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Using the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary to improve your writing

Whether you are writing a business email or a long research essay, your dictionary can be a powerful tool to assist you in becoming a better writer in English.

1. Using the main part of the dictionary

You can use the main A–Z of the dictionary to help you:

- Choose your words carefully. Many words in English have similar or related meanings, but are used in different contexts or situations.

Look carefully at the example sentences provided in the entries for words you want to use. Also look at any **synonym notes**, **vocabulary notes** and **topic notes** to help you choose the most appropriate word. If you need academic vocabulary, look for the **AW** symbol.

- Combine words naturally and effectively. In English, certain pairs of words go together and sound natural to native speakers (for example, *heavy rain*)—and others do not (*strong rain*). This is called **collocation**. Information on which words collocate with one another can be found in the example sentences in the dictionary entries.

Look up the key nouns you have used in your writing to check which verbs or adjectives are usually used with them.

- Become more flexible. Rather than repeating the same word or phrase many times in your work, try to find other ways to express your ideas.

Look for the **SYN** symbol to find synonyms and also study the **synonyms notes**. Look for **word families** and try using words in the same family that are different parts of speech (e.g. *different*, adjective and *differ*, verb). For example, you could write: *French is different from English in this respect*. You could also express this: *French differs from English in this respect*.

- Edit and check your work. You can use your dictionary to check any problem areas such as spelling, parts of speech, irregular forms, grammar, phrasal verbs and prepositions.

2. Using the Writing Tutor

In the following pages you will find examples of essays and practical types of writing that you can use as models for your own work. You will also find advice about planning, organizing and writing each type of text.

• Examples of written texts.

Look carefully at:

- the structure and organization of the text
- the way ideas and paragraphs are linked
- the language and style
- the notes on particular points

• Tips

These are quick reminders and advice to help when you are writing.

• Language banks

give you some useful phrases that you can use in each type of writing.

Check that you are familiar with these phrases and know how to use them correctly.

You can add other phrases when you meet them in your reading. In the main part of the dictionary there are more notes like this which give you further phrases and examples to show you how to use them. (For example, look at the note at 'however')

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The Writing Process

Each individual writer has their own aims and needs and their own way of approaching various parts of the writing process. However, whether you are writing a short essay, an article, a report or a research paper, the overall process is generally the same.

1 Preliminary Phase

Ask yourself some planning questions that will help guide the rest of the process.

What is the purpose of this piece of writing?

For example:

- To answer a specific essay, examination or research question
- To convince others of your point of view
- To communicate your knowledge or understanding to others, such as a teacher or an examiner

Who is my audience?

For example:

- A teacher or professor
- Fellow students or colleagues
- An employer
- The general public

The answers (you may have more than one purpose or type of audience) will help you to choose the appropriate level of formality. They will also help you make decisions about the amount of research required, as well as the kinds of examples and supporting evidence you will use.

Organize

After carrying out your research, you can draft a thesis (your main argument, statement or idea) to guide you.

Then, using your notes, make a detailed outline of the logical plan of your essay, article or report to support this thesis, giving a structure to your writing before you begin to write.

- Decide roughly how many words you will give to each part of your essay/report.
- Collect or prepare any visual aids such as charts or diagrams that you might need.

3 Writing Phase

In this phase, you will draft and revise several times until you have what you consider to be a final draft.

Draft

Write your draft in formal sentences and paragraphs.

- Remain focused on your thesis or main idea. If you do change this, go back and adapt your original plan to ensure that your essay/report continues to support the new thesis.
- Follow your outline, modifying it if necessary.
- In early drafts, concentrate on structure rather than spelling and punctuation.

Review/Edit

In this step, you read your writing with a critical eye.

In early drafts, ask yourself:

- Have you answered the question or achieved your original purpose?
- Have you introduced your subject, developed it logically and come to a conclusion?
- Is your supporting evidence appropriate and complete? Do you need more examples, statistics or quotes?
- Have you used headings to help the reader, if appropriate?
- Are the relationships between ideas clear and clearly signalled to the reader?
- Is each part the right length for the demands of the topic – with no part too long?

2 Pre-Writing Phase

Explore

Brainstorm for ideas using whatever method suits you best:

- Mind maps
- Lists of interesting concepts, facts, questions, etc.
- Conversations with colleagues

Research

Next, research your topic and gather information from a variety of sources:

- Books and journals
- The media
- Websites
- Interviews or questionnaires
- Scientific studies

When you read sources, take detailed notes and keep an accurate record of each source.
(Look at page WT10.)

In later drafts, ask yourself:

- Have you used paragraph breaks well?
- Is the level of formality appropriate for your readers?
- Have you chosen your words carefully, using correct collocations?
- Have you avoided repeating the same words or phrases too often (except technical terms)?
- Have you met any word count requirements?

If possible, ask someone else to read your text.

After each review, return to the drafting step, revising and editing your writing as necessary.

Using sources in essays

Ask yourself:

Have you quoted or mentioned sources to support your points?

Have you used the citation style recommended by your teachers or institution?

Have you listed your references in the style recommended?

(Look also at page WT11.)

What makes writing formal?

Whatever type of text you are writing, your aim should always be to express your ideas clearly and in a way that your readers can easily understand.

When you read, notice the kind of language that is used in the type of writing you need to do.

To make your writing more formal, consider:

1. Word choice.

- It is usually best to use standard English words and phrases, that is, those with no label in the dictionary.
- Only use words and phrases marked *formal* if you are sure they are appropriate.
- Avoid anything marked *informal*, *slang*, *offensive*, etc.
- Use suitable synonyms for common words such as *do*, *put*, *get*, *make*. e.g. *Several operations were carried out/ performed* (not done).
- Words that are frequently used in academic writing are marked **AW** in the dictionary.

2. Short forms

- Avoid contracted forms (e.g. *haven't*, *I'm*) and abbreviations (e.g. *ad – advertisement*)

3. Sentence structure

- In formal writing you are likely to be expressing complex ideas. To do this you will need to write sentences using relative pronouns (e.g. *which*, *that*), subordinating conjunctions (e.g. *although*, *because*, *if*) and coordinating conjunctions (e.g. *and*, *but*, *or*).
- Very long sentences with many clauses can be difficult to understand. Aim for **clarity**.

Academic writing

This tends to be **impersonal** in style in order to be objective. This makes it sound formal. When you read in your subject, notice how the writers express themselves. The following points may help you in your writing:

- Limit the use of the **first person pronouns** (*I* and *we*). Rather than *In this study I aim to...*, write: *This study aims to...* or *The aim of this study is to...* Look at how *I* and *we* are used in your subject area. Avoid using *you*.
- **Passive forms** are often used as they focus attention on the verb, not the person e.g. *A study was conducted to see...; It can be argued that...*
- Patterns with **it** and **an adjective** are often used: *It is clear that...; It is necessary to...*
- **Nouns** are often used as subjects of active verbs: *The results show that...*
- **Complex noun phrases** with prepositions are very common: *The advantages of X are...; the use of light treatment in 95 patients with...*

4 Presentation Phase

Proofread

When you have a final draft of your writing, you will need to read it once more to find and correct surface errors.

Tip

- Try to leave some time between your final draft and proofreading as you will find it easier to see your mistakes.

Check for

- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammatical mistakes.

You may find it helpful to ask someone else to proofread your final draft as a last step.

Format

Check with your teacher or tutor how you should present your work in terms of:

- Font size • Margins • Line spacing
- Paper size

Examinations

In an exam, you will not have time for all these stages, but your answers will be more successful if you:

- brainstorm ideas
- organize and plan
- re-read, check and edit

Answering the question

At all times, you must ensure that you really understand an examination question or assignment title and address all the required parts.

Questions can be considered in terms of three main components:

- Topic
- Scope and focus
- Question type

Topic

The topic(s) of the question will usually be clear from the question itself. For example:
Explain the process of photosynthesis.

When you write your answer think about why the examiner has chosen to ask about this topic.

Scope and focus

Often, the wording of the question will include a word or phrase that either limits or expands the topic in a very specific way. These phrases show you the focus of the question. Try to avoid common mistakes, such as:

- **Covering too broad an area.** For example, if the question asks about textile mills in the American South in the 1930s, think very carefully about including information about the 1920s or 1940s, or about textile mills in other parts of the country.
- **Writing with too narrow a focus.** For example, if you are asked about the impact of climate change on South America, you should not write about its impact only on Brazil.
- **Including irrelevant information.** For example, if you are asked about using nuclear power as an energy source, you should not write about wind or solar power.
- **Only answering half of the question.** For example, if the question asks *What other effects will a reduction in air travel have and will the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?* you need to discuss both questions.

Question types

The depth and type of information that you provide in your answer depends on the kind of question being asked. The table on the next page shows the key words that might appear in different types of questions.

IELTS Academic Writing

1. Knowledge Questions

These ask you to recall important facts and are the simplest question.

- Task 1: This is usually a combination of comprehension and analysis questions: *Summarize the information... and make comparisons where relevant.*
- Task 2: This is usually an evaluation question: *At what age should young people be considered adults? Explain your position.*

2. Comprehension Questions

These ask you to demonstrate your understanding of concepts. You must clearly show that you understand the ideas and theories that underlie the facts.

3. Application Questions

Here you use your knowledge of facts and concepts to address a specific problem. These questions require you to move beyond simple recollection.

4. Analysis Questions

These examine relationships between/among various facts and concepts.

5. Synthesis Questions

These ask you to create a new product or structure in written form.

6. Evaluation Questions

These ask you to make value judgments and present your own opinions. This kind of question is very common in academic work. It is important to support your opinions by citing the work and views of experts in the field, if possible.

Question Types

Level of Difficulty	1. Knowledge Questions	2. Comprehension Questions	3. Application Questions	4. Analysis Questions	5. Synthesis Questions	6. Evaluation Questions
	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outline define describe 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain summarize illustrate restate 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply show solve 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze compare contrast distinguish differentiate subdivide 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> design plan construct create prioritize compose 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce develop invent combine explore
	Example: <i>Compare the merits of 'renting' and 'squatting' as solutions to housing problems for the poor in cities in the developing world.</i>	Example: <i>Design an experiment to investigate whether listening to music improves students' performance in their studies.</i>	Example: <i>Show how a national minimum wage will affect levels of unemployment and total output.</i>	Example: <i>Discuss the argument that the use of force in self-defence is justifiable.</i>	Example: <i>Show how a national minimum wage will affect levels of unemployment and total output.</i>	Example: <i>Give three examples of human activities that have major effects on our climate.</i>
	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outline define describe 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain summarize illustrate restate 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply show solve 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze compare contrast distinguish differentiate subdivide 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> design plan construct create prioritize compose 	Key verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce develop invent combine explore
	Example: <i>Define the term 'muscle tone' and describe how it can help good posture.</i>	Example: <i>Give three examples of human activities that have major effects on our climate.</i>	Example: <i>Show how a national minimum wage will affect levels of unemployment and total output.</i>	Example: <i>Discuss the argument that the use of force in self-defence is justifiable.</i>	Example: <i>Show how a national minimum wage will affect levels of unemployment and total output.</i>	Example: <i>Give three examples of human activities that have major effects on our climate.</i>

Writing a comparison essay

You may often need to **compare** and **contrast** things in exams, academic essays, work and everyday life. Here is an example of a comparison essay.

Paragraph 1—Introduction

- 1**Sentences 1 and 2 catch the reader's interest.
- 2**The next sentence gives a definition of the two types of school. (Note: a definition is optional)
- 3**The 4th sentence indicates the scope of the essay and leads to the next paragraph.

Paragraph 2—Similarities

Aims, teaching and assessment

The writer notes 2 similarities here before emphasizing 5 differences in paragraphs 3–5.

Paragraph 3—Difference 1

The curriculum

Despite these similarities indicates that the writer is now going to list the differences.

Paragraph 4—Difference 2

Quality of teachers

Paragraph 5—Differences

3–5 Class size, discipline and academic standards

Paragraph 6—Conclusion

- 1**The first sentence summarizes the findings in paragraphs 2–5.
- 2**The second sentence gives the writer's personal opinion.

Key

Blue shows ways of introducing similarities

Yellow shows ways of introducing contrasts

Are private schools better than state schools? Discuss.

For parents, few things are more important than their child's education. In many countries, parents of school-age children can choose to send their child to a private school rather than to a state school.¹ In this essay, state schools are defined as those that do not charge tuition fees because they are funded and run by local or central government; private schools, **on the other hand**, are funded almost entirely by the fees that they charge.² Before deciding where to educate their child, parents need to examine the **differences between** the two types of school, particularly as regards the curriculum, the quality of tuition and student achievement.³

Private and state schools are comparable in some respects.

Like state schools, private schools aim to develop the knowledge, skills and character of students, in order to prepare them for their future lives. Both types of school are also very similar in the way they organize their teaching and assessment, using terms or semesters with assessments at the end of the academic year.

Despite these similarities, there are a number of **marked differences** in the way that state and private schools operate. The range of subjects taught at state schools is largely limited by the demands of the national curriculum. **In contrast**, private schools can offer a greater choice of subjects, because they generally have **more** money to spend on equipment, technology and staff **than** state schools do.

Teachers working within the state system must have recognized teaching qualifications and are paid according to a national scale. Private schools, **however**, are in a position to offer **higher** salaries and may therefore be able to attract subject specialists who have **considerable expertise** in their field.

In general, it is true to say that while state schools have a **high student-teacher ratio**, private schools tend to offer **smaller** classes. This may lead to **better** discipline in private schools with the result that students may achieve somewhat **higher** academic standards.

It is clear, therefore, that there are significant **differences between** private and state schools, and that private schools may offer advantages.¹ The benefits of private schooling must, **however**, be **balanced against** the cost involved and each family's budget priorities.²

Collocations: adjectives + nouns

To find interesting and appropriate adjectives to use with nouns, look up the nouns in the dictionary: e.g. *difference; expertise; ratio; standard*

Collocations: prepositions

To find the correct preposition to use after a verb or noun, look up the word in the dictionary: e.g. *difference; balance*

Preparing to write

- Brainstorm ideas about similarities and differences. For example, arrange points in a table:

Characteristics	State Schools	Private Schools	Similar or different?
Funding	Government	Fees	Different
Class size	Usually large	Usually smaller	Different

- **Highlight the similarities and the differences** and decide which are more important.
For this essay the differences are more important.
- **Choose which points to include** in the essay and which to leave out.
- Decide how to **define** the two things you are comparing. Here *funding* formed the basis of the definition.
- Choose the **organization structure** (see below). Here **Type A1** was used.

<p>Shorter essays</p> <p>Type A1: to emphasize the differences Introduction Similarities of X and Y Differences between X and Y Conclusion or Type A2: To emphasize the similarities, reverse the second and third sections.</p>	<p>OR Type B1: Introduction Characteristics of X Characteristics of Y Show how Y is similar to or different from X Conclusion</p>
<p>Longer essays</p> <p>Type C1 Introduction Aspect 1: compare X and Y Aspect 2: compare X and Y (and so on) Conclusion</p>	<p>OR Type A1 or A2 above.</p>

Language bank

<p>Similarities</p> <p>X... Similarly, Y... Both X and Y... X... Y also... Both + plural noun...e.g. Both types of school... Like X, Y... e.g. Like state schools, private schools... X and Y are similar in that they both... X is similar to Y in terms of / with regard to... X resembles Y in that they both... X is the same as Y.</p>	<p>Differences</p> <p>X... On the other hand, Y... / Y, on the other hand,... Unlike X, Y... X... In contrast, Y... / While X..., Y... X..., while Y... X... However, Y... / X... Y, however,... X differs from Y in terms of / with regard to... (e.g. their sources of funding.) X is different from / contrasts with Y in that... X..., whereas Y... / Whereas X..., Y...</p>
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Being more precise:

Similarities

X is almost / nearly / virtually / just / exactly / precisely the same as Y.
X and Y are very / rather / quite similar.

Differences

X is slightly / a little / somewhat smaller than Y.
X is much / considerably smaller than Y.
X and Y are completely / totally / entirely / quite different.
X and Y are not quite / exactly / entirely the same.

Writing an argument essay

Many essays that you have to write, whether during your school or college course or in an examination, will require you to present a reasoned argument on a particular issue. This will often be based on your research into the

topic, but some questions may ask you to give your opinion. In both cases your argument must be clearly organized and supported with information, evidence and reasons. The language tends to be formal and impersonal.

Paragraph 1—Introduction

- 1 Introduces the topic.
- 2 States the focus of the essay.

Paragraph 2—Introduces the argument

The first point (manned missions are not cost effective) with a quote from an expert to give authority.

¹ This is a useful way to introduce a quotation.

Paragraph 3—Development

Reasons and data are given to support the writer's point of view.

Paragraph 4—Development

Introduces the second point (unmanned projects are more scientifically productive).

Paragraph 5—Counterargument

¹ Presents the argument: *Some may argue* suggests that the writer will go on to argue against this position.

² Refutes it. *However* introduces the argument against ¹.

Paragraph 6—Conclusion

Summarizes the writer's points and states his/her conclusion on the title.

¹ *Thus* introduces the conclusion.

² *I would argue that* clearly shows the writer's position.

'Manned space missions should now be replaced with unmanned missions.' Discuss.

It is clear that the study of space and the planets is by nature expensive. Scientists and politicians must constantly attempt to balance costs with potential research benefits.¹ A major question to be considered is whether the benefits of manned space flight are worth the costs.²

For Nobel Prize-winning physicist Steven Weinberg the answer is clear. As he noted in 2007¹ in a lecture at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore. 'Human beings don't serve any useful function in space. They radiate heat, they're very expensive to keep alive, and unlike robotic missions, they have a natural desire to come back, so that anything involving human beings is enormously expensive.'

Unmanned missions are much less expensive than manned, having no requirement for airtight compartments, food or life support systems. They are also lighter and therefore require less fuel and launch equipment. According to NASA, the 1992 manned Space Shuttle Endeavor cost \$1.7 billion to build and requires approximately \$450 million for each launch. In contrast, the entire unmanned Voyager mission from 1972 until 1989, when it observed Neptune, cost only \$865 million.

In addition to their relative cost effectiveness, unmanned projects generally yield a much greater volume of data. While manned flights have yet to extend beyond the orbit of Earth's moon, unmanned missions have explored almost our entire solar system, and have recently observed an Earth-like planet in a nearby solar system. Manned missions would neither be able to travel so far, be away so long, nor collect so much data while at the same time guaranteeing the astronauts' safe return.

Some may argue that only manned space flight possesses the ability to inspire and engage the general population, providing much-needed momentum for continued governmental funding and educational interest in mathematics and the sciences.¹ However, media coverage of recent projects such as the Mars Rover, the Titan moon lander, and the Hubble telescope's photographs of extrasolar planets demonstrates that unmanned missions clearly have the ability to attract and hold public interest.²

Thus,¹ taking into account the lower cost, the greater quantity of data and widespread popular support, I would argue that² for now, at least, unmanned space missions undoubtedly yield the most value in terms of public spending.

Linking words and phrases guide the reader through the argument and show the writer's opinion.

Adverbs can be used to show your opinion.

These phrases make the argument less personal and more objective.

Experts are quoted to support the argument.

Preparing to write

WT9

- Brainstorm your ideas on the question, read and research the topic (unless in an examination). Which do you think are the strongest arguments? Decide what your viewpoint will be.
- Select 2 or 3 strong ideas on each side, with supporting examples, ideas or evidence. For some questions you can use evidence from your personal experience.
- Decide how to organize your essay to persuade readers of your case.
- Note down some useful vocabulary on the topic.

Structure 1 (used in the model essay)	Structure 2
Introduction	Introduction
Arguments for your case + supporting evidence, examples or reasons	Argument 1: + supporting evidence, examples or reasons
Arguments against + evidence	Counterargument
Evaluation of arguments	Argument 2: + supporting evidence, examples or reasons
Summary and conclusion	Counterargument (and so on)
<i>It is possible to reverse arguments for and against.</i>	Evaluation of arguments
	Summary and conclusion

Tips

- Look carefully at the **title or question** and make sure you really answer it.
- Use **general statements** to convey the main ideas, and then provide **evidence, examples, details and reasons** to support these statements.
- Use **paragraph divisions and connecting words and phrases** to make the structure of your essay clear to your readers.
- For **language** to help you structure your argument, look at the notes at 'addition', 'first'.

Showing your position

When you write an argument essay, you can show what your opinion is on the issue or question without using personal phrases such as *I think...*

or *In my opinion,....* You can do this by choosing words carefully as you write. Some examples are given below. Look out for more in your reading.

Language bank

Adjectives important, major, serious, significant e.g. <i>An important point to consider is...; This was a highly significant discovery.</i>	Verbs These help show how certain you are about a point or an argument. Modal verbs: can, could; may, might; will, would (<i>the first of each pair is most certain</i>) Compare: <i>I argue that...</i> (very certain). <i>I would argue that...</i> (not so certain) It + verb: It appears that, It seems that... It + passive verb: It can be seen that...; It should/must be noted/emphasized that... Showing verbs: show, indicate, demonstrate, suggest, imply (<i>These have a non-human subject</i>) Arguing verbs: argue, suggest, consider, conclude (<i>These can have a human subject e.g. I</i>)
Patterns with It + adjective clear, likely, possible, surprising, evident e.g. <i>It is clear that the study of space is expensive.</i> important, difficult, necessary, possible, interesting e.g. <i>It is important to consider the practical effects of these measures.</i>	Adverbs and phrases clearly, indeed, in fact, of course generally, usually, mainly, widely perhaps, probably, certainly, possibly rarely, sometimes, often e.g. <i>Clearly, this is a serious issue that deserves further study.</i> <i>This book is generally held to be her greatest novel.</i>

Writing a longer essay or dissertation

When you have a longer essay or dissertation to write, you will go through the same process of preparing and writing as for shorter essays.
(Look at page WT2.) However, there are additional things to bear in mind.

The title

If your title or a question has been given to you, check that you understand exactly what it means. (Pages WT4–5). If you are writing the title yourself, choose a clear title with definite boundaries.

Ask yourself:

- How can I define my subject so that it is not too wide in scope?

e.g. Not *How does Dickens reflect Victorian society in his novels?* but *How does Little Dorrit reflect Dickens's view of Victorian society?*

Reading and research: evaluate your sources

The quality of your research will play a vital part in the success of your writing. Keep the question or title in mind when you look for source material in books, journals or websites.

Ask yourself:

- Is the content relevant?
- Is it reliable? Is it written by someone who is an expert in the field?
- Is it biased in any way?
- Is there evidence to support information on anonymous websites?

If you are using surveys, questionnaires, market research or other studies, look carefully at the statistics and consider if the results are valid and the conclusions justified.

Making notes

When you are reading, make clear, accurate notes which summarize the key points and main information. Keep a note of the full reference for your source (title, author, date, publisher and page numbers).

Ask yourself:

- Have I summarized the information accurately?
- Is this part particularly useful? If so, have I written down the exact words used and the page number, so that I can quote it?

Planning and organizing

A long text is usually divided into sections with subheadings and it has a list of references or a bibliography at the end.

When you plan your work, ask yourself:

- How long should my text and each part be?
- Have I organized my notes, grouping together writers who have made similar points?
- Do I agree with their opinions?
- What is the point I want to make to my readers?
- What do I want my readers to know by the end?
- Have I planned what to write in the introduction, body and conclusion?

Using other people's ideas

When you have finished writing, look carefully at how you have used other people's words and ideas.

Ask yourself:

- Have I considered and discussed other people's ideas adequately?
- Have I paraphrased their ideas accurately?
- Have I made it clear which words/ideas are mine and whose words/ideas I have quoted?
- Have I included in my list of references all the works I have used and referred to?

Dissertations

A dissertation may differ from a long essay in the way in which it is organized. Check with your tutor. A dissertation will usually have all or some of the following chapters or parts:

- Title
- Contents
- Abstract (*a short text summarizing your dissertation*)
- Introductory chapter (broad to narrow focus: *to give the background, justify your research, explain your approach, give major arguments and current ideas on your topic and show the structure of your dissertation*)
- Review of the literature
- Methodology (*how you carried out any empirical research*)
- Results/findings
- Discussion
- Conclusion (narrow to broad focus: *a summary of your arguments and an evaluation of your work; further research needed*)
- Bibliography or list of references

Quoting and writing a bibliography

If you use the words or ideas of another person, you must always say where these have come from. If you do not, you might be accused of **plagiarism** (= copying another person's ideas or words and pretending that they are yours).

1. Author-date (Harvard) system

Used especially in social and physical sciences.

In the essay or dissertation

In your text, give the family name of the author or editor of the book or article you are referring to and the year of publication in brackets after your quotation or statement.

For example:

Dialects are not inferior. Most linguists agree that 'a standard language is not linguistically better.' (Swan, 2005:52).

Mason (1995) describes the procedure for a teacher to evaluate each student quickly during an oral presentation.

Give both authors if there are two, but if there are more, cite the first author and add 'et al.' (= and others):

(Mason and Wood 2008) or (Mason *et al.*, 2008).

Give the full reference in your bibliography.

The bibliography

In this system, it is often called **References** and is a list of the works that you have mentioned in your text. Give the full reference.

Swan, Michael. (2005) *Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

You need to write:

- The surname of the author or editor, followed by the initials or first name
- The year of publication in brackets
- The title of the book, in *italics* or underlined

Other examples

These apply to both systems, but in the author-date system, the year will go after the author's name.

Books

If the book is **edited**:

Wehmeier, S. ed. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. 7th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005

For an **article** in an edited book or journal:

Johns, A.M., and T. Dudley-Evans, 'English for Specific Purposes: International in Scope, Specific in Purpose', *TESOL Quarterly* 25 (2), 1991, 297–314.

Mention the author briefly in the essay and then at the end write a full reference in your **bibliography** or list of references. Different institutions have different styles for this, so check to see the method and punctuation to use, and be consistent.

- The edition number if it is not the first edition
- The place of publication (sometimes omitted)
- The publisher

2. Footnote/endnote system

This is a common style to use in writing on arts subjects. One version is described here.

In the essay or dissertation

Give details of the source in a numbered **footnote** at the bottom of the page, or at the end of the essay in an **endnote**. Put the same number in your text after the reference:

Phillips suggests that "parts of the city have remained untouched by the influences of modern life"¹. He goes on to say that "it is unlike any city in the world"².

Footnote

¹ Patrick Phillips, *A Brief Guide to Rome* (London: Spire Press, 2001) p.36.

If your next quote is from the same source you can just write **ibid.** and the page number:

² *ibid.* p.38

Later references can be shorter:

²³Phillips, *Guide to Rome*, pp.56–60

The bibliography

Give a full list of references at the end of your text, in alphabetical order by the authors' names. Use this order:

Phillips, Patrick, *A Brief Guide to Rome*. London: Spire Press, 2001

Newspaper articles

Fennell, E. 'How is the recession hitting lawyers?' *The Times*, 31 July 2008, p.54.

Electronic resources

Include as much detail as you can find.

In your **text**, cite by author if known, otherwise by title or URL, and the year if possible: (Directgov, 2008).

In your **bibliography** give the author, the title, volume/page, type of medium, date and publishing organization. Provide the URL and the date you last accessed the page: Directgov. 2008. <<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm>> accessed 27 October 2009.

Oral presentations

You may have to give an oral presentation or talk as part of your academic course, for an examination or at work. In many ways, preparing a talk is similar to preparing an essay. The guidelines below apply to most types of talk.

Preparing an oral presentation

Good preparation is the most important factor for a successful presentation.

1. First steps

- Check the **time** allowed for your talk and any **guidelines** you have been given.
- Think about the **purpose** of your talk: is it to inform, to entertain or to persuade your audience?
- Think about the **audience**. Who are they? How much do they already know? How much do you need to tell them? What will interest them?
- Decide on the **topic** if you do not know this already. If you do, decide on the specific area that you will present. Be realistic about how much you can cover in the time allowed.
- Collect** your ideas and gather more information if you need to.

2. Writing your talk

- Make notes on what you want to include. Think about what you *must* tell the audience, what you *should* tell them and what you *would like* to tell them if you have time.
- Produce an outline or a plan of your talk.

Tips

- Structure** your talk as you would an essay: have an introduction, a middle and a conclusion.
- Use **headings** to show the different sections of your talk.

- Some people prefer to write out the whole talk like an essay. If you do this, it is better not to read this when you give your talk, but make notes as below and talk from those.

3. Producing notes

- Make notes in English on cards that you can refer to while you are speaking.
- Open with an introduction to the title and an overview of what you want to say:

<p>The benefits of learning a foreign language</p> <p>Show OHT/Slide 1</p> <p>Intro: Good morning. My talk today examines the benefits of learning a foreign language.</p> <p>Overview: I intend to outline 3 imp. benefits of learning another lang.</p>	<p>The benefits of learning a foreign language</p> <p>Show OHT/Slide 2</p> <p>The first benefit I shall describe is practical – communicate with other nationalities</p> <p>A further benefit is increased cultural understanding – breaks down barriers / bridges gap between cultures.</p> <p>The final benefit that I shall describe is improved cognitive skills – research shows → brain power</p>	<p>Number note card.</p> <p>Note the number of the visual you will show.</p> <p>Write out and highlight key words and phrases to guide your audience through your talk.</p>
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- Try to get the attention of your audience at the beginning with e.g. a story, joke or surprising fact.
- Close** with a summary and an invitation for people to ask questions.
- Some people find it helpful to write out the whole introduction and conclusion.

4. Preparing visual aids

Visual aids help you to communicate your talk to the audience, if they are prepared carefully and used well.

Tips

- If you use PowerPoint™ or OHTs (overhead transparencies), writing and diagrams must be large and clear.
- Do not put too much information on each slide.
- If you use posters or pictures, check that the people at the back of the room will be able to see/read them.
- Avoid writing/drawing things on a whiteboard during your talk.

Examples of OHTs

The benefits of learning a foreign language Three main benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical uses• Increased cultural understanding• Improved cognitive skills	2	Leave lots of white space. Use headings and bullets to show the relationship between ideas. Use notes, not sentences.	The benefits of learning a foreign language 1. Practical uses for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel• Work• Study	3
---	---	---	---	---

5. Practising your talk

The more you practise, the more confident you will feel and the better your talk will be.

- First, practise your talk alone several times until you can speak fluently and confidently from your notes and keep to the time allowed.
- Then practise with one or more friends listening. Is the talk clear? Is your voice loud and clear? Are you looking at the audience?
- If you can, practise at least once with the equipment you will use.
- Use your dictionary or dictionary CD-ROM to check pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

6. Preparing for questions

- Try to predict some of the questions your audience may ask you and practise your answers.

Language bank

Introduction <i>Good morning. My talk today examines... The subject/title of my talk/paper is... Hello. Today I'm going to talk about/discuss...</i>	Changing the subject <i>So, I have discussed... Now I'd like to turn to... Moving on to the next/second/last benefit...</i>
Explaining structure <i>In this talk I intend to outline... In my talk I will discuss the main features of.... I am going to examine three benefits/advantages of...</i>	Concluding <i>So, I have talked about... To sum up/summarize: in my talk I have... In conclusion, I believe it is clear that... To conclude: the benefits I have described in my talk are important and therefore I consider that...</i>
Introducing each point <i>The first/second/next/last point/area... I would like to discuss is... I want to begin by looking at... I'd now like to look at another/the second benefit of...</i>	Answering difficult questions <i>"I'm sorry, I don't quite understand your question. Could you repeat it?" "Well, I'm not sure about that, but I think..."</i>

Writing a summary

A summary is a shortened version of a text containing only the key information. The aim is to present readers with a short, clear account of the ideas in the text. Summary writing is an important skill in both academic and business contexts. Follow the steps in order to write a successful summary.

Preparing to write

Select the key information:

- Read the text carefully, looking up words you don't know. It is important to understand the whole sequence of the argument. Ask yourself what the text is about. Think about the purpose of your summary and what your readers need to know.
- **Highlight the key information** (the main ideas). Omit details such as examples, quotations, information in brackets, repetitions, figures of speech and most figures and statistics.
- Underline any information which you are not sure about. Only include it in your summary if you have space.
- Make notes on the key information in your own words.

Are we living in a surveillance society?

The number of CCTV (or closed-circuit television) cameras in Britain has grown enormously in recent years. There are now more than 4 million, which makes an astonishing one camera for every 14 people.

CCTV has been used for many years for the surveillance of public areas associated with an obvious security risk, such as military installations, airports, casinos and banks. However, since the 1990s, there has been a huge increase in the surveillance of everyday locations such as city and town centres, car parks, shops and traffic. Added to this, more and more individuals are buying their own consumer CCTV systems for personal or commercial use. The most common function of these systems is to survey the area in front of a house or business and record any antisocial or criminal behaviour. People who buy these systems range from wealthy individuals who are afraid of being targeted by burglars, to people who are not wealthy at all but who live in high-crime areas, such as inner cities, and are trying to protect themselves.

For some people, the huge increase in public surveillance is a threat to the individual's civil liberties and is a sign that society is becoming increasingly authoritarian. They argue that the individual's right to privacy and right to live anonymously is an important aspect of being British. They also fear that present or future governments might abuse the information gathered by surveillance in order to manipulate, control or persecute the population, as happens in George Orwell's novel *1984*.

Individuals and groups in favour of CCTV, including the police, believe that it is a valuable weapon against crime. In fact, there is no strong evidence that CCTV reduces crime overall. It may act as a deterrent in certain locations, but the crime is displaced to another location. It is not even always a good deterrent. Many criminals aren't afraid of CCTV because they know that the cameras may not be running, or that no one is likely to be watching the screens. Few crimes are solved through CCTV. Sometimes CCTV footage is analysed retrospectively to identify criminals after a crime has taken place, but even this process is enormously time-consuming and expensive. One promising new development is the computer monitoring of CCTV, where computers are programmed to notice unusual movements, such as those of a car thief in a supermarket car park, and sound an alarm. Meanwhile we can expect the argument about the rights and wrongs of CCTV to continue.

Writing the summary

WT15

Write a first draft of your summary using the information you have selected.

- **Organize** the ideas in your notes into a logical order. This need not be the same order as in the original text, but must show the same argument.
- **Condense** the information where possible.
- **Express the ideas in your own words.** This will usually be shorter than the original. Rewrite phrases in the text, but keep any **key terms** from the subject area.
- Do not give your own opinion on the topic.

Your own words: try using synonyms or rephrasing words and expressions such as adjective + noun phrases. Use the dictionary to help you.

- everyday → **ordinary**
- **their own consumer** *CCTV systems for personal ... use*
→ **private systems**
- **no strong evidence**
→ **no clear proof**
- **promising** → **that may be effective**

Introduce **new terms** and concepts to condense and clarify the argument. For example, **opponents** and **supporters** can be used to refer to those against, and those in favour of, CCTV.

Britain has a very high number of CCTV cameras. **Originally** used for locations with an obvious security risk, CCTV surveillance has **now** spread to ordinary public areas, **while** individuals are **also** buying private systems to protect themselves from crime.

Opponents of the growth in CCTV surveillance base their arguments on the threat to civil liberties and the danger of government misuse of the data acquired by surveillance.

Supporters of CCTV argue that it reduces crime, although there is **no clear proof** of this. If it acts as a deterrent, crime probably moves to another area. Often it is not a deterrent and it does not solve many crimes. However, the technology is developing in ways that may be effective.

Combine sentences in new ways to condense the argument, e.g. by linking the key ideas with different conjunctions and adverbs from those in the original text.

Rephrase information to shorten it: try changing the verb form or the part of speech. Examples and word families in the dictionary can help.

e.g. **passive** → **active verb**:
Few crimes are solved through CCTV → *it does not solve many crimes*
noun → **verb**: *One promising new development is ...*
→ *the technology is developing*

Working on the draft

Ask yourself these questions:

- **Is it the right length?**
If there is a word limit, try to stay as close to it as possible. If your summary is too long, you can usually reduce it further by:
 - cutting adjectives, e.g. *locations with an obvious security risk* → *locations with a security risk; no clear proof* → *no proof*
 - replacing phrases with shorter versions, e.g. *a lot of/not a lot of* → *many/few*If it is still too long, go back and reduce your key information.
- **Does it contain all the important points from the text?**
- **Does it read well?**
- **Are the grammar and spelling correct?**

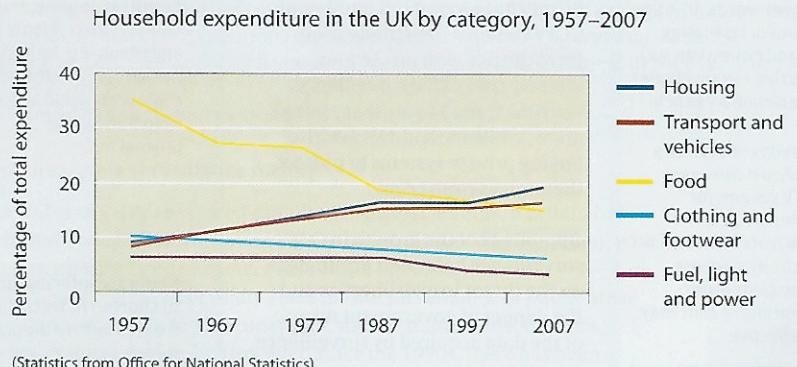
Reporting on data

The most common types of graphs and charts are **line graphs** (showing developments over a period of time), **bar charts** (comparing the proportions or amounts of different things) and **pie charts** (comparing percentages of parts of a whole piece of data).

Preparing to write

Interpreting a line graph

It is essential that you understand the information presented in the diagram before you begin writing.



You should ask yourself these questions:

What is the information about?	<i>the proportion of their money that UK households spent on certain things, on average, over a period of 50 years</i>
What do the numbers on each axis represent?	<i>horizontal axis: years; vertical axis: percentages</i>
What changes do the lines show?	<i>Two show an increase and three show a decrease.</i>
How do the lines stand in relation to each other?	<i>Two almost always remain below the rest; expenditure is always lower.</i>
Which feature of the lines stands out most?	<i>Expenditure on food shows a huge decrease.</i>
What conclusions can be drawn from the graph?	<i>Patterns of household expenditure have changed over 50 years; expenditure on food has changed the most.</i>

Writing the report

- **Language:** **accuracy** and **clarity** are the essential features of a good report. The language you use should be plain and simple, but academic in style.
- **Vocabulary:** the range of language you need for describing data is small. (*See the Language Bank*)
- **Organization:** organize the information so that you highlight the **main trends** or features. There is usually more than one suitable way of doing this. For example, for the graph above, you could focus on the relationship between the various spending categories, **or** you could focus on the different directions each has taken over 50 years. (*Look at the structure of the report on the next page*)

Summarize the information in the graph by selecting and reporting the main features and make comparisons where relevant.

The graph shows what proportion of their total expenditure households in the UK spent, over a fifty year period, in five different categories: housing; transport and vehicles; food; clothing and footwear; and fuel, light and power.

Between 1957 and 2007 expenditure in all five categories changed to some extent, but the most marked change was in the food category.¹ At the beginning of the period the proportion of expenditure on food was more than three times as high as that in all the other categories, representing more than thirty per cent of total household expenditure.² However, by 2007 this figure had more than halved to around fifteen per cent, and was slightly less than expenditure on both housing and transport.³

The two other areas where proportions of expenditure fell over the period are clothing and footwear, and fuel, light and power.¹ However, the changes here were much less dramatic.² Expenditure on the former dropped steadily from ten per cent to five per cent, and on the latter from six per cent to three per cent.³ For most of the fifty-year period, these categories used up a significantly smaller proportion of the household budget than the others.⁴

In two categories, housing and transport, the proportions of expenditure almost doubled, rising from nine and eight per cent to nineteen and sixteen per cent respectively.¹ Thus, by the end of the period, the highest proportion of household expenditure went on housing, and the lowest on fuel, light and power.²

In conclusion, the graph shows that the patterns of spending in UK households changed to some extent over the period 1957 to 2007, the part of the budget spent on food showing the most marked change.

Paragraph 1

—Introduction

Describes the subject of the data.

Paragraph 2—Trends

1 a general comment on the trends shown in the graph + main trend.

2-3 provide supporting detail on the main trend.

Paragraph 3—Trends

More detail on other trends where expenditure has fallen.

1, 2 a general comment, explained in detail in 3.

4 compares these trends with other expenditure.

Paragraph 4—Trends

1 more detail on trends where spending rose.

2 summarizes the main contrast in the trends.

Paragraph 5—Conclusion

This summarizes the report with a general conclusion.

Core language for describing graphs

Language bank

General

*The graph/chart shows/represents/indicates...
The figures show/indicate (that)...
draw conclusions from e.g.: The following conclusions can be drawn from the data.*

Pie charts: describing proportions of a whole

*More/Less than half of the total...
Only a third/a quarter... Just/well under/over 50%...
The biggest/smallest proportion/sector...
The vast majority of...
As many (people were learning French) as (Spanish).*

Bar charts: describing differences between amounts

*There were almost twice/three times/half as many ... as
Far/slightly/20% fewer X... than Y...
Many/far/a few/20% more X...than Y...
A greater proportion of... than of...
20% of women..., while only 10% of men...
80% of (adults send emails), compared to 34% (who prefer texts).*

Graphs: describing developments over time

*a small/ slight/ gradual increase/decrease
a significant/ marked/ dramatic increase/decrease
a small/ slight rise/fall/dip
steady growth
to rise/increase/fall/decrease/decline/drop
to rise/fall steadily/dramatically/sharply/rapidly
Customer numbers have fluctuated.
(Online sales) reached an all-time high/low.
The graph shows a marked change in...*

Writing a report

A report describes a study, an investigation, or a project. Its purpose is to provide recommendations or updates, and sometimes to persuade the readers to accept an idea. It is written by a single person or a group who has investigated the issue. It is read by people who require the information.

Tip

- Reports can vary in length but a good rule to remember is that they should be as long as necessary and as short as possible.

Think about the reader

You need to make the objective of the report clear so that the people who are reading the report know why they are reading. Thinking about the readers and what they need to know will help improve your report.

- Is the purpose of the report clear throughout?
- Can the readers find the information they need?
- Will diagrams or tables make the information clearer?
- Should I just present the facts or include recommendations as well?

Organizing your report

A typical report should follow the structure outlined below. Shorter reports might not need all the sections but they should at least include the highlighted sections.

1 Title

Your title should tell the reader exactly what the report is about.

2 Contents List

If your report has a number of sections it is important to include a table of contents so that the readers can find the information they want. A good way to structure a report is to use numbered headings:

- 2.0 Research
- 2.1 Focus groups
- 2.2 Technology for accessing the Internet

3 Summary

This section is often called an **Executive Summary**. It tells the reader what the objectives of the report are as well as the main findings, conclusions and any recommendations.

4 Introduction

This should give the reader the background to the report: why you are writing it. You should also include what the report will cover (and what it won't) and how you got the information you have based the report on.

5 Body of the report

The main body of the report will follow the structure in the Contents List. It will give precise information about the research you have carried out and what you have discovered from it. The information here should be mainly factual and not based on opinion. Tables, charts and bulleted lists can make the information clearer. Some of the more detailed information can go into Appendices and the Bibliography.

6 Conclusions

This is where you give your opinions on the facts that you have discovered.

7 Recommendations

If you have been asked to give recommendations, they should be based on your conclusions. You should also let the reader know what you predict will happen if your recommendations are followed.

8 Appendices

In a long report, you should put very detailed information in the Appendices with cross-references to them in the body of the report.

9 Bibliography

If your report refers to a number of other publications, you should list these in a Bibliography.

Executive summary

The summary below gives some useful language in context. In the Language bank are some other phrases that you can use in reports. Notice that the language used should be **clear, accurate** and **formal**. *We* and *I* are often used in internal reports, for example for describing research.

Web Page Design

The purpose of this report is to compare two different web designs. The reason for this is to decide what kind of web page is most likely to attract new customers and to encourage existing customers to buy more products from us.

We asked two developers to produce alternative web pages for our company. We asked Developer A to produce a simple, easy-to-use design and we asked Developer B to produce a more sophisticated design with lots of eye-catching graphics. We conducted our research by asking a group of twenty existing customers and twenty non-customers to use the web page over a month. The group was made up of people with a range of ages, professions, incomes, and computer expertise. We divided the group in two and asked one sub-group to use Design A and the other to use Design B. We asked each sub-group to log on once a day and to use the web page to perform certain tasks, including: buying products, getting information, returning damaged products, and tracking deliveries. We also asked the sub-groups to assess how attractive they found their designs and whether they would be encouraged to return to the web page.

In addition, we researched the technology that people had available for accessing the Internet, including the devices people used and the connection speeds available.

We found that, on the whole, people preferred to be able to purchase products quickly and easily. In conclusion, users do not visit a site such as ours for entertainment. While they initially enjoyed some of the aspects of Design B these could take a long time to load and users eventually became bored.

We recommend that we adopt Design A with two or three of the more practical features from Design B.

Language bank

Stating objectives

The purpose/aim/objective of this report is to...
This report aims to...
This report presents/gives information on...

Outlining research

We asked (two developers) to...
We conducted our research by... (e.g. asking a group of...)
We examined/looked at/researched... (e.g. the problem/the cost/several companies)
We surveyed... (e.g. a total of 250 employees)
We compared A and B.
The group was made up of...

Presenting findings

We found that, on the whole,...
According to the majority of respondents...
Overall people preferred...
50% of those surveyed said (that)...

Giving Conclusions

In conclusion...
The research shows/demonstrates (that)...
The research shows/demonstrates + noun (e.g. the effect of...)
From the research/the evidence we conclude that...

Giving recommendations

We recommend that...
It is recommended that...
The best solution is/would be to... (e.g. to adopt design A)
The best solution is/would be + noun (e.g. a reduction in office hours)
If we do A, we will see B.
This will have an impact on + noun (e.g. costs/productivity/the business)

Writing a review of a book or film/movie

The main purpose of a book review is to give information to a potential reader so that they can decide whether or not they want to read the book. A review of a film/movie has the same purpose. You can approach it in the same way as a book review.

Asking a question is one way to engage the reader. Or you could start with a personal opinion.

This is one of many **synonyms** of 'interesting'. Look at the note at the dictionary entry 'interesting'.

It is usual to use the present tense to describe the story.

Most **nouns** can be enhanced with an **adjective** – but make sure it is a natural collocation.

Linking words aid organization and can also give your opinion.

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

Is it a darkly passionate tale of love? Or should we call it a highly original gothic story? The classic novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë is, in my opinion, a unique and

gripping blend of these genres. Written in 1847, it is an epic family saga full of desire, hate, revenge and regret, focusing on the main characters of Heathcliff and Catherine. The atmospheric setting of the wild Yorkshire moors cleverly mirrors these violent emotions.

When Catherine's father adopts the starving orphan boy Heathcliff, Catherine's brother Hindley feels deeply hurt and resentful. She, on the other hand, develops an immensely strong bond with Heathcliff, which becomes an all-consuming love. Upon her father's death, Hindley becomes the head of the family and forces Heathcliff to assume the position of a servant. Despite loving Heathcliff, Catherine chooses to marry Edgar Linton, who is closer to her class and position in society. It is this decision which leads to heartbreak and tragedy, not only for them but for many others.

Heathcliff could be described as an anti-hero with his rough manners and lack of control. Likewise, Catherine displays many flaws, but the reader can still empathize with these characters. In fact, this is the main reason why I believe this novel is so brilliant. It rings with truth. The reader may be horrified at the way that Heathcliff and Catherine behave, and yet, at the same time, the writer ensures that we never hate them because the reasons for their actions are crystal clear.

The main part of the book relies on a narrator, Ellen Dean, who is a servant at Wuthering Heights and I think that this is a useful device which holds the complex plot together. However, *Wuthering Heights* is not what I would call an 'easy read'. There is dense description and some of the dialogue is written in dialect, which can be difficult to follow.

Nevertheless, I persevered and, all in all, I can highly recommend *Wuthering Heights*. I challenge you to remain unmoved after reading this exceptional book.

The title and author's name should appear in the introductory paragraph.

Information about the setting and era can be useful.

Collocations of adverb + adjective show your vocabulary knowledge. Look up **hurt** adjective.

Including information on the style of writing can be helpful.

Conclusion. Restate your opinion of the book as a recommendation to read it or not to read it.

Writing your review

1. Read or re-read the book and make notes

Your notes should try to answer the questions a reader might have:

- What kind of book is it?
- What happens in the story?
- Who are the main characters?
- What is the main theme of the book?
- Is it well written?
- Would you recommend this book?

2. Organize your notes

You can use the same plan as the model review (see below). A successful review will contain these elements, but the order can be changed.

Paragraph 1—Introduction General comments about the book.
Paragraph 2—Plot A brief summary of what happens.
Paragraph 3—Characters Briefly describe and comment on the main characters.
Paragraph 4—Other information Anything else important that you want to say about the book.
Paragraph 5—Conclusion Include your personal recommendation here.

3. Write your review

Remember not to include too many details and don't give away the ending of the book. The reviewer recommends this book but the review also contains some criticisms. It is a good idea to try to write about both positive and negative aspects of the book.

Tips

- Remember at all times that the person who reads your review has NOT read the book!
- Use your dictionary to help you find synonyms of words such as **book** or **story**.
- Find a range of adjectives to use to describe the book, plot and characters.

Reviews of non-fiction books

The purpose of a non-fiction book review is basically the same as fiction but the potential reader will have different questions:

- What is the author's reason for writing the book?
- Is it well organized? Can you follow the argument easily and find the important information?
- Does the author support his/her findings well?
- How does it compare to other books on the same subject?

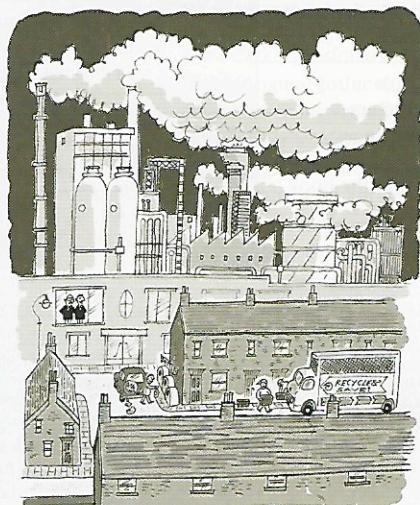
Language bank

Beginnings <i>It is a fascinating tale of... (e.g. rural life) This moving account of... (e.g. a young man's experiences) I found this story far-fetched and unconvincing.</i>	Giving your opinion <i>The writer excels at... (e.g. describing...) I was impressed by... One aspect I found a little disappointing was... One possible flaw is that...</i>
Details/plot <i>Written in..., the story begins with... The events unfold in... The tale is set in...</i>	Conclusions <i>I would highly recommend this rewarding book. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. In fact I couldn't put it down! By the end of this book, you feel... I was left unmoved by this story. I would strongly advise against reading this book.</i>
Characters <i>The writer introduces us to... The principal characters are... My favourite character is undoubtedly... The story focuses on... We experience all this through the eyes of...</i>	

Discussing pictures and cartoons

This task may occur in written or spoken examinations. Describing photographs or pictures can be similar to interpreting cartoons. There may not be a caption or any speech, but the photo can still have a message. You can also discuss the effect it has on you.

Look at the cartoon and the interpretation below.



"It is good to see people doing their bit for the environment!"

The cartoon shows a bird's-eye view of part of a European city or town. There is a large factory, several rows of houses, two vehicles and some people.¹ In the foreground, there is a rubbish collection truck, with two men collecting household waste for recycling. On the left of the cartoon, a man is putting a bottle in a street recycling bin. Watching him are two other men who are obviously managers in the local factory.² The caption reads "It is so good to see people doing their bit for the environment!"³

The caption is clearly the words that one of the factory managers is saying to his colleague, because the focus of attention is on them and also on the man with the bottle: all three of them are drawn in detail¹ and they also stand out because of the black clothing they are wearing.²

Paragraph 1—Description

¹ General description

² Detailed description

³ Caption or speech bubble

Key

shows the key language in each section.

focuses on prepositions and phrasal verbs.

Another important element in the cartoon is the factory and the pollution from its chimneys. The cartoonist has exaggerated the size of the factory in relation to the surrounding houses and has also exaggerated the pollution by blackening a wide expanse of sky.³ These aspects of the picture show the way that the pollution from the factory dominates the town and causes a serious environmental impact.

The factory itself is a symbol representing industry in general.⁴ It seems that the man who is dropping off his one empty bottle in the recycling bin has driven there in his car, so he has probably damaged the environment more than if he had just thrown the bottle away. He represents ordinary people.⁴

The cartoon is about our attitude to the environment. It is clear that the cartoonist is suggesting that while people focus on small-scale activities, such as recycling household waste, they are ignoring much more serious environmental problems such as the pollution from industries and from cars.¹ He/she uses irony to show that we are becoming complacent about saving the environment. This is done by contrasting what the factory managers are saying with what is really happening all around them: serious pollution that they themselves are responsible for.

Personally, I believe that the cartoonist is right. Many people are now very good about recycling their household waste. But, because we do this, we have become complacent about pollution and feel we are doing enough to protect the environment. We need also to address other more important sources of environmental damage.

Paragraphs 2–4 — Artistic techniques

¹ Technique 1—detail

² Technique 2—emphasis

³ Technique 3—exaggeration

⁴ Technique 4—symbolism

Paragraph 5—Message

¹ Use of irony

Paragraph 6—Personal reaction

Writing a description and interpretation

Follow these steps when you prepare for this task. Think about the questions and make notes; then, when you write, use some of the phrases in the Language banks and take note of the tips.

Stage 1—Description

The scene:

- What is the scene in the cartoon/picture?
- Where is it?
- What are the major features?

Details:

- Who/What is in the picture?
- What are they doing?
- What is happening?

Language bank

*The scene is of... (e.g. a café in which two people...)
The cartoon shows/depicts...
There is/are... (e.g. two people who look angry.)
In the centre of the cartoon is/are..., (who/which...)
At the top/bottom of the cartoon is/are...
On the left/right...
In the foreground/background...
The central feature of the cartoon is...
You can use prepositions e.g. **behind** the houses
Avoid using: **I/You can see...**; **In the picture...***

Tips

- Only describe the details that are important for the message.
- Try to avoid using short simple sentences such as: *In the centre is a man. He is shouting.*
Relative sentences are particularly useful: *In the centre is a man who is shouting.*

The caption or speech bubble:

- What is written in the caption or in any speech bubbles?
- Who is talking and to whom?

Language bank

*The caption reads "..."
One man is saying to the other "..."
The woman is asking whether...
He/She is commenting that...
He/She is wondering whether... (to go/he/she should go...)*

Stage 2—Interpretation

Tip

- Start a new paragraph for this section. Give evidence and reasons for your interpretation.

Artistic techniques:

How does the artist draw attention to important parts of the cartoon/picture? Does he/she use:

- detail? Where?
- emphasis? What is emphasized? How?
- exaggeration? What is exaggerated?
- symbolism? Which objects or people are symbols? What do they mean?

Language bank

*The focus of attention is on...
X is/are drawn in detail, (which shows/to show...) X stand(s) out because of the...
The most important element in the cartoon is...
This aspect of the cartoon indicates...
The X symbolize(s)/represent(s)...
The cartoonist has exaggerated X (in order to.../because...)
The reason for this is that...
Use your dictionary to find synonyms so that you use a wide range of vocabulary, e.g. clearly/obviously; indicate/show*

Message:

- What is the cartoon/picture really about?
- What is the artist trying to say?
- How does he/she try to persuade you? Does he/she use **irony** (contrasting the way the cartoon shows things with the way they really are) or **analogy** (using a simple situation to make a more complex situation clear)?

Language bank

*The cartoon is about/refers to/deals with...
The cartoon has to do with...
The cartoonist is obviously trying to show...
What the cartoon is saying is that...
I take/understand the cartoon to mean that...*

Stage 3—Personal reaction:

- Do you agree or disagree with the message?
- Why?

Tip

- Start a new paragraph for this section.

Language bank

*Personally, I believe that the cartoonist is right.
I only partly/partially agree with the artist's message because...
In my opinion/view, the artist is wrong, because...
Use phrases such as I think...; In my opinion...; or It seems to me that...
Do not use According to me/my opinion...*

Writing a formal letter

Writing a letter of complaint

The important things to remember about writing formal letters are the layout, which follows particular conventions, and the language, which must be formal or semi-formal and polite, even when you are complaining.

Customer Services Manager
FlyHigh Airways
PO Box 589
London W3 5NJ

1 August 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Booking reference: Porter POR 1359AZ

My wife and I and our two children, aged 2 and 4, were passengers on flight LZ238 from London to Orlando, USA on July 23rd 2009. I am writing to complain about a number of aspects of the service we received.

Firstly, when the flight was delayed, the staff at the airline's information desk were very unhelpful. We were not even given a voucher for a drink or meal, when it was clear the delay would be at least seven hours. This meant that we had to spend a considerable amount of money in the restaurant.

Then, when we were finally able to board, families were not allowed to board first, although we had paid for this. As a result we were not able to sit together, making our children, already very tired, extremely distressed.

It is a legal requirement for airline operators to provide suitable refreshments in the event of a long delay. I would therefore expect some compensation for your failure both to comply with this regulation and to provide us with the priority boarding for which we had paid.

I enclose our boarding passes and look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours faithfully

S R Porter (Dr)

6 Fore Street
Kensington
London W8 9NW

Paragraph 1
Explain clearly why you are writing.

Paragraph 2
Explain the problem and how you were affected.

Paragraph 3
Explain any further problem and the consequences.

Paragraph 4
State clearly what action you wish the company to take.

Ending
General comment.
Say you would like a quick reply.

Writing the letter

Layout

Look carefully at the layout of the model letter and note:

- Your address, but not your name, goes at the top on the right.
- The name and address of the person you are writing to goes on the left.
- If you do not know a name, use a position e.g. 'Customer Services Manager'.
- The date goes under either address.
- Give some kind of reference or use a heading (e.g. Poor service levels)

Key Yellow = key language

Tips

- **Tone:** be polite and formal, but keep your language simple and clear.
- Use short sentences rather than long ones.
- Try not to be emotional; avoid *you/you didn't* if possible.

If you are writing in American English, remember:

- Use American spelling and punctuation e.g. Mrs., Dr., etc.
- End your letter **Sincerely, Sincerely yours,** or **Yours truly,**

Language bank

Openings and closings <i>Dear Sir/Madam.....Yours faithfully Dear Ms Walker.....Yours sincerely</i>	What do you want? Definite: <i>a full/partial refund, a replacement, an apology</i> More flexible: <i>compensation, reimbursement, recompense</i>
Introducing the topic <i>I am writing to complain about/to express my dissatisfaction with... The purpose of this letter is to express my disappointment with...</i>	Endings <i>I look forward to your swift reply. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. I look forward to hearing from you without delay. I very much hope to hear from you shortly. I await your prompt reply.</i>
Describing the problem Strong adjectives: <i>appalled, distressed, disgusted, shocked</i> Less strong: <i>disappointed, dismayed, dissatisfied.</i>	

Writing a letter to a newspaper

This should still be a formal letter, but because it is for the public, it should show your opinion clearly or tell people something interesting or new. It can be direct and feel quite personal – you can use *I, we* and *you*.

A title attracts the readers' attention

Give information about you if relevant.

Use strong adjectives

Exclamation marks are acceptable to show how you feel.

A challenge to readers can be effective.

Ending: No finishing phrase is needed.

Sir

The craze for reality TV

As a student in my early twenties I am part of a key audience for TV channels. Why then, do I find so little to interest or entertain me? One trend I find particularly appalling is the increase in 'reality' TV programmes such as Survivor, Big Brother and Fear Factor, to name but a few.

'Reality' TV shows involve 'real' people performing ridiculous and often dangerous acts and generally behaving horribly towards each other. These shows appeal to that part of us which takes pleasure in watching the humiliation of others and I believe that programme-makers are being irresponsible by promoting this. It is demeaning to both the participants and the viewers.

Even worse, these programmes are having a negative effect on society, particularly on young people, who no longer feel any shame at watching or taking part in this kind of disgraceful behaviour. A national survey recently stated that one in seven British teenagers hopes to become famous by going on a show like this! The average British adult watches 26 hours of television per week. Reality TV is not only a waste of time, but it is dangerous. I believe it can and will affect our society, dragging it down into the gutter.

It is time we made a stand against reality TV, in favour of quality TV. How can we do it? Start by changing the channel.

Maria Fedora
Madrid

Paragraph 1

Clear introduction of the topic and the writer's opinion.

Paragraph 2

Main point, with reasons.

Paragraph 3

Further point to support main one, with reasons and/or examples.

Paragraph 4

Repeats the writer's opinion and offers a challenge.

Writing emails

- Emails vary in formality depending on how well you know the reader and what your status is in relation to them.
- All emails should be polite, but they vary in level of politeness depending on who you are writing to and what you are asking them.
- Writers use level of formality and politeness to achieve an appropriate tone.
- Emails between colleagues of a similar status can be informal and personal, but should still be polite and friendly.

Email etiquette

- Always use a short, informative subject line, not single general words e.g. Urgent or Enquiry.
- Mention attachments and say what they contain. Don't leave the body of the email empty.
- Acknowledge email attachments you receive. Thanks + your name is often enough.
- Re-read your email before you send it to make sure it is understandable and not offensive.

Writing business emails

Formal – An enquiry to a company – formal, polite

Tips

Formal business emails are shorter and less formal than letters.

- You should not use very informal language, incomplete sentences, exclamation marks or emoticons.

- You can use contracted verb forms, except where first impressions are important.
- You can become less formal as you establish a working relationship with somebody.

Greeting: full name as this is the first contact with this company.

Abbreviations: *promo* is acceptable in formal emails, as are *asap* (as soon as possible), *ad* (advertisement), *re*: (regarding)

Language: formal vocabulary: *purchase* = buy, *require* = need.

Modal verbs (*could*, *would*) make the request more formal and polite.

Ending: formal and friendly

To: office@trainersrus.com
Cc: Andrea.penn@fgt.com
Subject: Query about training DVDs

Dear Mr Baxter

I am the HR assistant at FeelGood Training plc. I am contacting you to say that we have received the promo material about your sales training DVDs and are interested in purchasing some.

Could you please send us some more information regarding their content as we are not sure which would be the most useful for our staff.

We would also require a price list and payment terms.

Looking forward to your reply

Regards
Renata Klein

Renata Klein, HR assistant
FeelGood Training plc
484 London Road, Uxbridge, UX3 6HO
www.fgt.com

Clear subject line

Opening: introduce yourself (use your position, not your name) and explain why you are writing.

We rather than I makes the message less personal and more formal

Close: Most writers use one before their name. Give your full name in the first email. The reader can use *Renata* or *Ms Klein* in a reply.

Signature: give your position and contact details.

A reply – Less formal (semi-formal), polite

WT27

Greeting and close:
Jim chooses to use first names – correspondence will now tend to be less formal.

Language sets a polite, semi-formal, friendly tone:

► We're happy to...
OR We're pleased to...

NOT:

We're delighted to...
– too formal for emails

► Please feel free to...

NOT:

Please don't hesitate to... – too formal

► Should you need help: more formal than 'If you ...'

To: Renata.klein@fgt.com
Subject: Re: Query about training DVDs

Dear Renata

Thank you for your interest in our training material.

We're happy to provide you with more detailed information regarding the contents of the DVDs. Attached you'll find a PDF containing a brochure plus purchasing agreement where you'll find terms and conditions are clearly explained.

Should you need help choosing a product to suit your company's needs, please feel free to contact us again. Either email me or alternatively you can speak to one of our customer service team by calling 05 471 375 31.

Best regards

Jim

Jim Baxter, Marketing Manager
Trainers-R-Us
j.baxter@trainersrus.com

Opening: a formal, polite opening sentence is appropriate for the first reply.

Say what's in the attachment.

Contracted forms can be used as the language is less formal now.

Language bank

Greetings

Formal

Dear Ms Klein/Dear Professor Smith/Dear Chris White (if you don't know the gender).
Do not use title and first name: Dear Ms Mary.

Dear All (to a group)

FAO/For the attention of the Sales Manager

Semi-formal

Dear Renata

Dear All

—

Informal

Hi/Hi Renata/Hello/
Hello Renata

Hi everyone/Hello all

Closes

Best wishes/Best regards/Regards + your full name.
Add position and contact details.

All the best/Best/Yours/
Many thanks + your first name or your full name.
(or formal closes)

Thanks/Cheers/Speak to you soon + your first name.

Requesting action

Very polite

Would it be possible (for you) to send me...?/
I would be grateful if you could send me...

Polite

Could you (please) send me...?

Informal request

Can you send me...?/
Pls can you let me have...?

I was wondering if you have had a chance to do it yet? Have you had a chance to [do it yet]?...?

Have you [done it yet]?

Would it be possible for me to come...?

Could I come...?

Can I come...?

I would really appreciate your help./I would be very grateful (indeed) for your help.

Thank you./Many thanks

Thanks

Writing academic emails

- Academic emails are usually **personal**, not official. You are writing to a specific, named individual, not to somebody in their official role.
- The level of **politeness** you need will vary. If you are asking a favour of an academic outside your university, you need to express a higher level of politeness than if you are asking your own teacher for a meeting. Emails between colleagues can be very **informal**.
- Remember to use a level of formality and politeness to achieve an appropriate **tone**.

Formal – A request from a student to an academic from a different department

Low status writer to high status reader whom he does not know.

Tone: Personal, very formal, very polite

	<p>Subject: Request for statistical help</p> <p>Dear Dr Barr</p> <p>I am a first year PhD student in the department of linguistics and my research topic is a quantitative study of verb forms in academic writing.</p> <p>As I need to use advanced statistical tools for processing the data, my supervisor, Dr John Pugh, suggested I contact you to ask for advice.</p> <p>Would it be possible for me to come and see you to discuss what I need? I attach a copy of my draft research proposal to give you an idea of the scope of my study.</p> <p>I would be very grateful indeed for your help.</p> <p>Best wishes</p> <p>David Samuels</p>	<p>Clear subject line</p> <p>Introduce yourself by giving your position in the university.</p> <p>Would it be possible... Very polite. OR Could I possibly... (Not kindly request – too official)</p> <p>Close: or Best regards, Regards. Give your full name. Add position and contact details if necessary.</p>
<p>Greeting: use Dear + academic title and family name, or Mr, Ms, etc. and family name</p> <p>Say why you are writing. Mention any academic contact.</p> <p>Be specific about what you want the reader to do.</p> <p>Give supporting details.</p> <p>Ending: very polite OR: I would really appreciate your help. (Not: Thank you for your time – official. Not: Thank you for your attention – very formal spoken)</p>		

Less formal – request from a student to their own supervisor

Lower status writer to higher status reader whom she knows very well.

Tone: Personal, polite, less formal

	<p>Subject: use ? to show a request</p> <p>A polite indirect question. Use it to remind somebody of higher status about something.</p> <p>Abbreviations can be used as style is less formal.</p>	<p>Subject: Meeting this week?</p> <p>Dear Ruth</p> <p>I was wondering if you've had a chance to look at my paper yet. If so, could we have a meeting some time this week? The best day for me would be Tues. I start my fieldwork at the end of the week and it would be very useful to have some feedback before then.</p> <p>Many thanks</p> <p>Nicole</p>	<p>Greeting: first names can be used as they know each other well.</p> <p>Could, would: Less abrupt/direct forms. Use them to make a suggestion/request to somebody of higher status.</p> <p>Close: informal – Nicole has the right to ask for a meeting</p>
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Using American style in emails

- If you are writing emails in an American English environment, the points about formality, politeness and tone on pages WT26–27 still apply. The language you use will be very similar. However, there are one or two things that you should be aware of, as shown below.

Formality

The main difference between American and British style in emails is that US emails do not use the very formal language that British emails often do and can be more direct. Look at these examples:

British (formal)

*I would be grateful if you could send your payment to...
A list of fees can be found on our website.
Please don't hesitate to contact me...*

American

*Please send your payment to...
You can find a list of fees on our website.
Please feel free to contact me.*

Business emails

Notice how the date is written. (BrE: 19/8/2009)

Notice the use of full stops and commas in these emails. Use full stops after abbreviations.

Use US spellings (e.g. customize, flavor, center, etc.) consistently.

Direct but polite questions using "you" are fine when writing to Americans.

Close: *Sincerely yours*, or *Sincerely*, are good ways to close a business email.

To: kmiller@charitytrainers.org
From: risai@newgreenspaces.jp
Date: 08/19/2009
Subject: Request for customized training

Dear Ms. Miller,

I am writing to ask about the possibility of organizing a **customized training program** for a group of five of our mid-level managers. We would be interested in having them learn more about staff recruitment, project management, and fundraising practices in the American charity

and nonprofit sector. Could you please let me know what scheduling and pricing options are available for a week-long course fulfilling these requirements?

Sincerely yours,
Risa Inyaka
New Green Spaces, Japan

Academic emails

Short, clear subject line

Attachments should be no larger than 2MB, if possible

Use full stops after short titles

To: jacobi@bussch.clemson.edu
From: rwagner@stud.clemson.edu
Date: 8/23/2009
Subject: Proposed meeting this week
Attachments: mif.doc

Dear Dr. Jacobi,

I'm planning to submit the attached paper to 'Markets in Focus' next week. I wonder if it might be possible for us to meet to discuss it before I send it off? I'd be very grateful for your comments and advice. I'm available every day after 3 p.m., or in the mornings on either Tuesday or Thursday.

Close: courteous and fairly formal

Many thanks,
Ross Wagner

Writing a CV or résumé

A well-written, well-produced, appropriate CV (*British English*) or résumé (*American English*) is vital for getting you to the interview stage for a job. Use the examples and advice here to help you. On page WT32 you will find an example of a good covering (cover) letter.

Tips

- Adapt your CV/résumé so that it is appropriate for the job you are applying for.
- Keep your CV short - no more than 2 pages if possible.
- Present yourself positively and accurately.
- Make your CV attractive and easy to read: use capitals, bold type, spacing and underlining.
- Choose a typeface such as Times New Roman, Arial or Verdana. Use at least 10 pt.

British style CV (curriculum vitae) – new graduate

Name Pamela Janet Mason
Address 29 Greenlands Avenue, London, SW3 6RF
Telephone 01924 786512 **Mobile** 0779 9238182
e-mail pam_mason@scapenet.com

Objective To find a role in a film or TV production company that will enable me to acquire and develop the skills required for a career in film or television.

Profile An outgoing and articulate graduate with work experience in both television and teaching

Education and qualifications

2009 - MA in Media Studies. Bristol University. Expected 2010
 2005–2009 BA in Media Studies with French (2:1) Bristol University
 1997–2004 Beacon School, London
 3 A levels: Drama (A); French (A); German (B)
 5 AS levels 9 GCSEs

Work experience

October 2007–June 2008: Language assistant in secondary school in France. Taught English to large classes and small groups. Ran a film club and a holiday dance and drama club. Assisted with school drama productions.
 September 2004–August 2005: Production assistant at Oordman and Associates Filmmakers, London N16. Performed office and on-set duties.
 June–September 2004: Tutor for Jacaranda Drama Workshops. Led groups of teenagers of different backgrounds in dance and drama activities.
 July–August 2003: Host at Adventure Camping holiday campsite in France. Led the children's club for 4–10 year olds and performed various practical duties on the campsite.

Skills

Languages: French—near native-speaker fluency (CEF C1); German (B2).
 Good keyboard skills. Familiarity with Word, Excel and film editing packages.
 Clean driving licence.

Interests

Drama, both acting and directing; singing (was member of university choral society). Regular volunteer at a local centre for the homeless.

References – attached

Personal information. You can omit the labels. There is no need to mention your age, gender, nationality, race, religion or marital status. Don't send a photo unless you are asked to.

Profile and objective. Some people do not include these, but they do give an employer an idea of who you are.

Education. Put the most recent first. Add prizes and awards. Omit primary school. Try to give British equivalents of your qualifications.

Work experience.

Put this in reverse order. Experienced candidates: put this before Education and write more about your most recent post.

Skills. Your practical abilities. Include exams passed. Write more here if you are experienced.

Interests.

Keep this short. Include a sport, a creative and a community activity, if you can. Avoid vague subjects such as reading or travel.

References. Give the names, titles, and addresses when you send your CV, either here or on a separate page.

American style résumé – new graduate

These are similar to British style CVs. But notice:

- For new graduates your résumé should be only one page.
- Describe your work experience in terms of self-motivation, teamwork, organization, problem-solving, and enthusiasm.

Tip

- The standard US paper size is not A4 (210 x 297mm) but 216 x 279mm.

Provide your college or temporary address if you have one.

Objective. To summarize your goals and customize your résumé for specific positions. State a realistic short-term goal and/or a job for which you are currently qualified.

Use bold to highlight key information.

Use US spelling and punctuation.

Jane Q. Student
jqstudent@mba.nau.edu

Present Address:
508 Blackbird's Roost
Flagstaff, AZ, USA 86011
Tel +1 929 555 1212

Permanent Address:
50, rue de Vaugirard
Saint-Sulpice, France 75006
Tel +33 1234 567 890

OBJECTIVE To obtain an entry-level management position within an international hospitality organization.

EDUCATION **Masters in Business Administration (M.B.A.),** 2006-2008 Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA
B.A. in International Hospitality, 2002-2006 Université de Savoie, Chambéry, France

EXPERIENCE **Travel Agent,** Sep. 2006-Present Kokopelli Extreme Tours, Sedona, Arizona, USA
Organized adventure package tours for large student groups, trained and supervised new staff members, and maintained partner relationships.
Camp Counselor, Jun 2002-Aug 2006 Voyageurs Summer Camp, Voglans, France
Group leader for children aged 10-15. Developed curriculum for campers and led overnight hiking trips.

HONORS Agent of the Month, Kokopelli Extreme Tours, March 2008
Voted 'Most Popular Counselor,' Voyageurs, 2005 & 2006

SKILLS & INTERESTS Fluent in French and English; conversational Spanish
Enjoy web design in HTML and Flash

Language bank

Action verbs

Use action verbs to describe your achievements and make them look more dynamic.

Examples: *achieved, administered, analyzed, advised, arranged, compiled, conducted, coordinated, created, designed, developed, devised, distributed, evaluated, examined, executed, implemented, increased, introduced, instructed, liaised, managed, mentored, monitored, negotiated, organized, oversaw, prepared, recommended, reduced, researched, represented, solved, supervised, trained.*

Positive adjectives

Use positive adjectives to describe yourself.

Examples: *active, adaptable, committed, competent, dynamic, effective, efficient, enthusiastic, experienced, flexible, (highly) motivated, organized, professional, proficient, qualified, successful.*

Other useful phrases

Skills

*Native French speaker
Near-native command of English
Good spoken and written German
Computer literate Familiar with HTML
Experienced trainer and facilitator*

Education and experience

*Baccalauréat, série C (equivalent of A levels in Maths and Physics)
The qualifications described below do not have exact equivalents in the British/American system.
Four weeks' work experience at...
Summer internship at a marketing firm.*

Personal qualities

*Work well as part of a team
Work well under pressure
Able to meet deadlines
Welcome new challenges Can-do attitude*

Writing a covering letter

A covering letter (*NAmE* cover letter) accompanies a CV/résumé or an application form. In Britain and North America they are usually typed on a single page. A good letter uses formal language and presents some key arguments for why your application should be taken seriously.

Mrs F Hunter
Human Resources Manager
Timson Office Supplies
Unit 5 Males Industrial Estate
Cambridge CB7 9HD

Flat 3
19 Strangelands Road
London
NE23 6ZB
Tel: 0207 337 34589
20 January 2010

For advice on layout see
Formal letters pages

The date could also be
January 20, 2010, 20/1/10
(*BrE*), or (*NAmE*) 1/20/10

Dear Mrs Hunter

Senior Accounts Clerk

I am writing to apply for the post of senior accounts clerk advertised in the Cambridge Evening News of 17 January.

In a cover letter use the words **post**, **position** or **vacancy**, not *job*.

As you will see from my enclosed CV I am currently an accounts clerk in a medium-sized printing firm. In addition to my normal bookkeeping duties, I am responsible for invoicing and chasing up late payments. I also deal with credit checks on potential customers.

Avoid contracted forms such as *I'm*.

I am committed to pursuing a career in management accounting and am currently studying for further professional qualifications by distance learning. I am particularly interested in your post as it would enable me to gain experience of working in a larger company with the opportunities for professional training and development that this brings. In addition to my skills and experience as an accounts clerk, I would bring to the post a proven ability to deal successfully and tactfully with customers and clients.

Use **Yours faithfully** here if you have begun Dear Sir or Madam.

I am available for interview for the next three weeks.

Sign your name and print it in full underneath.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Patel

Dilip Patel

Enc. CV

Enc. or encl. shows you have enclosed something.

Key phrases

Paragraph 1 states your purpose for writing. Say which job you are applying for and how/where you heard about it.

Paragraph 2 outlines your current job and responsibilities. Make it relevant to the post you are applying for.

Paragraph 3 says why you want the job and what you can bring to the company. It is very important to say what you can do for *them*.

Paragraph 4 gives other relevant information and when you are available for interview.

Language bank

Since graduating from..., I have...
I have considerable/extensive experience in (the field of...)
I consider/feel that my qualifications and work experience could/might be of interest to the company.
If called for (an) interview, I would be available at any time convenient for you.
Please find attached a copy of my curriculum vitae/résumé for your consideration.
I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

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