

Written versus oral languages

SPEAKING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_3066S_EN

LANGUAGE
English



lingoda

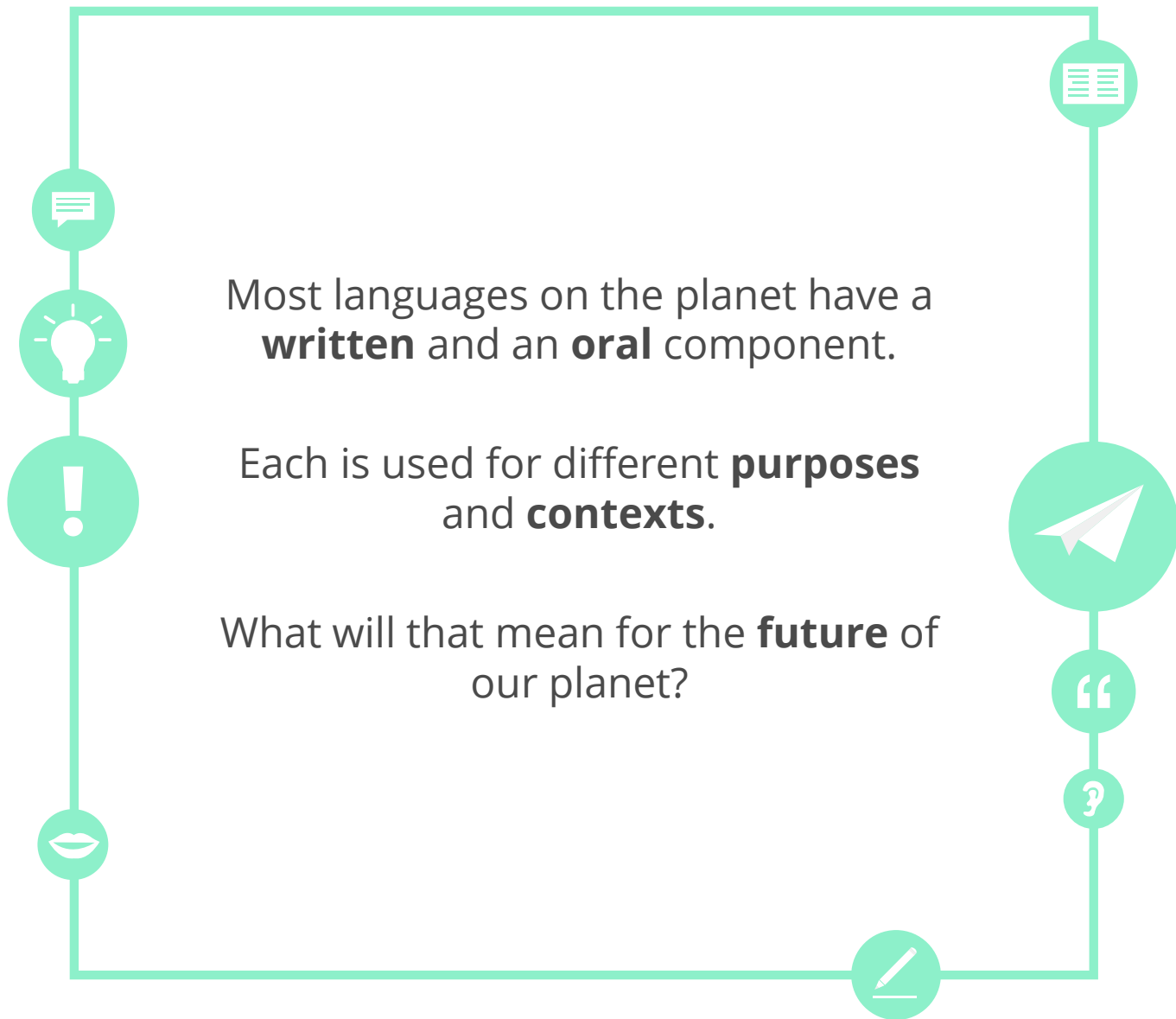




Goals

- Can read, listen to and understand a technical text about the differences between written and oral languages.
- Can explain how writing systems developed and evaluate their impact on a society's way of thinking.







Written and oral language

What are some differences between speaking and writing?

What are the important aspects of each? Tell your teacher.





Consequences

What are some advantages of a written language over an oral language?





Explain

Describe the context of each of the photographs.

**In this situation is written or spoken language more appropriate?
Why?**

Talk to the teacher.



Formality?



Context?

formality

A **formality** is the adherence to established procedures, conventions or rules.

Formality, the uncountable noun, is maintaining a level of seriousness or suitability to fit an occasion.



It is a **formality** in this house to wait until everybody is at the table before eating dinner.

Remember to stick to a certain level of **formality** in your speech this evening – no slang words or swearing!



New words

dynamic

Researching an article is a **dynamic** process – your opinions change with every new thing you read!

subjective

Beauty, like art, is entirely **subjective**. What may appeal to one person will not to another.

cue

She gave me the **cue** to leave when she started yawning and I saw she was tired.

subconsciously

He was extremely nervous, **subconsciously** placing his hands in his pockets.



Written vs oral language

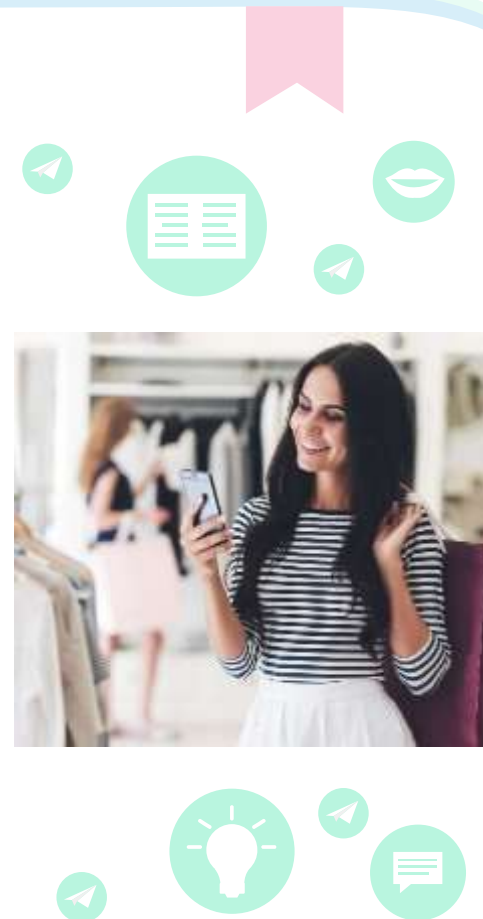
Language is one of the greatest of humankind's inventions. The development of means of communicating complex ideas has been the key to human progress. Both oral and written forms of language serve us in different contexts. Written language is generally a representation of oral language, using symbols and characters to represent the sounds of speech. While oral language comes naturally to humans, the written form must be formally taught. Each medium is used for different purposes and thus contains significant differences. Both exist in a state of flux.





Written vs oral languages

Oral language, the grouping of sounds and phonemes into meaningful communication, predates written language by millennia. Our primitive ancestors developed fluid and complex language structures well before anything was written down in permanence. Being less fixed than written forms, oral language is more dynamic and fluid, shifting quickly with the times and historical context. The ability to exchange ideas and information and give orders to others is fundamental to functioning societies. As a result, oral language is much more subjective. Its meaning is based on the context in which it is used, making it dependent on cues such as orientation, projection and tone. These traits, which we can pick up subconsciously as listeners are harder to represent in writing.



phoneme

A **phoneme** is a unit of sound, or speech, in a given language that differentiates one word from another. Perception of sound function varies based on the language spoken.



Phonemes are written between slashes, for example /θ/ and /d/.



Select the most appropriate word

1. Written and oral language are always changing – they are in a state of _____.

- a. fluctuations b. flexible c. flux d. flex

2. Generally, written language is a _____ of oral language

- a. reformation b. representation c. reference d. referendum

3. Oral language predates written language by _____.

- a. millennium b. millennia c. hundreds of years d. decades

4. Projection, tone and orientation are _____ which do not exist in written language.

- a. coups b. cubes c. hints d. cues



Select the most appropriate word

1. We pick up much of the implied meaning of oral communication _____.

- a. subconsciously b. unconsciously c. subordinately d. surrogately

2. Written language is _____, and thus is slower to change with the times.

- a. fletched b. unfixed c. fixed d. transfixed

3. Humans do not pick up _____ language naturally.

- a. written b. oral c. spoken d. verbal

4. Oral cues are harder to _____ in writing.

- a. repatriate b. repurpose c. represent d. repair



Explain

Talk to your teacher about the reasons and consequences of the fluidity of oral languages.

What are some examples of the constant flux of oral languages?

“

Oral language is much more fluid than its written form,
and changes rapidly in local contexts.

”



Rewrite the oral language into written form: what phrases would you never see in written English?



Hey mate! How ya doin'?

Yeah yeah, must be at least three weeks... whatcha got planned for the weekend?

Nice one! How about we --

No problemo old boy! Let's meet for a catch up soon.

Good pal, good! It's been a while, huh?

I don't rightly know yet... I'm pretty keen for a big one aye.

Oh, my bad, I forgot I've got a do on with the missus. Can't miss it really can I?



Get ready to listen



The next few slides will focus on
training your listening comprehension



Listening activity

As you listen to your teacher read, fill in the gaps with the appropriate terms in the sentences below.

1. Initially taking the form of _____ and hieroglyphs, written language evolved into a _____ system.
2. The _____ of written communication allowed societies to transfer information with greater _____ and accuracy.
3. Written language is also planned and _____ – a text is produced with a specific purpose in mind, causing the writer to weigh their language choices more carefully.
4. Due to the lack of social _____, the written word requires greater _____ precision.
5. As written language is both more _____ and _____, these casual elements _____ appear.

formal

deliberate

seldom

advent

linguistic

precise

phonetic

cues

precision

pictograms



True or false?

	TRUE	FALSE
1. There is little difference between written and oral language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Written language is more planned and deliberate than oral language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Oral language is less formal than written forms, utilising slang and contractions for efficiency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The Sumerians were among the first civilisations to practise oral language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The first evidence of written legislation came from Ancient Rome.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Understanding written communication requires a degree of literacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Talk to the teacher

“Initially taking the form of pictograms and hieroglyphs, written language evolved into a phonetic system, with the symbols of the alphabet representing the sounds of words rather than the concept.”

Discuss each statement from the text below.

Alphabet based writing systems are much more efficient than pictograms.

The development of hieroglyphics created many opportunities for the Sumerians and ancient Egyptians.

Our society and technological progress would not have developed so quickly without written language.



Written language

Describe the evolution of written language from 3100BC to the present to to your teacher. What do you think the future of written language will be?





What if...

What would be different about our world today if written language had not been invented? For example, what would advertising look like, and our computer screens? In fact, would we have technology in the first place?



Oral communication

Though less formal than written language, oral communication requires different degrees of formality.

Talk about the context of each photograph.

Which scenarios require the most formality?

Why?



With friends



Work conference



Job interview



Talking to police



Talk to the teacher

With the arrival of written language in Mesopotamia, society was able to develop in a more complex way. Records were written down on clay tablets. The scribe would use a stick to press the symbols into the clay while it was moist – once it hardened they were left with a permanent record of the information. Think about this and answer the following questions.



1

This is quite a laborious method of writing things down. How do you think the effort involved in writing then would have affected their attitudes towards written language?

2

How do you think this system would have been handled? Would there have been scribes, as there are tailors and bakers?

3

How would have the advent of written communication affected society in these areas? Government records; ownership rights; codes of law.



Oral tradition

Before the invention of written forms of language, a society would transmit its culture and knowledge orally. History, culture and other knowledge would be passed down through each generation through speech, song and poetry.

Write a response to one of the topics below.

Oral traditions strengthened community ties

Homer's Iliad and the Odyssey were originally stories passed down through oral tradition

Oral traditions made a sense of long term continuity difficult

Without written forms of language, much of culture and knowledge can be easily lost

Oral tradition fosters greater memory and attention spans

Oral tradition allowed listeners to be more involved participants in the culture and history of their society

A vertical sheet of lined paper with a blue margin on the left and a spiral binding on the right, intended for writing a response.



Rephrase the article below into oral language, in your own words

The ancient civilisation of Sumer, located in modern day Iraq between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, is often said to be the birthplace of written language. Over the course of a millennium, Sumer developed revolutionary approaches to government, technology and culture, steering human progress in the right direction.

The Sumerians were blessed by geography - the plains between the two rivers were extremely fertile, allowing for great prosperity. This led to greater amounts of trading, which in turn led to the need of keeping records. Merchants needed to keep receipts of their stocks and purchases so took to making marks on clay tablets. Thus was writing born.



Contractions?

Slang?

Informality?



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Transcription

The ancient civilisation of Sumer, based in Mesopotamia, are believed to be the inventors of written language. Archaeological evidence posits that writing developed here around 3100 BC. Initially taking the form of pictograms and hieroglyphs, written language evolved into a **phonetic** system, with the symbols of the alphabet representing the sounds of words rather than the concept. The **advent** of written communication allowed societies to transfer information with greater precision and accuracy. The formality of written communication also allowed the development of legal records, as legislation could be kept in a permanent state for reference. As written information is fixed, civilisation was able to build upon past ideas and learn from historical events. Written language is also planned and deliberate – a text is produced with a specific purpose in mind, causing the writer to weigh their language choices more carefully.

With written communication comes the need for literacy. Due to the lack of social cues, the written word requires greater **linguistic** precision. Sentences in written language are expected to be complete and structured in paragraphs. Oral structures are not so rigid – we often speak in fragments of sentences and words can be cut off or interrupted by another. In conversation we might also use contractions and slang words more regularly. As written language is both more formal and precise, these casual elements seldom appear.



Answer key

Activity p.12

1C, 2B, 3B, 4D

Activity p.13

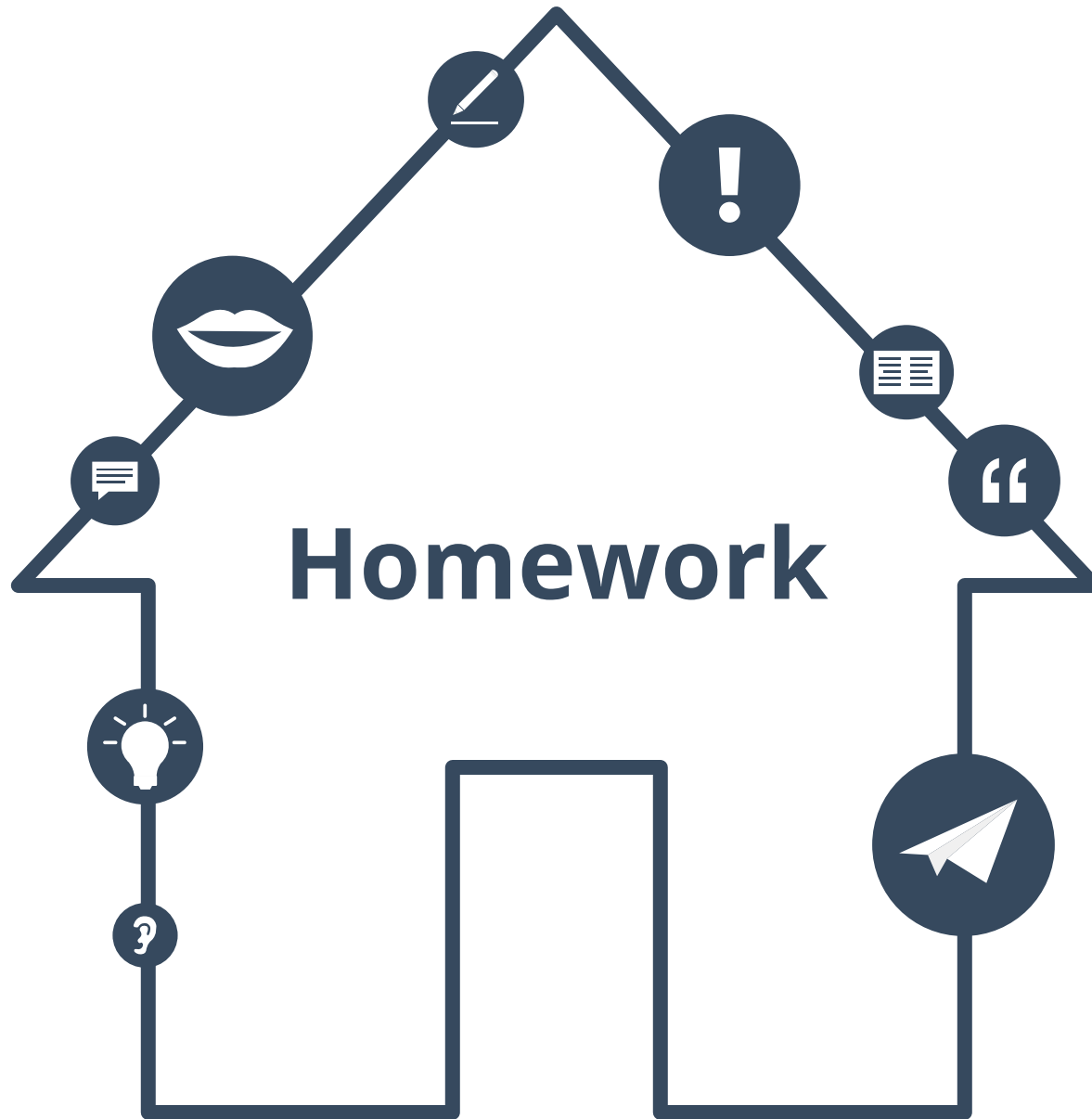
1A, 2C, 3B, 4C

Activity p.18

Please check the listening transcription on slide 29

Activity p.19

1F, 2T, 3T, 4F, 5F, 6T





Categorise

List all of the major differences between oral and written communication that you can remember from the lesson.

Positive outcomes

Negative outcomes



Rewrite the article below into oral language

Oral tradition is a universal human Practise, found in all human societies preceding the written form. It was the only way to transmit ideas and knowledge before the invention of writing. Buddhist and Hindu religious texts were initially preserved and transmitted through oral tradition.

The tradition was also dominant in Ancient Greece. The epic poetry of Homer was largely composed and performed orally before it became fixed in written language. The heroic legend of Homer's characters instilled a sense of patriotism and virtue in into ancient Greek culture and was central to their society and identity.





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