.

Q10. Look up *subterranean* in a dictionary.

(a) Which two parts can you find in the word?

(b) What does each part mean?

(c) Write one sentence explaining how knowing those parts helps you spell the word.

Produced outcome

Q11. Word detective card. Choose one technical word you have met in another learning area — a science, maths or humanities word would all work. Make a word card that shows:

1. the word, split into its parts — you can use the colours from this section;
2. the base word or root, and what it means (your dictionary can help);
3. one letter pattern or generalisation that helps you spell it;
4. one sentence of your own using the word.

Below your card, write one sentence saying which tool helped you most with this word, and why.

Answers

Q1. disappearance: prefix *dis-*, base word *appear*; replay: prefix *re-*, base word *play*; kindness: suffix *-ness*, base word *kind*; hopeful: suffix *-ful*, base word *hope*; submarine: prefix *sub-*, base word *marine*.

Q2. (a) *dis-* — (v) not, or the opposite; (b) *sub-* — (i) under; (c) *re-* — (ii) again; (d) *un-* — (iv) not; (e) *pre-* — (iii) before. Example words: *dislike*, *subway*, *rewrite*, *unhappy*, *preview*.

Q3. (a) *making* — drop the silent *e*; (b) *runner* — double the last letter; (c) *happiness* — change *y* to *i*; (d) *played* — keep the *y* (a vowel sits in front of it); (e) *stopped* — double the last letter; (f) *lollies* — *y* becomes *ies*; (g) *trolleys* — keep the *y* (a vowel sits in front of it).

Q4. (a) chief; (b) piece; (c) receive; (d) field; (e) *weird*.

Q5. (a) climbing; (b) designed; (c) handkerchief; (d) knife; (e) castle; (f) because the base word *climb* has a *b* — the base word keeps its letters when *-ing* is added.

Q6. (a) *ath* — contest or outstanding skill; *pent* — the number 5; *dec* — the number 10. (b) A pentathlon is a contest of five events; a decathlon is a contest of ten events. (c) An athlete is a person who trains for contests — someone with outstanding skill in sport.

Q7. (a) disappearance; (b) submarine; (c) poisonous; (d) nervous — the silent *e* of *nerve* drops before *-ous*. Sentences will vary.

Q8. *climing* → *climbing* (base word *climb* keeps the silent *b*); *lollys* → *lollies* (*y* after a consonant becomes *ies*); *recieve* → *receive* (*i* before *e*, except after *c*).

Q9. (a) metaphorical; (b) biology; (c) biodegradable. Sentences will vary.

Q10. (a) *sub-* and *terranean*, from the root *terra*. (b) *sub-* means under; *terra* means the earth or the ground. (c) Example: knowing *sub-* means under tells me to start with *sub*, and knowing *terra* reminds me of the double *r* in the middle.

Q11. Answers will vary; check your card against the four-point checklist in the question.

Step-by-step solutions

Q1. Split each word into the part you add and the word you already know. *Disappearance* is *dis-* added to the front of *appear*, so the prefix is *dis-* and the base word is *appear*. *Replay* is *re-* (again) added to *play*. *Kindness* is *kind* with the suffix *-ness* on the end. *Hopeful* is *hope* with the suffix *-ful*. *Submarine* is *sub-* (under) added to *marine* — under the sea.

Q2. Work through the meanings one at a time. *Under* belongs to *sub-* — a submarine works under the sea. *Again* belongs to *re-* — to replay is to play again. *Before* belongs to *pre-* — a preview is a view before the real thing. That leaves the two nots: plain *not* goes with *un-* (unpack means not packed, or to undo the packing), and *not, or the opposite* goes with *dis-* (dislike is the opposite of like). Any sensible word with the prefix is fine for the extra example.

Q3. Say the base word and the ending together, then apply the generalisation at the join. (a) *make* ends in a silent *e* and *-ing* starts with a vowel, so drop the *e*: *making*. (b) *run* has one vowel with one letter after it, so double that letter: *runner*. (c) *happy* ends in *y* with a consonant in front, so change the *y* to *i*: *happiness*. (d) *play* ends in *y* but a vowel sits in front of it, so keep the *y*: *played*. (e) *stop* has one vowel with one letter after it, so double: *stopped*. (f) *lolly* ends in *y* after a consonant, so the plural becomes *ies*: *lollies*. (g) *trolley* ends in *y* after a vowel, so the *y* stays: *trolleys*.

Q4. The generalisation is *i* before *e*, except after *c*. (a) *chief*, (b) *piece* and (d) *field* have no *c* in front, so *ie*. (c) *receive* has a *c* right before the vowel team, so *ei* — *ceiling* in Figure 6 works the same way, and *friend* in the same figure takes *ie*. (e) Figure 6 names *weird* as the exception that breaks the rule — learn it your own way.

Q5. The silent letter is written but never said; underline it in each word: the *b* in climbing, the *g* in designed, the *d* in handkerchief, the *k* at the start of knife, and the *t* in castle. For (f), use the base-word tool: *climbing* is built from *climb*

+ *-ing*, and the base word keeps every one of its letters — the *b* is silent in *climb* too, so it was never about the sound; it is about the word the letter belongs to.

Q6. (a) Read the roots against their meanings as Figure 8 sets them out: *ath* — contest or outstanding skill; *pent* — the number 5; *dec* — the number 10. (b) *Pentathlon* is *pent* (5) + *athlon* (contest), so it is a contest of five events; *decathlon* is *dec* (10) + *athlon*, so it is a contest of ten events. (c) The root *ath* means contest or outstanding skill, so an *athlete* is a person who trains to do well in contests — someone with outstanding skill in sport.

Q7. Write the parts in order, then check the join. (a) *dis* + *appear* + *ance* = *disappearance* — nothing changes at the joins. (b) *sub* + *marine* = *submarine*. (c) *poison* + *ous* = *poisonous* — spell the base word first, then the suffix. (d) *nerve* + *ous* = *nervous* — the *e* of *nerve* is silent, and because the suffix starts with a vowel the *e* drops. Example sentences: *The disappearance of my pencil stayed a mystery all week. The submarine travelled under the sea. Some bright mushrooms are poisonous. I felt nervous before my turn to speak.*

Q8. Read the passage once for sense, then hunt for the three words that look wrong. *Climing* is missing a letter: the base word *climb* keeps its silent *b*, so the word is *climbing* — base-word tool. *Lollys* has the wrong ending: *lolly* ends in *y* after a consonant, so the plural becomes *ies* — *lollies* — plural generalisation. *Recieve* has the vowels the wrong way around: a *c* comes first, so the *ei* team goes in — *receive* — *i* before *e*, except after *c*.

Q9. (a) *metaphor* + *ical* = *metaphorical* — a word you know plus a suffix; nothing changes at the join. (b) *bio* + *logy* = *biology* — two roots: *bio* means life and *logy* means the study of, so biology is the study of life. (c) *bio* + *degradable* = *biodegradable* — able to break down in living things. Example sentence: *We chose paper bags because they are biodegradable.* The underlined part should be the morpheme that carried the most meaning for you — for many students it is *bio*, because knowing it means life links the word to living things.

Q10. (a) The dictionary entry points back to Latin: the word is built from *sub-* and *terranean*, which comes from the root *terra*. (b) *Sub-* means under; *terra* means the earth or the ground — something subterranean sits under the earth. (c) Your sentence should connect meaning to letters. Example: *Knowing sub- means under tells me to start with sub, and knowing terra reminds me of the double r in the middle.* The double *r* is the part most spellers miss, and it is the part the root explains: *terra* brings its two *rs* with it.

Q11. Model word card (answers will vary — check yours against the same checklist). Word chosen: **biology**, from science.

biology — split into parts: *bio* + *logy* Roots and meanings: *bio* means life; *logy* means the study of. Biology is the study of life. Letter pattern that helps: say it in beats — *bi-ol-o-gy* — and spell one beat at a time. Sentence: *In our first biology unit, we looked at living things under a magnifying glass.*

Reflection example: *Word origins helped me most, because once I knew bio means life, the word had a meaning to hold on to, and the spelling stayed with it.*

Reading accurately and fluently for meaning, re-reading and self-correcting

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

Owens: VC2E6LY05 — “select and read different types of texts of varying complexity, integrating phonic, semantic and grammatical knowledge to read accurately and fluently for meaning, re-reading and self-correcting when needed”

Draws on: VC2E6LY05.E01 “bringing subject and technical vocabulary and concept knowledge to new reading tasks, and selecting, evaluating and using texts for their pertinence to the task and the accuracy of their information” · VC2E6LY05.E02 “using their knowledge of text structure to navigate the text to locate specific content for a purpose”

Level 6 achievement standard (Reading and Viewing): “When reading and viewing, students engage with a range of different types of texts for meaning.”

Learn

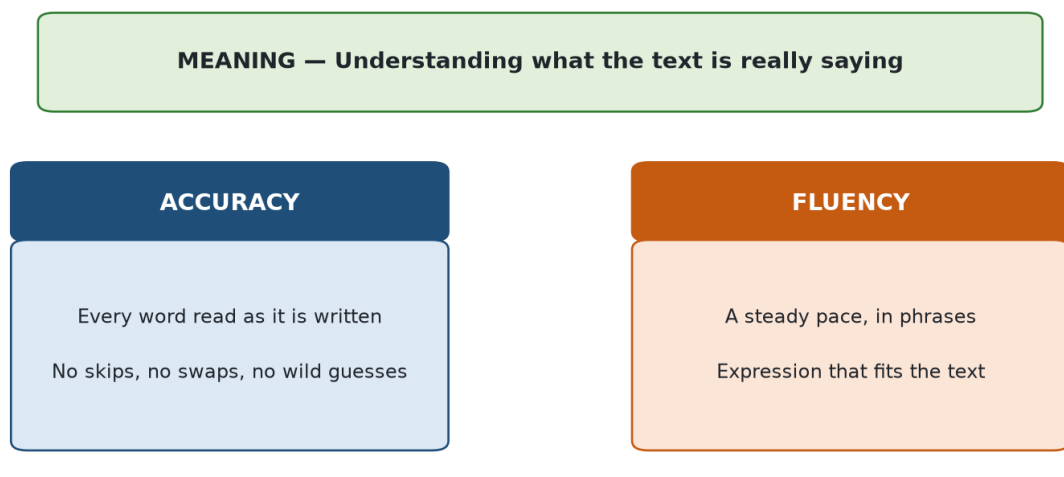
1. Two skills, one goal

At Level 5 you read texts that kept getting harder, and you read them for meaning. This section sharpens the two skills under all of that reading: accuracy and fluency.

Accurate reading means reading the words on the page as they really are — no skips, no swaps, no wild guesses. **Accuracy** is the name for that.

Fluent reading means reading in a smooth and even way, in phrases, with expression that fits the text. **Fluency** is the name for that smoothness. These two skills are not the point of reading. They are the means. The point is **meaning**: understanding what the text is really saying.

Reading for meaning



Both skills free your mind for the real job: understanding.

A diagram with a green bar labelled MEANING resting on two pillars: a blue pillar labelled ACCURACY holding ‘Every word read as it is written’ and ‘No skips, no swaps, no wild guesses’, and an orange pillar labelled FLUENCY holding ‘A steady pace, in phrases’ and ‘Expression that fits the text’.

When reading is slow and word by word, your mind is so busy working out the words that little room is left for what they mean. When reading is fluent, the meaning rides along. A **phrase** is a small group of words that belong together,

like *the old red boat* or *just after dark*. Fluent readers read in phrases, not in single words, and **pace** — how fast or slow your voice moves — settles at a speed that fits the text. **Expression** is how your voice shows what the text means: it rises for a question, hurries for the exciting part, slows for the sad part.

Reading in phrases, not word by word

The same sentence, two ways:

"The storm hit the coast just after dark."

Word by word:

The | storm | hit | the | coast | just | after | dark.

Seven stops. Hard to hold the meaning.

In phrases:

The storm hit the coast / just after dark.

Two phrases. The meaning rides along.

Let your voice ride the phrases — that is expression.

A diagram showing the same sentence, 'The storm hit the coast just after dark', read two ways: word by word with a stop after every word, labelled 'Seven stops. Hard to hold the meaning', and in two phrases, labelled 'Two phrases. The meaning rides along'.

And when a fluent reader meets a word that does not work, they fix it — that is **self-correcting** — and they read the part again — that is **re-reading**. Both are marks of a strong reader, not a weak one.

2. Three kinds of knowledge you read with

Readers do not use one kind of knowledge. They bring three kinds together, and each one is a check you can run on any word or sentence.

Phonic knowledge is what you know about sounds and letters: which letter patterns make which sounds, how words split into syllables, and what word parts look like.

Semantic knowledge is what you know about meaning: the meanings of the words you already know, what the text is about, and what the world is like.

Grammatical knowledge is what you know about how sentences are built: the kind of word that can sit in a gap (a naming word, a doing word, a describing word), and what a sentence needs to work.

Three checks every reader runs

	Knowledge you bring	The check question
Phonic knowledge	Sounds, letter patterns, syllables and word parts	Does it sound right?
Semantic knowledge	The meanings of words you know, and what the text and topic are about	Does it make sense?
Grammatical knowledge	How sentences are built, and the kind of word that fits the gap	Does the sentence work?

If any check says "no", stop and fix it.

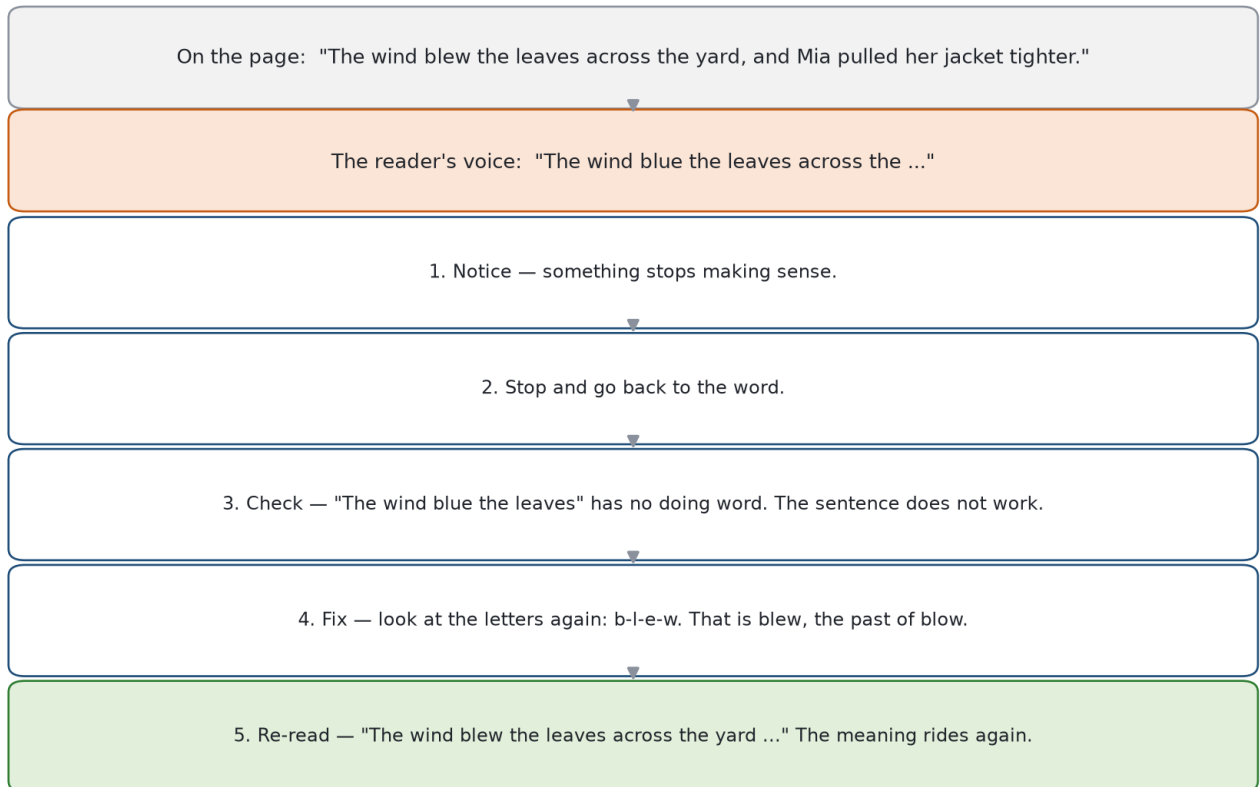
A table of the three kinds of knowledge readers bring. Phonic knowledge uses sounds, letter patterns, syllables and word parts, and asks 'Does it sound right?'. Semantic knowledge uses the meanings of words you know and what the text and topic are about, and asks 'Does it make sense?'. Grammatical knowledge uses how sentences are built and the kind of word that fits the gap, and asks 'Does the sentence work?'.

Good readers run all three checks almost at once, without thinking about it. When one check says *no*, that is the moment to stop and fix things, not to push on.

3. Noticing, fixing, re-reading

Every reader slips sometimes. The skill is not never slipping; it is noticing. Watch a reader do it.

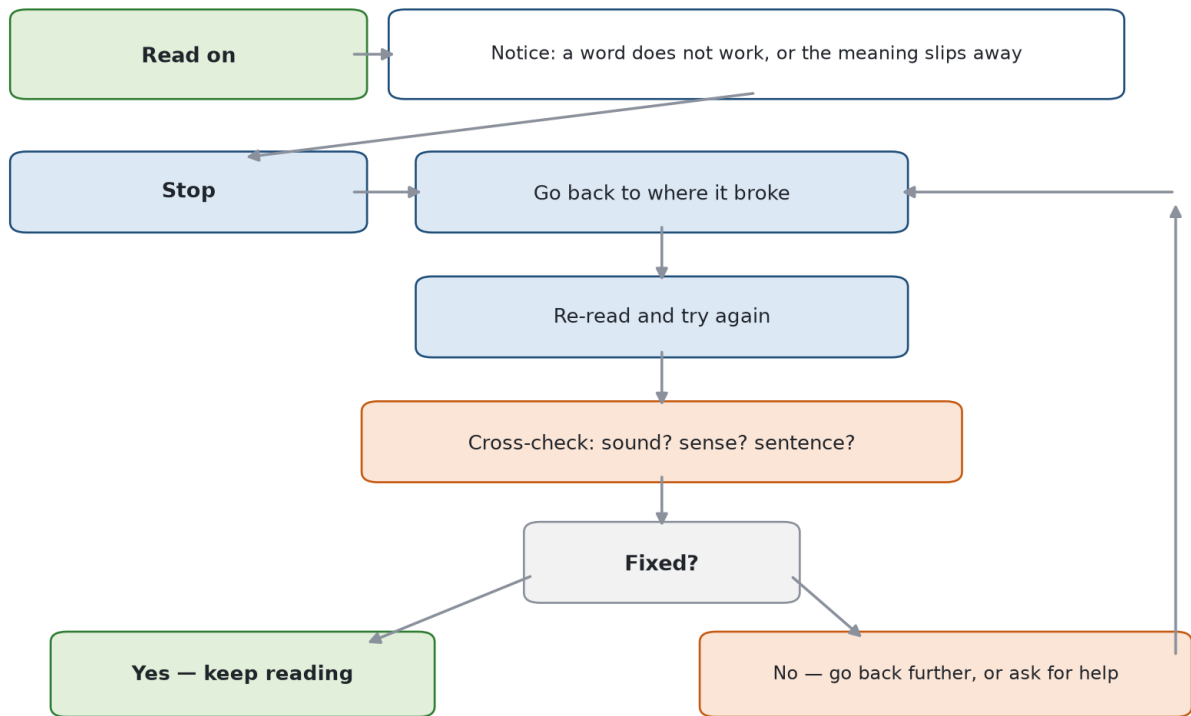
Watch a reader self-correct



A diagram that shows a reader self-correcting. On the page: 'The wind blew the leaves across the yard, and Mia pulled her jacket tighter.' The reader's voice says 'The wind blue the leaves across the ...' Then five steps: notice that something stops making sense; stop and go back to the word; check that 'The wind blue the leaves' has no doing word so the sentence does not work; fix by looking at the letters again, b-l-e-w, which is blew, the past of blow; and re-read so the meaning rides again.

The slip itself is nothing. The noticing is everything. When a check says *no*, strong readers run the same loop every time.

The self-correct loop



A flow diagram of the self-correct loop: read on; notice that a word does not work or the meaning slips away; stop; go back to where it broke; re-read and try again; cross-check with 'sound? sense? sentence?'; then a decision, 'Fixed?'. Yes leads to 'keep reading'; no leads to 'go back further, or ask for help', which loops back to 'go back to where it broke'.

Re-reading is not a punishment and not a sign of weakness. It is a tool, and strong readers pick it up often.

Re-reading: four good reasons

Reason	What you do
The thread of the story slipped away	Go back a page or two and read again from a part you remember.
You skipped or swapped words	Read that sentence again, slowly, one word at a time.
You need to find one fact	Use the structure — contents, heading, index — then read that part carefully.
You want to hear how a text sounds	Read it out loud, and let the expression carry the feeling.

Re-reading is a strength. Strong readers re-read more, not less.

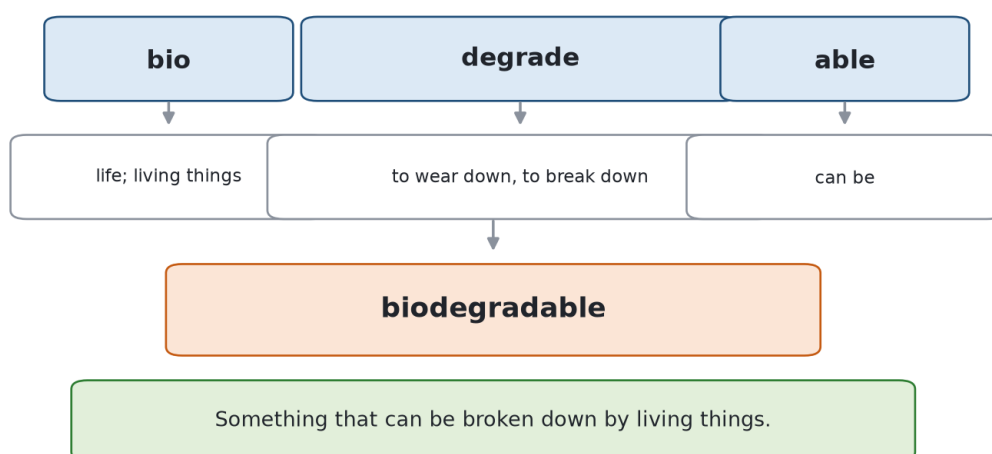
A table of four good reasons to re-read and what to do for each: the thread of the story slipped away, so go back a page or two and read again from a part you remember; you skipped or swapped words, so read that sentence again slowly one word at a time; you need to find one fact, so use the structure — contents, heading, index — then read that part carefully; you want to hear how a text sounds, so read it out loud and let the expression carry the feeling. The footer reads: 'Re-reading is a strength. Strong readers re-read more, not less.'

4. Bringing your word knowledge to a new text

A new text is never truly new, because you bring your knowledge with you. You bring **subject words** — the words a learning area uses for its own ideas, like *predator* in science or *decade* in history — and **technical words** — words built for one job, like *thermometer* or *goalkeeper*. You also bring what you already know about the topic, and that knowledge helps you guess, check and hold the meaning of what you read.

When a long new word shows up, the word parts you built in Sections 4C and 4D do real work. You do not have to know a word to read it; you have to break it.

Use word parts to read a new word



You met word parts in Sections 4C and 4D. Bring them to every new word.

A diagram breaking the word biodegradable into its parts: bio means life or living things, degrade means to wear down or break down, and able means can be. The parts add up to 'Something that can be broken down by living things'. The footer reads: 'You met word parts in Sections 4C and 4D. Bring them to every new word.'

You also get to **choose** what you read, and choosing is a reading skill. Before you trust a text with your task, ask two questions of it: does it fit the task, and can I trust its facts? A story book may be fun and still be the wrong text for a fact job; an old fact page with no author and no date may hold the facts and still need checking against one more text.

Pick the text that fits the task

Your task: find out what platypuses eat, and where they live.

The text	Does it fit the task?	Can you trust its facts?
A storybook about a platypus called Pip who loses his home	No — it is a story, not a fact text.	No — the story is made up.
A fact sheet from a wildlife park, with photos and a date	Yes — it is about real platypuses and how they live.	Yes — the park keeps real platypuses, and the date tells you it is up to date.
A page from an old animal book with no author and no date	In part — it may hold what you need.	Not sure — with no author and no date, check its facts against another text.

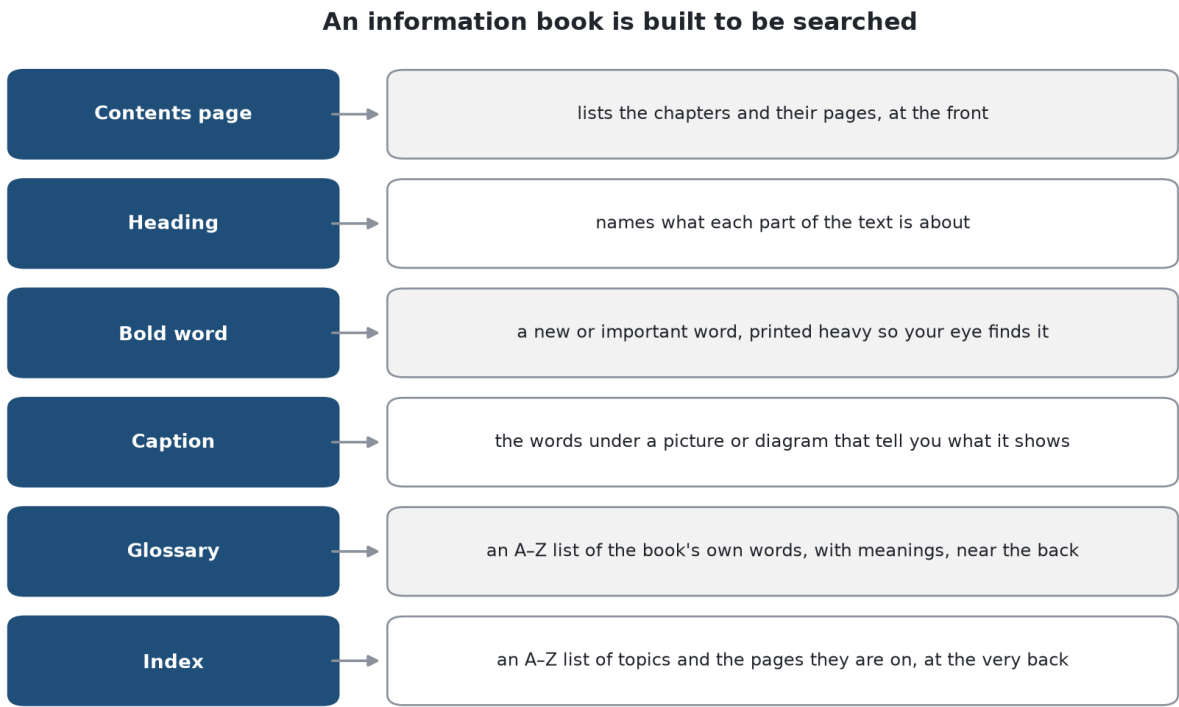
The right text fits the task AND tells you facts you can trust.

A table that matches three texts to the task 'find out what platypuses eat, and where they live'. A storybook about a platypus called Pip does not fit, because it is a story and made up. A fact sheet from a wildlife park with photos and a

date fits the task and can be trusted, because the park keeps real platypuses and the date shows it is up to date. A page from an old animal book with no author and no date fits in part, but its facts should be checked against another text. The footer reads: ‘The right text fits the task AND tells you facts you can trust.’

5. Using text structure to find your way

Section 1C showed that every text type is built out of its usual stages — a story opens, builds and resolves; a report sorts the world into groups and facts. That structure is also a **map**. To **navigate** a text is to move around it on purpose, using its structure to find exactly what you need instead of reading every word of it.



Read the map before the page.

A diagram of the parts of an information book a reader can search: the contents page lists the chapters and their pages at the front; a heading names what each part of the text is about; a bold word is a new or important word printed heavy so your eye finds it; a caption is the words under a picture or diagram that tell you what it shows; a glossary is an A–Z list of the book’s own words with meanings near the back; an index is an A–Z list of topics and the pages they are on at the very back. The footer reads: ‘Read the map before the page.’

Different needs call for different parts of the map. Learn which part answers which need, and searching stops being slow.

Find it fast

What you need	Where to look first	Why that works
What a new word means	The glossary	It is an A-Z list of the book's own words, with their meanings.
Which page a topic is on	The index or the contents page	The index lists topics; the contents lists chapters.
What happened first in a story	The start of the chapter, or the time words	Stories run in time order.
One fact about an animal	Index, then the heading, then that part	The index points to the page; the heading points to the part.

Structure is the map. Read the map before the page.

A table matching what you need to where to look first and why that works: what a new word means goes to the glossary because it is an A–Z list of the book's own words with their meanings; which page a topic is on goes to the index or the contents page because the index lists topics and the contents lists chapters; what happened first in a story goes to the start of the chapter or the time words because stories run in time order; one fact about an animal goes to the index, then the heading, then that part, because the index points to the page and the heading points to the part.

Notice the split: stories are for reading **through**; information texts are for **searching**. A reader who knows that never reads an information book from cover to cover to find one fact, and never searches a story for its ending.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — modelled analysis

Read this short passage.

On market day, Nonna sets up her stall at the end of the lane. She sells jars of honey from her three hives. A jar costs five dollars, and the money buys seed for next season. Last year, the stall sold out by noon.

Now watch a reader meet it. The table shows the tricky moments, the knowledge the reader brought, and how each one went.

Tricky moment	Knowledge the reader brought	How it went
<i>stall</i> — a new word	Phonic: the letters split as st-all. Semantic: a market and selling, so a stall must be a small stand you sell from.	The reader kept going with a sensible guess, and the guess fit.
Read <i>hives</i> as <i>lives</i>	Semantic check: “her three lives” makes no sense, and the topic is bees.	The check said no. The reader stopped, went back, and read the letters again: h-i-v-e-s. Fixed.
<i>sold out by noon</i>	Semantic: sold out means all sold; noon is the middle of the day.	No stop needed — the meanings were already known, so the phrase rode straight through.

Watch the pattern. The reader did not treat every word the same. A new word got a guess that was checked against the topic; a slip got stopped and fixed; known words got no stops at all. That mix — smooth most of the way, sharp stops where a check says *no* — is what fluent reading looks and sounds like.

Worked example 2 — modelled composition

A reading task also needs a plan. Here is the task: *for a two-minute class talk, find out how a bee hive makes honey.* Watch a writer build a reading plan for it, choice by choice.

Choice	The plan	Why
The text	The wildlife park fact sheet <i>Bees and honey</i> , not the story book <i>Buzzy the Bee</i> .	The fact sheet fits the task — real bees, real facts, a date from this year. The story book is made up.
Where to look	Contents page → the chapter <i>Honey</i> → the heading <i>From flower to hive</i> . For one fast fact, the index: <i>honey</i> , 14.	The map first, the page second.
Words to expect	<i>nectar</i> (the sweet water a flower makes) and <i>pollen</i> (the yellow powder a flower makes). Split <i>nectar</i> as nec-tar.	Word parts and topic knowledge do the work before the word is even met.
If it breaks	Go back to the heading, re-read that part, and if it still does not work, ask.	The loop, planned in advance.

And here is the plan written up, as the writer would hand it in.

My reading plan

1. My text is the fact sheet *Bees and honey*. It fits my task because it is about real bees, and I can trust it because the park keeps real hives and the sheet is dated this year.
2. I will use the contents page to find the chapter *Honey*, then the heading *From flower to hive*. For one fast fact I will use the index.
3. I expect to meet *nectar* and *pollen*. I can split *nectar* into nec-tar, and I know *pollen* from science.
4. If I lose the thread, I will go back to the heading and re-read. If it still does not work, I will ask.

Check the plan against the task: it picks a text and says why it fits, it uses the structure to find the part, it names the new words and the tools for them, and it plans the fix before the fix is needed.

Practice tasks

Guided practice

Q1. (VC2E6LY05) A reader's voice came out different from the page three times. For each one, name the check that catches it: *does it sound right?*, *does it make sense?*, or *does the sentence work?*

- a) The page says *house*; the reader says *horse* — “The cat slept in the horse.”
- b) The page says *there*; the reader says *their* — “Their is a big park near the school.”
- c) The page says *from*; the reader says *form* — “The bus form school leaves at three.”

Q2. (VC2E6LY05) A student read this text aloud, and one word came out wrong. Find the word, say which check catches it, and fix it.

Dad carried the letter into the yard and leaned it against the shed. Then he climbed up and cleaned the leaves out of the gutter.

Q3. (VC2E6LY05) Read this sentence aloud twice: first one word at a time with a tap between words, then in phrases, letting your voice ride each phrase. Then mark the phrase breaks with a slash (/) where you think they belong.

The old shed at the end of the track held a rusty bike and a box of tools.

Q4. (E01) Two words below came from the Level 6 curriculum's own word list. Break each into its parts, and say what the word means from its parts.

- a) *submarine* — *sub* means under; *marine* means of the sea.
- b) *subterranean* — *sub* means under; *terra* means the earth, the ground.

Q5. (E01) Your task: *find out how tall the tallest trees can grow*. Which text do you use, and which two checks did you run to choose it?

- A poster for a tree-climbing adventure park
- A page from a forest fact book with a height chart and a date from last year
- A tale about a giant tree that touched the clouds

Q6. (E02) Match each need to the part of the book you would use first: **contents page, heading, glossary, index, caption.**

- a) You need the meaning of the word *estuary*, which the book uses a lot.
- b) You need to know which page the chapter on wetlands starts on.
- c) You need one fact about herons, fast.
- d) You need to know what the photograph on page 21 shows.
- e) You need the part of the wetlands chapter that is about what herons eat.

Independent practice

Q7. (VC2E6LY05) Read this passage.

The weather station on the hill sends a report every hour. The gauge on its roof catches the rain, and a sensor reads the wind. When a storm rolls in, the sensor sends its warning fast.

Pick the two words that ask the most of you as a reader. For each one, say which knowledge (phonic, semantic or grammatical) you would lean on, and how. Then write one sentence saying exactly what you would do if the meaning broke down halfway through the passage.

Q8. (E01) Your task: *find out how long a tortoise can live, and what it eats*. Three texts are offered: a cartoon about a racing tortoise; a zoo fact page written this year, with photos and the zoo's name on it; and a page from a very old animal book with no author and no date. Choose the text you would use and give two reasons — one about fit, one about trust. Then name one subject or technical word you would expect to meet in it, and break it or gloss it the way you would while reading.

Q9. (E02) Below is the skeleton of an information book, *Coastal Birds of the South*.

Contents: 1. Gulls of the beach (p. 4) · 2. Penguins of the rocky coast (p. 11) · 3. Herons and the estuary (p. 18)

Index: estuary, 18–20 · gulls, 4–9 · moulting, 7 · penguins, 11–16

Glossary: estuary — where a river meets the sea · moult — to lose old feathers or fur and grow new

Write the route you would take to find each of these: (a) which chapter is about penguins; (b) the meaning of *moult*; (c) the pages about what gulls eat, if the gull chapter has the heading *What gulls eat* on page 6. Say which part of the map you use at each step.

Q10. (VC2E6LY05) Read this passage twice.

The ferry can hold twelve cars, but on storm days it takes only six. The crossing takes twenty minutes. On Tuesdays the first boat leaves at six in the morning, an hour earlier than on the other days.

First read: at a steady pace, for the gist. Answer in one line: about how long does the crossing take? Second read: slowly, hunting for what you missed. Then write two things: one fact you only saw clearly on the second read, and one thing the passage lets you work out without saying it straight out.

Produced outcome

Reading record: two texts, one week. Choose two texts of your own: one story you read for pleasure, and one information text you read for a purpose (a fact sheet, a chapter of a fact book, a page of a museum or park site). Read both, and keep a one-page reading record with four parts.

1. **The texts and the fit.** Name each text and say, in one sentence each, why it fit what you wanted from it.
2. **Two fixes.** Record two moments when you self-corrected: what you first read, what the page actually said, and which check caught it (sound, sense, or sentence).
3. **Two words.** Record two subject or technical words you met in the information text, and for each one show how you got its meaning (word parts, the topic, the glossary, or what you already knew).
4. **One search.** Record one thing you found using the book's or page's structure (contents, heading, index, glossary, caption), and the route you took.

Success criteria. The record names both texts and says why each fit. Each fix names the wrong read, the right word and the check that caught it. Each word shows the tool that unlocked it, not just the meaning. The search names the route step by step.

Marking note: marks are for the record of your reading — how clearly you can name the moment, the check and the tool — not for how hard the texts you chose were.

Answers

Q1. a) *Does it make sense?* — a cat cannot sleep in a horse; the meaning breaks. b) *Does the sentence work?* — “Their is a big park” has no word doing the job *there* does; the sentence fails. c) *Does it make sense?* (and sound) — “the bus form school” is not a thing; sense says no. (Fair answers may swap the labels for a) and c) if the reason is right: the point is that meaning and sentence checks, not just sound, catch slips.)

Q2. The wrong word is *letter*. You cannot lean a letter against a shed and climb it — the semantic check fails, and the grammatical check too (what is carried, leaned and climbed must be one thing that can do all three). The page word is *ladder*.

Q3. A sensible marking: *The old shed at the end of the track / held a rusty bike / and a box of tools*. (Two breaks or one break are both fair; the test is whether each phrase holds together as a meaning, not the number of slashes.)

Q4. a) *sub + marine*: a thing that goes under the sea — a boat that runs under water. b) *sub + terra + nean*: under the ground — living or happening below the earth, like the roots of a tree or a worm’s home.

Q5. The forest fact book page. Fit: it is a fact text about trees and their heights, and the height chart matches the task exactly. Trust: a fact book page with a chart and a date from last year can be checked and is fresh. The poster is an ad for climbing, not tree facts; the tale is made up.

Q6. a) Glossary. b) Contents page. c) Index. d) Caption. e) Heading.

Q7. Sample. *gauge*: semantic knowledge does the work — the topic is weather and rain, and the roof catches rain, so a gauge must be the tool that catches and measures it; phonic knowledge is little help, because the *gauge* letter pattern is unusual. *sensor*: phonic and morphemic knowledge — sen-sor, and the *-or* ending names a thing that does a job, like *motor*; semantic knowledge adds that it reads the wind. One fair sentence for the breakdown: “If the meaning broke, I would stop, go back to the start of the sentence, and re-read using the topic (weather) to check each word.”

Q8. Sample. The zoo fact page. Fit: it is about real tortoises and says how they live and what they eat. Trust: a named zoo writing this year keeps real animals, so its facts can be checked. An expected word: *herbivore* — a plant-eater; gloss it as “an animal that eats only plants”, or break it as *herbi* (plant) + *vore* (eater). Other fair words: *shell*, *habitat* (gloss: the home of a living thing).

Q9. a) Contents page — the chapter list names “Penguins of the rocky coast” as chapter 2, page 11. b) Glossary — it defines *moult* directly. c) Index first (gulls, 4–9) to confirm the chapter; then in the chapter, the heading *What gulls eat* on page 6 — the index points to the chapter, the heading points to the part.

Q10. First read: about twenty minutes. Sample second-read facts: on storm days the ferry takes only six cars, not twelve; the early boat is a Tuesday thing. Sample worked-out fact: the first boat on the other days leaves at seven in the morning, because Tuesday’s six am is “an hour earlier”. (Any one clearly second-read fact and one fair worked-out fact score.)

Produced outcome. Answers will vary. Check the record against the success criteria: both texts named with a reason for fit; two fixes each naming wrong read, right word and check; two words each showing the tool; one search with the route in steps. A strong record sounds like this: “I first read *form* for *from*, and sense caught it — ‘the bus form school’ is not a thing.”