



MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF WRITING

Adapted from Study Design, LOTE,
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The following descriptions outline the main characteristics of five different kinds of writing. They are intended as a guide only; students would not be expected to include all aspects in their writing.

Personal Writing

- Uses a personal voice.
- Establishes a relationship/intimacy/empathy between the writer and the reader.
- Usually employs first and/or second person; subjective; informal, familiar style/register; often includes emotive language.
- Emphasises ideas, opinions, feelings and impressions, rather than factual, objective information.
- Uses, in reflective writing, the act of writing to help the author understand and unravel his/her own feelings or ideas.
- May, in certain contexts, use contracted language, such as is used in speech.
- May make a universal point based on the individual experience.

Purpose: The author is trying to convey something personal to the reader.

Imaginative Writing

- Creates visual and/or emotional appeal.
- Usually creates a strong sense of context (physical surroundings and atmosphere) and situation.
- Normally includes description (person, place, emotion, atmosphere) so careful selection of language such as adjectives and adverbs (or their equivalents) is important.
- Uses techniques such as variation in sentence length, juxtaposition of different sentence length, careful control of structure and sequencing, to add to the overall effect by creating the desired atmosphere or conveying the required emotion.
- May break normal sequencing for added impact, such as in a flashback or in a final disclosure, which puts a different interpretation on preceding passages.

Purpose: It is a piece of fiction designed to entertain, amuse, or create an impression, picture, or feeling in the reader.

Persuasive Writing

- Aims to convert the reader to a particular point of view or attitude in order to convince him or her to act or respond in a certain way.
- Manipulates the reader's emotions and opinions in order to achieve a specific purpose, that is, to achieve a desired outcome or effect which is important to and selected by the writer.
- Persuasive techniques chosen are influenced by the nature of the target audience; that is, the language (vocabulary, sentence structures, style/register), structure and sequencing of the piece are framed with the particular audience and purpose in mind.
- Requires choice of the best word (with the precise shade of meaning and overtones of approval/disapproval, virtue/vice, etc.), so range of vocabulary and dictionary techniques are important.
- Aims in certain instances (for example, advertisements) to keep the target audience unaware of being manipulated and adopts an appearance of objectivity and rationality by using indirect, subtle, techniques; and confidential, intimate, register.
- Sometimes uses exaggeration, extravagant language, superlatives, and humour to create a conspiratorial relationship between the writer and the reader.
- Often uses the second person for direct address and appeal.

- Sometimes employs direct speech and questions to intensify the relationship with the audience.
- May use techniques such as the use of technical or scientific language and superlatives or quantitative statements to lend authority to the content.

Purpose: The author is taking a stance and trying to persuade the reader.

Informative Writing

- Aims to convey information from the writer to the reader as clearly, comprehensively, and accurately as possible.
- Usually uses objective style and impersonal expressions, although the writer may use an informal style to establish a relationship of 'friendly helper' with the reader.
- Normally has no particular point of view to convey; if a point of view is involved, the writing becomes either persuasive or evaluative.
- Generally uses facts, examples, explanations, analogies, and sometimes statistical information, quotations, and reference as evidence.
- Chooses language, structure, and sequence to make the message clear and unambiguous, so the sequencing of information is usually logical and predictable.
- Probably uses few adjectives, adverbs, and images, except as examples or analogies in explanation.

Purpose: The author is conveying objective information.

Evaluative Writing

- Aims to weigh two or more items/ideas in order to convince the reader rationally and objectively that a particular point of view is correct.
- Aims to reach a conclusion acceptable to an unbiased reader through the logical presentation and discussion of facts and ideas.
- Presents two or more important aspects of an issue or sides of an argument and discusses these rationally and objectively, using evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives.
- Uses objective style, appeals to reason not emotion; creation of an impression of balance and impartiality is essential.
- Often includes expressions of cause, consequence, opposition, and concession.

Purpose: The author is giving a balanced view of both sides of a case.



TEXT TYPES — PURPOSE, STRUCTURE, AND LANGUAGE FEATURES

The target audience and purpose of the text, and whether the text will be spoken or written, will determine the language chosen. Levels of language, language features, language structures, conventions, tone, etc., are factors that need to be considered when constructing a text for a particular audience and for a particular purpose.

The table below is presented as a guide for those curriculum statement text types that have been identified for productive use. Further information can be found in the range of literacy documents available in schools.

<i>Text Types</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Language Features</i>
advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to inform or promote• to persuade	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• headings/captions• graphics/photographs• layout/different fonts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use of emotive or persuasive language• frequent use of abbreviated words and sentences• use of comparatives and superlatives
announcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• information presented in logical sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• short sentences• factual, straightforward language• little elaboration
article	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to sustain an argument• to describe• to inform, to persuade, to amuse or entertain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• titles/headings• development of ideas/argument• sequencing and linking of ideas• statement of conclusion/advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• range of tenses• linking words• language can be descriptive factual judgmental emotive persuasive depending on context
conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to exchange information, opinions, and experiences• to maintain and sustain communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• exchange of opening salutations• question/statement followed by response• two-way interaction is sustained	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• question forms• strategies to maintain conversation (fillers)• interjections• sentences may not be complete• language level will depend on context and relationship between participants
description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to inform• to entertain• to describe• to classify	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• general statement or classification• introduction and elaborated description of characteristic features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• specific details• descriptive words• a range of tenses• varied vocabulary• comparative expressions• literary devices (e.g. simile, imagery)

<i>Text Types</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Language Features</i>
diary/journal entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to record personal reflections or experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> chronological or stream of consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> first person abbreviated words/sentences subjective/informal language
discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to give different points of view to examine issues from more than one perspective to make recommendations based on evidence to sustain an argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presentation of main idea in introduction evidence/data to support main idea interaction between participants to clarify understandings conclusion/reiteration of main idea balanced presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> linking words to sequence ideas logically qualifying words (e.g. usually, probably) persuasive, descriptive, discursive, or personal language depending on context comparative expressions
email/facsimile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to use technology-based methods of communication to inform to seek a response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conventions (email addresses) specific details without elaboration salutations and endings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> abbreviated words and sentences simple language structures
essays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to discuss to analyse to assess to guide or teach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> orientation/introduction presentation of argument/judgment evaluation conclusion/reiteration of main argument often has embedded description and/or explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formal, objective language linking words to sequence ideas and paragraphs qualifying words abstract nouns and concepts complex sentence structure evidence or examples included to support or enhance argument
formal letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to communicate in writing in formal contexts to request information to lodge a complaint to express an opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> salutations letter conventions (layout, address, date, etc.) logical and cohesive sequence of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of full sentences and paragraphs more complex sentence structure objective language frequent use of formulaic expressions
informal letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to communicate in writing with acquaintances, friends, family to inform, amuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> salutations letter conventions (layout, address, date, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequent colloquial language subjective language sentence structure often less complex than in formal letters
interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to seek and convey information, views, opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> question and response form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> question words link words strategies to maintain communication
invitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to invite in written form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> layout conventions statement of facts protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> abbreviated language formal or informal language words that tell when, where, with whom

<i>Text Types</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Language Features</i>
message/note	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to inform • to request • to instruct • to remind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general statement, description, procedure • may be in point form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • succinct • abbreviated words and sentences • lack of descriptive detail • frequent use of colloquial language
narrative account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to entertain, amuse, or instruct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • series of events presented in logical progression • resolution/conclusion • may contain a series of complications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time words used to connect events • use of action words • description of characters and settings
personal profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to describe • to outline personal details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be in point form (appropriate to situation) • use of headings and subheadings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factual • descriptive language • present tense • simple phrases or sentences
postcard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide information • to retell events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salutations • brief description or message • formulaic ending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • descriptive language • incomplete sentences • abbreviated words • colloquial expression • clichés • personal impressions
procedure* (Chinese only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to achieve a goal or outcome through a series of events • to instruct someone how to do something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statement of goal • steps presented in sequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of verbs in each group of instructions • instructional language • words that tell how, when, where, etc.
recount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to retell what happened • to tell a series of events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction/orientation • events sequenced in chronological order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • descriptive language • past tense • time words to connect events • words that use when, where, with whom, and how
report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to classify and/or describe • to organise facts • to draw conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general statement or classification • description • logical progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting evidence (e.g. statistics, examples) • factual • usually present tense • language specific to the topic
review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to respond to a text/stimulus • to summarise, analyse, or interpret a text and to assess its value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe context of text or work • describe the text or work • judgment or evaluation of text or work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • descriptive language • more complex structures with frequent abstract language • words that express judgment • possible comparisons • expressions of aesthetic nature
speech/talk (script)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to communicate ideas, opinions, and attitudes • to entertain • to persuade • to welcome • to thank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introductory statement of purpose • explanation or sequence of events or presentation of argument • concluding remarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choice of expressions to engage the audience • descriptive words • a range of tenses • subjective language • use of slogans or catch phrases • use of humour and anecdotes



CCAFL GLOSSARY OF TEXT TYPES

Advertisement	<p>In both spoken and written form, advertisements promote a product or service, and use persuasive language as well as factual information in an informal or colloquial register.</p> <p>They may be in graphic form, but must always include sufficient written text on which to base questions for comprehension.</p>
Announcement	<p>In both spoken and written form, announcements present factual information about an event that has recently occurred or is about to occur. These can sometimes use a formal register, but may be in informal or colloquial register.</p> <p>They may be in graphic form, but must always include sufficient written text on which to base questions for comprehension.</p>
Article	<p>Articles consist of a section of text that can be taken from a newspaper, magazine, or other publication. They can be reproduced directly or can be modified to make the language more accessible for students at this level.</p> <p>They should have a title that indicates the content. They are usually in a formal register.</p> <p>They may be accompanied by a graphic if necessary.</p>
Chart/Table/ Timetable	<p>A chart is a diagrammatic or tabular presentation of information, such as statistics about tourism, details of school numbers, candidates in an examination, etc.</p> <p>The chart shows some variations in individual elements, such as price, numbers, temperature, but requires information to be completed in other parts of the chart by the student, based on an accompanying text that is listened to or read. What is required must be clear from the information given and the layout of the chart.</p> <p>Language required in response is often in the form of single words.</p>
Conversation	<p>The language of conversations as a basis for comprehension, either spoken or written, should be of authentic, informal, conversational style.</p> <p>Spoken conversations in an examination (e.g. Listening and Responding) usually have two speakers, one male and one female, and should include pauses and fillers, and focus on tone and emphasis.</p> <p>Written conversations could have more than two speakers, but each speaker must be clearly identified.</p> <p>The conversation must always include sufficient information on which to base questions for comprehension.</p> <p>Conversations in which students engage in their oral examination should enable them to demonstrate the criteria listed in the curriculum statement for conversation and discussion. Students should adhere to the formalities of the text type (e.g. use polite form of address). A conversation written as a response in a written examination should observe the style of language listed above.</p>
Diary entry	<p>Specifications for diary entries should indicate the identity of the writer. The subject-matter of the entry, as well as the writing style, should be appropriate to the writer.</p> <p>The language should generally be informal and colloquial. Diary entries are written in the first person.</p>

The content of a diary entry used as a stimulus should include information, personal reflection, and/or comment. There must always be sufficient information on which to base questions for comprehension.

The layout should appear authentic, using a date, and possibly a place name.

A diary entry used as a response should also reflect the identity of the writer, and should observe the style described above.

Discussion	<p>The language of discussions, either spoken or written, should be in authentic, conversational style, but the content should be more closely focused and argued than a simple conversation.</p> <p>Spoken discussions in an examination (e.g. Listening and Responding) usually have only two speakers, one male and one female, and should include pauses and fillers, and focus on tone and emphasis.</p> <p>Written discussions could have more than two speakers, but each speaker must be clearly identified.</p> <p>The discussion should have a title that indicates its subject-matter. It must always include sufficient information on which to base questions for comprehension.</p> <p>Discussions in which students engage in their oral examination should enable them to demonstrate the criteria listed in the curriculum statement for conversation and discussion. Students should adhere to the formalities of the text type (e.g. use the polite form of address). A discussion written as a response in a written examination should observe the style of language listed above.</p>
email	<p>The language of email messages could be formal or informal, depending on the content. A message from one friend to another should be colloquial. A business-related message should use a more formal register.</p> <p>Although authentic emails often do not have either a salutation at the beginning or a signature at the end, they should have both in examination usage, in order to indicate more clearly the context of the message.</p> <p>They must always include sufficient information on which to base questions for comprehension.</p> <p>An email used as a response should also observe the conventions above.</p>
Form	<p>Forms to be filled in usually employ formal language.</p> <p>Gaps in a form require information to be filled in. What is required must be clear from the information given and the layout of the form.</p> <p>Language required in response is often in the form of single words.</p>
Formal letter	<p>The layout of a formal letter must be correct (address of sender and recipient, formal greeting and phrase of farewell).</p> <p>The language should be in formal register, and deal with a business or other specific topic.</p> <p>It must always include sufficient information (cues) on which to base questions for comprehension.</p> <p>A formal letter used as a response should also observe the conventions above.</p>
Informal letter	<p>The layout of an informal letter can be less stylised than a formal letter, possibly with only the address of the sender, a casual greeting, and a phrase of farewell.</p> <p>The language can be informal and colloquial. The content can be simple and casual.</p> <p>It must always include sufficient information (cues) on which to base questions for comprehension.</p> <p>An informal letter used as a response should also observe the conventions above.</p>
Interview	<p>The language of interviews, either spoken or written, should be in authentic, conversational style, but the format of question and answer should be observed, and the information requested and given should be closely focused.</p>

Spoken interviews in an examination (e.g. Listening and Responding) usually have only two speakers, one male and one female, and should include pauses and fillers, and focus on tone and emphasis.

Written interviews would generally have only two speakers, the interviewer and the interviewee, but each speaker must be clearly identified.

The interview should have a title that indicates its subject-matter. It must always include sufficient information on which to base questions for comprehension.

Invitation	<p>Invitations can be simply examples of a formal letter, but can also be presented in a graphic layout, including sketches.</p> <p>They can require a formal response, in letter form, or can ask for single words to be inserted in the original layout in response.</p> <p>In whichever form the invitation is made, it must always include sufficient information on which the response can be based.</p>
Map	<p>A map can be used to test comprehension of spoken or written directions.</p> <p>It should be a clear sketch, rather than a copy of a real map, and should include names of physical features and streets, and other markers, sufficient for students to be able to respond as required.</p>
Menu	<p>Dishes that are available in a restaurant, or fast-food outlet, etc., can be listed, and chosen by students to create a menu for a specific occasion.</p> <p>These could be in English or the target language.</p> <p>Prices accompanying each item could be used to devise questions.</p>
Message/note	<p>Messages/notes are less formal than informal letters. Often they can be used to convey in writing information left on an answering machine or in a telephone call.</p> <p>They have a salutation and a signing off, but the content should be brief and to the point, conveying a specific piece of information with little extra detail.</p> <p>A message used as a response should also observe the conventions above.</p>
Narrative account/story	<p>A narrative account/story that is provided for comprehension purposes tells a story that may be fictional, or may be an account of an event that has actually occurred in the life of the writer. It may be a part of a published story or account, or it may be an original composition. In either case, the narrative/story should contain sufficient detail to compose comprehension questions that are challenging.</p> <p>A narrative account that is required as a response may be a fictional story written by the student and stimulated by a picture or a series of pictures, or by an introductory sentence, or by a selection of phrases, or it may be a personal account stimulated by general suggestions that lend themselves to writing about a wide range of experiences.</p> <p>The language in each case should be formal and the passage clearly structured. A title should be given.</p>
News item	<p>News items may be authentic, or may be modified to make the language more accessible to students. The register should be formal and the passage factual.</p> <p>A title or headline should be given.</p> <p>They must always include sufficient information on which the response can be based.</p>
Notice	<p>Notices can be simple announcements, but are often written as signs or posters.</p> <p>They present factual information about a situation that exists, or an event that is about to occur. These use a formal register.</p> <p>They may be in graphic form, but must always include sufficient written text on which to base questions for comprehension.</p> <p>A notice used as a response should also observe the conventions above.</p>

Poem	<p>A whole poem or a selection of lines from a poem can be used as a basis for comprehension.</p> <p>Language must be accessible.</p>
Postcard	<p>Messages written on postcards are always short and the language informal. However, they must always include sufficient written text on which to base questions for comprehension.</p> <p>A postcard that is required as a response to a question will also be short and informal.</p>
Recipe	<p>Recipes contain lists of ingredients, measurements, and instructions for making the dish required. They use simple but rather formulaic language.</p> <p>Whatever response is required of the student, the recipe must always include sufficient written text on which to base questions.</p>
Report	<p>Reports are informative (rather than persuasive or imaginative), i.e. they deal with facts and/or statistics.</p> <p>A report that is provided for comprehension may be a part of a published report or account, or it may be an original composition. In either case, it should contain sufficient detail to compose comprehension questions that are of an appropriate level of demand..</p> <p>A report that is required as a response may be an account of a situation known to the student personally and stimulated by questions that allow for a wide choice of experiences.</p> <p>The language in each case should be formal, and the passage clearly structured. A title should be given.</p>
Review	<p>Reviews may be of films, musical performances, novels, or stories. They are similar to reports, but they are not only factual. They are generally more personal and contain evaluative comments.</p> <p>A review that is provided for comprehension may be part of a published review, or it may be an original composition.</p> <p>In either case, it should contain sufficient detail to compose comprehension questions that are of an appropriate level of demand</p> <p>A review that is required as a response should show understanding of the work or performance. The language and structure should be formal. A title should be given.</p>
Song	<p>The words of a song could be used for comprehension purposes, although it must be remembered that popular songs often contain colloquial language or slang that is difficult for students if they have not heard the song before.</p>
Speech/talk	<p>A small portion of a speech or radio talk might be used as an example in a comprehension exercise. Care would have to be taken that the language was accessible to students at this level.</p> <p>As a written exercise, students could be asked to write the text of a talk that would be delivered to their class or other audience.</p> <p>The language in each case would be informal, although not colloquial.</p>
Survey	<p>Results from a survey could be used as a comprehension exercise (<i>see</i> Chart).</p> <p>As a response, students could be asked to compose questions that could be used in a survey (<i>see</i> Form).</p> <p>Language in survey forms is formal.</p>