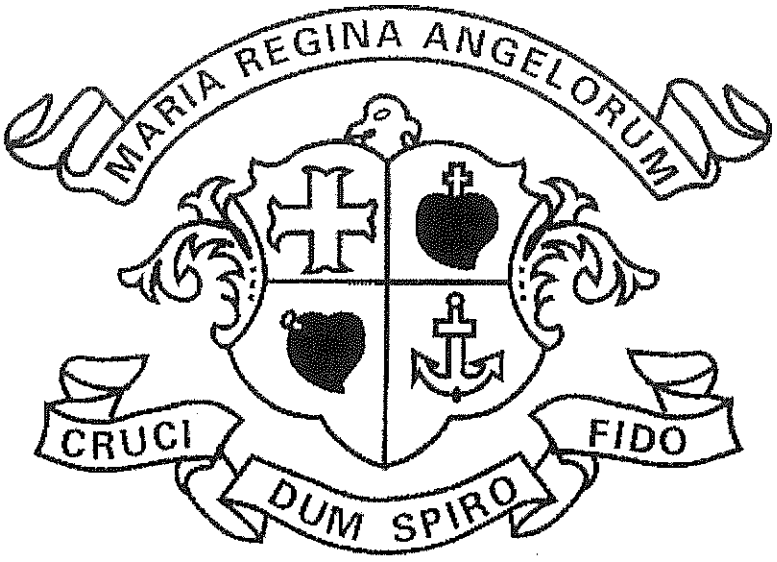



**Loreto Convent School**

**Grade 9**

**English Home Language**

**General**

**Name**_____

**Grade 9**_____

# Narrative Essays

The first important thing to remember about a narrative essay is that it tells a story. The author may write about

- an experience or event from his or her past
- a recent or an ongoing experience or event
- something that happened to somebody else, such as a parent or a grandparent

The second important thing about a narrative essay is that the story should have a point. In the final paragraph, the author should come to an important conclusion about the experience that has just been described.

The writing in an essay should be lively and interesting. Try to engage the reader's interest by adding details or personal observations. Sharing personal thoughts and details invites the reader into author's world and makes the story more personal and more interesting.

**Steps to write a narrative essay**

**1**
**Be ready to tell a story.** In basic terms, a narrative essay is a work of narration: storytelling. The most important brick of building a narrative essay is a plot or storyline. Right after you get the topic in your hand, take a fresh, vibrant page and start brainstorming your plot ideas.

- While brainstorming, let all your ideas flow. The possibilities for a good narrative essay are as endless as the list of all things that can happen to a person, place, or thing. Stories come in all forms, so let your imagination guide you, and don't feel hemmed into writing a narrative essay in only one genre (unless your assignment specifies it).

**2**
**Have some type of setting.** You need to have a setting: a place where your story starts or takes place at the beginning. You need to describe the setting- it's physical appearance, either with the help of descriptive words or even with metaphor and imagery.

**3**
**Build your reader's impression of your characters.** How many characters you have is your choice, but it's often best not to try to work in too many characters, particularly if it's a short story. Having a great number of characters will mean you don't get a chance to flesh them out properly.

- To give the reader the full run-down on your characters, find ways to naturally describe your characters' features, both how they look physically and how they act and feel; include their speech and behavior in your narrations. Add small details about them to make your reader be able to picture them more clearly.

**4**
**Let the plot unfold.** As you write, describe all the scenarios and characters' actions in such a way that the reader can visualize them. Use sensory words relating to all five senses. Particularly if you're working on a short story or essay, conveying a lot of sensory information using very evocative language can help the reader feel transplanted into the setting. With this kind of essay, you have less time to earn the reader's buy-in to your tale, so you have to make every word count.

5

**Plan your climax, the twist in your story.** It could be a death, a secret finally revealed, etc. Do not introduce the climax right in the beginning or all of a sudden right at the end; prepare your reader slowly for the climax and bring the plot naturally to it. This will keep the reader glued to the final word.

- As you are building for your climax, give the reader small hints, but don't give the whole plot away.

6

**Finish up your story.** With shorter narrative essays in particular, don't get bogged down by an obligation to wrap up every character's storyline or explain their future in detail. It's okay to leave the reader guessing about what happens next, and how the characters turn out. As a writer, leaving your readers satisfied with the plot but wanting to know more about your characters is the ideal balance.

7

**Revise** after writing. It's very rare to write a great story the first time through. You'll probably want to read through your work, make proofreading and editing changes, and get input from others on your story. Revision is just as important to the writing process as getting your initial ideas on paper.

**Tips**

- How to write a **narrative essay** essentially requires your understanding of your topic. Writing a narrative essay usually begins with a brief background of your topic and ends with a conclusion that looks forward instead of backward.
- Begin your narrative essay with an interesting quote relevant to the story such as a metaphor or a passage from a poem or another story. This method will help you catch the attention of your reader upon reading the first few lines of your narrative essay. Avoid using lengthy quotes as doing so may fail to capture your reader's attention. The shorter but more compelling your introductory quote is, the better.
- Each body paragraph of your narrative essay should only focus on one part of the sequence of events. Limit your discussion in every paragraph on one idea. Think of every paragraph as a box where you put only things of the same kind, another box for other things of the same kind, and so on. This will not only show the sequence of the thoughts you are narrating but will also show proper organization of ideas.
- Remember that writing a narrative essay requires that you write from your point of view. That is, write as to how you see or understand your topic. Interpret your topic from your personal perspective. Refrain from using other people's perspective unless there is a need. The key is to focus your narrative essay from your own mindset.
- Divide your essay into paragraphs, according to your limit: an introduction, two body paragraph and one conclusion. Your introduction can be either a shocker one, or one just describing the setting; the conclusion can reveal a surprise, or end with just a hint of the climax, keeping the final question to be answered by the readers.
- Be sensible while writing. It is necessary to stay on the topic rather than moving away from it. Do not lose your focus.
- Don't worry if you can't grip it at the beginning; writing a great story takes drafting and revising. Get some second opinions and input from others as you go.
- Always remember to have a powerful story-telling and a mind-crashing climax (this is what drains the colour off the readers' face).
- Write only when you have a perfect story to tell. When a reader finishes reading the story, he\she should feel all those emotions seep right through his\her ribcage. Only then as a narrator, have you succeeded.

- Using second-person or third person narration (you, she) can be interesting rather than first-person (I, me).
- Complex words and syntax are a hindrance to clarity and should be avoided. Ideas should be clearly distributed between sentences and paragraphs.
-

  Example: Although I have never been to the races before, I was very excited to behold them, yet also somewhat nervous, because of the type of people who go there.

  Improved: I'd never been to a horse race. I was excited to go, but also a little nervous, since I wasn't sure about the people at the track.

  **Don't describe each and every one of your own movements.**

  Example: As I went in the door, I turned and saw a TV. I looked around and saw posters on the wall. As I went further in I noticed everyone was watching M*A*S*H.

If you're having trouble choosing an experience to write about, take a quick glance through these prompts. They might help you remember or identify a particularly interesting or significant experience to focus on.

- **A childhood event**. Think of an experience when you learned something for the first time, or when you realized how important someone was for you.
- **Achieving a goal**. Think about a particularly meaningful achievement in your life. This could be something as seemingly minor as achieving a good grade on a difficult assignment, or this could be something with more long-lasting effects, like getting the job you desired or getting into the best school to which you applied.
- **A failure**. Think about a time when you did not perform as well as you had wanted. Focusing on an experience like this can result in rewarding reflections about the positive emerging from the negative.
- **A good or bad deed**. Think about a time when you did or did not stand up for yourself or someone else in the face of adversity or challenge.
- **A change in your life**. Think about a time when something significant changed in your life. This could be anything from a move across town to a major change in a relationship to the birth or death of a loved one.
- **A realization**. Think about a time when you experienced a realization. This could be anything from understanding a complicated math equation to gaining a deeper understanding of a philosophical issue or life situation.

**A Narrative is:**

- A piece of writing that tells a story about a chain of events
- An account of ONE past event
- A story as told by someone – a narrator
- Usually written in past tense
- A story which may have a strong descriptive element

**The process**

1. Think of what is really "interesting"
2. You need to think very carefully how you are going to reveal the storyline/plot to the reader.
3. If you are writing a story you would need to invite the reader to participate in the conclusion
4. Do not fence sit! Decide either to tell a story about an interesting encounter between two people or focus only on the encounter.
5. Make sure you what you are writing about.

**Elements of plot in a narrative essay**

If you are going to be writing a composition that tells a story, you will need to take into account the following sequence.

1. Initial situation – the beginning. It is the first incident that makes the story move.
2. Conflict or problem – the goal which the main character of the story has to achieve.
3. Complication – obstacles which the main character has to overcome.
4. Climax – The highest point of interest in the story.
5. Suspense – the point of tension. It arouses the interest of the readers.
6. Denouement or resolution – what happens to the character after overcoming al obstacles or failing to achieve the desired result, and reaching/ not reaching his goal.
7. Conclusion – the end of the story.

## Descriptive Essays

The purpose of a descriptive essay is to describe a person, place, or thing in such vivid detail that the reader can easily form a precise mental picture of what is being written about. The author may accomplish this by using imaginative language, interesting comparisons, and images that appeal to the senses.

The key to writing the perfect descriptive essay is to provide enough vivid detail to help the reader create a mental picture of what is being written about. This can be done through the use of figurative language.

**Steps:**

1. **Consider what other things were happening around you.** Are there any specific details that stand out in your mind? Things like:
   - The determination of a person suddenly dashing out to rescue someone from being hit by a car.
   - The beauty of a leaf falling against a sky lit up by a rainbow after a sun shower.
   - The cry of a baby wanting her mother to come and pick her up.

1. **Think about objects located in relation/next to where you were.** Things to consider include:
   - Did your surroundings remind you of any other place in time?
   - What was the texture of things around you when you touched them?
   - What feelings do the objects evoke/stir up in you?

2. **Recall the sights, smells and tastes of an event or memory.** Do they remind you of anything? For example:
   - The smell of a banquet feast when your cousin was married.
   - The sound of a jet engine roaring into action when your boyfriend moved interstate to study.
   - The colors of a parade when you had your first sighting of Santa.

3. **Write down what you were feeling at the time.** Feelings are the mechanism through which you can evoke much of the descriptive elements in your essay.

4. **Determine what you want the reader to feel about what you are writing.** What kind of words or images can convey this feeling?

5. **Make sure there is enough detail in your essay to create a mental image for the reader.**

6. **Take a break from it.** When you come back to it, read it out loud to yourself. Does it evoke the images that you're trying to convey?

Tips:

- Don't use nondescript adjectives like "nice". Use a thesaurus and get some new and interesting words, like "effervescent."
- Use all of the senses in a descriptive essay.
- Focus more on specific terms than abstract/immaterial terms (such as bright vs. beautiful). The definition of "beautiful" will vary from person to person, but words like "bright" will not.
- Try to "paint" an image in the reader's head and describe everything thoroughly, but not too thoroughly.
- Use lots of figurative language.
- Show the reader. Don't just tell them.

## Tips on Writing a Descriptive Essay

Writers use the descriptive essay to create a vivid picture of a person, place, or thing. The purpose of a descriptive essay is to reveal the meaning of a subject through detailed, sensory observation. The descriptive essay employs the power of language and all the human senses to bring a subject to life for the reader.

If readers come away from a descriptive essay with the feeling that they have really met a person, gone to a particular place, or held a certain object, the writer has done a good job. If readers also feel an emotional connection and deep appreciation for the subject's significance, the writer has done a great job.

### The Four-Step Writing Process for Descriptive Essays

Here are descriptive essay writing tips for each phase of the writing process:

### 1. Plan / Prewriting for the Descriptive Essay

In the planning phase of descriptive essay writing, students should take time to think about who or what they want to describe and why. Do they want to write about a person of significance in their lives, or an object or place that holds meaning? The topic doesn't have to be famous or unusual. The person could be a grandparent, the object, a favorite toy, and the place, a tree house.

Once a topic is chosen, students should spend time thinking about the qualities they want to describe. Brainstorm about all the details associated with the topic. Even when not writing about a place, reflect on the surroundings. Where is the object located? Where does the person live? Consider not just physical characteristics, but also what memories, feelings, and ideas the subject evokes. Memory and emotion play an important role in conveying the subject's significance. Plan the focus of each paragraph and create an outline that puts these details into a logical sequence.

### 2. Drafting a Descriptive Essay

When creating the initial draft of a descriptive essay, follow the outline, but remember, the goal is to give the reader a rich experience of the subject. Keep in mind, the most important watchword of writing a descriptive essay is **show,** don't tell. One of the best ways to show is to involve all of the senses—not just sight, but also hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Write so the reader will see the sunset, hear the song, smell the flowers, taste the pie, or feel the touch of a hand.

**Use descriptive and figurative language, as well as concrete images to describe the subject. Similes and metaphors work well. Here are some examples:**

**Telling**

The house was old.

**Showing**

- The house frowned with a wrinkled brow, and inside it creaked with each step, releasing a scent of neglected laundry.
- He was smart.
- If you had to pick a study buddy, you would pick this guy.
- The clock had been in our family for years.
- The clock stood by our family, faithfully marking the minutes and hours of our lives.

Enjoy the process of describing the subject—it can be a rewarding experience. A descriptive essay doesn't rely on facts and examples, but on the writer's ability to create a mental picture for the reader.

## 1. Revising a Descriptive Essay

In the revision phase, students review, modify, and reorganize their work with the goal of making it the best it can be. In revising a descriptive essay, students should reread their work with these considerations in mind:

- Does the essay unfold in a way that helps the reader fully appreciate the subject? Do any paragraphs confuse more than describe?
- Does the word choice and figurative language involve the five senses and convey/express emotion and meaning?
- Are there enough details to give the reader a complete picture?
- Has a connection been made between the description and its meaning to the writer? Will the reader be able to identify with the conclusion made?

Always keep the reader in mind from opening to concluding paragraph. A descriptive essay must be precise in its detail, yet not get ahead of itself. It's better to go from the general to the specific. Otherwise, the reader will have trouble building the image in their mind's eye. For example, don't describe a glossy coat of fur before telling the reader the essay is about a dog!

## 4. Editing a Descriptive Essay

At this point in the writing process, writers proofread and correct errors in grammar and language. It's also the time to improve style and clarity. Watch out for clichés and loading up on adjectives and adverbs. Having a friend read the essay helps writers see trouble spots and edit with a fresh perspective.

## Features and writing process of descriptive essays

The word "descriptive" – as used to describe a type of essay – means:

- Using words or sounds to represent what your five senses pick up.
- Having a good eye/ear/nose/tongue or sense of touch to be able to distinguish the quality of things
- Making the reader feel as though he or she is at the scene of the action
- Using figures of speech in original ways.

Be careful not to end up writing a narrative. Although a narrative element may be present, it is the description/s that really matter. The marker/reader must have the sense of constantly reading descriptions of sounds and sights.

# Discursive Essay

A discursive essay is a type of essay that discusses a problem, a controversy, or a recent issue. This essay may be informal or formal, but is most often written in a formal manner. Many universities and classes require applicants and students to write this type of essay to examine and evaluate their skills in writing, thought formation, and analysis.

One of the distinguishing elements of a discursive essay is its objectivity. It is important that the writer present the problem in an unbiased manner, discussing all points of argument thoroughly and carefully. If instructions allow the writer to side with one point, he should first present all sides before choosing one. To make the essay more objective, it is recommended that the essay be written in a third-person perspective and avoid using first-person phrases such as "in my opinion," "I believe," and "I fully support." In this way, a discursive essay is different from an argumentative essay, as the latter only presents one side of the issue and discusses details for or against that side.

An effective discursive essay often, if not always, starts with a sound introduction that clearly establishes what the issue is about. It can also discuss the issue's relevance and context to other current issues. The gist of the issue should not go beyond one paragraph, which can be composed, generally, of three to six sentences.

## Discursive Essay Plan

**Paragraph 1** – Introduction

Your first paragraph should:

- **be a general introduction.** Don't include specific points from the main body of the argument
- **include a response to the title.** You may need to identify the issues that lie behind the title, to give historical or topical background
- **be interesting** and **relevant**

**Paragraph 2** – Background

Provide some of the history of the topic you are writing about.

**Paragraph 3** – Your argument (at least 6/7 reasons, thus 6/7 paragraphs)

These paragraphs must:

- **contain one major point of the argument**, stating your reason for agreeing/disagreeing with question posed.
- **begin with or have near its start a topic (or "signpost") sentence** (a sentence which indicates what the paragraph will be about and how it relates to the essay title). This is NOT a sub-heading! Your writing should be formal continuous prose.
- **be linked to the paragraph that comes before**, often with a suitable conjunction or link words such as *in addition, nevertheless, despite this, however.* Don't put *also* or *for example* at the start of a sentence.
- **contain generalised evidence of your research** (e.g. statistics/expert opinion).

**2nd Last Paragraph** – Counter argument (1 paragraph)

- Open with "Contrary to this..." "In contrast there are those who..." "On the other hand..."
- **List** the opposing side's reasons but do not change your opinion. Use phrases like: *some people claim... There are those who say...*

## Conclusion

**A good conclusion WILL:**

- **be crisp and conclusive in feel, the goal of the whole essay**

**A good conclusion MAY:**

- return to something mentioned in the first paragraph
- evaluate what has gone before
- hint at something you might have followed up had the scope of the question allowed it
- Give your opinion. A discursive essay should feel as if you have weighed up the arguments and come to a conclusion at the end.

A poor conclusion will simply restate or summarise points made earlier or be a few sentences stuck on at the end.

**Examples of Openings to Discursive Writing**

A writer can choose to begin their discursive writing in a variety of different way. In the examples below, the controversial topic is Fast Food.

Below are a variety of ways that the writer can use to open his discussion on the topic.

### 1. Stating what the controversy is about

While children are lured to Fast Food outlets by the colourful appearance of the restaurants and the appetising smell of their products, nutritionalists have expressed concern about what they see as an unhealthy diet.

### 2. Summarising the views in a balanced way

It is difficult to balance the increasing popularity of fast food outlets with the heavy criticisms which are made about them by medical and nutritional experts.

### 3. Using a quotation from an expert

" There is nothing inevitable about the fast food nation that surrounds us – about its marketing strategies, labour policies, and agricultural techniques, about its relentless drive for conformity and cheapness." Such is the claim made by Eric Scholsser, author of *Fast Food Nation.* It is a view, however, which is not shared by all.

### 4. Using an illustrative opening to create a picture

John grins with delight as his mother emerges from the car carrying the tell-tale MacDonald's bag. Succulent cheeseburgers, crispy chips, ice-fold Cola – everything a boy who could want. His elderly neighbour casts a critical eye over the proceedings, thinking of the food of her childhood: wholesome home-made soups and fresh garden vegetables and no sweets.

## Linking Words

### To provide an illustration:

For example that is that is to say for instance

in other words namely such as as follows

Typical of this a typical/particular/key example

Including especially not least in particular

Notably chiefly mainly most importantly

A good illustration of this is it is interesting to note

### To extend a point:

Similarly equally likewise also

Furthermore Indeed in the same way

Besides above all as well in addition

### To show cause and effect/conclusion:

So therefore accordingly thus hence

Then as result/consequence resulting from/in consequence of this

in this/that case consequently because of this/that

for this reason owing to/due to the fact this demonstrates

it follows that this suggests that accepting/assuming this

in conclusion it can be concluded from this this implies

in short to conclude in all in brief

### To show the next step:

first(ly) second(ly) to begin/start with in the first/second place

first and foremost first and most importantly another

then after next afterwards third(ly) finally

ultimately

**To indicate a contrast:**

However on the other hand alternatively in contrast

Instead conversely on the contrary in fact

Rather in comparison another possibility

But better/worst still despite this in spite of

Nevertheless notwithstanding for all that yet

Although in opposition to this

# Argumentative Essay

## Definition

We've all used some form of argumentation at one point in our lives. Whether it was asking parents for permission to go somewhere, seeking more money at a job, or begging for a second chance with a lost love, we've examined different evidence to determine which approach is best to make our case for what we want in life. Though they may not have taken a formal style, these strategies of persuasion form the basis of argumentative essays.

An **argumentative essay** is a type of writing that requires a writer to defend a position on a topic using evidence from personal experience, literature, historical examples, and research to support his or her viewpoint. The writer usually uses several different arguments to prove his or her point.

### *What is an argumentative essay?*

The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.

The structure of the argumentative essay is held together by the following.

### A clear, concise, and defined thesis/argument statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.

In the first paragraph of an argument essay, students should set the context by reviewing the topic in a general way. Next the author should explain why the topic is important (**exigence**) or why readers should care about the issue. Lastly, students should present the argument statement. It is essential that this argument statement be appropriately narrowed to follow the guidelines set forth in the assignment.

### Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Transitions are the mortar that holds the foundation of the essay together. Without logical progression of thought, the reader is unable to follow the essay's argument, and the structure will collapse. Transitions should wrap up the idea from the previous section and introduce the idea that is to follow in the next section.

### Body paragraphs that include evidential support.

Each paragraph should be limited to the discussion of one general idea. This will allow for clarity and direction throughout the essay. In addition, such shortness creates an ease of readability for one's audience. It is important to note that each paragraph in the body of the essay must have some logical connection to the argument statement in the opening paragraph. Some paragraphs will directly support the argument statement with evidence collected during research. It is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis (**warrant**).

However, argumentative essays should also consider and explain differing points of view regarding the topic. Depending on the length of the assignment, students should dedicate one or two paragraphs of an argumentative essay to discussing conflicting opinions on the topic. Rather than explaining how these differing opinions are wrong outright, students should note how opinions that do not align with their thesis might not be well informed or how they might be out of date.

**Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).**

The argumentative essay requires well-researched, accurate, detailed, and current information to support the thesis statement and consider other points of view. Some factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal evidence should support the thesis. However, students must consider multiple points of view when collecting evidence. As noted in the paragraph above, a successful and well-rounded argumentative essay will also discuss opinions not aligning with the thesis. It is unethical to exclude evidence that may not support the thesis. It is not the student's job to point out how other positions are wrong outright, but rather to explain how other positions may not be well informed or up to date on the topic.

**A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.**

It is at this point of the essay that students may begin to struggle. This is the portion of the essay that will leave the most immediate impression on the mind of the reader. Therefore, it must be effective and logical. Do not introduce any new information into the conclusion; rather, synthesize the information presented in the body of the essay. Restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and review your thesis. You may also want to include a short discussion of more research that should be completed in light of your work.

*A complete argument*

Perhaps it is helpful to think of an essay in terms of a conversation or debate with a classmate. If I were to discuss the cause of World War II and its current effect on those who lived through the tumultuous time, there would be a beginning, middle, and end to the conversation. In fact, if I were to end the argument in the middle of my second point, questions would arise concerning the current effects on those who lived through the conflict. Therefore, the argumentative essay must be complete, and logically so, leaving no doubt as to its intent or argument.

## The Difference Between Discursive & Argumentative Essays

Discursive and argumentative essays have similarities and differences.

### Discursive Purpose

The goal of a discursive essay is to present a balanced and objective examination of a subject. Like an argumentative essay, the topic may be controversial, but the discursive essay attempts to present a much more balanced discussion of the issue. It does not, however, have to be expressly neutral. The essay should present both sides of the discussion, supported by facts and research. The author may draw tentative conclusions about the subject and suggest them to the reader.

### Discursive Style

The discursive style is written in a more formal and impersonal style than other essays. It begins with a introduction to the topic. Each issue should be discussed in a separate paragraph and each paragraph should begin with a strong topic sentence. The essay will typically alternate a paragraph of point followed by a paragraph of counterpoint. Discursive essays often have transitional wording leading into the next paragraph. The writer may choose to either express a low-key opinion in the final paragraph or leave readers to draw their own conclusions.

### Argumentative Purpose

The writer of an argumentative essay attempts to clearly present a strong position on a particular topic. Its purpose is to both educate and persuade the reader on a particular point of view. In this regard it is similar to a persuasive essay, but generally presents its view in a stronger, perhaps more controversial, way. It may target an audience that is more resistant to its viewpoint or message.

### Argumentative Style

Argumentative essays follow a general format. The writer states an initial thesis that contains the point of view for which the author is arguing. The body generally presents both sides of the argument, although each con is refuted in turn. The author may first present the pros of the argument, then offer the cons and refutation later in one paragraph. Or, each con may be both presented and refuted in an individual paragraph. The author presents the desired conclusion in the final paragraph.

## WRITING REVIEWS

Writing great reviews helps others discover the places that are just right for them. Here are a few tips:

- **Be informative and insightful:** Be specific and relevant to the place you're reviewing, and describe what other visitors are likely to experience. Highlight what makes the place special, and try to share something novel and new. From signature dishes to secret sale racks, reviews should reveal the unique experiences that places offer.
- **Keep it real:** Be authentic. Review your own experience, and explain why you liked or disliked the place. Try to be as accurate as possible, and include both the positive and negative aspects of your visit.
- **Be respectful:** Not every experience with a place is going to be perfect. Sometimes you'll want to share negative feedback. Even if you're frustrated, make sure your criticism is constructive. Business owners often use feedback to improve their offerings.
- **Reviews not General Commentary:** At times certain locations may become the subject of larger public debate or conversation due to recent news coverage or current events. While we respect and value your opinion, Local Reviews are not meant for social or political commentary. We think there are other forums that are more suited to those kinds of conversations, like blogs or social networks. Please write about your first-hand experience with the place and not general commentary on the place in relation to recent news.
- **Write with style:** People will pay attention when you write thoughtful reviews. Keep them readable and avoid excessive capitalization or punctuation. Use good grammar, check your spelling, and avoid profanity. Choose the right length - a paragraph is great. Be creative and have fun!

### Write the introduction

**Below are a few guidelines to help you write the introduction to your critical review.**

### Introduce your review appropriately

Begin your review with an introduction appropriate to your assignment.

If your assignment asks you to review only one book and not to use outside sources, your introduction will focus on identifying the author, the title, the main topic or issue presented in the book, and the author's purpose in writing the book.

If your assignment asks you to review the book as it relates to issues or themes discussed in the course, or to review two or more books on the same topic, your introduction must also encompass those expectations.

### Explain relationships

For example, before you can review two books on a topic, you must explain to your reader in your introduction how they are related to one another.

Within this shared context (or under this "umbrella") you can then review comparable aspects of both books, pointing out where the authors agree and differ.

In other words, the more complicated your assignment is, the more your introduction must accomplish.

Finally, the introduction to a book review is always the place for you to establish your position as the reviewer (your thesis about the author's thesis).

**As you write, consider the following questions:**

- Is the book a memoir, a treatise, a collection of facts, an extended argument, etc.? Is the article a documentary, a write-up of primary research, a position paper, etc.?
- Who is the author? What does the preface or foreword tell you about the author's purpose, background, and credentials? What is the author's approach to the topic (as a journalist? a historian? a researcher?)?
- What is the main topic or problem addressed? How does the work relate to a discipline, to a profession, to a particular audience, or to other works on the topic?
- What is your critical evaluation of the work (your thesis)? Why have you taken that position? What criteria are you basing your position on?

**Provide an overview**

In your introduction you will also want to provide an overview. An overview supplies your reader with certain general information not appropriate for including in the introduction but necessary to understanding the body of the review.

Generally, an overview describes your book's division into chapters, sections, or points of discussion. An overview may also include background information about the topic, about your stand, or about the criteria you will use for evaluation.

The overview and the introduction work together to provide a comprehensive beginning for (a "springboard" into) your review.

As you write, consider the following questions:

- What are the author's basic premises? What issues are raised, or what themes emerge? What situation (i.e., racism on college campuses) provides a basis for the author's assertions?
- How informed is my reader? What background information is relevant to the entire book and should be placed here rather than in a body paragraph?

**The Review writing process**

1. **Try out the product or service.** In order to write a review, you need to try the product. It seems obvious, but many people still write reviews without much first-hand knowledge of the product. Try it out, take your time, and get to know the product or service adequately enough to be able to speak authoritatively about it.

**2 Take notes.**

Gather details that you'll need to write your review. For example, if you're reviewing a restaurant, get the names and ingredients of certain dishes you're trying. Take note of the décor. Jot down the name of your server.

**3 Take photographs.**

In some cases, your review will be enhanced by photos. Document your experience by taking pictures so that your readers will know what you mean when you say, "There was a giant stain on the ceiling in my hotel room."

## Organizing Your Review

**1 Find out the parameters for the review.**
If you are planning to submit your review to a particular website, blog or magazine, make sure you find out any specifications for the review. For example, there might be a word limit or a specific format.

Check the deadline too, especially if the review is for something timely, like a movie, album or book. Your review should coincide with the release of these types of items.

**2. Figure out your angle.**

Every review has a particular perspective. You are, after all, making an argument in your review. Determine how you want to talk about the product or service. Will this be a positive or negative review? What will you focus on?

This works especially well for a book or movie review, where you might pick out a particular theme and write your review around that theme.

**Know your audience.** Think about who will read your review. Are you writing for a heavy metal music blog and your readers will already know various bands and songs? Are you writing a more technical review and your readers will understand jargon that you include?

If you are writing for a more general audience, assume that some readers will need more explanation about certain references or terms you use.

**3. Briefly describe the product or service.**
In a couple of sentences or less, describe the product that you're reviewing. You will reveal other details throughout your review, but the initial description will give your reader a sense of what you're talking about.

If it's a movie or book, don't spend your entire review summarizing the plot. There's no need to give the entire story. Just a brief overview in 1-2 sentences will suffice.

**4. Write with detail.**
Give lots of detail and evidence for the argument that you're making. If you're reviewing a music album, talk about the instruments or vocals on a particular track. If you're reviewing a movie, talk about why the cinematography is ground-breaking and give examples from the film.

**5. Use complete sentences.**
Your review will carry much more weight if you write in complete sentences, rather than fragments that leave the reader wanting more. Don't write things like, "okay food, terrible service." This doesn't tell the reader anything specific and therefore doesn't make for a helpful review.

**6. Include useful descriptive words.**
Skip words like "meh" and "okay." These words are not very useful in terms of describing a product. If you want to write a compelling review that gives the reader an idea of what you experienced, choose more descriptive words.[2]

**7. Personalize your review.**
Relate your review directly to your personal experience. Don't use vague statements and generalities. People reading your review will want to know about your experience, so they can determine if they'd like to use that service as well. Tell a story about why you like to go to a particular nightclub or why you find your yard service so reliable.[3]

**8. Position this product or service among its peers.**
Think about where this product fits among similar products. You should certainly judge the product on its own merits, but people reading your reviews will find it useful to have a reference to a restaurant they're familiar with. This makes the comparison – and thus, the evaluation of whether to try a product or service – easier for readers of your review.

**9. Include a sample.**
If possible, give your reader a sample of what you've experienced. This might be a picture of a meal that you ate, or it might be a link to a trailer for the movie, or it might be a snippet of a song from an album you're reviewing.

**10. Keep it truthful.**
Be honest in your review. Don't stretch the truth to fit with your argument one way or another. Don't make up stuff or exaggerate to make your point. If you don't have enough evidence to support a point you're making, leave it out.[4]

**11. Give a fair review.**
You may have had a terrible experience with a particular plumber, but balance your review with what the plumber did right. If a meal was excellent except for the crud in your water glass, mention the negative part. People find reviews more credible if they admit the good and the bad together.

**12. Be creative and interesting.**
The best reviews are ones that hook the reader and draw them in. Write in a way that is imaginative and that captures the essence of the product or service that you're reviewing.[5]

Some reviews are written in different formats, even as poems or haiku. Other reviews are tongue-in-cheek, conveying the facts in a humorous way.

**13. Add privileged information to your review.**
Include information that a reader wouldn't have from checking out the service's website or seeing an ad for the service. Provide information or details that you can only get when you're using the service.

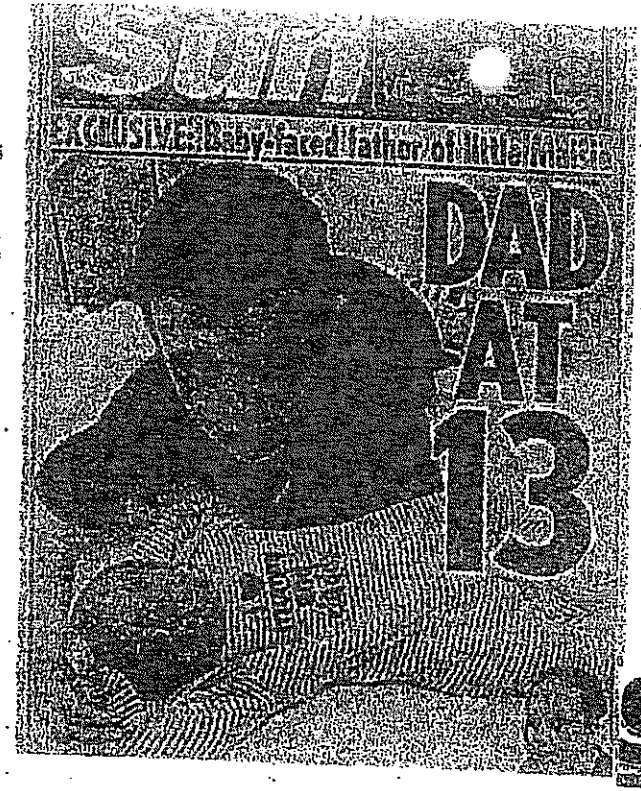
## Finalizing Your Review

1. **Make your review clear and concise.** Don't overdo the review with over-the-top praise or criticism. Eliminate extraneous words so that your meaning is clear in the review.
2. **Proofread your review.** Take some time to read through your review carefully, checking for proper grammar and spelling. People will discount your review if it's full of grammatical errors that make it hard to read.
3. **Have someone else read it.** Give your review to someone to read before you post it online or publish it. It's a good rule of thumb to have someone else read your writing to ensure that your writing is clear and your main points are adequately supported.
4. **Submit your review.** If you are publishing your review with a magazine, blog or other source, send in your review. Your review may need to go through an editor and may take a bit of time to be printed or posted online.

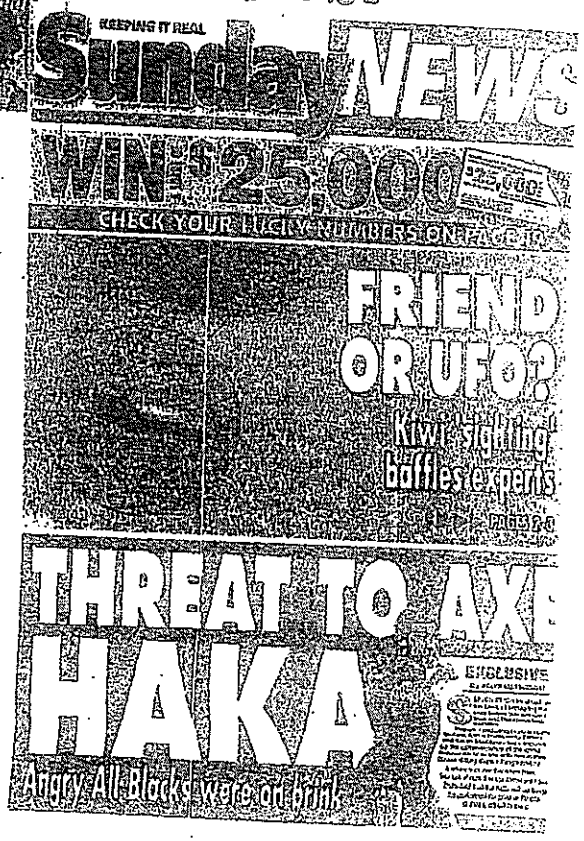
# Newspaper Terms

| | |
|---|---|
| AP | Associated Press. An international news agency. |
| Assignment | A story that a reporter has been detailed to cover. |
| Banner | A headline in large letters running across the entire width of the front page. |
| Beat | Reporter's regular routine covering news sources. |
| Bold face | Heavy black type used in intros or to emphasise paragraphs. |
| Broadsheet | Traditional large format newspaper like *The Pretoria News, The Star, Beeld* and the *Sunday Times*. |
| Byline | Name of a newspaper writer appearing above a news or feature article. |
| Copy | All text prepared for printing. |
| Correspondent | A reporter assigned to cover an area some distance from the home office, such as another city or another country. |
| Credit Line | A line giving credit for the source of a story, photograph or illustration. |
| Cross-head | Small subheading in the body of the article. Used to break the mass of grey. |
| Cub | Junior reporter still in training. |
| Dateline | The line at the beginning of a story giving the place and sometimes the day of the reported event. |
| Deadline | Time at which all copy for an edition must be in. |
| Dummy | A diagram or mock-up of the page indicating the position of articles, pictures and advertisements. |
| Ear | The space next to the name of the newspaper on the front page which is used for advertising. |
| Edition | All copies of a newspaper printed at the same time as in the *Stop Press, City Late* or *Late Final* for example. |
| Editorial | The comment on the main news events of the day. Usually written by the editor or one of his senior staff. |
| Editorialising | The inclusion of a journalist's own opinion in a news report. Usually considered undesirable. |
| Extra | An edition of the newspaper which has not been regularly scheduled which carries some story of great significance. |
| Feature | A story where the interest lies in some factor other than mere news value. It is usually longer, more researched and less time-bound than a regular news report. |
| Filler | A story of interest but of little news value, used to fill space. |
| Galley | Long columns of copy that are produced by the photo-typesetter and are then cut up and laid out on the page. |
| Gutters | The space between columns. |
| Kill | Cancel a story. |
| Lead | The most important story of the day. Usually featured with a banner headline. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Libel | Publication of material considered to be injurious to someone's reputation. |
| News Editor | The person responsible for organising and directing the gathering of local news and pictures. |
| Proof | The first printed copy of the newspaper where errors can still be corrected. |
| Reuters | The name of an international news agency which supplies news to all newspapers worldwide for a fee. |
| SAPA | The South African Press Association. Same as Reuters. |
| Scoop | An exclusive story which no other newspaper has covered. |
| Sub-editor | The journalist who edits and corrects the stories and writes headlines for stories. |
| Tabloid | A3 size newspaper. Smaller than broadsheet. eg. *Weekly Mail, Citizen, Sunday Star.* |




TABLOIDS



WALL UNITS AND ROOM DIVIDERS

The Star

Johannesburg Wednesday August 2 1978

CITY LATE

12c

Woman TODAY SLIM ALONG with Woman

The Jackpot is R4000 — plus, plus, plus — See Page 2

# UN team on way

## And SA will give cautious welcome

By Kevin Jacobs, The Star Bureau

New York

The vanguard of a United Nations survey team is expected in Windhoek tomorrow to begin an unprecedented, UN-supervised independence exercise that could yet be blocked by South Africa.

Now Tobie's a photo-finish father

## 7 robbers get total of 74 years' jail

Index

BY GEORGE!

## SA embargo on all imported tinned salmon

## Shootout at Iraqi consulate

## In the dead of night . . .

Mrs Conradie

You can win R75 groceries

## Alvon hopes to fly out on Friday

R127m blow against wife beaters

Australian troops for SWA?

A bad slip for David Owen

Guerillas killed in SWA ambush

New elections loom in Portugal

Self-rule urged for Bermuda

AN ALLIED SAVINGS ACCOUNT ISN'T JUST FOR SAVING!

ALLIED

Example of a Front Page

THE PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE OF TSHWANE

LATE FINAL

PRETORIA NEWS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 8 2011

DO YOU OWN GOLD?

INSIDE

R14 MILLION FRAUD CASE - PAGE 4

# Road terror: mom loses baby

City mother in shock as 'drunk suspects' are out on bail hours after arrest

## I will never fly Zuma again, says coup pilot

## Tests show body in boot may be that of cop

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# FACTS

A FACT IS:

- a statement which contains a finite verb
- a statement which can be proved true
- not a personal opinion.

*EXTRACT ONE FACT FROM EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:*

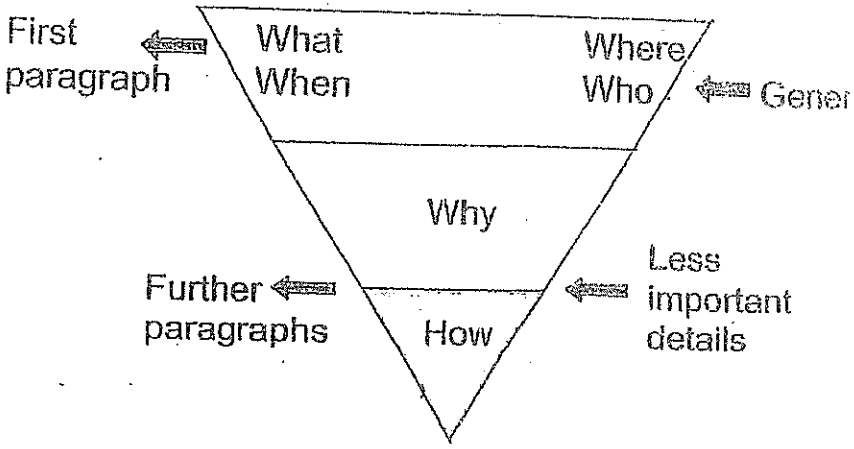
1) There's life in something called LA VIE. Taste it. The natural lively white wine made for living.
2) If you like value for money, this is for you; a six pack of quality T-shirts in sparkling colours for only R59.99 - which works out a bit more than R10. Each. Not bad for quality.
3) To compare the fabulous Beacon Island with the very best in international resorts is already no exaggeration, but very soon the addition of a unique solarium complex, including a heated indoor swimming pool, saunas gymnasium and squash courts will provide even more all-round pleasure.
4) To Gus, Birdmarsh Harbour was a dreary nothingness of a place; to his friend Paul it was a haven for sea-birds he loved to watch, and in his eyes it was beautiful.



# HOW TO WRITE A NEWS STOR

1) The introduction:
   - must contain the story's most interesting points
   - must be brief and to the point
   - tells news a second time, elaborating on the headl
   - is sometimes typed in bold

2) As all the most important questions are answe first, the news article follows an inverted triangle:




3) Write in simple past tense

4) Quote your sources (i.e. written in direct speech)

5) Write a separate paragraph for each idea (relat facts) – so paragraphs tend to be short

6) Other than in the headlines, avoid emotive langua

7) Include bylines and cross-heads, datelines, subhead etc. where necessary

# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEWS REPORTS, FEATURES, EDITORIALS AND COLUMNS

## News Reports

1) report the facts of an event (no opinions)

2) report the facts as soon as possible after an event

## The Feature

1) Interprets facts – includes background, opinion and discussion

2) Unlike a news report, it is not time based – can be printed some time after an event

3) Is well-researched and should pertain to what has been happening in society so that it is relevant

## Editorials

1) Are comments by senior editors on major events or news articles, often referring to the main lead article

2) Contain opinions

## Column

1) A regular (usually weekly) article or feature, often written by experts or well-known people

# HEADLINES

They must catch the reader's attention. To do this, they employ the following techniques:

1) Jargon (the terminology of a profession, group, etc.)
   a) Sporting jargon, e.g. Love match
   b) Political jargon, e.g. Liberation before education
   c) Women's page jargon, e.g. Rag trade chaos
   d) Stock exchange jargon, e.g. Bears evident

2) Ambiguity
   - headline has two or more different meanings
   - words deliberately omitted lead to ambiguity, e.g. Baby tycoon succeeds

3) Familiar names
   - Political, sport, entertainment, e.g. E.T. to testify, Naas battles it out

4) Pun
   or play on words, e.g. Bulls feel blue

5) Sensationalism
   e.g. Six killed in shoot out

6) Bias or Prejudice
   - in favour or against, e.g. Come on, Coetzee

7) Emotive Language
   - headlines which inspire courage, fear, love, etc. in the reader, e.g. Tearful Di flees

8) Alliteration
   e.g. Fight flab now!

Headline

# Russian Mars probe loses its way minutes after launch

Byline

By Dalton Stocks

Bold face introduction

**A Russian space probe sent to collect rock and dust from a Martian moon has veered off course within minutes of starting its 33 month mission.**

First two paragraphs include the "what" "where" "when" "who"

The Russian space agency said an engine designed to keep the probe on track failed to start.

It says the craft is currently stuck in an Earth orbit and engineers have three days to correct the fault before its batteries run out.

The project is Russia's most ambitious space voyage in recent years.

It is called Phobos-Grunt - "grunt" means "soil" in Russian.

Background to main content of story

Scientists hope the dusty debris it is designed to collect will provide fresh insights into the origin of the 27km-wide moon, that many scientists suspect may actually be a captured asteroid.

The venture is also significant because it is carrying China's first Mars satellite

Yinghuo-1 is a 115kg probe that will ride piggyback and should be released into an observation orbit around the Red Planet.

The craft lifted off from Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on a Zenit-2SB rocket at 00:16 local time on Wednesday (20:16 GMT Tuesday).

If its course can be corrected, and everything else goes well, Martian moon samples could be back on Earth in just under three years' time.

Includes quotes from experts and those involved in story

"It looks like the engine system has not worked," said Vladimir Popovkin, the head of the Russian Space Agency.

"It means that it did not determine orientation on the stars."

"I would not say it's a failure, it's a non-standard situation, but it is a working situation."

James Oberg, a NASA veteran who now works as a space consultant, says it may still be possible to put the probe back on track.

"The race is on to regain control, diagnose the potential computer code flaws, and send up emergency rocket engine control commands," he told the AP news agency.

"Depending on the actual root of the failure, this is not an impossible challenge."

Sidehead

**Torrid history**

Russia is hoping Phobos-Grunt will finally see it conquer its Martian curse, says the BBC Science Correspondent, Jonathan Amos.

Cross-head

**"I would not say it's a failure, it's a non-standard situation, but it is a working situation."** – Vladimir Popovkin (Russian space agency head)

Moscow has despatched a total of 16 missions to the Red Planet since the 1960s. None has successfully completed its goals, with the most recent endeavour - the sophisticated Mars-96 spacecraft - being destroyed in a failed launch.

Lead scientist at Moscow's Space Research Institute, Alexander Zakharov, said: "We haven't had a successful interplanetary expedition for over 15 years.

"In that time, the people, the technology, everything has changed. It's all new for us; in many ways we are working from scratch."

Phobos-Grunt is a hefty spacecraft, requiring several elements to complete the tasks of landing on the moon, picking up the samples and then despatching them home.

Statistics and additional information towards the end

If you include the cruise stage (and all its fuel) that will take Phobos-Grunt and Yinghuo-1 out to Mars, the total launch mass for the mission is more than 11 tonnes.

Phobos-Grunt is scheduled to reach Mars next September.

After dumping its cruise stage and releasing Yinghuo-1, the main spacecraft should manoeuvre itself into position to land on Phobos.

**Shipped home** — Sidehead

Detailed mapping of the moon has been conducted by the European Space Agency's Mars Express (MEx) satellite, and this information is being used to identify a suitable location to land in February 2013.

Once on the surface, a robotic arm will pick up samples of the regolith ("soil"). Some of this material will be analysed there and then, but a portion of it - about 200g - will be transferred to a canister for return to Earth.

No clear conclusion at the end of a news article.

This canister and its departure stage should be sent home within a few days of Phobos-Grunt's arrival on the moon. If all goes well, the canister should fall to Earth in the Kazakh desert in August 2014.

Potato-shaped Phobos is a fascinating target. Although it has been studied extensively by passing satellites, it still holds many secrets - not just about itself, but also the planet below.

It is one of two moons at Mars (the other being Deimos). It has an extremely low density, indicating it probably has many interior voids.

Example of a feature article

# A Dark Cloud and a Silver Lining for the World's Fisheries

**by Henry Cotton**

**A new study reveals that small, unassessed fisheries are in even worse shape than we thought. But the research also provides hope that smarter management could stop the bleeding—and provide more sustainable seafood.**

The default law of the sea is lawlessness. Take fishing, by far the major human interaction with the three-quarters of the Earth's surface that is not dry land. There are perhaps 10,000 fishing areas around the world—from Alaska's multi-billion dollar fishery to near-shore African waters that are fished by hand for subsistence—and more than 80% of them are completely unregulated. Not only are there little to no laws controlling fish catches in those mostly smaller territories, scientists haven't even been able to assess their status. Throughout much of the world, we don't even know how much we've lost.

That's beginning to change. In a major new paper published in the September 27 *Science*, a team of researchers at the University of California-Santa Barbara (UCSB) and the University of Washington managed to assess the status of those smaller fisheries, which together comprise more than 80% of the global catch. And what they discovered offers plenty of reason to despair—and some hope as well. It turns out that those small, unregulated fisheries are doing worse—in some cases much worse—than the larger, better studied and regulated fisheries. That means the world's oceans are even more overfished than we had feared.

But the study's authors also found that those fisheries—if better managed—can be rebuilt quickly, and may be able to produce an even larger, more sustainable catch than they do now. "This report is a big deal," says Brett Jenks, the CEO of the conservation non-profit RARE, which is involved in small-scale sustainable fisheries. "Some might see this as another dark cloud for fisheries, but there's a silver lining."

Because there literally is no one counting the full catch in small-scale fisheries, the researchers—led by Christopher Costello, an economist with the Bren School of Environmental Science at UCSB—used regression models to estimate the state of the smaller fisheries. They found out that smaller fisheries in the northeastern U.S. and Canada—where boats have been plying once-abundant waters for centuries—are in particularly bad shape, while the fisheries in the eastern Indian Ocean tended to be richer. But in general, the stats for those smaller, unassessed fisheries are not good. "Small-scale unassessed fisheries are in substantially worse shape than was previously thought," Costello told reporters last week. "The longer we wait, the harder and most costly it will be [to revive them]. In another ten years, the window of opportunity may be closed."

The good news is that smart policy can help even those most depleted fisheries recover. One simple way is to provide more funds for scientists to assess smaller fisheries—after all, we need to be able to diagnose the problem before we can cure it. Once scientists can assess the state of a fishery, they can set quotas that prevent territories from being overfished. That's helped in the U.S., where tighter regulations has translated into more sustainable catches, with U.S. landings of fish and shellfish hitting a 17-year high in 2011. Another option involves granting communities or even individual fishermen exclusive rights to catches in return for establishing no take zones that allow stressed species time to recover. "The silver lining is that we have proven solutions," said Michael Arbuckle, a senior fisheries specialist with the World Bank.

Because the unassessed fisheries are so small, that means working community by community. To that end RARE has established 40 pilot sites in Asia and Latin America that use both catch shares and protected areas to help small fisheries recover. "We're working with local mayors to preserve and protect those no take zones," says Jenks. "The incentive for better management is to remove the tragedy of the commons and provide security for local fishermen."

That better management can pay off. The *Science* study estimates that 64% of the small, unassessed fisheries could "provide increased sustainable harvest" if they came under better management. And that in turn could increased global fish abundance by 56%, which would translate into more seafood for the world. Given that global food demand is expected to double by the middle of the century, that could be quite the catch.

Still has a headline and byline, and can have a sub-heading

No "what", "where", "when" etc. in the opening paragraph. Often more "story like".

Includes a lot of statistics early on and requires more research than a news article

Also contains quotes, but they are based on opinion rather than fact

Unlike a news article, it has a clear conclusion and offers solutions based on the writer's opinion

## Church speaks out

If the Queen (of England) was, forgiveably, in retrospective mood, it was pleasing to hear some unusually up-to-date sentiments from our church leaders this season. And it was doubly pleasing that both Anglican and Catholic archbishops chose to risk unpopularity by doing so.

The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, spoke with passion about immigration and deplored the cold comfort that too often awaits newcomers in Britain. He was taking on a local as well as a national view.

"What concerns me at the moment," he said, "is our attitude as a nation to these many immigrants." Most come to our country "because they wish to have a better life and work to provide for their families." They needed to be welcomed. Instead, they "simply feel excluded because they are outsiders."

The archbishop was right. It was salutary to hear such plain speaking from a national figure. We can only regret that so few political leaders have the courage and integrity to do the same. So busy do they seem to be, devising new ways of discouraging would-be migrants and deporting those already here, that they neglect to mention the benefits the new workers bring to Britain or the shabby way they may be treated by harsh officialdom or employers.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, for his part, warned about the way in which human greed distorts and threatens the fragile balance of the Earth. Again, he was right. He, too, was making the sort of outspoken appeal heard all too infrequently from our politicians. This Christmas, those in secular power could have learnt much from paying attention in church. - The Independent (London)

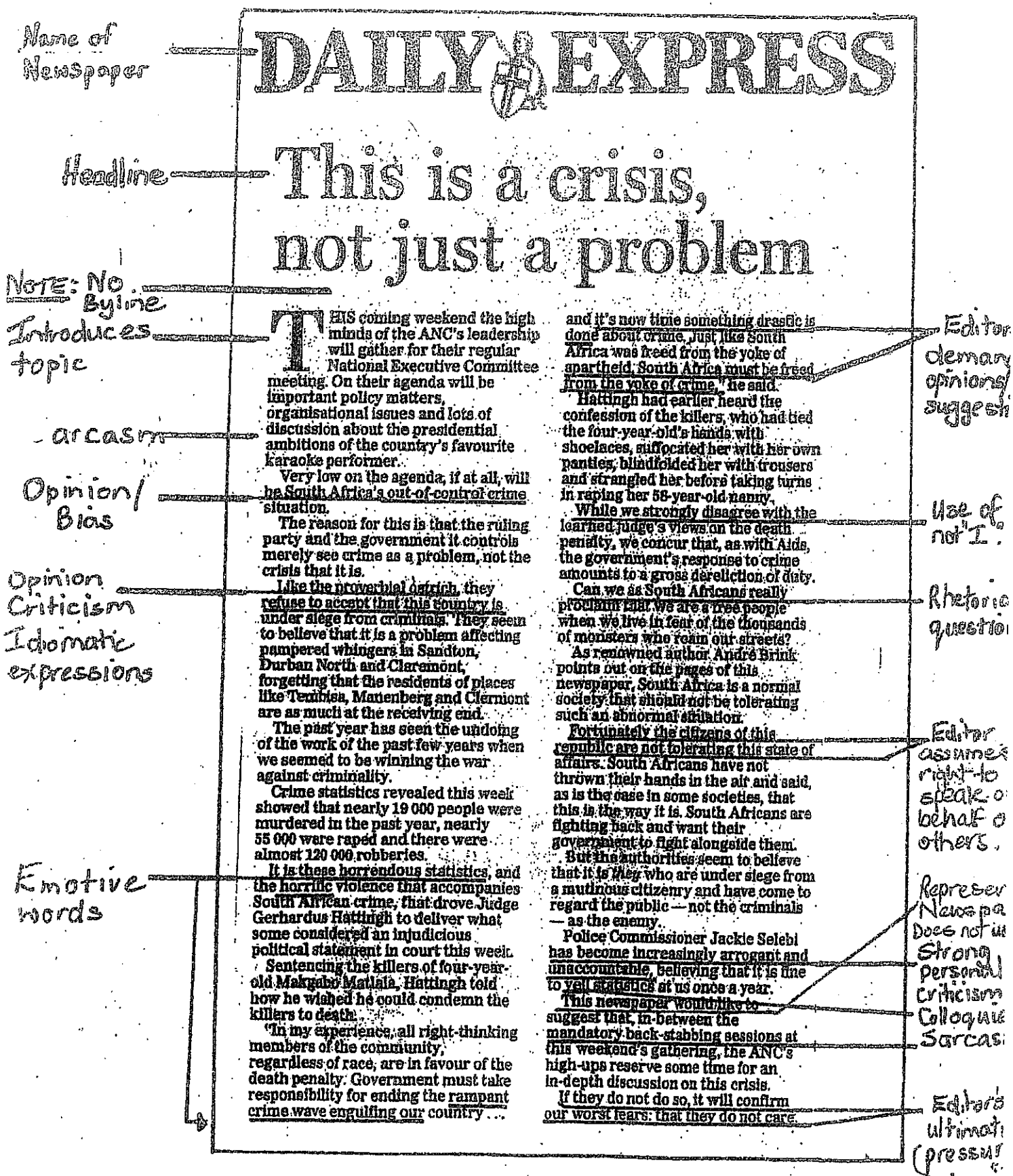
Cape Times Friday, 28 December 2007

TIPS:

- An editorial comments on an issue or issues of the day.
- It is written by the editor of the newspaper or by a quest invited by the editor to write the editorial (it is called 'the leader column'.)
- In a magazine, it also comments on the articles in that particular issue and some of the writers responsible for the articles.
- It is the viewpoint of the editor and does not always take sides, but merely points out some discrepancies, foolishness, lack of wisdom, lack of direction or problems that are staring us in the face that no-one seems to be doing anything about.
- On the other hand, it can take a strong stand on an issue clearly aligning itself with some injustice or criticism of leadership in the country.

In this editorial politicians are criticised and both Anglican and Catholic archbishops commended for being critical of the imaginative way that immigrants are dealt with and human greed.

EXAMPLE OF AN EDITORIAL



Name of Newspaper

DAILY EXPRESS

Headline

# This is a crisis, not just a problem

Note: No Byline

Introduces topic

THIS coming weekend the high minds of the ANC's leadership will gather for their regular National Executive Committee meeting. On their agenda will be important policy matters, organisational issues and lots of discussion about the presidential ambitions of the country's favourite karaoke performer.

sarcasm

Very low on the agenda, if at all, will be South Africa's out-of-control crime situation.

Opinion/ Bias

The reason for this is that the ruling party and the government it controls merely see crime as a problem, not the crisis that it is.

Opinion Criticism Idiomatic expressions

Like the proverbial ostrich, they refuse to accept that this country is under siege from criminals. They seem to believe that it is a problem affecting pampered whingers in Sandton, Durban North and Claremont, forgetting that the residents of places like Tembisa, Manenberg and Clermont are as much at the receiving end.

The past year has seen the undoing of the work of the past few years when we seemed to be winning the war against criminality.

Crime statistics revealed this week showed that nearly 19 000 people were murdered in the past year, nearly 55 000 were raped and there were almost 120 000 robberies.

Emotive words

It is these horrendous statistics, and the horrific violence that accompanies South African crime, that drove Judge Gerhardus Hattingh to deliver what some considered an injudicious political statement in court this week.

Sentencing the killers of four-year-old Makgabo Matlala, Hattingh told how he wished he could condemn the killers to death.

"In my experience, all right-thinking members of the community, regardless of race, are in favour of the death penalty. Government must take responsibility for ending the rampant crime wave engulfing our country ... and it's now time something drastic is done about crime. Just like South Africa was freed from the yoke of apartheid, South Africa must be freed from the yoke of crime," he said.

Editor demands opinions/ suggestions

Hattingh had earlier heard the confession of the killers, who had tied the four-year-old's hands with shoelaces, suffocated her with her own panties, blindfolded her with trousers and strangled her before taking turns in raping her 58-year-old nanny.

While we strongly disagree with the learned judge's views on the death penalty, we concur that, as with Aids, the government's response to crime amounts to a gross dereliction of duty.

Use of 'we'

Can we as South Africans really proclaim that we are a free people when we live in fear of the thousands of monsters who roam our streets?

Rhetorical question

As renowned author André Brink points out on the pages of this newspaper, South Africa is a normal society that should not be tolerating such an abnormal situation.

Fortunately the citizens of this republic are not tolerating this state of affairs. South Africans have not thrown their hands in the air and said, as is the case in some societies, that this is the way it is. South Africans are fighting back and want their government to fight alongside them.

Editor assumes right to speak on behalf of others.

But the authorities seem to believe that it is they who are under siege from a mutinous citizenry and have come to regard the public — not the criminals — as the enemy.

Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi has become increasingly arrogant and unaccountable, believing that it is fine to yell statistics at us once a year.

Represents Newspaper Does not use

Strong personal criticism

This newspaper would like to suggest that, in-between the mandatory back-stabbing sessions at this weekend's gathering, the ANC's high-ups reserve some time for an in-depth discussion on this crisis.

Colloquial Sarcasm

If they do not do so, it will confirm our worst fears: that they do not care.

Editor's ultimate (pressure) Ends, with strong tone

## LETTER TO THE PRESS

2119 Zwelitsha Street
Zweleternba
6852
29 December 2008

The Editor
**The People's Voice**
Box 222
Tshwane
0001

Sir

Right, you are wrong!

'Unfulfilled' (Durban Times, 23 December 2007), has made a valid point that life is difficult, disappointing and stressful. However, I believe there is a flip-side to this kind of attitude.

*State the issue immediately and clearly.*
*Criticise another writer's points, logically and calmly.*
*You may criticise, but be constructive.*
*Give your points of view rationally.*
*Let your letter be of value. Let it make a difference.*
*Clearly explain your reason / purpose for writing.*
*Be rational, calm and relevant to win the arguments.*
*Use relevant examples to support your viewpoint.*
*End with a challenge / question / memorable statement*
*Your language and register should be acceptable.*
*Check the format.*

Life happens moment to moment, but is fleeting. Surely we should all make a special effort to ensure that the time we have on earth is well-spent, serving others, keeping our equilibrium and contributing to peace on earth. Despite the attitude of 'Unfulfilled', I still admire her for expressing her views. It is the direction she has chosen which I find disappointing.

Yours faithfully
*Hopeful*

.....
(Signature)
Colin L High

**TIPS:**

- You send the letter to the editor, but not for him/her to react, advise, correct or promote particularly.
- Therefore, you use only 'Sir' as you are not writing to the editor, but to the public.
- Your subject line should get to the heart of the matter. It should be crisp and striking.
- Briefly repeat what someone else has expressed and then offer your viewpoint.
- You can use a pseudonym, (nom-de-plume) at the end if you do not wish to have your name used BUT must still supply your name. You should have the courage of your convictions to link your name to your views!
- Make sure that your words make a difference. Satire, used well, works wonders.
- A woman would write (Mrs/Ms) in brackets behind her name, but a man does not do this.

## ① Business Letter

Write out address in full

*9 Elm Avenue*
*Eastleigh*
*Edenvale*
*1610*
*5 February 2006*

Postal code always follows the town

Write out in full using this format

Always include name of business

Always direct your letter to someone – give his/her title

*The Personnel Manager*
*ABC Chemicals (pty) ltd*
*P.O. Box 46*
*Braamfontein*
*2001*

Don't forget Postal code

*Dear Sir*

- Topic must be clear and concise
-Do not forget to underline

*Application for Employment*

*I wish to apply for the position of Junior Laboratory Assistant in your chemical factory at Braamfontein. The post was advertised in The Star on 1 February 2003.*

*I was educated at James High School, where I received a University Entrance pass in 2002. I was awarded distinctions in Physical Science and Mathematics. Your advertisement specifies that applicants must have done well in these subjects in a Senior Certificate examination. I am nineteen years of age.*

*In support of my application, I submit photostat copies of the following documents:*

*a) Birth and Matriculation Certificates*
*b) Testimonial from Mr J Caruthers, Principal, James High School*
*c) Testimonial from the Minister, St Dominic's Church, Edenvale*

*I trust that my application will receive your favourable consideration.*

*Yours faithfully*

** A business letter starting with "Dear Sir" always ends "Yours faithfully"
** "faithfully" has a small "f"

Do not forget to sign

R. C. Allen

Write your name out neatly under your signature
NB a man never writes (Mr)

## ② Letter to the Editor

Always address to "The Editor"

Remember name of newspaper

P.O.Box 147
Groenkloof
0027
5 February 2006

The Editor
The Star
P.O. Box 25
Johannesburg
2000

Write on next line

As a rule you do not write "Dear Sir"

Sir

Topic must be clear and concise
Do not forget to underline

Servants' Responsibilities

At least 3 paragraphs

In your edition of 1 February 2003 you reported a serious injury to a child in Randburg. While his nursemaid was occupied elsewhere, a toddler wandered onto a building site and was almost killed.

While one's heart goes out to parents on such occasions, one should also give some thought to the feelings of the nursemaid. I do not know all the details of this particular case, but domestic servants are often expected to cook, wash up, do laundry, iron, clean the house, and also look after children. It is impossible to cope with all these tasks satisfactorily; so a task as responsible as child-minding is an unfair burden to carry under such circumstances.

One would not condemn working mothers but one wonders whether some of their income ought not to be sacrificed for automatic appliances which would free a servant to keep better watch over children in her care.

Yours faithfully

Do not forget to sign

You may use a pseudonym but then you must still sign and write your name underneath that. Without this, your letter will not be published.

J. J. Hanger (Mrs)

## PURPOSE OF AN ADVERT:

All adverts try to PERSUADE the audience to buy the product or service

## ADVERTISING JARGON:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| PRODUCT: | - | the item or service that is being 'sold' |
| TARGET GROUP / AUDIENCE: | - | group of people the advert is aimed at e.g. mothers, affluent businessmen, Yuppies / Dinkies |
| SLOGAN: | - | short catchy phrase / clause always associated with that product |
| BASIC APPEAL: | - | desires appealed to |
| COPY: | - | the words used in the advert, both what the words say and the shape and size of the letters used in the words. |
| VISUALS: | - | elements that are not words e.g. logo, models, scenery |

## LINGUISTIC TECHNIQUES COMMONLY USED:

Adverts use the figures of speech and techniques you have already learnt such as:

| | |
|---|---|
| ❖ alliteration | ❖ repetition |
| ❖ assonance | ❖ rhetorical questions |
| ❖ emotive words | ❖ proverbs & sayings |
| ❖ technical jargon | ❖ metaphors & similes |

**And some new figures of speech:**

❖ **PUNS**

The different meanings of a word or phrase are played with, usually in a humorous way

**Examples:**

"Take my picture now," she snapped.

"I cannot eat starchy food," he said stiffly.

**Bumper sticker:** Rehab is for quitters!

**Joke:** Why did the orange cross the road? *He wanted to play squash.*

❖ **HYPERBOLE**

This is used to exaggerate an issue for effect.

**Examples:**

There are millions of ants in my lunchbox.

I haven't seen you for ages.

He is as large as a house!

❖ **EUPHEMISM**

This is used to describe something unpleasant, frightening or vulgar in a mild, indirect way.

**Example:**

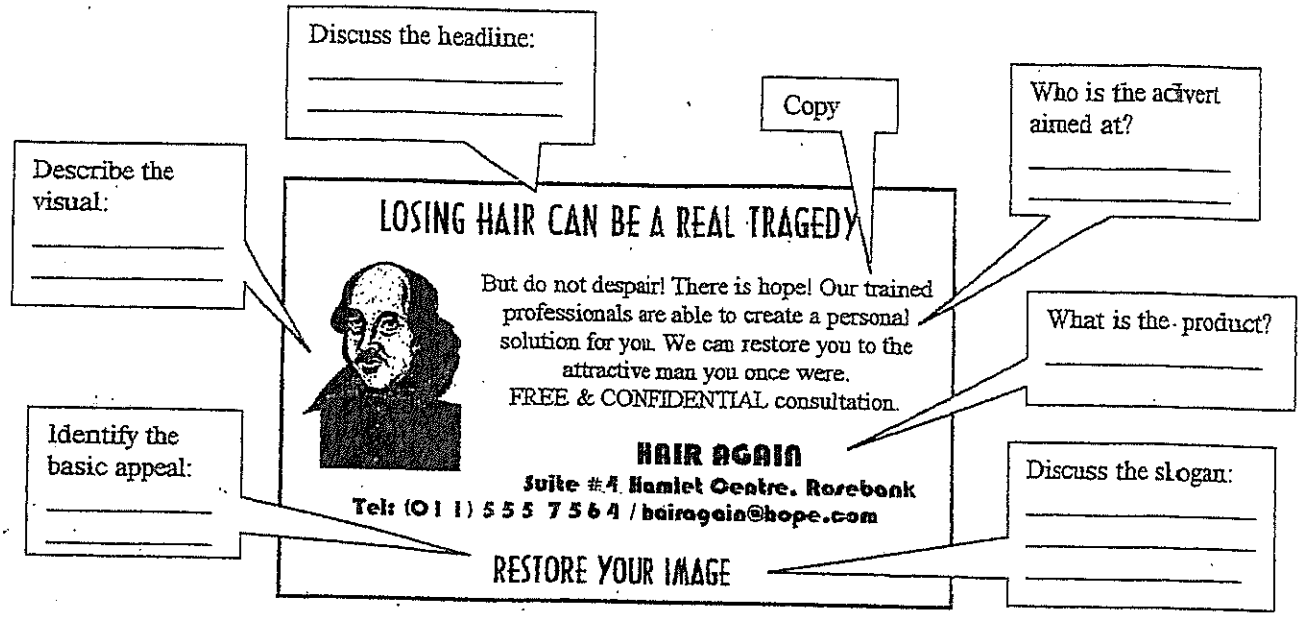
Your grandfather has passed away NOT : Your grandfather has died.

She is plump NOT : She is fat!

"Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently" HENRY FORD

## Exercise 2:

Complete the following.



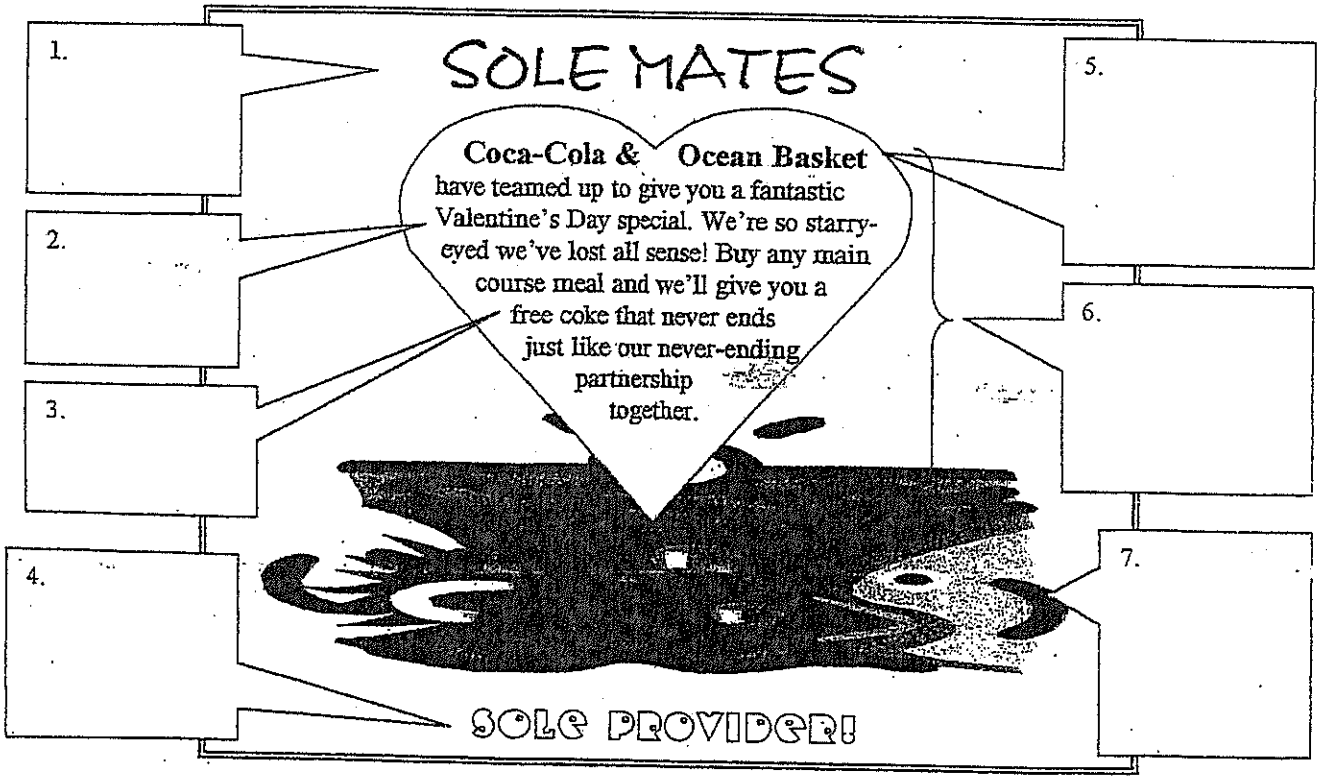

## Discussion:

In small groups discuss why advertisers put the following things into their adverts:

- the product name
- the slogan
- a headline
- pictures

## Exercise 3:

Now it's over to you. In this exercise you must label and discuss the features of the advert indicated by the callouts.



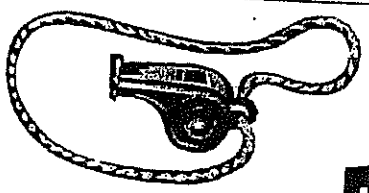
## CARTOONS

### Terminology/Jargon

| | |
|---|---|
| Body Language | The facial expressions and positioning of a person that provide non-verbal clues about their mood and attitude |
| Caricature | Features or actions of a person are exaggerated to help the reader work out who is being represented. For example, Nelson Mandela might be drawn in a Madiba shirt or Prince Charles might be drawn with big ears. |
| Intention | What is the cartoonist trying to achieve? Is the cartoon meant to amuse, make a political statement or ridicule a person or statesman? |
| Irony | When one thing is said bit something else is meant. |
| Parody | An imitation of a piece of writing used to ridicule the original or create a satirical point. |
| Satire | Satire uses humour to make a serious point. It involves using wit, irony or sarcasm to expose or highlight human vices or follies. |
| Stereotype | An exaggerated, preconceived generalisation about the typical behaviour, attitudes, dress, etc. of various types of people. |
| Verbal clues | Some parts of the drawing may be labelled or specific dialogue may be used to help the reader establish what the cartoon is about. |
| Visual Metaphor | In a metaphor, two things are compared. In a visual metaphor, a picture stands for or represents something else. |

## Exercise 6:

Read the following advert and answer the questions which follow.



# As clean as a Budget rent a car

We don't compromise on service because we offer competitive rates. A clean car is a basic value at Budget and our way of thanking you for choosing our company. If your car is not as clean as a whistle next time you rent a car from us we will give you a higher grade car at the original price.

**THE SMART MONEY IS ON BUDGET.**

**Budget**

rent a car

1. What product is being advertised here? [1]
2. Quote the slogan from this advert. [2]
3. What linguistic technique (figure of speech) is used in the headline? [2]
4. To what sort of person is the advert appealing? Choose the best answer from those suggested below. [2]
   - 4.1. adults
   - 4.2. businessmen
   - 4.3. people who want good service / treatment
   - 4.4. families
5. Explain why the advertisers chose a picture of a whistle to advertise a car rental company. [3]

{10}

I am an estate agent. Yesterday I went to see a house that I have been asked to sell. It was on a very busy double-carriageway, had a totally overgrown garden, paint peeling off the walls, most lights did not work because the electricity needs a complete overhaul. The owners wanted R200 000,00 for it! However, it is my job to sell the house so this is the advert I placed in the newspaper:

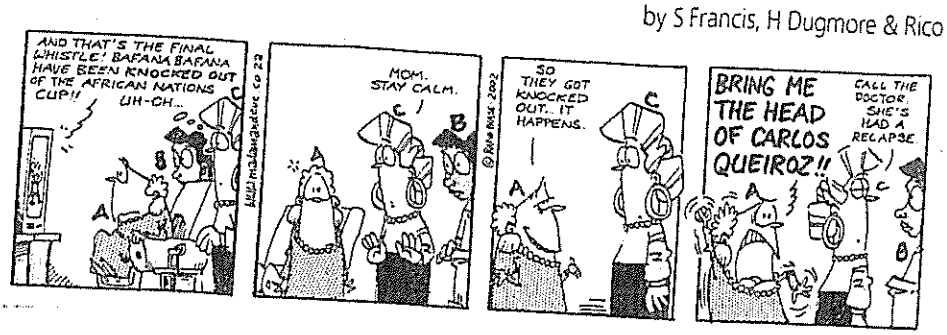
**HOUSE FOR SALE**

Feel part of the action in this house which boasts an unusual natural garden, face-brick finish and romantic lighting. A steal for only R200 000,00. Phone Rita 0823333333

# VISUAL LITERACY
# CARTOON REASONING

MADAM & EVE

by S Francis, H Dugmore & Rico




## TASK 1

### QUESTION 1

1.1 Name the characters in the cartoon strip above. (3)

1.2 Give one word which describes their emotion in frame one (1). (2)

1.3 Explain why the three dots ... have been used in frame three. (2)

1.4 Give one word which describes *character A's* reaction in frame four (4) (2)

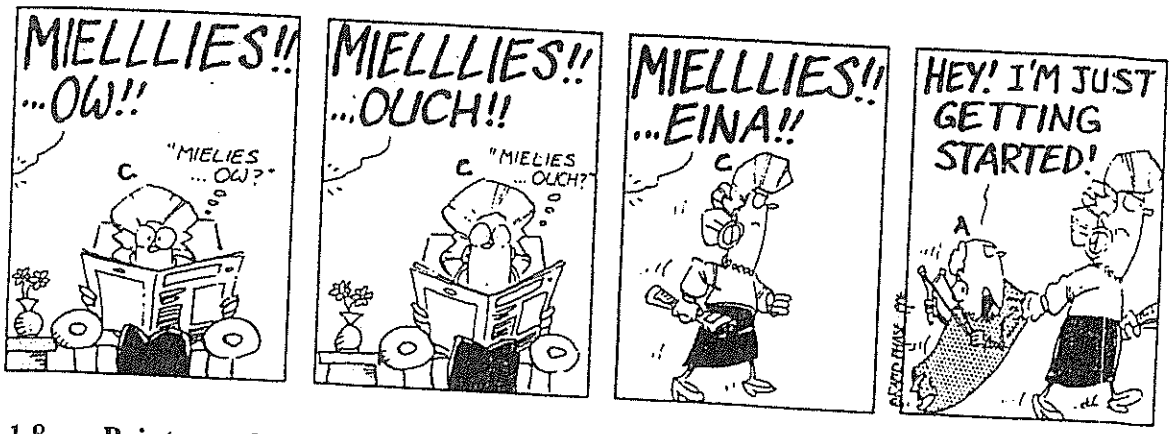
1.5 List four (4) visual clues which support the reaction. (4)

1.6 Explain why *character B's* reaction is the same throughout the four frames. What explanation would you give for her reaction? (1)

1.7 Re-write the reporter's statement in frame one (1) in reported speech. (2)

### QUESTION 2

In South Africa, another sort of war has been going on in the world of Madam and Eve: The Milie War. In the cartoon you first see *character C* and then finally *character A*. Read the cartoon and then answer the following questions.



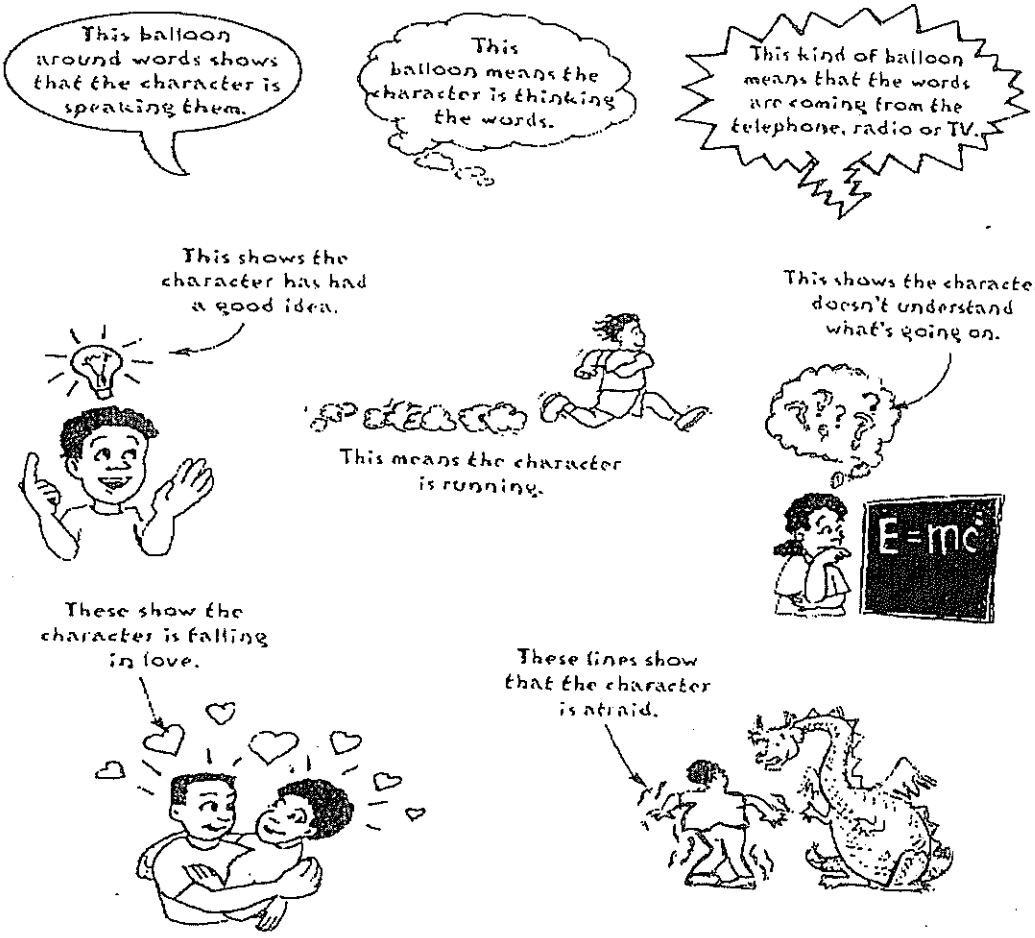

1.8 Point out the differences between the repeated words in frames 1 and 2 and then give a reason for those differences. (2)

1.9 Frame 4 explains by implication what has been going on off frame. Explain clearly what has been happening. (2)

*TOTAL MARKS:20*

# CARTOON REASONING

**The notes below are about the special marks that cartoonists use to tell us what is happening in cartoons and how to show what the characters are feeling.**




These curved lines might indicate anger / irritation or frustration

Stars show puzzlement / pain or a daze.

Drops might indicate sweat / tears / or drops.

or

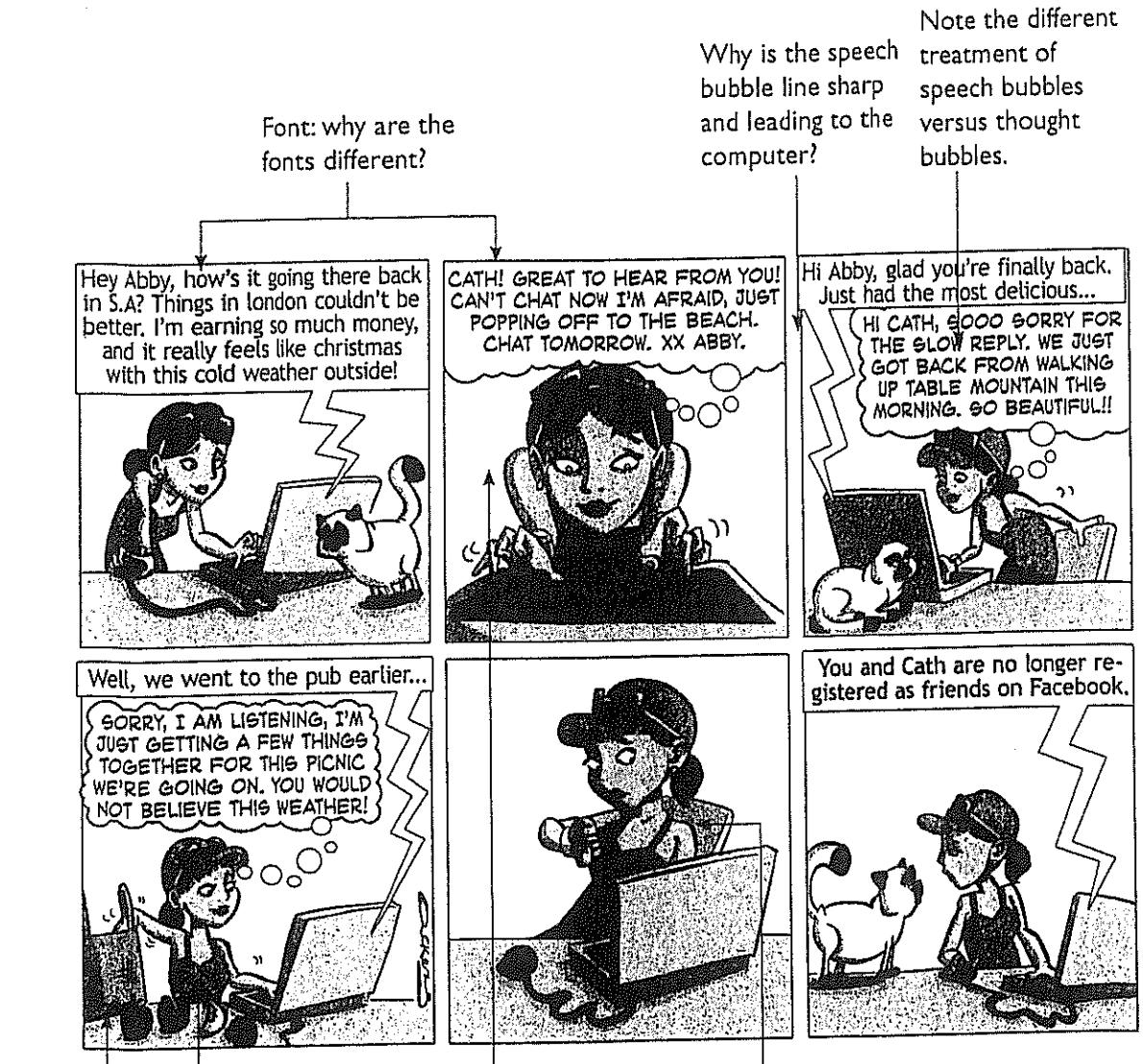
It shows steam / heat or it is hot.

This indicates sound as well

# Visual literacy

A great deal of your language exam will call on your visual literacy skills. Before you answer any of the questions take the time to study and analyse the cartoon or advert.

Follow the labels and take note of the key elements you should look for when analysing a cartoon.




## Analyse the cartoon

1 Give one word to describe Cath's tone in frame 1.
2 Explain the use of ellipses in the cartoon.
3 Explain why Cath got annoyed with Abby.
4 How does frame 5 foreshadow what happens in the last frame?

# READING CARTOONS

Study the following Zapiro cartoons and answer the set questions.

## Cartoon 1

*Cartoons by Zapiro, Sunday Times © 2011-12. Reprinted with permission.*

1.1 Identify the source of the words spoken by the elf second from the left. (1)

1.2 Give TWO reasons for your answer in question 1.1. (2)

1.3 Describe the elves' response to these words. (1)

1.4 Mention TWO visual effects used to show their response. (2)

1.5 The words 'reindeer crib' have been used to describe Santa's mode of transport. What is the correct word? (1)

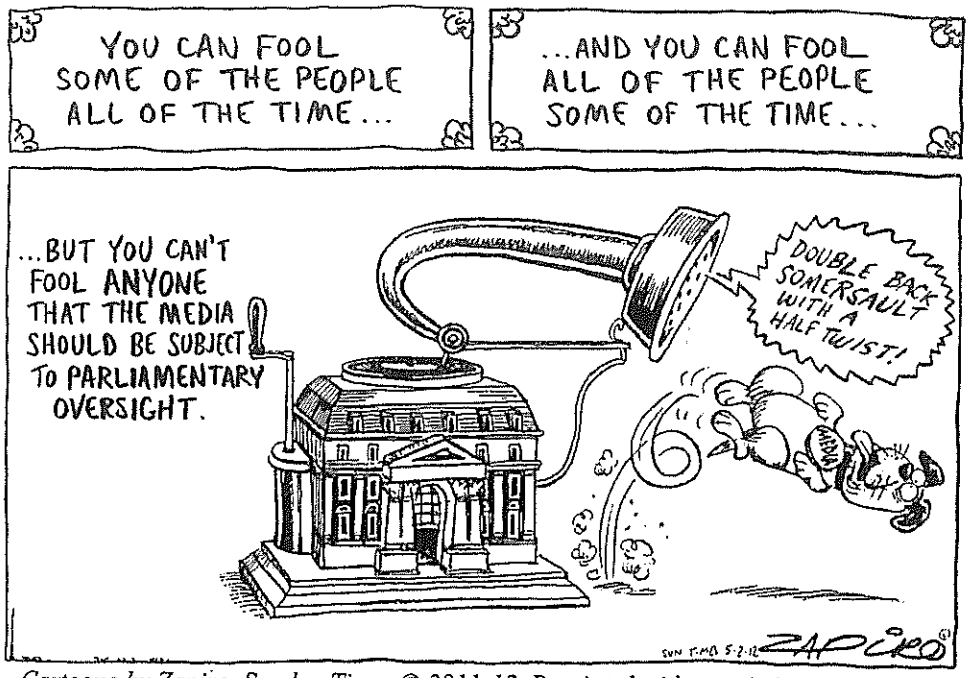
1.6 What does the elf say to Santa? Rewrite his words in reported speech. (2)

1.7 Now complete the following sentence.

The humour in this cartoon is based on the idea that _____ (1)

[10 MARKS]

## Cartoon 2




*Cartoons by Zapiro, Sunday Times © 2011-12. Reprinted with permission.*

2.1 The saying 'You can fool some of the people all of the time and you can fool all of the people some of the time' has been credited to several sources including Abraham Lincoln.

How has Zapiro used this saying to put across his point? (3)

2.2 Comment on the unique characteristics of the building and suggest why Zapiro has included them. (3)

2.3 Comment on the shape of the 'speech bubble'. What effect does it have? (3)

2.4 The dog has been labelled 'MEDIA'. Explain this metaphor with reference to the visual aspects portrayed in the cartoon. (2)

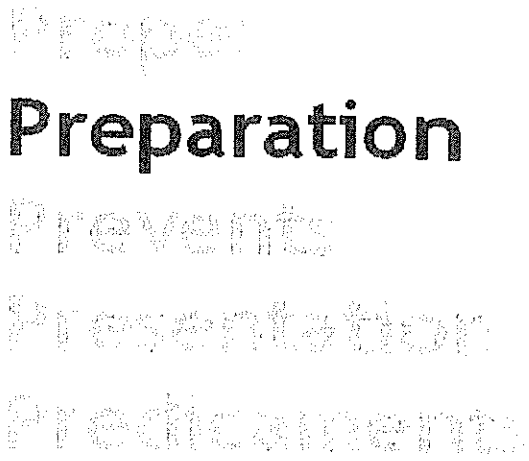
2.5 What do we call this kind of humour? Give a reason for your answer. (2)

[13 MARKS]

**Suggested answers:** 1.1 sms / letter from a child ✓ 1.2 Use of sms language e.g. Plz = Please ✓/ elf is holding what looks like a cellphone rather than a letter which is the traditional way to write to Santa. ✓ 1.3 They are puzzled / confused. ✓ 1.4 Facial expressions – puzzled, concerned looks; body language – hands held open as if appealing for answers / one scratching his head; questions marks surrounding their heads. [TWO] ✓✓ 1.5 sleigh 1.6 The elf said that they ✓needed ✓ younger elves. 1.7 The humour in this cartoon is based on the idea that times have changed / children do not play with the same toys they used to / don't speak the same language ✓ 2.1 By pointing out that people are sometimes fooled ✓ highlights the fact that in this instance nobody is fooled ✓ i.e. no one thinks that the media should be censored by the government.✓ (3) 2.2 The building resembles an old gramophone player. ✓ The handle on the left winds up the machine and the sound is broadcasted through a loudspeaker.✓ By depicting parliament in this way, Zapiro portrays the voice of parliament overseeing the media in a novel way / ✓ suggests that parliament is going backwards to a time when the media was more controlled. 2.3 The jagged lines around the words fit in with the idea that the words are coming from a remote source.✓ The effect is to give the idea that these are commands made in a robotic, impersonal way emphasising that there is no personal contact.✓ The loudspeaker and exclamation mark support the idea that the commands are loud and dictatorial.✓ 2.4 The media is compared to a dog that is being told to do tricks / the dog is following instructions from the voice over the loudspeaker.✓ The media is traditionally known as a watch dog but the cartoon shows a goofy dog that only responds when told what to do. ✓ 2.5 Satire.✓ The purpose is to make a statement about a topical issue / social criticism. ✓

## #1: How to Prepare a Presentation

Proper preparation prevents presentation predicaments!




Speech preparation is the most important element to a **successful presentation**, and also the best way to **reduce nervousness and combat fear**.
The **Speech Preparation Series** is a series of articles examining each of the six steps which are necessary to properly prepare for a speech.

These steps are briefly introduced here, and investigated in more depth in later articles:

**Speech Preparation Series**

1. **How to Prepare Your Presentation**
2. Select Your Speech Topic
3. Plan Your Speech Outline
4. Writing Your First Draft
5. Editing Your Speech
6. Add Speech Impact with Rhetorical Devices
7. Staging, Gestures, and Vocal Variety
8. Practicing Your Presentation
9. Self-Critique: Preparation for Next Time
10. Winning a Toastmasters Speech Contest

### 1. Select a speech topic

This may seem like an easy task, but there are infinite public speaking topics. How do you choose the *right* one? How do you select a topic which is a perfect fit between you and your audience? Your topic leads to your **core message** — the entire presentation aims to deliver this core message to your audience.

### 2. Create a speech outline

**Your speech needs structure.** Without structure, your audience will either wonder what your core message is or they will lose interest in you entirely. Sadly, this step is often skipped to "save time." **A planned outline is vital**.

### 3. Write the speech

**Speech writing is an iterative process** which begins with your first draft. Writer's block can handicap speakers at this stage.

Once the first draft is created, speech writing involves iteratively massaging your speech into its most effective form. Keeping your ego in check, you are wise to **edit mercilessly**. The fifth article in the series shows you how to edit your speech for focus, clarity, concision, continuity, variety, and impact. Remember that **speeches should be written for the ear**; adopting figures of speech will keep your speech from sounding like an essay or legal document.

### 4. Apply gestures, staging, and vocal variety

At this stage, the words are ready, but that's all you have — words. A **presentation is not read by the audience**; it is listened to and watched.

### 5. Practice and solicit feedback

**Great speakers seem natural** when they speak, almost as though they are speaking the words for the first time. Nothing could be more wrong. **Rehearsing your speech** makes you a master of the content. **Seeking/asking feedback and acting on it** gives you confidence that your presentation will be a success.

### 6. Self-Critique: Prepare for the next speech

Although listed as the final step in the process, it's really the first step in preparing for your *next* speech. After you've delivered your speech, **examine your performance objectively**. This will solidify lessons learned as you prepare for your next speech challenge.

## The 14 Easy Steps to Preparation

1. **Think About the Purpose of the Speech.** Is the purpose of your talk to inform, to entertain, to persuade, or to call your audience to action? Every speech must have its own topic and reason for being.

2. **Analyze the Audience.** A gossip is one who talks to you about others, a bore is one who talks to you about himself, and a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself. Speak to your audience: know its members and understand their interests, attitudes, goals, and fears. Speak to what they know and care about, and you are on your way to a memorable speech. Chapter 9 goes into this crucial step in detail.

3. **Gather Enough Material.** What do you already know and believe about this topic as it relates to this audience? What additional research can/should you do? This has become so much easier with all that data within instant access on the Internet. Start by collecting all your thoughts and notes. After you have exhausted your thinking on your topic, go to the library, ask colleagues, and research. Imitate the great journalists—they never use most of their research, but doing research gives them a reserve they can draw on. It makes them more expert in their topics than before they began.

   Take advantage of trade publications and associations—two excellent sources of industry-specific information. I once gave a speech to the members of the American Lung Association. I researched the association and its concerns so thoroughly that people listening to the speech thought I was on the staff of the association. That's the fun of preparation—learning enough so that you really communicate with your audience, while adding to your own knowledge as well.

   Then be ready and willing to discard the unnecessary facts. Select only information relevant to your audience and to this particular speech. Your task is not to elaborate but to simplify and reinforce.

4. **Compose One Concise Sentence That Clearly States Your Purpose.** This will become your focus—or even your title—and, as you put the rest of your speech together, you will constantly refer back to this one line that will keep you on target.

5. **Construct an Outline.** Would you build a building without a foundation? You couldn't, and you also can't build your speech until you lay its foundation, which is the outline. In the outline you will reduce your ideas to three or four main sentences or key phrases and arrange them in the most convincing order. Chapter 5 will give you outlining ideas.

6. **Add Support.** Now you will fill out the outline by adding explanations, support, facts, anecdotes, and stories to give depth and meaning to your main points. As a rule of thumb, you can spend 5 percent of your time defining the purpose and mood of your speech, 10 percent of your time outlining, another 10 percent on visuals, and 25 percent practicing.

   That leaves 50 percent of your time to spend on working on the support that colors your speech and brings it to life. Your mood could be serious, jovial, or closely tied with concerns facing the audience. Whatever the mood, the support you choose must reinforce the mood you have chosen and ensure that your speech is never boring. Although it's easy to gather facts, they don't make an interesting speech by themselves.

7. **Prepare All Visual Aids.** If your speech needs visual aids, fine; if you don't need them, or your material does not lend itself to them, then don't try to fit them in.

   If used properly, visual aids can be effective. People remember 40 percent more when they hear *and* see something simultaneously. But remember that visual aids can be simple. I remember a salesman giving a speech suddenly holding up a shoe with a large hole for the audience to see. He made his point about the necessity of pounding the pavement—and memorably, too. Visual aids are covered in detail in Chapter 14.

8. **Devise an Opening With Impact.** It may be humorous, surprising, informative, challenging—an opening can be anything original that works for your particular speech. You make your first impression in the introduction: it can cloud all that follows or assure people that what follows is worth listening closely to.

   In business presentations, it's important to tell your audience what's coming up. But you have to do this without losing its attention. Refrain from sentences that start out, "I'm Jane Jones, VP of marketing. Today I'll be covering..." It's dull.

   It's much better to get your audience's attention first and then explain your purpose. Jane Jones could start her talk on the benefits of exercise by saying, "Good morning. I'm Jane Jones and I'll be talking to you today about why exercise is important for executives, no matter how busy you are." Or she could grab her audience, "Did you know that 20 minutes of exercise three times a week can add 10 years to your life? Good morning. I'm Jane Jones, and after my talk you'll be able to walk out of here ready to begin a sound exercise program."

   Refrain from saving major surprises for the end, and grab people with the facts—and your focus—early on.

9. **Craft Your Conclusion.** Build up to it, even if you are ending by summarizing your main points. Then end the speech with a strong, dynamic challenge that tells the members of the audience what you expect them to do with the information you've given them. Conclusions, like openings, must be memorable.

10. **Write Your Speech, Polish It, and Edit It.** Put it aside for a day or two, then go back and rewrite any parts you think need it. Remember Lincoln and his need to tinker. One way to achieve his admirable conciseness is to edit—ruthlessly. Don't be afraid to cut one-third—or even one-half—of your prose; this will leave you with a text that is stronger, leaner, and clearer. Technical presenters, in particular, are prone to excess words. Distill your speech down to the essentials, especially if it is technical, so it will be easier for your audience to follow. Don't be afraid of being brief and clear—too few speakers are.

    Effective written communication is different from its oral counterpart. A speech is a temporary event—words float in the air and are gone. Your words will have a better chance of staying with your audience if you take advantage of oral communication's greater informality. Use short sentences and words, colorful language, sentence fragments, contractions, repetition, and questions. All of these work to make your words lively and memorable.

    And finally, once you are satisfied, practice your delivery.

11. **Have Your Confidence Cards Prepared and Ready.** Are they legibly numbered so that if you drop them, you can get them back in order?

12. **Get Your Timing Down.** Part of practicing your delivery is timing your speech. We speak approximately 150 words a minute, so three double-spaced typewritten pages take five minutes to deliver, depending on how quickly you speak.

    Even though you can never time a speech to the precise second, there is no substitute for recording your speech and estimating the time. If you have a lot of jokes, stories, and audience questions, you'll have to allow extra time for them.

    When it comes time to deliver the speech, keep a digital clock or a watch on the lectern where you can see it easily, or have somebody in the audience signal you when you have five minutes left. As you approach these final five minutes, you'll know you have just enough time left to finish an important point before going into your closing statement or before asking for questions.

13. **Make a Last-minute Checklist.** A key aspect of preparation is controlling and preparing your speaking environment. Avoid last-minute problems by making sure you take care of all the little details—such as arranging chairs in a small gathering and clearing away empty cups—before the speech. Other details to attend to before you speak can include:
    - ☑ Deciding what you're going to wear
    - ☑ Making two copies of your text or notes.
    - ☑ Bringing your glasses.
    - ☑ Knowing if you'll have a podium
    - ☑ Preparing visual-aid equipment and lighting

Lists compiled by truly prepared speakers are exhaustive and call attention to another crucial aspect of preparation: stage managing—overseeing all the details of your speech that don't have to do with your words. Chapter 18 will give you all the information you need on the key tasks that make up stage managing.

14. **Have I orchestrated the question and answer period?** (You may need to read Chapter 12: Professional Secrets of Question-and-Answer Sessions before you can answer that question.)

### Preparation Knows No Shortcuts

These 14 steps constitute the ultimate outline for a person giving a speech. Sure, you can skip one, or cut a few corners, but the audience will notice. Every *minute* of your presentation should be supported by an *hour* of preparation time. It's also important to prepare for your general communications: talking to your boss about a raise or presenting something to a client. Even a telephone call requires preplanning: You should know what you plan to cover and what your objectives are.

Without preparing sufficiently, the odds are you will commit one of the six major speaking faults, which are explained in depth in the next six chapters. Tackle each step in order and you will have the foundation for a memorable speech.

Here's a summary in the form of questions you can ask yourself:

- ☑ In one concise sentence, what is the purpose behind this speech?
- ☑ Who is the audience, and what is its main interest in this topic?
- ☑ What do I already know and believe about this topic as it relates to this audience? What additional research can I do?
- ☑ What are the main points of my outline?
- ☑ What supporting information and stories can I use to support each of these main points?
- ☑ What visual aids—if any—do I need?
- ☑ Do I have an arresting opening?
- ☑ In my final summary, have I explained what I expect the audience to do with this information?
- ☑ Have I polished and practiced the language of the speech to the best of my ability?
- ☑ Have I written a concise introduction for myself?
- ☑ Have I taken care of all the little details that will help me speak confidently?

With fear put into perspective and with the foundation of preparation under you, you're ready to start eliminating the six major faults that get in the way of powerful speeches, and the next six chapters will show you how.

# Preparing for an oral ...

When preparing for an oral, just think to yourself,

**"It's a piece of cake!"**

Here are some ideas to use when it comes to planning:

- Mindmap or brainstorm so that all the possible ideas are listed even if it seems a bit disorganised at times; at least get them all down onto paper!

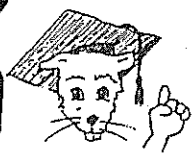
- Decide how best to start: think of this as the 'plating up' stage: what will attract the audience's attention most successfully? You could begin with a horrifying statistic or a short piece of lyrical poetry.

- Then move on to the 'base' layer of the cake: you need to provide your speech with a 'solid foundation': think of interesting evidence; show that you have researched the topic.

- Next, what about some 'icing'? A different style of information. If you have provided factual evidence, why not insert something anecdotal or more light-hearted? The idea is to 'layer' your work, so that each stage of your speech seems refreshing, varied and interesting.

- Consider a different style now. How about something historical or philosophical. Perhaps this is the time to include some thought-provoking rhetorical questions, or emotive language.

- You're nearing the end now, so think about leading towards your 'final touches' ... your 'cherry on top'. You want to leave a lasting impression. How can you best do this? If most of your speech has been serious, now might be the time to bring in something humorous; if much of your speech has been light-hearted, why not move in for some profound social commentary?



**Remember, whenever you change your subject-matter a little bit, your tone of voice will shift and this will make your delivery more interesting.**

**REGISTER**

**Refers to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the writing in terms of :**

- **The relationship between the writer and the person who receives the message**
- **The situation in which the message is conveyed**
- **The medium used**
- **The purpose behind the message.**

Language **register** is the level and style of your writing. It should be appropriate for the situation you are in.

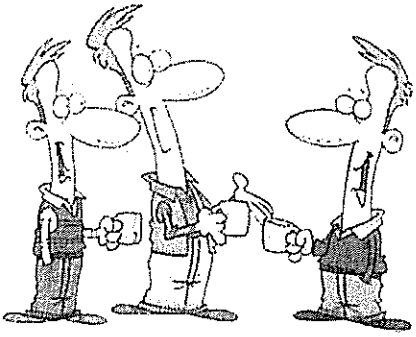
The language register determines the vocabulary, structure, and some grammar in your writing.

The three most common language registers in writing are:

- Formal
- Informal
- Neutral
- Jargon
- Politically Correct language
- Colloquial Language
- Slang

We use different language registers for different types of writing, just as we speak differently to different people. **You would not speak to the President of the United States the same way you would talk to your brothers.**

**To your brother:** What's up? It's awesome that you came to visit!



**To the President:** Good morning, Mr. President. We appreciate your visit.

The **formal register** is more appropriate for professional writing and letters to a boss or a stranger.

The **informal register** (also called casual or intimate) is conversational and appropriate when writing to friends and people you know very well.

The **neutral register** is non-emotional and sticks to facts. It is most appropriate for technical writings.

In articles such as these, we tend to mix the formal and informal registers to present the information in an easy to understand and personal tone.

Let's look closely at the three most common language registers used in the English language.

**Formal Language Register**

Formal writing is probably the most difficult type of writing. It is impersonal, meaning it is not written for a specific person and is written without emotion.

Some kinds of writing are always written in formal English.

**Formal writing includes:**

- Business Letters
- Letters of complaint
- Some essays
- Reports
- Official speeches
- Announcements
- Professional emails

## Rules of the informal language register:

***1. Do not use contractions***

Contractions are not usually used in formal writing, even though they are very common in spoken English.

In formal writing, you should spell out contractions.

**Examples:**

In formal writing, you should use:

- cannot instead of can't
- have not instead of haven't
- will not instead of won't
- could not instead of couldn't
- is not instead of isn't

**Contractions <u>CAN</u> be used if you are quoting someone's exact words in your writing.**

**Example:**

"Two-thirds of my eighth grade students can't read at grade level," the professor stated.

**Keep in mind that <u>an apostrophe does not always make a contraction</u>.**

Apostrophes are also added to nouns to show ownership. These are used in all language registers, including formal.

**Examples:**

- children's classroom
- professor's report
- elephant's trunk

***2. Spell out numbers less than one hundred***
**Examples:**

- nineteen
- twenty-two
- seventy-eight
- six

***3. Write in <u>third person point of view</u>***
In formal writing, we usually do not use first person or second person unless it is a quote.

Avoid using:

- I
- You
- We
- Us

**Examples:**

- **You** can purchase a car for under $10,000.

  **One** can purchase a car for under $10,000.

  OR

  A car can be purchased for under $10,000.

- **You** will probably see an elephant on an African safari.

  **One** may see elephants on an African safari.

  OR

  Elephants are a common sight on African safaris.

- **We** decided to invest in the company.

  **The group** decided to invest in the company.

### *4. Avoid using too much passive voice*

In formal writing it is better to use an **active voice**.

**Passive sentences:**

- The bone was eaten by the dog.
- The research was completed by the students in 2009.

**Active sentences:**

- The dog ate the bone.
- The students completed the research in 2009.

  In 2009, the students completed the research.

For example, in a rule above I wrote, "Apostrophes are also added to nouns to show ownership."

I wrote this sentence in a passive voice.

To make it active, I could write:

"Additionally, add an apostrophe to a noun to show ownership."

OR

"Use apostrophes with nouns to show ownership."

### *5. Avoid using slang, idioms, exaggeration (hyperboles) and clichés*

Slang is common in informal writing and spoken English. Slang is particular to a certain region or area.

**Examples of slang:**

- awesome/cool
- okay/ok
- check it out
- in a nutshell

A cliché is a phrase that is overused (said too often).

**Common clichés:**

- too much of a good thing
- moment of truth
- Time is money.
- Don't push your luck.
- Beauty is only skin deep.

***6. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms***
If you use an acronym or abbreviation, write it out the first time

When using acronyms, write the entire name out the first time it appears, followed by the acronym. From then on, you can use the acronym by itself.

**Examples:**

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)

For abbreviations, write the complete word the first time, then use the abbreviation.

**Examples:**

- influenza => flu
- United States of America => U.S.A or USA
- tablespoon => tbsp.
- Kansas => KS

**Do not use slang abbreviations or symbols that you would use in friendly emails and texts.**

**Examples:**

- LOL (laugh out loud)
- ttyl (talk to you later)
- 9
- &
- b/c (because)
- w/o (without)
- w/ (with)

***7. Do not start sentences with words like and, so, but, also***
Here are some good transition words and phrases to use in formal writing:

- Nevertheless
- Additionally
- However
- In addition
- As a result of
- Although

***8. Always write in complete sentences.***

***9. Write longer, more complex sentences.***

# Informal Language Register

Informal writing is written in the way we talk to our friends and family. We use informal writing when we are writing to someone we know very well.

Some kinds of writing can be written in an informal style.

**Informal writing includes:**

- Personal e-mails
- Phone texts
- Short notes
- Friendly letters
- Most blogs
- Diaries and journals

**There are no major rules to informal writing.**

**With informal writing, you can include things such as:**

- Slang and clichés
- Figurative language
- Symbols and abbreviations
- Acronyms
- Incomplete sentences
- Short sentences
- First person, second person, and third person
- Paragraphs or no paragraphs
- Jokes
- Personal opinions
- Extra punctuation (Hi Bob!!!!!!!)
- Passive and active voice

## Neutral Language Register

We use the neutral language register with non-emotional topics and information.

Neutral writing is not necessarily formal or informal. It is not usually positive or negative. A neutral register is used to deliver facts.

Some writings are written in a neutral register. This means they are not specifically formal or informal.

**Writing in the natural language register includes:**

- Reviews
- Articles
- Some letters
- Some essays
- Technical writing

## Jargon

Here are some extracts from different texts that contain jargon. As you read them, see if you can:

- Identify the jargon.
- Guess what type of people would use these words.
- Convey the information they contain more simply.

I've got a code blue with my drain. It needs attention stat!

1. All stock items despatched from either head office or a dealer are subject to a courier and administration fee.
2. If you intend keeping your shares, as a shareholder, you will be entitled to receive dividends when they are declared.
3. If this equipment causes interference with reception, relocate the receiving antennae or increase the separation between the equipment and receiver.
4. Move the mouse pointer to the taskbar and double click on the application that you wish to restore. This will maximise the window.

### Using jargon

- If you are writing for a readership familiar with the subject being discussed or members of the same group or profession as you, it is acceptable to use buzzwords because the readers will understand them.
- Jargon, however, should be avoided if the text is being written for a general audience. For example, texts such as newspapers that have a wide-ranging audience deliberately avoid using very technical jargon as they want to ensure that their articles are understood by as many people as possible.
- If you don't think your reader will be familiar with a buzzword, briefly define the word in brackets after you have used it, or ensure that there are enough contextual clues for the reader to deduce what the word means.

## Politically correct language

### What is this?

- Language that deliberately avoids sexism, racism, ageism or other words that could be offensive is known as politically correct language. Politically correct words are often euphemisms for words that could be offensive.
- In South Africa, some politically correct terms that are commonly used in the media include: "informal settlements", "previously-disadvantaged communities", and "affirmative-action positions". Do you know what these expressions mean?

### Some more examples...

Here are some extracts from "politically correct bedtime stories" written by some high school pupils. As you read them, see if you can:

- Guess which traditional stories have been adapted.
- Find examples of politically correct language and work out what words they are replacing.

There was once a single, mature parent who possessed a son by the name of Jack. They were economically challenged, so after deep thought and majority vote, they sent Jack to the dealership in town to sell their beloved Porsche...

Not so long ago a beauty-enhanced, financially-independent princess from the northern suburbs went to Sun City to search for a prince...

It was written in the will of the chairman of world-renowned fashion company, Emperor Designs, that should the inevitable come to pass, his empire should be entrusted to his daughter, Yvonne. A strong-willed, dynamic citizen of society, Yvonne had but one weakness – a case known as compulsive-garment-accumulation...

- Now write your own modern-day, politically correct bedtime story that replaces words which some might regard as offensive.

### Using politically correct language

- In your speaking and writing, it is good to be sensitive to your readers to avoid offending people. I am sure that you can think of many insulting and derogatory terms that can be used to refer to people who are different from you, but I sincerely hope that you don't use these in your speech or writing!
- While it is good to avoid being offensive, being overly politically correct can lead to absurd alternatives. For example, calling a "man-hole" a "person-access-hole" or changing "history" to "herstory".

Bob, I think I am too chronologically gifted, fitness-impaired and horizontally-enhanced to fit down this person-access-hole!

In this article, we are going to focus on different diction that is used for different purposes.

Diction refers to your choice of words. Depending on the purpose or audience of a text, the diction that is used might be scientific, emotive, journalistic, stark or figurative. Diction is an important component of register, which is the style of writing appropriate for the audience and intention.

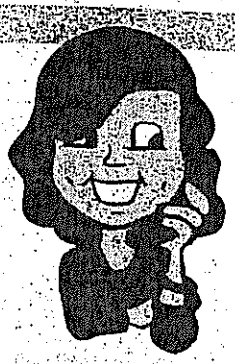
**Hints & tips**

In your creative writing, you will find that you can use a wide range of vocabulary and diction to create different effects. In your language and comprehension paper you may be asked to comment on the author's choice of words and the effect that these have had.

## Colloquial language and slang

### What are they?

- Colloquial language is everyday language used in informal situations. It may include code-mixing, whereby words from other languages are included in the conversation.
- Slang is the very informal language often used by teenagers. Slang changes constantly.
- Different groups of people will use different types of slang and colloquial language depending on how old they are, where they live and what their interests are.



**Jislaaik! It's only lekker to have a good skinder!**

### Some examples:

Here is an extract that has been adapted from an article written by Zingisa Mkhuma and Megan Power that appeared in *The Star* (June 9, 2001). As you read it, see if you can:

- Identify examples of slang, colloquial language and code-mixing.
- Work out what the Standard English equivalents of the words used are. If you are not familiar with the slang used, see if you can work it out from the context, or ask a friend to help you.

So, this is what you ngamla or plaas Japie need to know to be able to survive on the township streets. When you greet you have to say Heita! Hola! Or Kaofela – kaofela!

Another greeting that could get you out of a tight situation – but one has to know how to use it – is MaBhakaniya! This presupposes that the people one is greeting are Orlando Pirates' fans. Of course this isn't always so, but you would be surprised what an AmaBhakaniya sticker can do for one's image.

Then we get into the ultimate township status symbol – the car. For amagents, a car can make or break a love life or an image. The man behind a G-string – the latest model BMW 3-series – is bound to be more popular with the Model Cs than a man who is in a starter pack. Amagents also adore "Vura" (a VR6) because it is fast and allows them to burn rubber. A minibus taxi is often referred to as a sandwich.

**Used with permission of *The Star*.**

### Using colloquial language and slang

- Using some colloquial language in your creative writing can make it seem more vivid and personal, especially if you incorporate it into direct speech. If you are discussing an event that you were involved in, writing a narrative that involves teenagers or recalling a conversation, it is acceptable to use some slang as this will make your essay seem more realistic.
- In formal or argumentative writing, slang and colloquial language should be avoided. If you do include slang or colloquial language in a piece of formal writing, place it in inverted commas to show your reader that you are aware that you are using informal language. But you should ask yourself why you are using it in the first place.
- Because slang is so dynamic it can date your writing and may result in the reader or examiner not completely understanding your writing.
- Be careful of using too much code-mixing in your essays. If the non-English words that you use are not widely known or common expressions, your examiner may not be familiar with them.

## Jargon

### What is it?

Certain words that are associated with different professions or subjects are called jargon or buzzwords.

**Definition:**

(1) A verbal exchange between two or more people. (Compare with monologue.)

(2) A conversation reported in a drama or narrative. Adjective: *dialogic*.

When quoting dialogue, put the words of each speaker inside quotation marks, and (as a general rule) indicate changes in speaker by starting a new paragraph.

*"And what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?" – Lewis Carroll*

I can manage books without pictures, but I know how Alice feels about the conversations. When I'm browsing, I flick through books to see how much dialogue there is. If there doesn't seem to be much, I'll put the book down and choose something else.

I'm pretty sure I'm not the only person who does this, either...

As a writer, dialogue lets you:

- ***Show* rather than *tell*** – when characters act and speak, they become real to us
- **Build tension and drama**, furthering the plot
- **Reveal character in what's said** (or what isn't said)
- **Create white space on the page** – attractive to busy readers
-

But many writers list "dialogue" as one of the key things they struggle with. I love writing dialogue, and I still have to work hard at it – though thanks to the wonderful Lorna Fergusson from fictionfire, I've definitely improved.

**So what makes for good dialogue?**

**#1: Watch Your Dialogue Tags**

A "dialogue tag" is the bit you put before or after the dialogue, like:

- he said
- she asked
- I replied

In primary (elementary) school, I was taught to vary dialogue tags with words like *whispered, shouted, pondered* ... This might be great for encouraging kids to grow their vocabulary, but it's poor advice for any adult fiction writer.

**Normally, the word "said" will do just fine.**
Throw in an occasional "whispered" or "shouted" if you need to, but don't get fancier than that. The reader will barely notice the word "said" – but when characters start "mumbling awkwardly" or "opining" then the dialogue tags end up distracting from the actual dialogue.

(I particularly dislike the use of words like "laughed" and "giggled" as dialogue tags. Does anyone really *giggle* a whole sentence?)

You can normally avoid adjectives and modifying phrases, too. If the dialogue is well-written, readers will *know* that it was "said happily" or "shouted furiously".

### #2: Ground Your Dialogue in a Scene

It's easy to fall into the trap of "talking heads" – two characters discussing something in bare lines of dialogue, with little or no supporting text.

**Every conversation that takes place needs to *be* somewhere.**
The location or scene makes a difference to the actual dialogue. Think about:

- Where are your characters? In a busy coffee shop, driving in a car, on a train, at home...?
- Who's nearby? Nosy onlookers, young children, the boss...
-

You don't have to have action or description after every single line of dialogue, but you do need a sense that your characters are physically located in a particular setting.

It can be tough to manage dialogue on the phone, where characters can't see one another; you can use tone of voice or background noise to help add to the scene.

### #3: Use Dialect and Accents with Caution

One mistake that newer writers often make is to go over the top with dialect words or accents. This can make the text incredibly hard to read – and it can also be unintentionally comic, or even offensive.

Generally, less is more.
**If you have a Scottish character, they don't need to sound like a Burns poem.**
Use the occasional dialect word like "wee" and the reader will get the idea.
Similarly, if you have an uneducated or lower-class character, using non-standard grammar or phrases (e.g. "ain't") will establish their voice – you don't need to start knocking letters off every word.

### #4: Don't Let One Person Speak for Too Long

In real life, we don't normally give long speeches during regular conversations. There are some circumstances where one person might speak for several minutes at a time – during a lecture, sermon, etc – but this is limited to special occasions.

**If your characters have long blocks of speech, break those up.**
Other characters could butt in or simply ask for clarification. You could also have non-verbal responses from the listeners (nodding, sighing, frowning, etc).

When your plot requires a character to speak for some length of time, don't give us the whole speech! A few lines from the start and end, plus a narrative summary of what was said, will be enough.

### #5: Realistic Doesn't Mean Real

This was one of the areas I struggled with in my novel. I tried too hard to make my dialogue realistic – with lots of "ums", hesitations, repetitions and so on. It was over-the-top.

**Dialogue is supposed to give an *impression* of real speech; it's not supposed to be a transcript of how we really talk.**
When I went back and cleaned up the dialogue, my text flowed much more smoothly. That meant having my characters speak in realistic-sounding but clear sentences. They did hesitate or stumble at times – but only when it was really warranted by what was going on.

### #6: Give Your Characters Distinct Speech Patterns

Do all your characters sound exactly the same? If so, you need to do some tweaking.
Think about:

- **Age:** a 13-year-old will speak differently from a 70-year-old
- **Gender:** women and men may use different vocabulary
- **Social background:** does your character use down-to-earth words or "posh" ones?
- **Education level:** does your character have a wide or limited vocabulary?
- **Geographical area:** where do they live?
- **Particular catch phrases:** don't go overboard here, but consider whether your character has any common phrases (things like "for sure!" or "good good" or "awesome")
- **Verbosity:** some people tend to babble, others will be taciturn(quiet/distant)
-

One good trick is to take just the lines of dialogue in your short story or novel – cut out the action and dialogue tags – and see whether you can work out who said what.

### #7: Don't Put Exposition in the Dialogue

Sometimes, you need to convey information about the characters. *Don't* try to force this into the dialogue – it'll come across as stagey and fake.

**Avoid having characters tell one another things that they logically should already know.**
This sort of dialogue is a particular problem for sci-fi writers: *"But captain, if the unobtanium runs out, the whole ship is gonna blow..."*

If you're really keen to get information across during a conversation, then make sure that the set-up for the conversation is appropriate. If two friends are catching up after 10 years apart, they might well fill in one another on the details of their work, family and lives in general.

### #8: Use Silence as Well as Words

**Sometimes, what's *not* said is more powerful than what *is* said.**

If one character says "I love you" and the other person doesn't say anything at all, that's often stronger than a response like "Oh, okay" or "Yeah, right".

When a character refuses to respond to a particular question, or refuses to speak to a certain person, we immediately know that there's something going on – without the author having to say *"James didn't want to talk about his marriage"* or *"Mary hadn't been on speaking terms with her mother-in-law for years."*

### #9: Get in Late, Leave Early

I'm indebted to Lorna for this particular tip:
**you don't have to begin the conversation at the first word and end at the last.**
If someone's talking on the phone, cut out all the "Hi, how are you?" "Fine thanks, and you?" bits at the start. Yes, they're realistic – but the reader isn't interested.

Often, it's powerful to end a scene on a line of a dialogue. We don't need to see how the other character responds. We definitely don't need the conversation to tail off into "Bye" and "See you next time."

**#10: Punctuate Your Dialogue Correctly**

This is crucial if you're going to be submitting your work to publishers, or if you're entering writing competitions. It's also vital if you're self-publishing – **you want your story or novel to be as professional as possible.**

Dialogue should:

- Begin on a new line for each new speaker
- Have punctuation *inside* the quotation marks
- End the dialogue line with a comma if you're adding a dialogue tag, but with a full stop if you're adding an action.

Here's an example:
*Sam: Joe, please come here, we need to talk.*
*Joe: What about?*
*Sam: You know what. (folding her arms)*

## How to Give Instructions

Do you know how to give instructions in English? What sort of instructions can you give someone?

- How to make a cup of coffee?
- How to search for a topic on Google?
- How to make a call on your cell phone? Or listen to your voice mail?

There are two parts to giving instructions.

What we call **Sequencers** and then the **actions**.

### Sequencers help order your instructions

It is like the 1, 2, 3, 4 of your actions.

The most common are

**First(ly)...**

**Then...**

**Next...**

**After that...**

**Finally...**

**Example:** Today I am going to tell you how to make the best sandwich in the world.

**First**, you must roast a chicken and slice it into thick pieces. **Then** toast your favourite bread (two slices).

**After that** you need to put mayonnaise and mustard on the toast and then the chicken slices. **Next** you are going to add your vegetables. Tomatoes, lettuce onions, cucumbers etc.

**Finally** put a couple slices of cheese on the sandwich and then close it with the other piece of toast.

The second part,

**Instructions...**

do one of three things.

1) Tell people what is necessary
2) what is wrong
3) what is not necessary

- You (don't) need to...
- You have to...
- You must/mustn't...
- You should/shouldn't...

So now that you know the basics...here is an example:

**How to Make a Cup of Coffee**

**First** you need to buy some coffee and a coffee maker.

**Then** you have to put the water into the bottom of the coffee maker.

You needn't boil the water (you don't need to boil the water), cold water is fine.

**Next** you have to put the coffee in the coffee compartment and screw the top of coffee maker on.

**After that** you need to put the coffee pot onto the stove.

**Then** turn the stove on hight and wait. You don't have to move the coffee pot.

When the water boils and goes into the upper part of the pot you**then** have to remove the pot from the heat.

**Finally** you pour some coffee into a cup, add sugar and milk and enjoy.

- See more at: http://www.helping-you-learn-english.com/how-to-give-instructions.html#sthash.6ezymUPA.dpuf

## How to write a report

What is a report?
Initial preparation
Planning and research
Report structure
Style
Checking

### What is a report?

A report is a systematic, well organised document which defines and analyses a subject or problem, and which may include:

- The record of a sequence of events
  - interpretation of the significance of these events or facts
  - evaluation of the facts or results of research presented
  - discussion of the outcomes of a decision or course of action
  - conclusions
  - recommendations

Reports must always be:

- Accurate
  - concise
  - clear
  - well structured

Various courses require you to write reports (as opposed to essays), notably business and scientific or technical subjects. There are, however, different interpretations of what a report should look like, so it is important that you check with your course tutors and course documentation as to the report format and content expected. In addition, there is at times some blurring between what "essays", "reports" and "assignments" are, so again check within your department. Much of the advice given in Guide 1.01, How to write an essay, also applies to reports.

### Initial preparation

Always analyse your brief/instructions carefully, making sure that you fully understand the topic, question or case, that you know what the purpose of the report is, and who it is being written for. The clearer these things are in your mind, the easier the report will be to write and the more effective it will be.
When you are researching, planning and eventually writing, continually ask yourself what the main purpose of the report is, what your objective is in writing it: is it to inform; to argue; to persuade; to evaluate? What does your reader want to see in the report and what will they do with it?

### Planning and research

You first need to decide your basic framework. With your main topic or question as a central focus, jot down your initial thoughts and start to group these together. You may find the Mind Mapping technique useful.
Start to divide key ideas from secondary information.
Continually ask yourself if everything is relevant; if it isn't, then delete it.

- You will now be able to plan your research.
- Ask yourself what you need to find out, maybe in the form of questions that need to be answered
- Approach your reading from this starting point.

- If you have specific information to look for, it will make your reading easier and less time consuming.
- Try not to gather too much information.
- Again, keeping your topic or question in mind, reject anything which is not 100% relevant.
- When you're making notes, always try to summarise the main points as accurately as possible.
- Remember to make a comprehensive/complete record of any sources used in order to be able to correctly reference these.

**Report structure**

Title page
Acknowledgements
Contents page
Terms of reference
Procedure
Materials and methods

Summary
Introduction
Main body
Results
Conclusion
Recommendations

Appendices
References
Bibliography
Glossary

Unlike essays, reports are written in sections with headings and sub-headings, which are usually numbered. Below are the possible components of a report, in the order in which they would appear.
Title page (always included)

This should normally include the title, your name and the name of the tutor to whom it is being submitted, date of submission, your course/department, and if applicable, the name of the person and/or organisation who has commissioned the report.

Avoid "fancy" fonts and effects and don't include any clipart.

**2. Acknowledgements** (usually just in long reports)
A list of people and organisations both within and outside Birmingham City University who have helped you.

**3. Contents page** (always included in reports of 4+ pages)
A clear, well-formatted list of all the sections and sub-sections of the report. Don't forget to put the page numbers! If applicable, there should be a separate list of tables, figures, illustrations and/or appendices after the main index.
Make sure that the headings in this list correspond exactly with those in your main body. It is best to do your list of contents right at the end.

**4. Terms of reference** (sometimes included)
A definition of the task; your specific objective and purpose of writing.
Even if you don't include this as a heading, it is a vital process to go through in your planning.

What exactly is your report going to be about?
If it is group work, who exactly is responsible for what?
How long have you got? What is your task timescale?

Why are you writing the report? What exactly are the assessment criteria?
Who are you writing the report for? Are you actually playing a role? What does your reader want to see?

**5. Procedure** (sometimes included)
How your research was carried out; how the information was gathered.

**6. Materials and methods** (included if applicable)
Similar to procedure, but more appropriate to scientific or engineering report writing. The following advice comes from Robert Barrass' book *Scientists Must Write* (Chapman & Hall,1978:135-136):

**1** List the equipment used and draw anything that requires description (unless this is very simple).

**2** State the conditions of the experiment and the procedure, with any precautions necessary to ensure accuracy and safety. However, when several experiments are reported, some details may fit better in the appropriate parts of the Results section.

**3** Write the stages in any new procedure in the right order and describe in detail any new technique, or modifications of an established technique.

**4** If necessary, refer to preliminary experiments and to any consequent changes in technique. Describe your controls adequately.

**5** Include information on the purity and structure of the materials used, and on the source of the material and the method of preparation.

**6 Summary** (usually included in longer reports; may be called Executive Summary, Abstract or Synopsis)
This is a very brief outline of the report to give the potential reader a general idea of what it's about. A statement of:

- overall aims and specific objectives (unless included in terms of reference)
- method/procedure used (unless included in separate section)
- key findings
- main conclusions and recommendations

**Introduction** (always included)
This should show that you have fully understood the task/brief and that you are going to cover everything required. Indicate the basic structure of the report.
You should include just a little background/context and indicate the reasons for writing the report.
You may include your terms of reference and procedure/research methods if not covered elsewhere.
Your introduction will often give an indication of the conclusion to the report.

**Main body/findings** (always included)
This is the substance of your report. The structure will vary according to the nature of the material being presented, with headings and sub-headings used to clearly indicate the different sections (unlike an essay). A "situation>problem>solution>evaluation" approach may be appropriate.
It is not sufficient to simply describe a situation. Your tutor will be looking for analysis and for a critical approach, when appropriate.
Charts, diagrams and tables can be used to reinforce your arguments, although sometimes it may be better to include these as an appendix (particularly if they are long or complicated).
Do not include opinions, conclusions or recommendations in this section.

**Results** (possibly included in scientific/engineering reports)
This section records your observations (in the past tense) and would normally include statistics, tables or graphs.

**Conclusion** (always included)
Your conclusion should draw out the implications of your findings, with deductions based on the facts described in your main body. Don't include any new material here.

**Recommendations** (sometimes included)
These should follow on logically from your conclusion and be specific, measurable and achievable. They should propose how the situation/problem could be improved by suggesting action to be taken. A "statement of cost" should be included if you are recommending changes that have financial implications.
Recommendations can be numbered if you wish.

**Appendices** (sometimes included)
An appendix (plural=appendices) is detailed documentation of points you outline in your findings, for example, technical data, questionnaires, letters sent, tables, sketches, charts, leaflets etc. It is supplementary information which you consider to be too long or complicated or not quite relevant enough to include in your main body, but which still should be of interest to your reader.
Each appendix should be referred to in your text. You should not include something as an appendix if it is not discussed in the main body.

**References** (always included)
This is a list giving the full details of all the sources to which you have made reference within your text. By far the most common method in use at Birmingham City University is the Harvard method.
Eg, (Chapman & Hall,1978:135-136)

**Bibliography** (sometimes included)
This is either a separate list of sources which you have used during your research, but have not actually made reference to in your writing, or this list together with your list of references.
Check in your department what you are expected to use.

**Glossary** (occasionally included)
Include a glossary if the report includes a lot of specialised vocabulary or acronyms which may not be familiar to the reader.

**Style**

Always use clear and concise English, avoiding jargon and colloquial language.
Write in fairly short sentences.
Make sure you develop each paragraph sufficiently (usually a minimum of 5/6 sentences).
Most of your report should be impersonal, although it may be appropriate in your conclusion or recommendations to include more personal language.
Be extra careful with verb tenses.

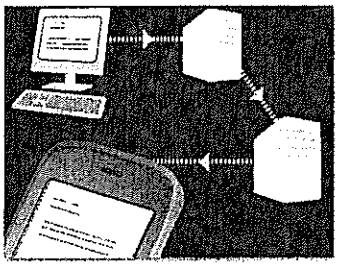
**Check everything carefully**

Careful checking of your report before you print off the final version can make a big difference.

Check:
- General layout
- Text organisation
- Coherence
- Grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Referencing
- Style

And finally overall, does the report fulfil its purpose? Does it do what you're being asked to do and what you say you're going to do in your introduction? Are you pleased with it? If you can't confidently answer "yes" to these questions, then you may need to do some major editing and rewriting.

**E-mail**



**Introduction**

**How E-mail Works**

It can take a day to send a letter across the city and weeks to go around the world. To save time and money, you can't beat electronic mail. It's fast, easy and cheaper than the postal service.

**E-mail Addresses**

E-mail addresses typically have two main parts: the user name and the domain name. Knowing the correct address is crucial if you want your message to arrive at its destination. E-mail is by far the most popular service on the Internet

**1. What makes e-mail different from other types of communication?**

Emails are digital and it is created on a computer, tablet or smartphone. It can be sent and received right a way through the Internet. Emails can also be deleted.

Letters are written on paper. It is sent through the country's postal system and requires a stamp. It takes longer to reach the recipient.

**2. What are some advantages of e-mail?**

Emails are used to communicate to people you either know or don't know. Emails can be either formal or informal communication.

With an email, you can see what date and time it was sent.

**3. What are some disadvantages?**

Every day, tens of millions of people use electronic mail to conduct business and to communicate with friends and family. But if you think your e-mail is private, guess again.

Emails are not always secure and private.

**4. The 5 parts of an e-mail message.**

1. **Header:**
   The recipient's or recipients' email address/es.

The header also contains the subject line. This must be clear informative and should say what the email is about.

2. **Greeting:**
   The greeting is usually more informal than with letter writing. This is commonly "Dear _____, " followed by a comma.

3. **Body:**
   This is the message or information in the email.
   - Write the most important information first and make use of numbers or bullet points to make your message clearer.
   - Make use of simple clear grammar and write in short sentences.
     - Avoid using things like the passive
   - Choose simple concrete words that express your meaning precisely.
   - Use paragraphs to keep the message clear and easy to understand.

   Always proof read an email before you send it. Double check the following:
   - Proper capitalisation
   - Proper punctuation
   - Correct spelling

4. **Closing:**
   Close an email with a proper greeting – Regards, Yours sincerely.

5. **Signature:**
   Most people sign their letters in written correspondence. With electronic messages, you can add a signature too, although it can be anything from a clever quote to some additional information about you.

- **Smileys**

- When you talk to someone face-to-face, your body language, the tone of your voice, your inflections and facial expressions impart great meaning to what you say. Personalize your **informal** written communication by using a smiley or emoticon.

**Use Common Sense!**

It's always a good idea to proofread an email before you send it. Double-check for the following:

☐ a clear and specific subject
☐ a greeting, closing, and signature
☐ proper capitalization
☐ proper punctuation
☐ correct spelling

DO's and Don'ts of emails:

| Do's | Don'ts |
|---|---|
| • Use an informative subject line, which says what the email is about.<br>• Write the most important information first.<br>• Use numbers and bullet points to make the message clearer.<br>• Use simple grammar.<br>• Write short sentences.<br>• Use paragraphs to keep the email clear and easy to understand. | • Write 'hello' as your subject line.<br>• Write about irrelevant issues. The reader will soon hit 'delete' if the email doesn't get to the point.<br>• Give personal information that you don't want anyone else to know. (The email could end up in the wrong hands)<br>• Use capital letters to write whole words – in emails this is considered shouting.<br>• Use different fonts in the email (the recipient's computer may not be compatible)<br>• Use italics (The reason may be misunderstood, due to cultural differences)<br>• Use exclamation marks (!)<br>• Use abbreviations like 'coz' and 'uni' as the recipient may not understand them.<br>• Use acronyms like BTW for the same reason.<br>• Use smileys in business or formal communication. They may be misunderstood and come across as unprofessional. |

**Example of an email:**

**From:** bestfriend1@fastemail.com
**To:** tbone@fastemail.com
**Sent:** Thursday, November 1, 2012 at 3:34 pm
**Subject:** playdate

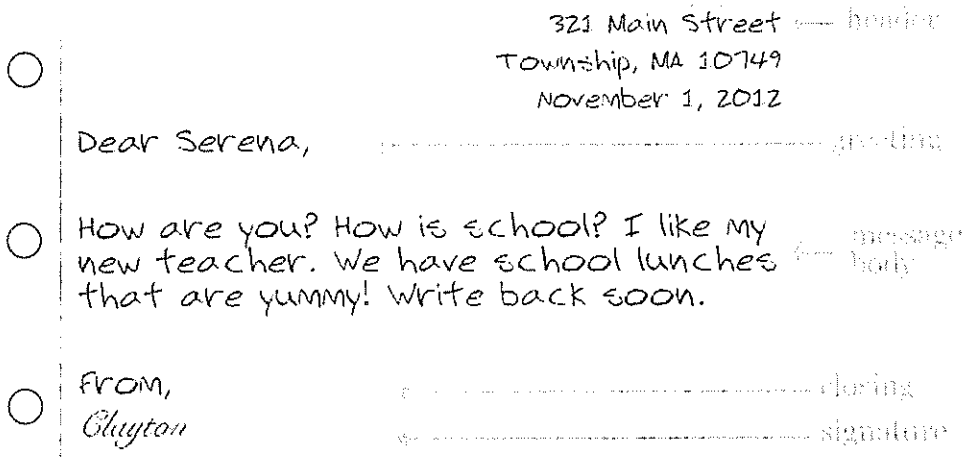
Hey Tyrone,

How are you? Can you come over on Saturday?

From,

Tanya

**Example of a letter**




**Formal letter**

Dear Mr Jones,

I am writing to enquire about your language courses in the summer. I am a university student studying to become a translator.

I would like to know whether your school offers courses specifically for university level students as I would like to study techniques for essay writing in English. Could you also tell me how many hours of lessons there are per week?

With regards to accommodation, do you only provide homestay-style lodgings or are there any other possible alternatives? I feel I would prefer to stay in shared accommodation with self-catering facilities.

Finally, I was wondering if any extra-curricular activities such as lectures or excursions are offered at your school. If so, are these included in the price, or at an additional cost?

I would be grateful for any information you can give me and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jaana Nikkinen

**Semi-formal email**

Subject: Information about summer courses

Dear Mr Jones,

I'm a university student from Finland and I'm writing to get some information about your language courses this summer. I've got a few questions:

1. Do you do a course for university students, which help them with their essay writing skills?
2. How many hours a week are the courses?
3. What sort of accommodation do you offer?
4. What after-school activities are there?
5. Do you do any trips to other towns in the UK?

I'm hoping to come over in June, so if you can get back to me as soon as possible, it would be great. Thanks for your help.
Best regards,
Jaana Nikkinen

---

**Informal email**

Subject: Dani is back in Bournemouth

Hi Jack,

Remember me, Dani from last summer? How could u forget, we had such a good laugh every weekend, didn't we? How's it going?

Anyway, just writing to let u know that I'm coming back! I'm gonna be working in a hotel in Bournemouth from June till September. Brilliant, eh?

Actually, there was something else* Do u reckon it would be possible to have my old homestay family? We got on so well, and the mum was a fantastic cook! Dunno if it's possible, but just thought I'd ask.

Would be great to catch up sometime, so gimme a bell*I've still got the same SIM, so my number's the same: 0786 8757652.

Cheers, mate!

Dani

**'Bad email'**

Subject: Hello!

Hi Jack!!!
My name's Jaana and I'M FROM FINLAND!!! I bet you haven't had students from here B4 ;-) ;-) That's probably coz we're so amazing at languages, that we don't need any xtra help? except me – I need all the help I can get!! FYI: the problem really started when I was in primary school, and my parents, who had been arguing
non-stop since I was a little baby, got divorced and decided that I should be adopted as they couldn't decide who should have custody of me. If I had been in their situation, I think I probably wouldn't have known either!! Anyway, this was all a bit traumatic, so all my school subjects suffered, especially English. HAHAHAAA ONLY JOKING!!!! :-) (Actually, don't tell anyone, but I'm actually quite a good student? but if anyone found out, my reputation would be ruined, so shhhhhh!) BTW do u do courses for uni students? How many lessons/week? Is there any extra stuff after school, SO I CAN MEET SOME COOL PEOPLE? How about trips? Give me all the info you can, man.

Jaana (although all my mates call me Jakki!!)

For effective interviews, reporters prepare carefully, and they ask questions that induce/persuade the source to talk freely. Questions are directed at obtaining/getting information on a theme that the reporter has in mind before beginning the interview.

The reporter notes what is said, how it is said and what is not said. Sources are encouraged by the reporter's gestures and facial expressions to keep talking.

**The four principles of interviewing:**

1. Prepare carefully, familiarizing yourself with as much background as possible.
2. Establish a relationship with the source helpful/conducive to getting information.
3. Ask questions that are relevant/important to the source and that encourage the source to talk.
4. Listen and watch attentively.

**Interviews follow the two "P's" ¾ persistence and preparation.**

1. **Persistence** is necessary to persuade people to be interviewed, and it is essential in following a line of questioning that the subject may find objectionable.

2. **Preparation** may consist of a few minutes spent glancing through a story in last week's newscast before dashing out to do an interview. Or it may be a prolonged examination of clippings, material, articles and research.

**How to prepare for an interview:**

1. Do research on the interview topic and the person to be interviewed, not only so you can ask the right questions and understand the answers, but also so you can demonstrate to the interviewee that you have taken the time to understand the subject and also that you cannot easily be fooled.
2. Devise a tentative/provisional theme for your story. A major purpose of the interview will be to obtain quotes, stories and other evidence to support that theme.
3. List question topics in advance ¾ as many as you can think of, even though you may not ask all of them and almost certainly will ask others that you do not list.
4. In preparing for interviews on sensitive subjects, theorize about what the person's

    a. Attitude *is likely* to be toward you and the subject you are asking about
    b. What is his or her role in the event?
    c. Whose side is he or she on?
    d. What kinds of answers can you logically expect to your key questions?

## The Interviewer's Ground Rules

Both parties in an interview have certain assumptions and expectations. Generally, the reporter expects the interviewee to tell the truth and to stand behind what he or she has told the interviewer. The interviewee presumes the reporter will write the story fairly and accurately. Both agree, without saying so, that the questions and answers mean what they appear to mean - that is, that there are no hidden meanings.

Having said this, we must admit to the exceptions. Sources may conceal, evade, distort and lie when they believe it is to their advantage. The reporter must be alert to the signs of a departure from truth.
The rules that govern the reporter's behavior in the interview can be detailed with some certainty. Reporters, too, conceal, mislead and, at times, lie. Few reporters justify these practices. Most agree the reporter should:

1. Identify him/herself at the start/outset of the interview.
2. State the purpose of the interview.
3. Make clear to those unaccustomed to being interviewed that the material will be used.
4. Tell the source how much time the interview will take.
5. Keep the interview as short as possible.
6. Ask specific questions that the source is competent to answer.
7. Give the source ample/enough time to reply.
8. Ask the source to clarify complex or vague answers.
9. Read back answers if requested or when in doubt about the phrasing of crucial material.
10. Insist on answers if the public has a right to know them.
11. Avoid lecturing the source, arguing or debating.
12. Abide by requests for non-attribution, background only or off – the - record should the source make this a condition of the interview or of a statement.

Reporters who habitually violate these rules risk losing their sources. Few sources will talk to an incompetent or an exploitative reporter. When the source realizes that he or she is being used to enhance the reporter's career or to further the reporter's personal ideas or philosophy, the source will close up.

Sources also risk trouble when they exploit the press. Reporters understand that their sources will give incomplete, even misleading, information. But constant and flagrant/obvious misuse of the press leads to retaliation/revenge by journalists.

## STAGES OF AN INTERVIEW

### 1. Give and Take

The early stage of the interview is a feeling-out period. The interviewee balances his or her achievements and losses from giving information the reporter seeks, and the reporter tries to show the source the rewards he/she will receive through admission of the information.

### 2. The Questions

Careful preparation leads the interviewer to a few themes for the interview, and these, in turn, suggest questions to be asked. But before the specific questions are put to the interviewee, a few housekeeping details usually are attended to, vital data questions. For some interviews, these may involve age, education, jobs held, family information. For well-known people, the questions may be about their latest activities.

Questions of this sort are nonthreatening and help make for a relaxed interview atmosphere. Also, they are sometimes necessary because of conflicting material in the files, such as discrepancies in age or education.

### 3. Direct Questions

Most questions flow from what the reporter perceives/thinks to be the theme of the assignment.

A reporter is told to interview an actor who had been out of work for two years and is now in a hit musical. The reporter decides that the theme of the story will be the changes the actor has made in his life.

### 4. Open- and Closed-Ended Questions

When the sportswriter asked the hurdler, "What do you think of our town?" he was using what is known as an *open-ended question,* which could have been answered in general terms. The sports editor's suggestion that the reporter ask the athlete about the condition of the track would have elicited a specific response - fast, slow, or slick- as it was a *closed-ended question.*

The open-ended question does not require a specific answer.

The close-dended question calls for a brief, pointed reply.

Reporters often begin their interviews with open-ended questions, which allow the source to relax. Then the closed-ended questions are asked, which may seem threatening if asked at the outset of the interview.

Television and radio interviews usually end with a closed-ended question because the interviewer wants to sum up the situation with a brief reply.

The reporter who asks only open-ended questions should be aware of their possible implications. To some sources, the open-ended question is the mark of an inadequately prepared reporter who is fishing for a story.

Good questions are the result of solid preparation, and this requires more than reading the local newspaper and chatting with authorities.

### 5. Tough Questions

Sometimes a young reporter finds that posing the right question is difficult because the question might embarrass or offend the interviewee. There is no recourse but to ask.

Some reporters are courageous only when they write, when they are alone with their typewriters, not when they face the person in power.

### 6. Intrusive Questions

Still, there are questions that few reporters like to ask. Most of these concern the private lives of sources – the mental retardation of a couple's son, the fatal illness of a baseball player. Some questions are necessary, some not. The guidelines for relevance and good taste are constantly shifting, and reporters may find they are increasingly being told to ask questions that they consider intrusive. This is the age of intimacy.

Reporters who dislike asking these questions, preferring to spare sources anguish, are sometimes surprised by the frank replies. A reporter for *Newsday* was assigned to follow up on an automobile accident in which a drunken youth without a driver's license ran a borrowed car into a tree. One of the passengers, a 15-year-old girl, was killed. In doing his follow-up story, the reporter discovered that most of the parents were willing to talk because, as one parent said, the lessons learned from the accident might save lives.

### 7. Junk Questions

Don't tell people what you know. Ask questions. Then back off. Use diversion. Talk with people about things you're not there to talk to them about. You ask a question that may be very meaningful. Then you move away from it. Anything that will divert him, and he will start talking about that. And then maybe ask two or three questions about junk, and then come back and ask another very pointed question.

### 8. Listening, Watching

Great reporters are great listeners. The good listener hears good quotes, revealing slips of the tongue, the dialect and diction of the source that sets him or her apart.

## Types of media Interviews

There are several types of news media interviews,
ranging from impromptu/unprepared ones in a crisis to long-planned, easy going talk-show type of interviews.

### 1. News Interviews:

The purpose is to gather information to explain an idea event or situation in the news.

### 2. Radio

The main feature of radio is that it is a personal medium. Radio gives the illusion of a one-to-one relationship, which means that you should adopt an appropriate style when you go on radio programs.

You should adopt a friendly approach in interviews on programs such as talkback. In radio you are talking to or with people, not at them.

The radio message is a fleeting moment of sound. It is not the medium for complex explanations or lists of facts and statistics. The listeners have to be able to grasp your point at one pass of the information, as there is no visual reinforcement and no hard copy to check back for verifications.

### 3. Television

Television is demanding in the sense that the audience see you as well as hear you. Your body language, dress, background and movement all contribute to communication with the audience.

To appear credible on television, you must sound and look credible. Sit rather than stand, as you need controlled movement and remember to use slow, controlled gestures. Review your appearance before the interview, ensuring your dress, hair and facial expression come across credible.

The power of television is its visual impact; you must be brief, to the point and get the key message across in a limited time. Allow yourself time to think, look away and think about the question (look down to the floor not to the ceiling). Use silence instead of filler words such as 'um' while thinking.

4. **Print**

Press interviews have similar requirements as electronic media in terms of news value.

The apparent relaxed nature of press interviews should not lull you into a false sense of security. Ensure you get your key messages in early, be careful of rambling and place tonal emphasis on key messages. A trick for press interviews over the phone is to stand up while doing the interview - it will give you a lot more confidence.

**5. Accident or incident**

In the highly-charged emotional atmosphere of an accident or incident where news media may be denied access due to ongoing investigations, recommend to the Case Officer that he make a brief statement to the news media and take a few questions.

**6. General**

This is a one-on-one interview involving a reporter and an individual involved in a specific event or issue. The reporter should monitor the interview and tape-record it in case questions arise later on the context of the answers or if the interviewee is misquoted.

**7. Talk show**

Many local television channels have interview shows where "people in the news" are interviewed. These are referred to as "soft" interviews that usually focus on the personality of the person or command, rather than on hard news issues. Nevertheless, prior preparation is important even for a soft interview. Be sure you know if there will be another speaker on the show who will be asked their opinions of the issues the interviewee will address. Since the talk show interview is usually scheduled in advance and topics may be agreed upon in advance, the interviewee must be aware that new questions may arise tied to current events in the news.

**8. Ambush**

This type of "on-the-run," unanticipated interview usually is related to some major issue or controversial event. The person leaves his home, a congressional hearing or a courtroom, and is suddenly faced with television cameras, microphones and shouted questions.

**9. Remote**

This is similar to the general interview but involves the interviewee in one location (such as on the ship's bridge or pier) and the interviewer in a television studio asking questions. There may also be a third party linked by another remote location or in the television studio. The interviewee has an earplug to hear the questions.

**10.Edited**

As you already know, any interview, whether it be print, radio or television, may be edited if it is not done live. The problem with the edited interview is that an answer may be edited **out of context.**