

# Sample answers for practice activities 1-22 in section B1 'Recognise the format'.

## ● Practice activity for writing letters, page 13

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- 1 Write to the town council explaining why the local playing field should not be developed into a new supermarket. Put your case forward in under 250 words.

Miss Jasmine Nash  
27 Thistledown Road  
Acton Tyrell  
ST1 3TS  
01/12/2009

Mr Patrick Lynch  
Planning Department  
Hayfield Council  
HC3 1CH

Dear Mr Lynch,

I am writing regarding the proposed development for the Thistledown Road playing fields. At present the fields are a haven for wildlife with a designated bird hide, dipping pond and wildflower meadow at one end, and a safe playing area for our children at the other.

It saddened me when I read in the Acton Tyrell Star that the fields were to be developed into a supermarket with a drive through eating establishment. I understand that this is to encourage new shoppers and will create many jobs. Whilst I understand that new jobs are important, I would urge the Council to reconsider.

The access to the fields can only be gained via Thistledown Road, a quiet, established area. The vast number of shoppers and delivery lorries throughout the day and night will turn this into a noisy, dangerous place with nowhere for our children to play. There is also the effect that the supermarket will have on the local economy as the village shops could not possibly compete with a large supermarket.

Perhaps most of all, I fear that changing the local ecology would destroy this wildlife for future generations. Is a supermarket and burger bar that important to our village?

I look forward to your response and hope that it is not too late to consider local residents and their needs.

Yours truly

Miss Jasmine Nash

### **Tutor's comment**

This pupil has shown an excellent range of skills here. The format is well set out with an appropriate greeting and sign off. The letter fits the 250 word count exactly and is well set out in logical paragraphs using Standard English to show an awareness of formal letter writing. This pupil has used a wide range of vocabulary suitable for the task. Words such as 'economy', 'ecology' and phrases such as 'future generations' show the control of the writer. There is an effective use of detail here – reference to the present use of the field, the local newspaper and names of roads and places give a sense of reality to the letter. The ending question leaves the problem firmly with the Council, which is the aim of the letter. This high mark reflects strong letter writing skills. 40/40

## ● Practice activity for writing letters, page 13

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2 Write a letter to a penfriend about a recent visit you made.

Include details about:

- who else was there
- the place you went to and what you saw
- the best and worst part of your visit.

Your letter should be no more than one side of A4 paper

David Preston  
Flat 19  
Mossley Place  
Monday

Dear Richie,

I went on a visit to the football match with my younger brother Alex and my dad and we saw the match and our team won and done good and we had a great time and it was really good. The place we went to was the football match. I think that the best part of the visit was that our team won and the worst part was that we had to quew for ages to get a drink and then I dropped it on the way back to my seat. I seen my favourite footballer and he scored two goals which was really good. I want to go to the football match again and when I leave school I want to play for my team because there really good. Do you go to the football match.

Anyway right soon

Yours sincerelery

Dave

### Tutor's comment

This pupil does understand that letters have to be set out in a format but this knowledge isn't secure. The place and postcode is missing and there is only a day rather than a date. The bullet points of the task have been answered, but the information given is minimal with limited description and detail. This makes the letter far too short to gain a high mark. The range of vocabulary is narrow with much repetition of 'good' and most sentences begin with the word 'I'. There are spelling difficulties with 'queue', 'dropped' and 'sincerely' and there are errors in the use of tenses, for example 'I seen' instead of 'I saw' and 'done' instead of 'did'. There is an incorrect use of 'there' instead of 'they're' and 'right' instead of 'write'. The letter has limited use of punctuation; most noticeably the lack of a question mark at the end, and the letter isn't divided into paragraphs. There is also some confusion between formal and informal letters with the use of 'Yours sincerely' to end an informal letter. This pupil needs to focus closely on improving: spelling skills, breadth of vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. More practise at writing will help improve performance. 10/40

## ● Practice activity for writing diary entries, page 15



**3** Recount your first day of primary school in the form of a 200-word diary entry.

Dear Diary,

I was very scared but also excited today. I didn't know what to expect when I walked through our lady of mary primary school doors and I didn't mean to cry but it was so overwhelming. Mum kissed me but then went and when I tried to hold her hand she told me to be big and brave and to do my best. I thought I would burst with tears but then the teacher, Mrs jones, came over to me and gave me a teddy bear to hold. He felt nice and furry and Mrs jones smelled nice so I felt a bit better. I had to sit next to another girl called grace but I quite liked her. She had red ribbons in her hair like me and when we had break she held my hand in the playground and I think she will make a good friend. On our table there was another girl called megan, one called alison and one called kes. I think they are all quite nice. We had a bell that went at dinner time and we had to stand up outside the head teachers room until we could go into the hall. I had chops and chips to eat and then a glass of pineapple juice and a banana for afterwards. The room was full of bigger children. I wanted to get back to the playground so I ate my banana too quickly and it was a HUGGE banana. It made me feel a bit sick but I felt better when I got outside. We had a story about ricky the rabbit who had his first day at school and then the doors opened and I saw my mum standing there with the other mums and dads. I was so happy to see her but I liked my first day at school. I will write again tomorrow but now I'm going to have a bath and a story. Bye for now x

### Tutor's comment

This pupil does understand the informal and personal format of a diary entry and this comes across well. On the whole there is a good use of punctuation and grammar, but there is no use of capital letters for proper nouns. Sentences start with a variety of words and spellings are secure throughout. The use of detail is excellent with a range of senses employed, but this diary entry is far longer than the 200 words asked for in the question. This pupil needs to focus on improving grammar and giving more attention to the word count. Some further practise of writing exercises will improve their score further. 25/40

## ● Practice activity for writing diary entries, page 15

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- 4 Civil war\* has broken out in the country you live in. You are a primary school teacher and have been in hiding since the fighting started a week ago. Your supplies have almost run out so you have decided to make a break for the border tonight. Before you set off, you write your thoughts in your journal.

You might find it helpful to think about the following questions:

- Who is fighting and why has the fighting broken out?
- Where are you hiding?
- Is anyone with you?
- What have you experienced over the last few days?
- How far is the border and how are you planning to reach it safely?
- Why are you making notes about these events?

Your journal entry should be no longer than 300 words.

\*A war between groups of people or regions from the same country.

*Dear Diary,*

*Tonight must be the night. If I don't go now I never will and staying behind cannot be an option, as I know that I will die. The rebel fighters from the south are pushing the boundaries further and further and I don't know if the north can take another battering. We are losing faith in our leader, McCabe, but the cause is worth fighting for. If we lose the battle I know that we'll all end up paying a crippling tax to the south. Parliament has been taken, the palaces are taken and churches and cathedrals have become satellite military bases. Rumour has it that villages south of the mountains are already giving all of their money to Major Key and he's supposed to give them 'living money' out of their own wages, but it isn't enough to survive on. We think he's using the money to buy weapons and using the people to join his army. Hungry, desperate people will do anything and so his army grows. I am now the only teacher left here, huddled in the school staff room. The other staff have dwindled one by one either moving north to cross the border, or surrendering to the south. Now it's my turn and I am heading for the border, but there is danger everywhere. I don't think that I will survive and so I leave this diary here hoping one day, someone will find it and understand the struggle that we had. If I should miraculously survive, I'll collect my diary with great joy. You have been a constant friend and I couldn't have survived without writing my feelings down. Pray that I now make the border safely and may our country one day be reunited again. xxx*

### **Tutor's comment**

This pupil has understood diary writing with informal language and offering a personal account. This response shows that this pupil can remain focused on the question, can write creatively and can follow the given style. This pupil has excellent spelling and grammatical skills illustrating a wide range of vocabulary such as 'rebel', 'crippling' and 'miraculously'. This high mark reflects the high standard of writing and further practise at other writing styles will ensure that this pupil consolidates these skills. 40/40

## ● Practice activity for writing fictional narratives, page 18

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- 5 Write creatively about the following title: 'A week in the life of an orange'. Write up to two sides of A4 paper.

Well there I was on Monday quite happily hanging on the tree when WHOOOSH! I could feel a hand on my bottom and there I was swinging around and into a basket with all of my mates. "What's going on here then?" I said but nobody had a clue. We were jingled and jangled together as the basket was tipped into a large crate and then off we went to who knows where? I slept quite well on Monday night but when I awoke, there I was on a conveyer belt. Some woman picked me up and put me into a bag with five other oranges. It was a bit of a tight squeeze but fortunetlly the bag was a wholey one so I could see what was going on around me. Wow you should have seen that room. It was humongous and full of oranges all seperated into these bags.

Wednesday was a strange day. I was put in a crate and the crate was put on a ship. Was I glad that I was on the top of the crate and could just see through the gap between the crate and the lid? You bet! I could see all of the people stacking crates one on top of another and eventually we set sail. I have never seen so much sea in all of my life and let me tell you, I've seen some things in that orange grove!

On Thursday we arrived at our destenation and off we went into yet another journey. I couldn't see quite so well this time as the lorry was dark and it was so cold. I'm used to a bit of sun on my body but this was serioasly chilly. We arrived at this supermarket and my crate was taken into a back storeroom and after all of that, I was glad to get a little sleep.

On Friday I was wheeled into the fruit section of the supermarket and placed on a shelf. It was so busy it was unreal. People milling about, lights everywhere, children in the strangest of vehicles who thought it was fun to poke me. I nearly poked them back but then out of the blue I was lifted and swung into one of these weird vehicles. I found myself sitting on a bag of toilet paper with a bottle of brown sauce layed next to me. This was one peculiar sitution that I am glad I have never been in before. I was whizzed along another conveyer belt and then taken outside and into a car. It was all too much for me and so I slept.

I awoke on Saturday to find myself sitting in a fruit bowl on a table. Four people were sitting there eating breakfast when this women said, "Anyone want fresh juice?" They all seemed to want this and suddenly I was picked up along with several other pieces of fruit. I was prodded so much I thought I would burst but then I was put back into the fruit bowl. There were I and grapes, two bananas and four oranges left. Within seconds the woman came back to the table with some glasses of orange coloured liquid. I wonder what that was?

Today is Sunday and I am quite happy sitting here watching the television. The woman has come back into the room and she has said, "Does anyone want some fresh juice?" I wonder what will happen next?

### **Tutor's comment**

This pupil has some creative ideas and has divided the writing into logical paragraphs. The use of punctuation is correct but there are some spelling mistakes, (holey, destination, seriously, conveyor, laid, fortunately and separated) but this pupil has shown a wide ranging vocabulary and there are many difficult words that are spelt correctly. There are occasional points of grammar that need looking at: "There were I and grapes, two bananas and four oranges left" should be "There were grapes, two bananas, four oranges and myself left." Some revision of spellings and grammar followed by further writing exercises should improve these skills. 30/40



## ● Practice activity for writing fictional narratives, page 18

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6 Write a 250-word story entitled: 'The Day I Met the Queen'.

The day that I met the queen was a very strange day. I woke up and put on my new clothes and new shoes and we got into the car with my mum and dad and we drove to London. I once went to London with my school and we all went to Hampton Court because we were doing a Tudor project, which I really enjoyed. We did this in year 4 with Mr Pearson and it was really good fun and I got a teachers award for my project and I had to take it into assembly with me and the head Mr Schubert said it was a really brilliant project and that I had earned my class an extra long break time and everyone was really pleased and they thought that I was great for getting everyone a longer play. The Tudor project was good fun and I'm looking forward to doing another project soon. I hope that we can do a project on dinosaurs, as I know lots about them. I had a book for my birthday full of dinosaurs and it's my favourite book. I quite like reading in school and this year our school is doing the Big Write so I think that we will have lots of fun.

### Tutor's comment

This pupil has used effective punctuation for the most part and the spellings are secure but sadly they have not fulfilled the question requirements. This pupil needs to focus closely on the question title and to perhaps check the question part way through their writing to ensure they are still focused on the question. This pupil needs to take another look at how to plan a piece of writing as this will help to focus on the answer. This will also help to write the correct number of words, as this answer is too short. A quick revision on grammar and how to write in paragraphs would also be useful and then to practise with a range of question titles to improve these skills. 5/40

## ● Practice activity for writing text continuations, page 20

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- 7 Write the opening sections for a story that starts with the following sentence:

**'Three sharp blasts on the whistle, a groan from the rails, two jerks forward; we were finally away and I was leaving it all behind me.'**

Think about: – what you have left behind and why

– where you are going

– your feelings as you leave and/or arrive at your destination.

Write no more than one side of A4; you do not need to finish the story.

*Three sharp blasts on the whistle, a groan from the rails, two jerks forward; we were finally away and I was leaving it all behind me. I closed my eyes and thought about the cottage. Who would be in there now? Would the kitten still be outside the door and who would feed her now? I wanted to cry. It only seemed like yesterday when we were coming and now we were going home and our holiday was all over. I loved Devon but it seemed such a long journey home now. We sat at a table playing games but we had our DS in case we got bored. I asked my mum why we couldn't move to Devon to live. She said that if we did that, we would have nowhere to go on holiday but I don't think that I would care. If I could go rock pooling every day then I didn't need to go on holiday but mum said that I'd still need to go to school if we lived here and so I wouldn't get to go rock pooling anyway. I think mum is mean and when I'm older, I'm going to move to Devon anyway. I want to live in a holiday cottage for the rest of my life.*

### Tutor's comment

This response shows a moderate ability in writing. There is a general understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation and the story is logical and flows from the given text. To improve upon the score, this pupil should look at the descriptive writing section and the sections on how to make writing exciting. For example how could the cottage be described? Is it white, old, brick, crumbling, new, pretty, little? What about the kitten, the games played, the exact place in Devon? All of these details would help to bring this writing to life and to make it far more interesting for the reader. 20/40

## ● Practice activity for writing text continuations, page 20

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- 8 Read the extract again and then continue the text. Remember that your writing should follow the existing style of the author. Write no more than one side of A4.

The creature's head snapped up straight and it looked around frantically. Vishnie and Sylvac held their breath, praying that the creature would not be afraid, but it was too late. As soon as the beast turned its frightened eyes towards the two children, it let out a long, low moan, flicked back its silvery mane and galloped away. "Quick!" shouted Sylvac, "Let's follow him!" but the creature had already disappeared.

Vishnie ran over to the tree and touched the splintered bark. "Look Sylvac!" she called. The trace of the unicorn's silvery tongue was slowly evaporating, with tiny particles of magical dust settling into the sticky tree sap. "We must come back tomorrow to see if he returns, Sylvac", sighed Vishnie. "Something is wrong and we must try to help." Sylvac agreed.

The following day they returned to the same spot and waited. The cold, frosty weather gave Vishnie cold feet but she didn't want to complain. She was scared to walk up and down in case she should make a noise but she felt as if she couldn't continue to stand still like this. She put her hand gently on Sylvac's shoulder but just at that moment, the creature returned. The two children watched as it shook its silvery mane and stamped its little hoofs up and down. It looked so breathtaking that Vishnie forgot about the cold. The silver creature found the tree that it was looking for and then began to tip tap the bark with its silver horn. Over and over like a woodpecker it tapped and tapped and then gently, the creature licked the sticky sap as it trickled out.

Sylvac moved his weight from one leg to another but the creature could hear the slightest of sounds and like a bolt of lightening it looked up and in the direction of the two children. "Don't be afraid." whispered Vishnie hoping that the creature might stay but it was far too timid to wait and with a quick turn the pretty unicorn pranced around the trees as it wove its way through the forest.

"We now know for sure that the silver unicorn exists," Sylvac pondered, "but I wonder why it wants the tree sap?" Vishnie had already made her way over to the tree and was looking again at the silvery dust that had settled into the sap. She touched it with one finger and as she did she was filled with a warm, glowing feeling. She understood within a second that it was not the silver unicorn that was so special, it was this tree that had such magical powers.

### **Tutor's comment**

This pupil has achieved full marks because this is an imaginative ending that follows on closely from the original text. This effect is created by using phrases from the extract (the creature's head snapped up, the splintered bark and the sticky tree sap) and by using a similar writing style. The mention of the 'magical dust' and the tree having 'magical powers' retains the fairy story theme and the ending leaves the reader to speculate on what might happen next. This pupil demonstrates excellent spelling skills (except for the misuse of the apostrophe), uses accurate punctuation for dialogue and narrative and includes some interesting vocabulary (galloped, evaporating, pranced) and a range of synonyms for the word 'said'. The length of this piece is perfect and further practice of writing exercises will consolidate these skills further. 40/40

## ● Practice activity for writing descriptions, page 22

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- 9 Describe, in 300 words, how you would spend your perfect day. Consider the following points in your answer:
- Where would you be?
  - Who would be with you?
  - What would you do?
  - Why would it be your perfect day?

*My perfect day would be spent at grandma's house. First we would bake bread together as my grandma makes delicious bread and I like kneading it and then watching it as it grows bigger and bigger. When we bake it the smell is lovely. While it is baking, grandpa would let me help him in the potting shed. We plant seeds, pot them on when they get bigger and eventually we put them into the garden or the greenhouse. As this would be my perfect day, it would be spring time as we could plant some seeds, pot some plants on and plant some out into the garden as I like doing all of these jobs.*

*Next grandma calls us in and the three of us would have huge chunks of bread that is still warm with best butter on. If it was spring there would still be some of our jam left that me and grandma made so we would have this aswell. I like this alot and we always have hot chocolate to drink with pink and white fluffly marshmallows in it.*

*Then me and grandpa would watch Star Trek on the television as I've got all of the DVDs at grandpa's house. We only watch the first series as it's the best. We would have a cup of tea and cookies at 3 o'clock and then grandma would tell me stories of what it was like when she was a little girl. She's got an album of photos from when she was little and from when she and grandpa were on holiday and pictures of mum when she was little.*

*Then my mum would come round and we would have tea. I like it when grandma makes new potatoes and salmon and peas and parsley sauce and then sticky apple pudding with custard for afters. Mmmm my perfect day!*

### Tutor's comment

This pupil has shown a well structured piece of writing using words such as 'first', 'then', 'next' to show time. All of the bullet points have been answered and there is a good use of punctuation. There are some spelling problems with 'as well', 'a lot' and 'fluffy' and although there are plenty of descriptive words, there is a lot of repetition of common words so extending a vocabulary range would be the next step. This pupil needs to learn and then use more words, so check the section on developing word knowledge and using a thesaurus. 30/40

## ● Practice activity for writing descriptions, page 22

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**10** Write about your favourite person from history, using no more than 300 words.

*My favourite person from history would be a Viking warrior. I enjoy boats and to sail on a Viking long boat would be so cool. As we pulled up on the shores of England we would look so scary with our horned hats and our sheepskin clothes. We would pull our long boats onto the beaches and would then run into the villages with our swords and make the villagers hand over food to us. In return we would protect the villagers from bears, wolves and anyone else that wanted to fight. Everyone would think that we were very brave and they would be a bit scared to challenge us, as we would have the best swords in the world.*

*We would get into lots of adventures and nobody would be able to beat us, as we would be invincible. I think the Vikings would be extremely clever as they took over lots of countries and were really powerful. They had metal shields that protected them from other people and they knew how to use swords well. Not all of the Vikings were warriors though, only the biggest and the bravest. When the warriors had taken over a settlement, they then brought their families over, as they knew then that it was safe. They made really comfortable homes for themselves and many Vikings were great craftspeople. I've seen a Viking display in the museum and there were examples of jewellery, weapons, cups and bowls.*

*Some people in Britain have Viking blood in them and I think that I might be one of them. I have blonde hair and blue eyes and I am tall and good at sport. I also like fighting with my little brother and easily win! That means that if I were a Viking, I would probably be a warrior.*

### **Tutor's comment**

This is an example of secure writing technique. The piece is divided into logical paragraphs, the punctuation is secure and there is a fair range of vocabulary (invincible, challenge, extremely) with strong spelling skills. There is just the word 'museum' spelt incorrectly. This pupil can write creatively and keeps to the word count. The piece is focused and has a certain style to it. To maintain this sound skills base and to extend it further, this pupil should continue to practise a range of writing exercises and to check the sections of this book regarding word knowledge to further improve the range of vocabulary. 32/40

## ● Practice activity for visual stimuli, page 24

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**11** Look at this image.

Now write a response to the photograph.

Consider the following points in your writing:

- Explore what the image makes you think of.
- Describe how the image makes you feel.
- Explain where and why you think the photograph was taken.

Write no more than 250 words.



I think that this photograph was taken on Mars. The landscape looks bleak and there is mist or smoke in the background. The rocks don't look as if they are from this world. They remind me of lunar pictures.

I think the picture is very atmospheric. There are no people about, no buildings, no birds and no animals. It looks as if nobody has not ever lived there and maybe that is because the landscape cannot let people live there, only space men and aliens. Maybe this is what the world would look like after years of global warming. It would be bad to live in a place like this.

I think that this photograph was taken to show people what the world would look like if we don't look after it.

### Tutor's comment

All of the bullet points were attempted but the piece is far too short and lacked descriptive details. Poor spellings and grammar use has also caused this pupil to lose marks. There are some excellent ideas here so I think this pupil needs to focus closely on building word knowledge and strengthening spelling skills. It is also worth looking back at the generating ideas section of the book. Perhaps using the question and answer interrogative technique would help here. 10/40



## ● Practice activity for visual stimuli, page 24

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- 12 'The weather was cold and spitting with rain. He pulled the scarf close around his neck and began walking. A van was parked on the left, facing away from the quayside. He knew exactly what to do ...'



Using this opening paragraph and the photograph as your starting point, write a piece of creative writing. Write no more than 350 words.

*The weather was cold and spitting with rain. He pulled the scarf close around his neck and began walking. A van was parked on the left, facing away from the quayside. He knew exactly what to do. He broke into a gentle jog keeping his head down to protect his eyes from the biting wind. The taste of salty sea spray on his lips would usually make him feel happy. Today it tasted more like tears.*

*As he reached the van he looked quickly through the window reassuring himself that he was not mistaken. He wasn't. There were no other vehicles around and sitting on the passenger seat of the van, was a fat, padded envelope with 'Mr Pritchard' written on it in thick, black, marker pen. All was as it should be.*

*The man placed one gloved hand on the passenger side handle and opened the door. It opened easily and within seconds he had the bulky envelope in his hands. Slipping the item into his inner pocket, the man crossed the road and within seconds had reached the stone steps leading to the beach.*

*The tide was well in but that was what the man wanted. On the fourth step down, there was a small hole in the wall. Originally it had held the rope for tethering boats but nobody had used it for years. The man slipped off the glove from his left hand and began fumbling inside the hole groping around for the small key that was hidden there. He couldn't allocate it so taking off his right glove, he used his right hand to examine the hole but the key was not there. He stood still for a minute trying desperately hard to think of what to do next.*

*There was a sudden click from above and as the man looked upwards, he found himself staring into the barrel of a gun. "Well Mr Pritchard, we meet at last." Said the sinister voice of the man above. He held a silver key in his fingers. "Is this what you're looking for?" he asked with a menacing smile.*



### **Tutor's comment**

This is an example of a strong and confident answer. The photograph has been the inspiration for a thrilling, atmospheric piece showing a breadth of vocabulary knowledge, excellent spelling and grammatical skills and a well-constructed response, with very few errors. The many uses for the word 'touched' are particularly imaginative. Further writing exercises will help to maintain this high level. 40/40

## ● Practice activity for writing playscripts, page 25

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- 13** Develop the following scenario in the form of a playscript. 'Sophie is trying to persuade her mum to let her go round to her friend's house after school tomorrow.' Write no more than two sides of A4 paper.

*Sophie: Mum can I go round to Olivia's house after school tomorrow?*

*Mum: Erm, I'm not sure about tomorrow. It depends whether I can do the shopping on Wednesday or not.*

*Sophie: But mum I really want to go to Olivia's because she's got some new games for her birthday and I want to play with her.*

*Mum: Well I'll see what time your Dad is getting back on Wednesday night. We're going to Nan's house on Thursday so I can't do the shopping then and the shops are too busy on Friday.*

*Sophie: Everyone else is going to be there and I don't want to miss out.*

*Mum: I'm sure not 'everyone' will be there... Olivia's house is hardly big enough.*

*Sophie: But mum, everyone in the class is going.*

*Mum: What is Jacob going?*

*[Sophie looks irritated]*

*Sophie: Well obviously the boys aren't going to be there.*

*Mum: Well is Gemma going?*

*Sophie: Gemma has a mum who won't let her go anywhere and that's why Gemma has no friends and that's why I'll have no friends if I don't go to Olivia's.*

*Mum: What a mean mother and father you have eh! You go to every party and every sleepover so I hardly think you're missing out on anything.*

*[Sophie opens the hall door and shouts upstairs to her dad]*

*Sophie: Dad?*

*Dad: What?*

*Sophie: What time are you getting home on Wednesday?*

*Dad: Why?*

*[Sophie, feeling exasperated, starts to shout louder]*

*Sophie: Because mum wants to know so she can do the shopping.*

*Dad: Oh. Erm, yeah I can get home early on Wednesday.*

*[Sophie is suddenly much happier as she shuts the door and sits back down in the living room]*

*Sophie: Dad says he can get back early on Wednesday so pleeeeeease can I go to Olivia's house tomorrow?*

*Mum: Oh for goodness sake Sophie. Yes you can go to Olivia's tomorrow, but only if you've finished your homework and passed your spellings.*

*Sophie: Yeah I've only got a bit more to do now and you can test me on spellings 'cause I know them already.*

*Mum: Well what homework have you got?*

*[Sophie places her book over her homework title which is, 'Persuasive Writing']*

*Sophie: Oh... just a piece for English.*

### **Tutor's comment**

This pupil has clearly understood how a playscript is set out and understands that stage directions are important for the audience to understand the drama. This pupil has understood how to write informal language (erm, yeah, pleeeeeease) adding to the drama of the piece and the mixture between longer dialogue and one-word sentences gives the right balance to a playscript like this. Further practice at a range of writing exercises will be useful to attempt different writing styles. 35/40

## ● Practice activity for writing playscripts, page 26



**14** Continue this scene. Write up to two sides of A4 paper.

*Dad: Is that the post?*

*Philip: Yes – there's just one letter for me and a telephone bill.*

*Dad: A letter for you? You don't usually get letters.*

*[Philip opens the letter and begins to read it aloud]*

*Philip: Dear Philip, Congratulations! You have won first place in the competition ...*

*Dad: What is it?*

*Philip: It says that I have won first prize in a competition. I had to write a story about my local village and the winning story would get published in this book and it looks as if my story was the best. I enjoyed writing it but to be honest, it was so long ago, I can't really remember what I wrote but I know that I mentioned the Secret Woods of Theams and how Theams got its strange name.*

*Dad: I remember you reading that story to me, but is the story real or did you make it up? I used to play there when I was a young boy and in those days, the park had a huge gate to the entrance as the Victorians used it as a wonderful place for entertainment. There is still the remains of the bear pit and the two large oak trees in the centre have got the rope burns there from the swing boats.*

*Philip: Were the swing boats there when you were a boy?*

*Dad: No they had long gone, but your nana and grandpa remember them well. In fact, they first met in the Secret Woods when they were children. Your nana went on a Sunday school trip there and grandpa was there with his mum and dad. Of course their parents knew each other as they lived close by and from that day on, they met up frequently. Anyway what did you say that you had won?*

*Philip: I've won a book, with my story written in it, and I've won a camera so that I can take some pictures of the Secret Woods. The letter also says that they will contact the Theams Evening News and they will take pictures of me with my prize.*

*Dad: Well you never know, the paper might even print your story as it is of local interest. Well done Phil. Now go and tell your mum the good news. She will be thrilled.*

### **Tutor's comment**

The story line here is very good, but this pupil hasn't really understood how to balance a playscript or shown an awareness of dramatic effect. Both characters have long passages of dialogue, which need to be split up and there are no stage directions at all. Could Philip have shown surprise, delight and excitement? Could Dad have sat down, stood up, looked at the letter? This pupil needs to look carefully again at the section on playscripts and perhaps have a look at some examples. Then try to rewrite this piece splitting up the speech into smaller chunks. Spellings and grammar are secure so it should not take long to improve. Further writing exercises will help to use these skills. 30/40

## ● Practice activity for given texts, page 27

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- 15** Read the letter and then, in no more than 350 words, write your own version of events from the thief's point of view.

*I wish there was a way to avoid this afternoon but I know that there is no other option. I have spoken to John over and over again but he refuses to agree. I have offered him reasons, excuses, validations, promises anything and yet he still refuses so I must prepare myself for this afternoon's drama. I would do anything to hold Meg in my arms again...*

*I have heard from my beloved brother Davies. It would appear that Lady Gwendolin, should journey from the castle to reach the main road here just after noon. I have my mask, my gloves, my cloak, my boots, my breeches – yes I am ready to go. I do not think Lady Gwendolin will question me. She will surely just assume that I am a highway robber like so many others.*

*Oh how I wish that John would see sense and just release her to me. She whimpers at night for me and my brother has said how sad her eyes are. She is not eating and refuses to drink and yet I know that if she were with me she would be well again. I wish that I had never taken her to my brother for then John would never have seen her. As soon as he did his face lightened, his eyes brightened and from that day hence forth, he refuses to see reason. I see a coach in the distance. Oh may my heart be strong and my nerves remain controlled. I have a duty to perform...*

*Oh how glad am I that Lady Gwendolin did not question me. She has no idea that it is I who plunder her riches and jewels and she would be aghast if she knew. My hands are shaking so much and I just want to ride home as fast as I can. John loves his sister dearly and I am sure that however much he loves my Meg; he will return her to me to get his precious bonds and his sister's ring back. I have no need for any of them and I do not want them. All I want is Meg – the prettiest, fluffiest, most beautiful, little kitten.*

### Tutor's comment

This is a well-written piece that remains faithful to the original style. Words such as 'beloved', 'breeches' and 'aghast' give the piece an older feel to it and using the character names and elements of the original story help this piece to feel connected to it. This pupil has found a creative way of solving the problem by having 'she' as a kitten, which solves the mystery, but keeping this element of the story to the end ensures the interest of the reader. This pupil shows excellent spelling and grammatical skills, wide vocabulary and word knowledge, and further practice at writing exercises should consolidate these skills. 40/40

## ● Practice activity for given texts, page 27

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- 16** Read the given passage. Using the text for reference, write a detailed portrait of one of the characters. You should aim to write between 250 and 350 words.

I was work in the bank when all of a sudden a man came in and he had a gun. He said put the money in a bag and be quick and I was too scared to say anything so I did what he said. There was a woman there in the bank and a father with a baby in a pram. It was my first week in work and I was very scared. The robber had a gun. I'll shoot this if anyone tries any funny business but nobody said anything else.

### Tutor's comment

This pupil has several problems with this piece, which is why the score is so low. The first step of answering this prompt is to read the original text carefully. That stops the confusion between who is there and what is said. In the original text there are two masked men, one older man and a mother with a small child in a pushchair. We find there is plenty of detail from the clothes people are wearing to descriptions of how people are moving, talking and even thinking. All of this is missed in the writing above. This pupil also needs to look at grammar and punctuation. All speech has to be enclosed with speech marks and it has to be clear who is saying what.

A further problem with this piece is that it is far too short. Reviewing the section on how to plan a writing piece would be useful and also try some of the generating ideas exercises to help. Then look back at the original text and highlight key words or phrases, perhaps using a different colour for each character. I would then try this question again. Try to create a plan for every character; the bank cashier, the man, the mother, the toddler and either or both of the robbers and then use one or two of these plans to write up, which will help to practise these writing skills. 5/40

## ● Practice activity for writing reports and recounts, page 29

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### 17 Write a report entitled: 'Tourism and my region'.

You may like to consider the following questions:

- Where is the region and how can someone get there?
- What is the history of the area?
- What is the climate like?
- What is there to see and do?
- Where can someone eat? drink? sleep?
- When is the best / worst time to visit?
- Where can someone get more information?

Your report should be no more than two sides of A4 paper.

*Situated in the North East of England is Cullercoats. This beautiful seaside town is easy to reach from both the North and South with an excellent rail and coach network in addition to good travelling roads and we have Newcastle International Airport and the Royal Quays International Ferry Terminal all within a taxi ride.*

*As an ancient fishing village, Cullercoats has been written about and talked about for centuries. In ~~1677~~ the quay was built to transport coal from the local colliery. It has been known for its fine bathing and is now a popular holiday resort.*

*As we are on the East coast the wind can be strong but there are many bays and coves in the area that offer protection from the weather. There is perhaps no better place in the country to watch the sun rise at dawn than from Cullercoats.*

*Cullercoats has plenty to offer the visitor from shopping and rock pooling to the Blue Reef Aquarium and interesting history of our shipwrecks. We are well placed for visiting the city of Newcastle, the beaches of Tynemouth and the historical, World Heritage Hadrian's Wall.*

*Visitors will be overwhelmed with the numerous hotels, bed and breakfast guest homes, caravan and camping parks and self-catering apartments to stay in. This offers something for everyone. During the summer vacancies go quickly so it is worth booking in advance but outside of the peak season Cullercoats is quieter. For family fun, the school holidays are unbeatable but for bird watchers and nature lovers, outside of peak season is perhaps best.*

*For further information, please contact the Tourist Information Board or travel agent.*



### **Tutor's comment**

This pupil has understood the important elements of report writing. The use of present tense, formal language, third person writing is all here and is executed with confidence. This pupil has remained focused on the questions with all bullet points answered fully. There are excellent spelling and grammatical skills and a wide variety of vocabulary. This pupil should continue to practise a range of writing exercises to strengthen these skills and perhaps to try different writing styles. 40/40

## ● Practice activity for writing reports and recounts, page 29

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- 18** You witnessed a traffic accident this morning while out walking your dog. A car hit a tree after driving too quickly around a corner. As you approached the crash site, the driver and passenger were getting out. The police have now asked you to write a personal statement explaining what you saw. Limit your statement to 250 words.

The person was walking their dog this morning when they saw a car driving far to quick round a corner which meant that the driver lost controwl of the car and the car hit a large tree that was on the left hand side of the road. The person walking their dog saw the accident and went over to the car to help the people who was a driver, a man, and a passenger, a girl teenager who got out of the car. The man had brown hair and was not to fat or not to skinny but he was tall and the girl had long, red hair and was quite slim and quite tall and her hair was long and strait. The car was red and looked new and it also looked very clean as it was new and shiny and it had not got no mud on it. Their are often lots of accidents on the road at this bit as many cars drive too fast becuse they don't read the speed signs however there are speed signs that tell drivers to go no faster than 30 miles an hour but even this is too fast so the counsell should make the speed limit no faster than 20 miles an hour and then maybe there wouldn't be so many accidents. The police also need to go into schools and tell the pupils that they should ask their mums and dads to drive slower because then there wouldn't be so many accidents and it would be safer round here because one day some one will be killed and it might be a child who is walking on the pavement or a dog who is by the tree and they might be killed so people have to drive safer. The person who was walking the dog seen all of this and they told the police what they new and then they went home.

### Tutor's comment

This pupil has lost marks through poor spellings, word knowledge and grammar. They have not understood that the question asks for a personal statement, which needs to be written in the first person – 'I' instead of 'the person walking the dog'. The piece is well over the word count and does not really focus on the accident itself, as it is too vague.

This pupil needs to look at homophones (try the Bond *How to do ... 11+ English* book for more help on this) as words such as 'straight', 'knew', 'to' and 'there' are common mistakes. This pupil has covered conjunctions as most of the sentences are long, but they are sometimes too long and rambling so reading the section on varying sentence lengths might help here. Spellings are another area of concern. Simple spelling strings are known, such as 'might' but words such as 'because' are written in a variety of ways whilst 'council' and 'control' are phonetically spelt. This pupil needs to look at double negatives; 'it had not got no mud on it' is an example of this. A general revision of grammar would be the next step.

It is important to create a plan for all writing exercises so that writing is focused, clear and purposeful rather than a vague response that does not really answer the question. Reread the sections on how to answer a question, how to generate ideas and how to create a plan to improve upon this area. 10/40

## ● Practice activity for writing reviews, page 31



- 19** Your local newspaper has invited you to contribute to their children's literature section. In no more than 300 words, explain your opinion of a favourite book, poem or play.

*My Favourite Poem by Annia Wojciechowski*

My favourite poem is 'The Night Before Christmas' by Clement Clarke Moore and it is the first poem that I have learnt off by heart. The poem is about a man who is woken by a noise on Christmas Eve and as he looks out of the window he sees St Nicholas arrive on his sleigh with a pack of toys and presents on his back. St Nicholas comes down the chimney and fills the stockings with presents for all of the boys and girls before disappearing on his sleigh.

I love it so much as it is atmospheric. We hear the reindeers on the roof and St. Nicholas gives them all of their names: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.

St Nicholas is described very well with his chubby belly that shakes like jelly and his dimples are merry with his nose like a cherry. It is this rhyming throughout the poem that I really like. It is a long poem, but doesn't feel so long as the rhyme makes it go dead fast. A good example of this is the first two lines:

*"Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house,*

*Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."*

There are some difficult words to read but I still think that this poem would be perfect, as it sounds even better when it is read out. My mum read it to me when I was a little girl, before I could read, and so when I was old enough to read it for myself, I already knew most of the poem, making it much easier. We always read it now on Christmas Eve before I go to bed and it makes me feel excited. That is why I fully recommend this poem to everyone whatever their age.

### **Tutor's comment**

This is a well-presented review of a good length but it does have some spelling and grammatical problems. The piece does show good punctuation skills and connectives are well used. This pupil has made the review personal enough and has highlighted both the positive (it is exciting) and how to overcome the negative (suggesting it could be read out). They have made it clear that people of any age would enjoy the poem and even suggests a time when it is read out – Christmas Eve. Adding the names of the reindeer and including some of the descriptive elements gives us a flavour of the poem and would encourage others to read it. This pupil needs to build spelling and grammar skills and then to practise further writing exercises to build confidence in other writing styles. 28/40

## ● Practice activity for writing reviews, page 31

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**20** Write a 250-word review of the relationship between two or more characters in a piece of literature that you have read. In particular, think about:

- what you find interesting or surprising about their relationship
- how important you think their relationship is to the plot
- how the characters make you feel.

*My favourite book is 'Why the Whales Came' by Michael Morpurgo and the relationship between Gracie, Daniel and the mad Birdman is central to the story.*

*Gracie and Daniel are best friends and they do everything together. When they look for some water to sail their boats on they end up on the forbidden beach. It is forbidden because that is where the Birdman lives.*

*Because they were warned never to talk to the Birdman it surprised me that they did, but the children soon realised that he wasn't mad. They think that he looks strange as he wears a black cloak and a tall, pointed hat but he is just different to other people. The two friends do befriend the Birdman and the two children and the Birdman work together to solve the Samson Curse.*

*The relationship between the two friends and the Birdman is critical to the plot because otherwise they would be unable to solve the curse and Gracie would not get her father back. The two children and the Birdman have to trust each other and they do overcome their initial wariness.*

*As I read the book I felt protective of the two children and scared for them as they might get into trouble. The Birdman sounded scary at first but then I felt very sorry for him because he isn't really mad at all. I was glad that the children became friends with him because then the other islanders would stop being so horrible to him.*

### Tutor's comment

This piece does answer the bullet points and remains focused on the question. This pupil has a good understanding of spellings and grammar with some difficult words such as 'wariness', 'protective' and 'befriend' used. This pupil now needs to practise a range of writing exercises to build upon these skills. It is also worth looking at the section on varying sentence lengths as the balance between shorter and longer sentences do make writing more interesting. 30/40

## ● Practice activity for writing debates, page 33

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- 21** Do you think that children should only have to study the subjects that they like at school? Explain your answer in 350 words.

I think that it would be much better if children only had to study the subjects that they like at school. If the school had lots of lessons that we could choose from we could pick as many as we like and only have to study them so that we would get much better at subjects we like. This would be good for the future because then pupils could get a job that they like as they would know everything about that subject rather than not knowing much because they had to study subjects that they didn't like.

I also think that if pupils could study just the subjects that they liked, they would be in school more as they wouldn't want to miss their favourite subject. That would be better for mums and dads who have to look after their children when they are not in school and it would be better for teachers as pupils would always be in their lessons.

It would also be better for teachers as pupils would behave more if they like their subject so the teacher wouldn't have to shout as much and the pupils would do better and get more stickers and awards and the school would do really well. It might mean that lots of parents would send their children to the school that let pupils pick the subjects that they like.

My dad would let me go to a school where I could pick the subjects that I like because then I would play football all morning and then do history in the afternoon and then I might choose science sometimes as I like science when we do exciting things like take flowers apart or when we put sugar or salt into water to see which dissolves. Then I would get even better at football and science and history for when I am older and leave school.

So I think that it would be much better for pupils to just pick the subjects that they like and to only study them in school. That way the teachers, the parents and the pupils would all be much happier.

### Tutor's comment

This pupil has listed all of the reasons that support the question but it is not balanced with reasons against. A debate needs to consider both sides so this pupil needs to revise the section on writing a debate. A plan that lists the reasons for and against would be the next step, so some further practise at debate writing is needed. This pupil also needs to look at the 'Develop language skills' section, especially the advice on using synonyms to find alternative ways to express sentences. For example, there are 11 uses of the word 'like' in this piece so perhaps try a 'Verb Clock' to develop a wider range of words. 15/40

## ● Practice activity for writing debates, page 33

?

- 22** Selling off half of your school playground (to enable the car park for the local supermarket to be expanded) is the best way for the school to pay for a new IT suite. Discuss this statement in no more than 400 words.

*With the need for pupils to develop strong IT skills, it is imperative that a school has the facilities to offer this. Building a new IT suite in our school would be one step of achieving this aim and all of the pupils would benefit from this facility. A specialist IT suite would be a real selling point for our school.*

*The only problem with developing the IT suite would be a lack of financial resources. One suggestion for solving this dilemma would be to sell off half of the school playground to the neighbouring supermarket. This would generate the money required, but it would also leave our modest playground even smaller.*

*There is a government drive to improve the health of children and the school playground is so important in achieving this. Unless pupils can run around at playtime, the amount of exercise they get is insufficient. We cannot solve that problem by taking away the very resource that provides this critical health benefit.*

*Many children have parents who fund extra-curricular exercise classes, and have access to large gardens to run around in, but other parents could not afford exercise classes and only have access to a tiny back yard. This was not too bad as we had the local park, but since that has been turned into a supermarket, where are these children supposed to get their exercise?*

*I would argue whether or not other alternatives have been considered. Is it possible to raise the money via PTA events? Could parents be directly asked to contribute to the costs or could pupils take part in a range of money making ventures to secure the capital needed? Would it be possible to sell off half of the playground and then to convert the teacher's car park into another playground?*

*In conclusion I feel that until all other options have been explored, we cannot simply sell off one vital resource to fund another. We need to decide whether it is more important to have pupils with fantastic IT skills, or pupils with a healthy lifestyle. We can improve our IT skills throughout life but we can never make up for poor health choices at an age when our growth is at a critical stage. An IT suite is a wonderful resource but not at the expense of our health.*

### **Tutor's comment**

This pupil shows excellent spelling and grammatical skills, a wide range of vocabulary and a secure understanding of a debate. Both sides of the argument are balanced before a personal point of view is reached and full marks have been awarded to this pupil for a thoughtful, well-crafted piece of writing. Further writing exercises in other styles would consolidate these strong skills. 40/40