

THE SENIOR ENGLISH WRITING HANDBOOK

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES, RESOURCES
AND TOOLS FOR EVERY SENIOR
ENGLISH STUDENT

TICKING
MIND 

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**THE
SENIOR ENGLISH
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1. WRITING PERSUASIVE PIECES

This chapter will look at three types of tools you can use to construct effective persuasive pieces:

1. Generating arguments:

When we begin to develop ideas for persuasive writing, it's instinctive to immediately think about the positives and negatives, or pros and cons of an issue. While we do ultimately want a list of such points, there are more useful starting points to use in coming up with ideas. This section will look at a range of strategies to help you with this.

2. Structuring your ideas for persuasive writing:

There's more to persuasive writing than an introduction which says what you're going to say, a body which says it, and an conclusion which rehashes it all over again. In this section of the chapter there are a range of effective structures for a persuasive piece.

3. Polishing and perfecting your writing:

This section of the chapter gives you a whole range of phrases and sentence structures to use in your persuasive piece to help you turn your ideas from statements to words that can persuade.

4. Oral presentation strategies:

You'll often need to present your persuasive writing as an oral presentation. This section of the chapter will give you a range of practical tips for how to prepare your writing to be read for a presentation, make eye contact with your audience and use hand gestures.

5. Writing a statement of intention:

Your persuasive writing will need to be accompanied by a statement of intention which outlines what you aim to achieve in your piece. This section shows your what content to include and how to structure it.

Generating Arguments:

BASIC ARGUMENTS FOR & AGAINST

Why come up with new arguments when there are perfectly good old ones?

The table below lists a series of basic arguments that have been around as long as people themselves.

If you are arguing about why we should or shouldn't implement a change (such as a new law, rule, technology or way of doing things) then start by looking at this list.

For the particular issue you are looking at, which of these arguments applies and can be used to make an effective case?

BASIC ARGUMENTS FOR

- Progress is good - we need to live in the 21st century, not in the past. We can't be left behind
- If we do things the same way we will only get the same results - doing something is better than doing nothing
- We need to think about what's best for most people - not just some people who don't want to change
- We all need to be responsible
- The benefits are long term / it will be cheaper in the longer term
- If we don't do it, we'll regret it later
- Other people are doing this, so we should as well

BASIC ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- If we let this happen...what will be next?
- It's impractical - it'll never work
- It's expensive
- It impacts on people's individual freedoms - their right to choose and do what they want
- What's wrong with what we're doing now?
- We've heard these arguments before - they've never made sense in the past and they don't now / This hasn't worked in the past, it won't now

For example, if we were considering the proposition, 'we should go from having no school uniform to having a school uniform', we might select these arguments against:

- It's expensive
- It impacts on people's individual freedoms-their right to choose and do what they want
- What's wrong with what we're doing now?

Once you've selected basic arguments for or against, the next thing you can do is brainstorm all the reasons to support them.

For example, uniform is expensive because:

- You have to buy a whole range of different uniform
- It's not like you can get a cheap version - there's just one place that supplies uniform for the one price
- Uniform often isn't great quality and you have to keep replacing it

Generating Arguments:

CONSIDER ALL FACTORS

Often when we brainstorm arguments for or against a topic, our thinking can be limited to the most obvious factors and ideas. For example, if we were given the topic: ‘We should create more national parks’, we immediately think of the environment. If we were given the topic, ‘The drinking age should be raised to 21’, the factor of safety straightway comes to mind. But for any issue there are a whole range of factors that need to be considered beyond the obvious. The more broadly we consider what factors are relevant to a topic we are thinking about it, the more ideas we can generate.

On the opposite page you will find a Consider All Factors Chart. This chart lists a whole range of factors that could be relevant to an issue you are thinking about.

To use this resource to help generate arguments for or against a topic:

1. Begin by using the resource as a checklist. Without considering whether you are for or against a topic, simply read through the factors and tick off the ones that are in any way relevant to the issue
2. You will probably tick off between 8-10 factors. Look back through what you ticked off – prune these down to the five most important factors to the issue
3. Now, create a for and against chart as in the example below. Considering each factor one by one, what would be a for argument and what would be an against argument. Sometimes you might not be able to identify both a for and against argument. In that case, simply put in a question mark like in the example below:
4. Which side is strongest? Pick this side to make your case.

TOPIC: THE YEAR 12 ENGLISH EXAM SHOULD BE DONE ON COMPUTERS		
	FOR	AGAINST
MONEY	Computers are now pretty cheap.	It will cost a lot of money to make sure there is a computer for every student to do the exam on.
PROGRESS	Producing work on computers is the way the real world runs. Shouldn't we also do this on our exam?	?
PRACTICALITY	?	What happens if the computers break down during the exam?
SECURITY	There are now a lot of tools available to keep computers secure and stop people using them the wrong way.	What happens if people find a way to cheat using the computers?
FAIRNESS FOR ALL	What about all the students who have messy handwriting - or type faster than they write?	What about if some students aren't good at typing or using computers?

MONEY • Will cost be a consideration?	ENVIRONMENT • Will this impact on the environment?	EMPLOYMENT • Will this impact jobs?
EDUCATION • Will this impact on the education of people?	HEALTH • Will this impact on the health of people?	SAFETY & SECURITY • Will this impact on the safety and security of people?
PROGRESS • Is there a question of whether this will help us progress or take us backwards?	PRACTICALITY • Is there a question of how practical or easy this is to do?	EXTENT OF BENEFIT • Is there a question of how much this will really benefit people?
MORALS/ETHICS & JUSTICE • Will there be a question of whether this is morally right or wrong or whether it will provide justice?	RIGHTS AND BELIEFS? • Will people's individual rights or beliefs be affected?	TRADITIONS, CULTURE & LIFESTYLE • Will this impact on the traditions, cultures or lifestyle of people?
FAIRNESS FOR ALL • Will this impact on all people in the same way? Is there a question of whether people from different backgrounds or areas will be affected differently?	GENDER • Is there a question of how it will affect females or males in particular?	POPULARITY • Is there a question of how much people will like this?
AGE AND GENERATION • Is there a question of whether this will impact differently upon people of different ages?	LOCAL/NATIONAL /GLOBAL • Is there a question of how this will impact a local area, the country or the world?	SECRET REASONS • Is there a question of why this is really being done? Is there a reason that could be being kept secret?

Generating Arguments:

THE BIG PICTURE

Generating arguments for and against a topic sometimes means we focus on the small picture and we lose sight of the bigger things that are at stake. Big picture thinking works with issues where there is a principle at stake that is bigger than just immediate practical concerns for people. It's about asking the question: 'What type of society do we want to live in and how can our response to this issue help us shape this type of society?'

On the next page you will find a list of big picture principles. Begin by identifying which principles are relevant to the topic.

For example, if we were debating the topic

'Energy drinks should not be sold to people under 18',

We could circle all of these principles:

- Public health: Is this a serious public health issue?
- Government policy: Is this an issue about the responsibility of the government to make laws that take care of its citizens?
- Individual autonomy: Is this an issue about the rights of the individual to do what they want without being restricted?

We now need to pick which principles are the most important.

If we were going to argue against energy drink bans, we might say,

'This is ultimately an issue about the rights of the individual and that governments shouldn't control every aspect of our lives'.

In other words: Do we want to live in a world where the government is always telling us what to do?

Alternatively, if we were advocating the ban on energy drinks we might say,

'This is really an issue about about public health and what the government should be doing to protect public health'.

In other words, 'Don't we want to live in a society where we make laws which are in the best interests of everyone's health?'

Included in the section on opening your persuasive pieces later in this chapter is a series of phrases you can use to argue the bigger picture to an issue in your writing.

SOCIAL / WELFARE • Is this an issue about how we behave and relate to each other as individuals and groups? • Is it about how well we look after each other in our society?	JUSTICE, FAIRNESS & EQUALITY • Is this an issue about people being treated fairly according to the law or according to what most people would perceive as fair? • Is it about people being treated the same?	MORAL & ETHICAL • Is this an issue about accepted codes of conduct in certain situations?
ECONOMY & PRODUCTIVITY • Is this an issue about money or employment and the opportunities individuals and families have to financially look after themselves? • Is it about how efficiently we are using our resources?	RELIGIOUS FREEDOM • Is this an issue to do with people's spiritual or religious beliefs?	CULTURAL HERITAGE • Is this an issue to do with the traditions, institutions, and ways of behaving of groups, communities or nations?
ENVIRONMENTAL/ ANIMAL RIGHTS • Is this an issue about how best and most sustainably we can use our resources?	PUBLIC HEALTH • Is this an issue to do with what is in the best interests of keeping us all healthy and safe from physical dangers?	DEMOCRACY, FREE SPEECH & INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY • Is this an issue to do with our freedom to make decisions and to decide who governs us? • Is this an issue to do with our democratic rights and our rights as individuals?
EDUCATION • Is this an issue to do with how well we are educating the people in our society or what opportunity they have to access quality education?	GOVERNMENT/POLITICAL • Is this an issue about what governments should be doing to best help their people?	PRIVACY • Is this an issue to do with the rights of people to control information about themselves?

Generating Arguments:

IDENTIFY & MATCH
ARGUMENTS TO THE AUDIENCE

In writing a persuasive piece your task isn't just to generate 3-5 effective arguments. Your task is to convince a particular audience of your contention. This means that you need to identify an audience and consider which arguments might be most persuasive for this audience.

The checklist below will help you to identify the type of audience you want to engage in a persuasive piece on an issue.

What type of stakeholder in this issue is my audience?

Start by identifying which general statement best identifies the audience you are interested in addressing in your persuasive piece. After this, you can consider whether there is a more specific group of people who will be your audience (i.e parents, teenagers, politicians, business owners, etc...). There won't always necessarily be a specific group of people like this.

- ☐ My audience is people who know a lot about this issue and are directly affected by it
- ☐ My audience is people who know the issue somehow involves or affects them but haven't thought much about it
- ☐ My audience are people who don't realise this issue involves them somehow and don't really care about it

What is their opinion?

- ☐ My audience has a strong opinion about the issue
- ☐ My audience is people whose minds aren't made up about the issue
- ☐ My audience is people who haven't thought about the issue or actively don't care

What action do I expect the audience to take?

- ☐ Direct action: I want my audience to actively do something towards this issue
- ☐ Indirect action: I want my audience to support the actions of others towards this issue
- ☐ Change of attitude/opinion: I want my audience to change their attitude or opinion about the issue

Your next step is to consider which arguments (and in turn techniques) will most engage and convince the audience you've chosen.

The planning template below will help you begin to organise your thoughts.

MY AUDIENCE	ARGUMENTS I'M GOING TO USE	TECHNIQUES MOST APPROPRIATE FOR THIS ARGUMENT and most likely to appeal to my audience
My audience has this involvement in the issue:		
My audience has this opinion about the issue:		
I want them to have this response to the issue:		

DOWNLOAD A BLANK COPY FROM:
www.tickingmind.com.au/persuasive-planning-template

Tools For Structuring Persuasive Writing:

STARTING A PERSUASIVE PIECE

After you have developed arguments to write about and identified your audience, the next thing to think about is how to structure your piece in a way that is most likely to convince this audience.

Having a dynamic opening to your persuasive piece - that targets particular points of interest or relevance for your audience - is one of the most basic ingredients of effective argumentative writing.

Listed below are seven ways a persuasive piece can open. Pick out three which might be particularly effective for your specific audience.

Anecdote: Starting with an anecdote about your own personal experience with a topic or issue can engage an audience because they can see that you know what you're talking about. <i>I know what it's like to be in a crash and witness the effects of drink driving and speeding. I have been as close to it as you can get...</i>	This is your issue: With this beginning, you are establishing that the issue currently impacts on the lives of the people in your audience - or will impact on them in the future. <i>Each day, each of you in the audience contribute to the devastation of the environment. Each of uses....</i> <i>If you think this issue doesn't affect you, you are wrong. By the time all of us in this room are 30, eight of us will have been....</i>
Questions: Asking an audience a question or series of questions at the start of a presentation can get an audience to instantly see how they have a stake in the topic being discussed. This technique is most effective when you as a presenter actually get the audience to put their hands up. <i>How many of you have been affected by bullying?</i> <i>How many of you have spent money on something you don't actually need?</i>	Startling/Shocking fact: A related way to engage your audience is to start with a shocking fact (or a shocking picture). <i>Last night, while you watched TV, texted your friends, or updated your Facebook page, 1000 people died of poverty.</i>

Mental picture:

We can also engage our audience at the start by painting them a picture of a horrible future society that could come into being if we don't stop doing something (or don't start doing something).

Picture a world where your every move is tracked. Where everything you buy is collected on a database, everything you...

Bullet Proof Argument:

This is the argument everyone (or most reasonable people) would agree with. Starting with this means the audience is more likely to agree with what comes next.

You can't argue with the fact that...

We all accept that...

Establishing the big picture and claiming the high moral ground:

This strategy is about identifying the big picture principle that is at stake in the issue. By arguing from the start that you know what the most important principle at stake is, and your position supports this principle being upheld, you force the audience to accept that your argument has moral value.

- **What we're not talking about is the real issue...**
- **We need to remind ourselves...**
- **It needs to be clear that...**
- **This is not a debate about...it is really a debate about...**
- **What is at stake here is not just...but...**
- **We need to see the bigger picture here. What is at stake is...**
- **Of fundamental importance in this debate is the principle of...because...**
- **The bigger issue here....**
- **On one level this is an issue about...But on a bigger level this is a matter of...**
- **What's most important here...**
- **At its most basic level, this debate is about...**
- **Let's be clear, what we're really arguing about here is...**

Tools For Structuring Persuasive Writing:

BUILDING A CASE OVER A WHOLE PERSUASIVE PIECE

How you build your case over the course of a whole piece is an important consideration.

It's not simply a matter of writing out arguments in the order that they first occur to you. You need to think about the sequence of arguments which will present your case most persuasively and how one argument can build upon the previous one in a way that makes your case seem entirely convincing.

Here are two ways of structuring your persuasive piece for you to think about.

THREE-PRONGED ATTACK

Rather like music, arguments can sound more effective when they build to a crescendo: when they start quietly but then finish with a boom. The three pronged argument is a way of structuring your persuasive writing so that one argument snowballs into the next until you have a very big snowball by the end of your piece and everyone will be utterly convinced of what you are saying (you hope!).

In the three pronged argument you brainstorm a range of points and choose your best three. After this, you rank these three best arguments from strongest to least strongest.

You start your case with the weakest argument, before introducing a stronger one and concluding with your strongest argument.

One reason for sticking to three arguments is that it's easier for the human brain to process things in three – in other words, you're creating a memorable set of arguments.

Another reason for the three-pronged approach is that by finishing with your strongest argument, you create an impression of authority and gravity in what you are saying. In the following table there is a selection of word combinations you can use at the start of each of your three body paragraphs to incrementally introduce your points and build towards your stunning conclusion.

Here is an example of these phrases in action:

To begin with, changing school uniforms will be immensely unpopular...

On top of the unpopularity of the move, is the cost of the change...

But above all, changing school uniform will take away the very thing that makes this school great: its diversity...

1.	2.	3.
• To begin with • To start with • In the first place • At first glance / We can see at first glance • What strikes you first about this issue...	• As if this wasn't enough reason, there is also.... • On top of that... • Added to that... • More importantly / significantly... • Besides / apart from the fact that... it's also the case that... • Over and above this • Of greater concern / interest	• Above all / But above all / Yet above all • More than this / But more than this / Yet more than this • Of most importance / Yet of most importance / But of most importance • Of primary importance though • However, of even more importance than... • However, these first two reasons pale into insignificance compared to... • Even if you don't accept the first two reasons, you cannot argue with...

ATTENTION-HEART-HEAD-SOLUTION

A different way of structuring a persuasive piece is around the types of emotions you want your audience to feel.

In the Attention-Head-Heart-Solution structure, we begin by engaging the audience’s attention using any of the strategies outlined at the start of this section.

The body of the persuasive piece then revolves around appealing to the audience’s head (with reason) or their heart (with emotion).

Below are some suggested words and phrases you can use for emotional appeals or appeals to logic. You can begin your body with either emotional appeals or appeals to logic, as long you consider which technique would make the most impact.

The piece can then conclude by offering a ‘simple’ solution to the audience, appealing to everyone’s natural inclination to see uncomplicated fixes as the best ones.

The table on the following page includes a range of phrases you can use in your conclusion to offer such simple solutions.

Appealing to the heart with emotive language: <i>dire, disastrous, catastrophic, extreme, drastic, severe, exceptional, valuable, efficient, effective, impressive, practice,difficult, problematic, painful, arduous, complicated, significant, important, crucial, serious, fundamental, historic</i>	Appealing to the head by outlining the facts of the issue: <i>The facts on this issue/matter can’t be argued with...</i> <i>The most essential facts are...</i> <i>The key to understanding this issue is to realise that...</i> <i>Experts are saying...</i> <i>Researching is showing beyond any doubt...</i> <i>The figures don’t lie...</i> (This will be) <i>simple, easy, cheap, uncomplicated, straightforward</i>	Outline a solution: <i>The answer is simple...</i> <i>The only genuine solution is...</i> <i>The way forward couldn’t be more clear...</i> <i>When it boils down to it, this is plainly a case of...</i> <i>There’s nothing complicated about what needs to be done...</i> <i>When all the shouting is over, the simple solution that is left...</i> <i>There’s nothing difficult about solving this problem...</i>
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Tools For Structuring Persuasive Writing:

FINISHING A PERSUASIVE PIECE

A strong persuasive piece will be book-ended by a dynamic opening and closing. While the opening will seek to engage the audience in the issue - and will probably contain a reasonable amount of detail - the closing should be simple and sleek.

Below are four different ways a persuasive piece can finish.

You must choose one, or a combination, which would best suit your piece.

Take away message This technique aims to summarise the core of your argument into one (slogan like) sentence: <i>In a nutshell, the message is...</i> <i>To put it bluntly...</i> <i>When it’s all said and done, it’s clear that...</i> <i>We must do this for...for the...and for the...</i>	Call to think Not all arguments are about taking immediate action - some messages are about considering what has been said and being prepared to change opinion. <i>It would be the easiest thing in the world to ignore what has been said today. But it must be thought about...</i> <i>I’ve made my case, now it’s up to you to think about it...to consider...</i>
Call to action/arms With this conclusion, you challenge your audience to take immediate action. <i>Action can’t wait until next year or next month. It must start now. We must...</i> <i>This is not someone else’s problem, this is your problem...</i> <i>This is not some hypothetical problem - it’s real and it’s happening now. We must...</i>	Black and white choice This strategy is about reducing the two sides of the case to a black and white choice. <i>In the end the choice is simple: We can...or we can...</i> <i>On the one hand you can believe that...But on the other hand you can see the vision of...</i>

Persuasive language:

PHRASES

More than any other type of writing, persuasive writing uses ‘set’ phrases. These phrases have been crafted and utilised over millennia of rhetorical writing and speaking and are important to provide cues to the audience about what they should think or feel towards the content of a persuasive piece. As you craft your piece, look through the list of phrases below and try to use at least two or three of them.

I strongly believe It is clear to me.. It is beyond doubt... It’s a fundamental truth... There can be no question... It’s always been my view that... The facts are plain...	We must all We must... We all... We all believe... We all feel... Who of you...? Who hasn’t thought... You all know... It’s occurred to all of you at some point... It’s happened to all of us... Who/which of us...? Who/which of us hasn’t this affected? Who/which of us doesn’t believe this?
---	--

The evidence suggests that... It could not be clearer from the evidence that... Beyond all doubt the facts tell us... The facts are black and white:... It’s obvious from the statistics that... We can’t argue that the experts are telling us that... The overwhelming consensus amongst experts is that... The facts are staring us in the face and shouting that...	You can’t argue with You can’t deny that... We all agree that.... We all care about... We all recognise that... We all know that... We all know it’s a basic truth that... We all accept...
We must (not) act now Now is the time If we are to...then we must act now... For too long For far too long For so long In the past We need to be careful... We need to tread warily... We need to slow down and consider... We need to do this properly, not quickly....	It’s ridiculous that... Those who oppose/support this argue that... Those who oppose/support this complain that... Those who oppose/support this suggest that.. What’s ridiculous about these arguments... What’s fundamentally wrong about this is... What’s fundamentally flawed about this is... What’s specious in every way about this thinking... What they don’t tell you is... What they ignore is...

Persuasive language:

THE RULE OF THREE

Effective arguments should have good ideas, good structures and good words. See what we did there? We used a rule of three (known formally as a tricolon): a list of three things in a sentence or a series of three sentences which start (or are structured) the same way.

Like the basic arguments we covered at the start of this chapter, the rule of three has been around ever since people started arguing about who should get the drumsticks from the dinosaur they just killed. It's an extremely effective technique because it creates that mysterious thing called 'flow' in your writing.

A series of three things in your writing just sounds good – and it makes you seem impressive.

Consider these sentences:

National parks – the heart, the lungs, the soul of our country – must be protected.

We must save our national parks. We must protect them. We must nurture them.

Good things come in packages of three. On the following pages you will find more examples about the rule of three along with suggestions about how to integrate them into your writing.

Examples:

“Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”

“Friends, Romans, Countrymen. Lend me your ears.”

“Government of the people, by the people, for the people”

“I came, I saw, I conquered”

Phrases:

- It's not only...but it's also...and...
It's not only good for families, but it's also good for the unemployed and the disempowered.
- It's isn't just...it's also...and...
It's isn't just wrong, it's plain stupid and illogical.
- The reasons for this are threefold:
it's..., it's..., and it's...
The reasons for this are threefold: it's wrong, it's plain stupid, and it's illogical.
- It's...It's...It's...
It makes sense, it's easy, it's cheap
- We must...,, and.....
We must work hard, work long, and work well.

Tips for introducing 'threes' into your presentation:

- Circle adjectives you have used to describe things (i.e this is a bad idea). Try using not one, but three adjectives (*This is a cruel, stupid and bad idea*)
- If you are praising an idea, action or person, use a series of three descriptions to praise it
- If you are attacking an idea, action or person, use a series of three descriptions to attack it
- If you use a phrase such as 'we must', or 'we should' try following it with three actions instead of one
- Use a series of thee in your opening
- Circle the main idea in a topic sentence. Use a series of three to describe or discuss this main idea
- Use a series of three in at least one topic sentence
- Develop a slogan or key sentence for your presentation which has a series of three in it

PERSUASIVE ORAL PRESENTATION STRATEGIES

FORMAT THE TEXT OF YOUR PRESENTATION SO IT'S EASY TO READ

The transcript of your speech or presentation needs to be set out in way that is easy to read and allows you to annotate spots where you should pause, repeat information or change tone. If you are using a lectern for your presentation, then print out your speech on A4 pages but separate out each phrase of each sentence of the text. This will make it much easier to implement some of the strategies suggested below.

Here is an example of the first three sentences on a persuasive piece contending that more needs to be done to reduce the road toll of young people:

Dozens of families every year receive a visit from the police at Christmas.

The news is that their children, their brothers, their sisters have died in a car accident.

Every Christmas from now on will be without them. Lives will never again be the same.

If you're not using a lectern for your presentation, so can't rest A4 pages against something, then it's highly advisable that you put your presentation on cards. If you have your presentation on A4 pages, then you'll probably tend to spend most of your time reading from the sheets, rather than looking at the audience and actively engaging with them. If your hands are nervously shaking, A4 pages will also shake - something you want to avoid.

Cards should:

- Be small enough to be held in one hand. While you can use two hands to hold the cards for parts of the presentation, you still want to be able to use both hands to make hand gestures. When you do use both hands (or one hand to make gestures), your cards will need to be held by only one hand. A good size for a card is an A4 page that has been divided into eighths
- Be written with the phrases separated - the same as suggested above for a presentation written out on an A4 page
- Have only 2-3 sentences so they're easier to read
- Be numbered

MAKE EYE CONTACT AT THE END OF SENTENCES

Your brain can read written text faster than you speak it. Effective speakers start by reading aloud a sentence, but as they read it aloud, their eyes scan through and process the rest of the sentence. This means you know the words which finish a sentence before you read them aloud. When you know how a sentence finishes, you can look up, make eye contact with different sections of the audience and finish saying aloud the sentence as you do.

Try this technique now.

Read and speak aloud the sentence below and let your eyes scan through the whole sentence as you speak it aloud. Try looking up and saying the last few words of the sentence from memory:

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog because there was a bowlful of hotdogs on the other side.

MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE ROOM

The audience of people you will be speaking to can be divided into different 'sectors':

- The sector of people to the right
- The sector of people to the front
- The sector of people to the left
- The sector of people at the back of the room
- The sector of people at the front of the room

Your task isn't to eyeball specific people in the crowd, but to look at different groups of people in the crowd. Try:

- Looking at a different sector of people every time you make eye contact at the end of a sentence
- Looking at more than one sector of people when you look at the audience. For example, look to the right and then the left, or look at the back and then the front
- When you use the rule of three, you should take the opportunity to make eye contact with a different section of the audience at the end of each phrase

GO SLOWLY, REPEAT KEY INFORMATION & ROUTINELY PAUSE

Listening to a presentation requires different processing skills than reading. When we read, we can read at our own pace and re-read things we don't understand. However, when we listen to a presentation, we need to listen at the speed a person is talking and we can't go back and re-read what we missed. As presenters, we need to be aware of this. Speak slowly so the audience can absorb what you have to say. You will have important facts, statistics and examples in your piece. Repeat these and pause after them ensuring the audience has time to think about them.

CHANGE YOUR TONE WHEN YOU USE EMPHATIC LANGUAGE

Throughout your piece you will use emphatic language: strong or emotive words which describe and label the things you are persuasively writing about. Circle these words in the transcript of your presentation to help you remember to say them with some kind of emphasis.

This may include:

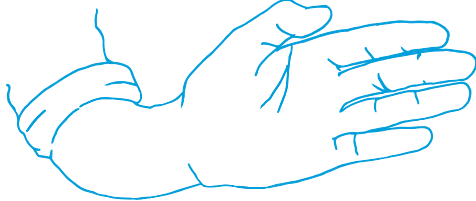
- Deepening your voice
- Saying the word more slowly or loudly for emphasis
- Making eye contact with the audience as you say the word
- Gesturing

Pointed finger



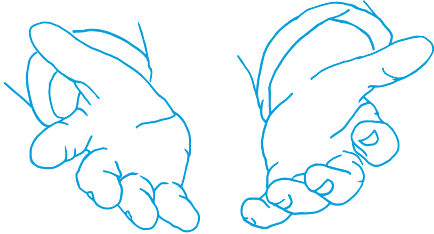
The pointed finger is often used like an exclamation mark in presentation. It indicates points that an audience should pay particular attention to or points that can't be argued against.

Flat, side on hand



Like the spreading hands, the flat, side on hand, can be used to indicate that something is reasonable or that it's common sense. It can also be used to accompany lists or series of steps.

Two spreading hands



The spreading hands can be used as an invitation for the audience to see that something is reasonable. It can also be used as an emotional plea to the audience to see that they should do something about an issue.

PRACTICE USING SOME HAND GESTURES

Hand gestures are the tools we use to visually punctuate our presentations. They emphasise key points and provide important cues to the audience about what they should think or feel at certain points of our presentation.

Hand gestures are most effective when coupled with eye contact towards the audience. The key to using hand gestures effectively is to rehearse your presentation standing and to practice using your hands to complement your presentation. You need to do this until you feel comfortable using hand gestures. There are dozens of different ways hands can be used throughout your presentation. These are three basic ways:

PRACTICE A STANDING POSITION THAT LOOKS ASSURED

Since most students aren't used to public speaking, they will often appear awkward and uncomfortable when standing up before a large crowd.

Practising your presentation isn't just about making sure you read at the right pace and don't trip up over any words, it's also about making sure you feel comfortable standing a certain way to deliver your presentation. Audiences will naturally trust speakers more if they seem assured in their physical body language.

When you rehearse your presentation, practice standing up before a fake audience or practice standing behind something like a lectern (if you're doing your speech behind a lectern) and work out what you should stand to feel and look assured. Filming yourself or doing this in front of a mirror will provide useful feedback to your about you look when you give a presentation.

WRITING A STATEMENT OF INTENTION

Your persuasive piece will need to be accompanied by a written statement of intention.

The statement of intention should outline:

- The issue you are writing about
- Your contention on the issue
- The audience you are writing for
- An explanation of the arguments you chose to convince your audience of your contention
- An explanation of the techniques you'll use to make your case.

This should include a discussion of why you've structure your piece the way you have, and, if it's for an oral presentation, how you will use oral presentation techniques such as eye contact, hand gestures, pace and tone

In fact, it's a lot like language analysis, except in this case you're analysing your own persuasive writing.

<i>Recently there have been calls for the Year 12 English exam to be completed on computers rather than with pen and paper. It's my intention in this speech to argue that we should in fact use computers for the exam. My audience are senior education bureaucrats with VCAA - the government body which makes decisions about how students are assessed. This is a speech that would be given to them in a forum where people can give feedback about this issue.</i>	A summary of the issue. Since this is a statement of intention, it emphasises what the student will do in their presentation. The statement of intention specifies the audience and a context in which the presentation would be given.
<i>Since people who work for VCAA are probably unlikely to be moved by emotional appeals - and will want to think about the rational upsides and downsides to using computers for exams - I'll employ a reasonable, measured tone in the way I present my piece.</i>	An identification of the techniques and arguments which are most likely to appeal to the target audience.

My speech contains three key arguments which I think are most likely to appeal to education administrators:

- How computers are successfully being used elsewhere
- How using computers for the exams can be cost effective
- How computer use is linked to students' educational and work futures

To support these arguments, I will use a range of rhetorical and persuasive techniques, which will convince my audience both of the thought I have put into crafting my contention and of the essential truths of the arguments I am making. The first argument will be proven with a range of anecdotal evidence from other countries and school systems, building a picture of the ease of incorporating computers into an educational system. I will support the argument about the cost effectiveness of computers with both statistics and with graphic representations of these statistics. The visual of facts and figures will help my audience to consider and understand the figures I am presenting, allowing my argument greater opportunity to convince them of the truth of what I am saying to them. In my final argument, I will use first person pronouns a great deal, demonstrating to my audience how I, as a young person, will be affected by their decisions. The combination of seeing me standing before them and my impassioned use of 'me', 'mine' and 'I' will force my audience to see me and my future as intrinsically linked to their decision making. By allowing them to see me as a person, my audience is far more likely to agree with my arguments.

Furthermore, I have carefully considered the structure of my argument and the order in which I have placed each argument. I've decided to start my piece by creating a picture of what type of education system we want. This will seek to appeal to my audience's natural desire to want to have the best education system. After this, I'll follow up by outlining how computers are already being used to examine students in other countries. This is a powerful technique because it addresses the two concerns of 'can it be done?' and 'are we staying up with what others are doing?' I'll build upon this evidence with statistics about the cost effectiveness of computers in English exams. This technique will endeavour to reassure the question that many people in my audience will have about whether this proposition can be afforded. Some of these statistics I'll repeat and pause after - to allow their significance to sink in. The final argument is that using computers for English exams is more relevant to students' futures than pen and paper. I'll finish with this because it's my strongest argument and will return my audience to the key theme I started the piece with: developing the best education system we can.

An acknowledgement of oral presentation conventions which will be employed.

Use of metalanguage to demonstrate understanding of how language is used.

An explanation of how different rhetorical (or persuasive) techniques work to support an argument.

An understanding of the way in which the form of a piece can affect the audience.

An explanation of why a piece has been structured the way it has.

An explanation of how arguments have been crafted to build on each other.

An explanation of how pause will be used to make the presentation more persuasive.

2. TEXT RESPONSE ESSAY WRITING

This chapter will look at three types of tools you can use to construct insightful text response essays:

1. Tools to generate ideas for your text response essays: Apart from underlining key words in an essay topic and then brainstorming ideas, what do you do to generate things to write in an essay? This section of the chapter will look at some strategies to help you think of the best ideas to write about. It includes:

- Underline and create questions
- Not only, but also
- Using contradictory examples
- Checklist planning

2. Tools to structure your ideas into an essay: You've got your ideas, now off you go, right? Hold on! This section will look at what order you should write your ideas in your essay. It includes:

- An essay is not a hamburger

3. Writing introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions: What types of words do you use in an introduction? How do you structure a topic sentence? What are different ways you can use quotes in your body paragraph? This part of the chapter will look at the nitty gritty of crafting both the language and the sentences in your body paragraphs. It includes:

- The introduction
- Writing about ideas in a body paragraph
- What does analysis look like in a body paragraph
- Using quotes in a body paragraph
- The conclusion

Tools To Generate Ideas For Your Text Response Essays:

UNDERLINE AND CREATE QUESTIONS

Most of us are familiar with the basic essay question planning strategy of underlining key words.

As an example, here's a typical text response essay question about the Harper Lee's classic novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*:

Despite Atticus' dedication to achieving justice in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, injustice remains at the end of the novel. Discuss.

If we were to underline the key words, it would look like this:

Despite Atticus' dedication to achieving justice in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, injustice remains at the end of the novel. Discuss.

It's fairly easy to underline key words in an essay topic – because most of the words are key words!

After this, the typical next step in the essay planning procedure is to start brainstorming ideas and examples to write about.

The problem with this is that we tend to focus on the obvious parts of the question – to take the above example, we might come up with examples of the experiences of how Atticus fights for justice throughout the novel.

So we're answering the question, right? Yes.... to a degree. But in focusing on the obvious elements of the question, we can sometimes miss the deeper levels of a topic.

Think about an essay topic as being like this: a big question which is made up of many smaller questions. When we answer these smaller questions, we successfully answer the bigger question. Instead of just underlining key words in a topic, then, we can underline and turn these key words into further questions.

For each word (or phrase) we underline, we need to generate essential questions about this word that need to be answered (in terms of the text).

Our questions should start with these words:

- Who
- What
- How
- Why
- Which

or:

- Does/Did/Doesn't/Didn't?
- Is/Are/Isn't/Aren't?

The key words from the question about *To Kill A Mockingbird* can be turned into these questions:

- What is justice in the world of *To Kill A Mockingbird*?
- How is Atticus dedicated to justice?
- Why is justice achieved or thwarted at the end of the novel?
- Who else is concerned with justice in this novel?

Notice that three different question words (What, Why, How and Who) are used?

This ensures that we're looking at the question from different angles. In order to answer the whole essay topic well, we need to answer all of these smaller questions.

Of course, many of these smaller questions overlap – but often they can be neatly divided into groups which can become the basis for the body paragraphs in our essay.

WITH THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, WE COULD PLAN AN ESSAY THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS:

Introduction:

Define key terms

(more on this later in the chapter)

- All of the four questions

Body Paragraph 1:

Key question –

How is Atticus dedicated to the fight for justice?

- What motivates Atticus?
- Examples of what sets Atticus apart from other people in the town

Body Paragraph 2:

Key question –

How is justice achieved and how is justice thwarted at the end?

- The guilty verdict of Tom Robinson and his death.
- The continuing presence of racism in Maycomb.
- The death of Bob Ewell.
- What Scout learns about people's humanity.

Body Paragraph 3:

Key question –

Who else is concerned with justice?

- Calpurnia
- Miss Maudie
- Boo Radley

Conclusion:

Each paragraph (including the introduction) is built around answering a key question. Later on in this chapter we'll look at what type of key question an introduction answers. Once we know what all the smaller questions are, then we can brainstorm ideas and examples more thoughtfully.

Tools To Generate Ideas For Your Text Response Essays:

NOT ONLY, BUT ALSO

For many essay topics we get, there will be a rich amount of material to write about if we are able to unlock everything a topic is asking us to consider. Using a process such as the one modelled above will help in this. But sometimes we get questions where we think:

Yes, this is true – but how will I write a whole essay on this? For instance:

Images of nature are essential to the characterisation of Medea as an emotional force in Euripides' play. Discuss.

In considering this topic above we might think: Yes, there are some images on nature in the play – but I don't know if I can write three pages about just that!

In thinking this, we are falling into the trap of focusing on the most obvious thing in the essay topic: 'images of nature'.

Let's look again at the key words in the topic:

Images of nature are essential to the characterisation of Medea as an emotional force in Euripides' play. Discuss

'Images of nature' are actually only one part of the question: 'essential' and 'characterisation' and 'emotional force' are all other important parts of the question. In order to answer this question we need to discuss 'images of nature' but we are also invited to write about what is 'essential' to the 'characterisation' of Medea as an 'emotional force'.

In other words, we can turn 'essential,' 'characterisation' and 'emotional force' into these further questions:

- Do the images of nature characterise Medea in ways other than an 'emotional force'?
- Are there other 'essential' techniques used in the 'characterisation' of Medea?

This type of response is called a: 'What else' or a 'Not only...but also' response because we are asking 'What else is this text about?' and we can say: 'It's not only about...but it also explores...'

For instance, with *Medea* we could state:

Throughout Medea, Euripides employs images of nature to depict us the play's protagonist not only as a person driven by powerful feelings, but also, at times, rock-like in her emotionlessness. In characterising Medea like this, Euripides further utilises continual contrasts between Medea and the characters surrounding her to highlight her character attributes.

'WHAT ELSE/NOT ONLY...BUT ALSO' RESPONSES SHOULD BE LIMITED TO TYPES OF QUESTIONS SUCH AS:

Is questions:

Example topic:

Tiny Tim is the main catalyst for Scrooge's change in *A Christmas Carol*. Discuss.

Tiny Tim is a central catalyst, but there are also others such as...

Example topic:

Loyalty is critical to the conflicts characters face in *On The Waterfront*. Discuss.

Loyalty is a fundamental part of the struggles characters face in *On The Waterfront*, but there other emotions impact on them as well.

Example topic:

The narrative structure of *Things We Didn't See Coming* is an important technique in understanding the post apocalyptic world of the novel. Discuss.

The narrative structure in *Things We Didn't See coming* slowly reveals to us the apocalyptic world of the novel, but other techniques highlight this world as well.

The book is about, explores, shows us, highlights (or variations of these words) something:

Example topic:

Nowra's *Cosi* shows the radical politics of the 1970s as hollow and unimportant. Discuss.

What else does *Cosi* show us?

Example topic:

The role and treatment of women in the novel *Year of Wonders* highlights how narrow minded the villagers were. Discuss.

What else does the role of women highlight?

Example topic:

The minor characters in *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* offer important contrasts to Antonio. Discuss.

What else do the minor characters offer?

CAUTION!

While the 'What else/Not only...but also' response can be highly effective – only use it under the right conditions.

We should only attempt these responses when:

- We consider we haven't got enough to say about what the essay topic is directly asking us to discuss.
- There is an excellent opportunity to answer the question: What else?

USING CONTRADICTIONARY EXAMPLES

Text response questions are often reasonable sounding statements that invite us to write about examples that affirm whatever the topic says is true.

Take this topic as an illustration of the point:

This Boy’s Life shows how difficult it can be for people to come to terms with their identity. Discuss.

Since there are lots of examples in the text *This Boy’s Life* of people who do find it difficult to come to terms with their identity, then we can easily go on our merry way discussing how these examples show the topic to be true. But what about the people in the novel who don’t have trouble with their identity? Well, that’s true, there are some – so we could write an essay along the lines of: Many people in *This Boy’s Life* have difficulty coming to terms with their identity, but not all – and we could write three paragraphs about the characters who do and one about those who don’t. But we know that text response essays are much better when they don’t just write about the what (as in what are examples of characters that have trouble with their identity and what are examples of those that don’t?), but when they reflect on the why and how (as in why do some characters have trouble with their identity and others don’t?). And when we do reflect on the why and the how, we can think about: how do the examples that don’t support this statement show us something about those that do?

It’s about not just asking this question:

- What examples support this statement?

But moving onto these questions:

- What examples don’t support this statement?
- How and why are the examples that don’t support this statement different from the ones that do and what does this show us?

In terms of *This Boy’s Life* the generic questions above would look specifically like this:

- Which characters have difficulty coming to terms with their identity?
- Which characters don’t have difficulty coming to terms with their identity?
- Why do some characters not have a problem with their identity, how are they different to the ones that do?
- What do the characters who don’t have a problem show us about the characters who do have a problem?

At the end of this process we still might have three paragraphs about the characters who support the statement and one about those who don’t, but we will now be focused on writing about the why and how, rather than just the what.

CHECKLIST PLANNING

All of the above strategies are essentially about breaking a broad essay question/topic into smaller, more specific questions which can be answered throughout an essay response. Yet we still have to generate actual examples to write about in order to answer the questions.

Checklist planning is a basic, but effective tool for ensuring that we’re considering all the possible things we could write about.

People who use checklists to pack before travelling don’t forget things and pack better (as opposed to those who don’t and who end up leaving behind their undies or their wallet).

The same is true of essay writing: People who remind themselves of all the things they could write about – include a greater range of more interesting examples than people who don’t – who can get stuck writing about just a limited range of obvious examples.

This strategy involves making a checklist of all the elements from the text that could be discussed in a text response essay before looking at a question. Below are example checklist headings for each type of text that can be responded to.

FOR A NOVEL, FILM, PLAY OR NON-FICTION TEXT		
MAJOR CHARACTERS/PEOPLE	MINOR CHARACTERS/PEOPLE	FEATURES OF THE SETTING: PHYSICAL & SOCIAL
TECHNIQUES/DEVICES (such as narrative voice, narrative structure, camera angles, stage directors or characterisation)	SYMBOLS/IMAGES	THEMES/MOTIFS

FIND BLANK COPIES OF THESE CHECKLISTS FROM:
www.tickingmind.com.au/text-response-checklists

FOR A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES					
STORIES	STORY 1	STORY 1	STORY 1	STORY 1	STORY 1
Features of the setting					
Features/attributes of the major character					
Features/attributes of minor character					
Type of problem in the story					
Techniques/Devices					
Symbols/Images					
Themes/Motifs					

FOR A COLLECTION OF POEMS					
POEMS	POEM 1	POEM 2	POEM 3	POEM 4	POEM 5
Speaker/Persona/ Poetic voice					
Tone					
Techniques/Devices					
Symbols/Images					
Themes/Motifs					

Once we’ve made such a list, we can then consider the essay topic (using any or all of the strategies written about above to generate further questions) and then use our checklist to identify the actual examples from the text we can write about.

The point of checklisting is that it reminds us of all the things we could include – not just the obvious things that first occur to us or that we remember.

You might be asking yourself how this will help you in the exam - after all, checklists are easy and effective to use at home when planning a text response essay, or planning a response in class for practice. But in the exam you can’t bring anything in and you don’t really have the time to draw out an elaborate checklist grid like the ones above.

One key purpose of using checklists when planning responses is that you will internalise this checklist in your mind and be able to access it from memory in an exam.

Tools To Generate Ideas For Your Text Response Essays:

THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT SETTING

In the previous section we listed ‘features of the setting’ as a category of example that can be checklisted for texts.

What’s the deal with setting?
Setting is both the physical place a text is set in and the social conditions of that place.

These two types of settings can impact on the lives of characters or people in a text and can be an important feature to discuss in a text response essay. In filling out ‘features of setting’ for a checklist, this table below will help you identify setting attributes and the possible impact they have on characters.

SETTING	POSSIBLE FEATURES OF SETTING	POSSIBLE IMPACT ON CHARACTERS
PHYSICAL	- Isolated / Small - Crowded / Large - Old/ Historic - Hot / Intense - Cold / Difficult - Harsh / Barren - Colourful - Colourless - Natural - Unnatural	- Trapped - Disconnected - Restricted - Unfulfilled - Hopeless - Powerless - Lack of identity / individuality - Lack of ambition - Lack of belonging - Little true understanding of themselves or the world around them - Innocence / naivety
SOCIAL	- Strong traditions / culture - A ‘normal way’ of living/ doing things - Conformity - Power / status hierarchy - People divided into social groups that they are expected to stay in - Insiders / outsiders	

Tools To Structure Your Ideas Into An Essay:

AN ESSAY IS NOT A HAMBURGER

An essay is like a hamburger, isn't it? The introduction and conclusion are like the bun halves on the top and bottom of the burger, and the body paragraphs are like the filling. Maybe – if you're in Year 7!

The hamburger analogy is fine as a starting point for younger students learning about essays, but for older students like you it is important to move onto something that is more sophisticated.

Over the page you will find a visual of the structure of an effective text response essay.

Some important things to note about this:

- A good introduction is not just a list of the things you are going to say in the rest of the essay but defines what the key ideas in the essay topic mean and what needs to be discussed in order to respond to these ideas (more on writing good introductions in the next section of this chapter)
- The first body paragraph should discuss the most important point -think carefully about which idea needs to be written about before the other ideas can be discussed
- A conclusion is not simply a mirror of an introduction. Whereas an introduction should define the key ideas and indicate how these will be discussed in the body of an essay, the chief task of a conclusion is to succinctly outline the bigger, fundamental message of a text

INTRODUCTION

- State the big picture purpose of a text by using verbs such as 'explores', 'shows', 'seeks to', 'explores', 'depicts'
- Define the key ideas in an essay topic by using your own words to discuss and elaborate on them
- Signal the types of features/examples from a text that will be used to discuss the ideas from the essay topic

BODY PARAGRAPH 1

Discuss the most important idea.
None of the ideas in the rest of the essay can be discussed without discussing this one first.

BODY PARAGRAPH 2

An idea that is connected to or follows on from the main idea.

BODY PARAGRAPH 3

An idea that is connected to or follows on from the main idea.

BODY PARAGRAPH 4

An idea that is connected to or follows on from the main idea.

CONCLUSION

- A succinct analysis of:**
- The most important point about the essay topic and (optionally) an important alternative point.
 - The ultimate message of a text in terms of the essay topic.

Writing Introductions, Body Paragraphs and Conclusions:

THE INTRODUCTION

A good introduction does more than just tell us what the rest of the essay will be about – it defines what it is about.

To define what your essay is about is to explain the key terms -to put forward your own interpretation of them, and what they mean for the text you are analysing.

It's no surprise that most good quality text response essays begin with phrases like this:

- In *Burial Rites*, Hannah Kent...
- In the world of Euripides' *Medea*...
- In Adiga's *The White Tiger*...
- Throughout *No Sugar*...

All of these phrases begin a sentence outlining the way the text raises an idea.

Let's consider the *Romeo and Juliet* essay topic again:

In Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*'s actions are inevitable because they live in a violent world. Discuss.

'Inevitable' and 'violent' are two key ideas that we need to define in our introduction. But this doesn't mean writing something clunky like: "Violent means to hit someone else."

You should be aiming to define what those words mean in the context of the play:

Shakespeare depicts the world of *Romeo and Juliet* as brutal and aggressive – not just physically – but emotionally.

Notice how the word 'violent' from the essay topic wasn't repeated? Instead 'brutal and aggressive' were used to show our understanding of the essay topic and define what 'violent' means.

Furthermore, putting the author's name, the text's name along with a 'construction' verb like 'depicts' allows us to craft a powerful introductory statement about the purpose of a text.

Typically one sentence will not always do all the defining required in an effective introduction.

These next two sentences follow on from the example introductory statement above, and provide an example of how to elaborate on key ideas mentioned in an introductory statement:

Physical violence is graphically represented throughout the play by the murders, brawls and fights. However, Shakespeare also demonstrates that emotional violence is everywhere, represented through the way characters routinely attack each other's emotions.

The word 'in' and 'throughout' helps us define what ideas mean in a text, the phrase 'as well' signals that there is more to what the words mean and 'through' and 'by' help us write about how the ideas are shown in the text. The words 'through' and 'by' begin to give us an overview of what we'll discuss in the rest of the essay.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

There are two things you need to do to craft an introductory statement that will make an impact:

- Identify one or more of your own words you can use to define the key ideas in the essay topic.
- Use one of the phrases in the first column below to begin your statement, combined with one or more words or phrases from the other columns to shape a statement about the author, text, purpose and big idea.
- An effective introduction only needs to be To begin with: try using one word from each column in the order they appear. After this, experiment with changing the order of words to put your own unique spin on the introductory formula.

AUTHOR AND TEXT PHRASES EXAMPLES	CONSTRUCTION VERBS	WAYS TO LABEL A TEXT	BIG IDEAS
• Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>... • In <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, • Shakespeare... • Throughout <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, Shakespeare... • The world of Verona is depicted by Shakespeare in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> as... • In Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> we see/are presented with...	- depicts - represents - explores - illustrates - highlights - creates - imagines - expresses - draws - presents - provides - conveys - seeks - aims to	- exploration - depiction - illustration - representation - the world of... - the lives of... - the experiences of... - the struggle of... - the idea that... - text - narrative - story - journey	- growing up - discovery - identity - survival - grief - justice - loyalty - hope - power - change - adulthood - childhood - masculinity - gender - prejudice - the past - memory - redemption - nature - reality

An effective introduction only needs to be 3-4 sentences long.

After you have crafted your introductory statement, your task is to elaborate on the big ideas in the first sentence and signal the types of examples and points you will use throughout the essay to discuss these ideas.

Here's is an illustration of this in an introduction on the memoir *This Boy's Life*:

In his memoir This Boy's Life, Tobias Wolff represents his boyhood quest for identity in a life filled with lies, failure and disappointment (Author + Text + Purpose + Big Ideas). Central to Wolff's search for identity, is his understanding of what it is to be a man in 1950s America and what the men in his life can teach him about this (Elaboration of big ideas). Yet most of the men in Wolff's life are weak role models, leaving his mother Rosemary as the one figure of stability for him in the end (Signalling of main point/example plus further or alternative point/example).

The words below can be used as a starting point to shape the second, third and fourth sentence of your introduction.

WORD TO ELABORATE ON BIG PICTURE	WORDS TO SIGNAL THE MAIN POINT/EXAMPLE
This	the protagonist
Central to this	characterisation of...
Fundamental to the	imagery of...
As well as	symbols of...
Along with this	devices such as...
Not only does...but	showing
Moreover	illustrating
	creating
	through
	by
	with

Writing Introductions, Body Paragraphs and Conclusions:

LINKING IDEAS TO ACTIONS IN A BODY PARAGRAPH

There are many things that you can do to improve the quality of a body paragraph in a text response essay but in this section we'll focus on just three:

1. Make your sentences about ideas
2. Use strong verbs (action words) combined with extra information words to write about what ideas, texts or techniques do
3. Create links between sentences

MAKE YOUR SENTENCES ABOUT IDEAS

Here's a test for you.

Which of the things in the following list is an idea and which is an event?

Hunger, Your 18th Birthday, Bitterness, Inspiration, Driving to school one day last week, Hate

Most people will separate out words like 'hate' or 'inspiration' as ideas while saying that things such as 'driving to school on day last week' or 'your 18th birthday' are events: and they'd be right. And while there are a range of interesting things you might say about the event of driving to school one day last week, it is, in the end, one solitary action.

Hate, however, is a big idea and in discussing it we could use many examples. So what's all this got to do with text response writing?

Consider these two examples of body paragraph topic sentences:

- Romeo fights Tybalt.
- Romeo's impetuous passion drives many of his actions throughout the play.

The first topic sentence - which focuses on an event or character action - will invariably lead us to summarise the fight scene between Romeo and Tybalt and will result in very low level text response writing.

The second sentence, though, which concentrates on the idea of 'impetuous passion' provides us with the opportunity to link and analyse multiple examples of Romeo's impetuosity in the play. When this happens, there's a great likelihood of deep level analysis occurring.

So it's important in particular that topic sentences are driven by ideas. You should also look for opportunities to structure the rest of your sentences in a body paragraph around ideas as well.

Here are some suggestions about how can structure topic sentences and other sentences to be about ideas:

- Start a sentence with a character's qualities or attributes: Youthful impatience and naivety define Romeo's character throughout the course of events in Romeo and Juliet
- Start a sentence with one of the big ideas (such as themes) from a text: Fate dominates the doomed lives of Romeo and Juliet, looming in the background of every scene and action.
- Start a sentence with a word that labels a technique or device in the text (such as symbol, imagery or characterisation): The recurring symbolism of poison is used by Shakespeare throughout Romeo and Juliet to create a sense of foreboding.

USE STRONG, SPECIFIC VERBS
IN YOUR SENTENCES,
And Combine Them With
Extra Information Words

Believe it or not, not every sentence needs to contain the verbs 'is' or 'are'. 'Is' and 'are' can be used to create some great sentences but about half your sentences in a body paragraph should use verbs other than them. Why? Because although 'is' and 'are' can convey insightful ideas, they do this best when used in conjunction with other, more specific verbs.

Think about this example:
Romeo and Juliet are passionate characters.

If we re-write the sentence without 'are' and use a much stronger, more interesting verb, we can achieve this:

Passion compels Romeo and Juliet towards their fate.

Using verbs other than 'is' and 'are' helps us to construct more insightful sentences. So if we can't use 'is' and 'are' what can we use?

The list opposite is by no means exhaustive but simply provides you some starting stimulus. It's your task to find the right verb for your sentence.

You'll notice in the table opposite a section which says 'extra information words'. These are the words we use to create more detailed and even more insightful sentences.

Consider this example of an idea driven sentence again:

Fate dominates the doomed lives of Romeo and Juliet, looming in the background of every scene and action

There are six 'extra information words' in the above sentence. Good text response writing will have a high frequency and large range of 'extra information words' - it's not just a matter of putting 'and' into a sentence several times. Every time you write a sentence, think: 'And what more can I say? How can I say it in a way other than using 'and'?'

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS:

Instead of writing that a character 'is', write that a character:

acts, accepts, approaches, achieves, believes, challenges, confronts, continues, develops, exists, employs, endures, experiences, encounters, finds, lives, maintains, journeys, reacts, realizes, sees, seeks, survives, undergoes, understands

Instead of writing a theme or feeling 'is', write that a theme:

blocks, blinds, consists, confronts, challenges, compels, contributes, causes, creates, drives, dominates, evades, features, forces, impels, informs, impacts, motivates, influences, pervades, prompts, underscores, underlines, overwhelms, exerts

Instead of writing that a technique/device 'is', write that a technique/device:

emphasizes, reinforces, shows, connects, illustrates, creates, highlights, represents, symbolizes, characterizes, recurs, features, suggests, denotes, focuses, captures, marks, reveals, manifests, presents, serves to, contrasts, compares, links, parallels, juxtaposes, allows, aids

Instead of writing that a text 'is', write that a text/author:

explores, shows, seeks to, demonstrates, depicts, represents, portrays, creates, draws, presents, creates, highlights, illustrates, captures, draws, critiques

Extra Information Words:

and, along with, also, but, or, either; because, since, to, leading to, resulting in, impacting, influencing; such as, evident in, seen when, illustrated by; by, through, into, throughout, with, from, for, of, about, at; while, when, which, that; -ing words: i.e shaping, causing, influencing, creating, forcing

CREATE LINKS BETWEEN SENTENCES

'Flow' and 'fluency' are words that teachers can often throw around in describing what we should aim for in our writing. But what does it mean for our writing to have 'flow'? It could mean lots of things, but most often 'flow' refers to the connections between sentences.

Consider this paragraph:
Romeo is a passionate character. Romeo shows his passion by killing Tybalt and marrying Juliet. The play makes Romeo seem very impatient because of his passion. Romeo's passion makes him do things that aren't wise and result in a bad end for Romeo and Juliet. A big problem in the play is Romeo's passion.

This paragraph lacks flow and the main reason for this is that every sentence begins with 'the', 'a', or the name of a character or thing. It's effectively a list of statements - rather than sentences that connect with each other. How can we improve this?

Creating flow strategy #1:
The same paragraph could instantly have more flow if we used these words at the start of sentences instead of 'the', 'a' or the name of a character or thing:

- He/She/It/They
- His/Hers/Their/This
- An alternative word for a key term mentioned in the previous sentence

Romeo is a passionate character. His emotions (alternative word for passion) cause him to kill Tybalt and marry Juliet. The play makes Romeo seem very impatient because of his passion. It characterizes him as someone who makes decisions that aren't wise and result in the bad end for himself and Juliet. The feeling (alternative word to just passion) of passion is big problem in the play for Romeo.

You can see that this paragraph is better than the previous effort because 'his', 'it' and 'feeling' create better connections with the previous sentences and this results in 'flow'.

You will notice that when we changed the beginning of the sentence, we also had to change parts of the rest of the sentence: not only did the sentence connect better with the previous sentence or sentences, but the sentence as a whole was more interesting. Thinking carefully about how sentences connect results in more insightful writing.

Creating flow strategy #2

The paragraph about Romeo could be even better if we used a variety of these linking words at the start of sentences throughout the paragraph:

- In, Throughout, During, By
- But, Although, Despite, While, However, Nevertheless, Moreover, Furthermore
- So, Consequently, Ultimately, From This, In, Therefore, For

In Romeo and Juliet, Romeo is portrayed as a passionate character. His emotions cause him to kill Tybalt and marry Juliet. But the feeling of passion is destructive for Romeo. Although he succeeds in marrying Juliet, he is very impatient because of his passion and his plans are badly thought out. The play characterises Romeo as someone whose decisions are controlled by emotion rather than wisdom. For Romeo, his death comes about because of his passion.

The paragraph above is known as an In-And-But-So paragraph because it uses the connectives 'in', 'but' and 'so' (or variations of them) at the beginning, middle and end of the paragraph to create details, complexity and flow in the writing. This is a structure you can experiment with in your own writing:

IN-AND-BUT-SO STRUCTURE		
IN	Use one of these words at the start of the paragraph to create a context for the idea you are writing about and to add detail	In, Throughout, During, By, While,
AND	Use one or more of these words or phrases at the start of sentences or within sentences in the body paragraph to add further examples	Additionally, Furthermore, Similarly, Moreover, Also, Along with, Including
BUT	Use one or more of these words or phrases at the start of sentences or within sentences in the body paragraph to provide a contrasting example	But, Although, Despite, However, Nevertheless, In spite of this, in contrast
SO	Use one of these words (or a variation of them) at the opening of a sentence at the end or towards the end of your paragraph to summarise or conclude the analysis within the paragraph:	So, Consequently, Ultimately, From This, In, Therefore, For

The In-And-But-So structure is not something that is meant to be followed rigidly – if all of your body paragraphs begin with the word ‘in’ and use ‘but’ and ‘so’ in pretty much the same way later in the paragraph, then your writing will come across as formulaic. You should vary how your sentences begin throughout all your paragraphs – but always keep in mind this one consideration: how does the beginning of my sentence create a connection to the previous sentence?

Creating flow strategy #3

Rather than always beginning your sentences with the name of the author or the name of a character, you can begin your sentences by using an ‘-ing’ word.

These word typically force you to think more deeply about how a sentence flows on from the previous one or into the next one.

Any of the verbs in the ‘Strong verbs’ grid above can be turned into an ‘-ing’ words like the ones below and put at the start of a sentence:

- Showing
- Illustrating
- Representing
- Creating
- Depicting

Acting with characteristic impetuosity, Romeo marries Juliet with little thought or planning.

Depicting Romeo as rash and impetuous, Shakespeare shows us the marriage of the young lover to Juliet in Act 3.

‘By’ and ‘through’ are two words which are often used before ‘-ing’ words at the start of a sentence.

For example:

By showing us the responses of both Juliet and Romeo to their banishment one after another in Act IV, Shakespeare allows the audience to observe the marked difference in their characters.

Two things to be careful about ‘-ing words’ are these.

- Don’t overuse them. If you have any more than two sentences in a paragraph which begin with an ‘-ing’ word then you are at risk of creating a convoluted essay or one which lacks variety.
- Make sure the sentence makes sense. Many students start a sentence with an ‘-ing’ word and then only write half a sentence.

Here’s an example:

Romeo marries Juliet without her parents’ permission. Risking everything for the passion he feels.

The trick is to remember to always include the name of the character, author, text or technique within a sentence that begins with an ‘-ing’ word.

So the above sentence could have been written:

Risking everything for the passion he feels, Romeo marries Juliet without her parents’ permission.

Writing Introductions, Body Paragraphs and Conclusions:

WHAT DOES ANALYSIS LOOK LIKE IN A BODY PARAGRAPH?

The previous section built your understanding of the types of language we use to ensure our writing is focused on ideas rather than surface level summaries of character actions, events or content.

The aim of this section is to emphasise the difference between summarisation and analysis in text response writing.

For text response writing to be analytical, it needs to meet one or more of these criteria:

- Discusses how a text has been constructed
- Cites and links examples
- Interprets aspects of a text that aren't immediately obvious

Described below are strategies or phrases you can use to engage in each of these types of analysis.

Discussing how a text has been constructed

It's important that one or more of the sentences in your body paragraph begin with the name of the author of a text and include a reference to a technique. If this is not the case, then you are at risk of writing statements that just retell the content of the play, novel, film, poem or short stories you are writing about.

By focusing on how an author is constructing a text, then you are analysing something that isn't immediately apparent to anyone who reads the text for themselves.

Any of the verbs under the headings 'techniques' or 'text/author' in the verb grid in the previous section can be utilised to write about how a text has been constructed.

Citing and linking examples

- The...(character) says/believes/thinks/feels...
- The...(character) (action verb).....
- These values are epitomised by...
- [Author's name] draws a parallel between...
- The experience of [character] shows us that...
- This is portrayed when...
- This is evident when...
- The incident/moment where.... suggests that...
- An important instance of this is...
- [The author] portrays this through....
- This idea is represented when....
- The author uses the scene....to show us...
- This is epitomised by....

Interpreting aspects of a text that aren't obvious

- use an -ing word: revealing, reflecting, showing, illustrating, representing, emphasising, creating, disclosing
- The reader/viewer can see from this that...
- It is evident from this that...
- It is clear from this that...
- Central to the narrative is the concept of...
- What is most important in this example is...
- What is portrayed in this is that...
- When this evidence is combined with the fact...we can conclude that...
- One of the most important moments in the text is when (a character says or does). This shows us that...
- What is important about this (example) is... Furthermore...
- A crisis emerges when...demonstrating that...
- The pattern that emerges from these examples is...
- In other words...
- These [words/ideas/beliefs/thoughts etc...]...reveal/show/illustrate...

As with the In-And-But-So paragraph written about in the previous section, it's critical that you don't see the above list of phrases as something that needs to be followed rigidly in a text response piece.

These lists of phrases are simply starting points – concrete suggestions of what it looks like when we summarise evidence succinctly and analyse it. Start with experimenting with these phrases, but move on to create your own variations of them.

USING QUOTES IN A BODY PARAGRAPH

Apparently there are lots of ways to skin a cat. We can't speak to the truth of this suggestion, but we can tell you that there are more ways than one to use quotes in an essay. In fact there are stacks of them.

Below you will see examples of the myriad ways you can insert a quote into a sentence. Like so many of the suggestions in this book, using this resource is about being willing to experiment with your writing.

Experiment with using quotes in at least two different ways in your essay – don't settle for a formulaic use of them.

STRAIGHT INSERT	Max is portrayed as “king of all the wild things.”
SINGLE WORD QUOTE	The description of Max as “lonely” shows how important relationships are to him.
IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANOTHER QUOTE	While Max was “king of all the wild things,” he was also “lonely.”
IN A CLAUSE (ONE SECTION OF A MULTI-PART SENTENCE)	We come to see that Max, mostly through scenes such as when he is “king of all the wild things”, is a character is desperate need of control and empowerment in his life.
STRAIGHT INSERT WITH COMMA AND FOLLOW UP EXPLANATION	When Sendak writes that “Max was king of all the wild things,” he is showing us Max’s need to have control.
INTRODUCED WITH A COLON	It is in his own mind that Max sees himself as being in control: “Max was king of all the wild things.”

THE CONCLUSION

A good conclusion contains two things:

- A core topic statement: What is the key idea in response to the essay topic?
- A big picture statement: What is the significance of a character’s actions, an idea in the text or the author’s purpose?

An effective conclusion should contain between three to four sentences. Any more than four and it’s in danger of becoming ‘waffly’.

Consider the conclusion below in response to this essay topic:

In Shakespeare’s play, Romeo and Juliet’s actions are inevitable because they live in a violent world.

Romeo and Juliet are ultimately forced to act in the way they do because of the violent physical and emotional culture of the society of Verona that they find themselves in. They are surrounded by people for whom it’s a norm to engage in brawls of the heart and of the sword. Shakespeare shows us that when such a norm is the case, then the passion of young lovers is doomed.

Three sentences does the trick in the above case.

The conclusion is structured like this:

Core topic statement:

Romeo and Juliet are ultimately forced to act in the way they do because of the violent physical and emotional culture of the society of Verona that they find themselves in.

Further information about the core topic statement:

They are surrounded by people for whom it’s a norm to engage in brawls of the heart and of the sword.

Big picture statement:

Shakespeare shows us that when such a norm is the case, then the passion of young lovers is doomed.

Taking two sentences to adequately summarise a core response to the topic is typical. Your task isn’t to summarise everything you’ve written about in your essay – just the guts of it. The last sentence should show that you understand the bigger picture of what the text is about.

You will find these words/phrases useful to begin a conclusion:

- Ultimately
- In the end
- In the final analysis
- In essence
- For the most part
- [A character/idea] is shown/presented/depicted in/throughout [the text] as
- [The text] is a story of...which shows / presents...

You will find these words/phrases useful to make a big picture statement:

- The message of the text is that...
- The text shows that / shows that when / shows how / shows what it means
- The text demonstrates/illustrates/concludes/highlights/suggests that...
- Central to the text is the idea that...
- ...the reader/viewer is left with the understanding that...
- We see/realise/understand that...

3. COMPARING & CONTRASTING TEXTS

This chapter will look at three elements of compare and contrast writing for texts.

1. What is a compare and contrast essay trying to do?

- [The purpose of compare and contrast writing](#)
- [Example annotated essay](#)

2. Planning for compare and contrast text writing

- [Brainstorming connections between the texts](#)
- [Turning concrete connections into big picture idea connections](#)
- [Compare and contrast plan](#)

3. Writing introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions

- [Writing introductions](#)
- [Writing body paragraphs](#)
- [Writing conclusions](#)

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF COMPARE & CONTRAST WRITING?

Of course, at a fundamental level compare and contrast writing is about identifying similarities between two texts. But there are features of compare and contrast writing beyond this basic aspect.

Listed below, are a series of important purposes of compare and contrast writing which might seem obvious - but many students fail to appreciate:

Identifying differences is just as important as discussing similarities:
This shouldn't need to be pointed out, but so many students fail to do this. Texts are never identical, and the richness of your analysis can come equally from discussing the differences as from the similarities.

It's all about the big ideas:
Effective compare and contrast writing shouldn't get bogged down in listing the small ways texts are similar or different. It should start by looking at the big ideas, like the quest for identity, or overcoming grief, and then look at how the smaller things like characters and events show this in both texts.

Identify what authors/directors/playwrights are trying to achieve:
Although the ideas between texts will be similar, the author, director or playwright could be expressing entirely different viewpoints on the one topic. Identifying and discussing variations in perspective is one of the most important things you can do in compare and contrast writing.

Discussing the worlds of the text is important:
Authors, directors and playwrights construct the world of a text which shapes the lives of the characters who inhabit it. The lives of these characters - what happens to them - ultimately illuminates the message of the text. It's important, then, to always discuss how the worlds of the two texts have been constructed similarly or differently.

Write a lot of detail on a few things:
It's easy to write lots of short body paragraphs focusing on a range of small details that are different or similar between the texts. You can't write about everything. Focus on a few ideas and write on these in detail.

WHAT DOES A COMPARE & CONTRAST TEXT ESSAY LOOK LIKE?

Below is an example compare and contrast text essay about the novel *Ninety Eighty Four* and the film *Gattaca*. The essay is annotated to include some basic, important features of compare and contrast text response writing. Later in this chapter, these features will be described in more detail and you'll be given some tools and resources to help you implement these features in your own writing. Before reading through the example essay, though, take a moment to consider these essential similarities and differences between responding to a single text and comparing two texts. This will highlight for you that many of the things you need to do well for a single text response essay are things you also need to do well for a compare and contrast essay.

SINGLE TEXT RESPONSE ESSAY	COMPARE & CONTRAST TEXT ESSAY
Introduction addresses essay topic	Introduction begins by discussing something about the bigger picture (genre or topic) that connects the two texts before addressing the topic
Topic sentences are about ideas	Topic sentences are about ideas but also articulate how these are in one or both texts
Body paragraphs focus on analysis rather than summarisation	Body paragraphs identify key features of both texts before comparing and analysing
Setting is one feature of a text that you could discuss	The similarities and differences in how the setting affects our understanding of the world of the character must always be discussed
Strong, analytical verbs are used throughout	Strong, analytical verbs are used throughout
A variety of ways to start and link sentences are employed	A variety of ways to start and link sentences are employed

TOPIC:
1984 and Gattaca both present bleak visions of dystopian societies.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

Since science fiction texts are concerned with how humans utilise technology, the genre generally presents us with a picture of oppressive societies where science is used to control individuals. In other words, science fiction explores our fears about how we might use technology to gain power over each other. This is certainly the case in George Orwell's novel Nineteen Eighty-Four and the film Gattaca, directed by Andrew Niccol. Both texts show us a grim world where there is limited, if non-existent privacy, and where technology is used by powerful organisations to control citizens. But there is an important difference in the message each text gives us in the end about the capacity of humanity to overcome dehumanising societies. Orwell's text says to us at its conclusion that humans, working as individuals, are ultimately too weak to defeat more powerful groups who have dominant technology. However, Niccol's version of the science fiction story is much more hopeful: individual's humanity is not only able to overcome the powerful forces that oppress him, but provide an inspiration to others around him.

Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four are each set worlds where powerful organisations seek to control their individuals in order to create what they believe is a better society. The product of this control is not, in fact, a perfect place to live, but rather a grim environment of conformity and fear where individuals have lost the thing which gives them their humanity: individuality. In Niccol's depiction of a dystopian future, genetic engineering of children has become the norm. Before conception, parents choose the genetic features they want their children to have. A child's genetic makeup becomes their "passport", governing what jobs and life they can have in society. The opening shot of the film, where we see a colourless, featureless factory-line of workers going into the Gattaca corporation, establishes that the product of trying to make all humans "perfect" is actually to make them the same. The technology in Orwell's dystopian world of Nineteen Eighty-Four might be different, but the society is the same soulless, grim place as Gattaca. In Nineteen Eighty-Four, 'Big Brother' is the powerful government which controls its citizens through a pervasive surveillance system of listening devices, cameras and spies.

IMPORTANT
FEATURES

Introductory statement:
What do texts of this genre or about this topic seek to explore/show us?

Identification of similarities - particularly setting

Identification of differences. Use of colon to elaborate

Topic sentence about key idea: i.e control

Succinct identification of text elements such as plot, techniques or setting

Alternative ways of referring to the text other than just its name

It's a society in which "You had to live...in the assumption that every sound you made was... scrutinized" meaning that "There seemed to be no colour in anything." The lives of the people in the worlds of both Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four contain no hope of being able to do anything other than what the powerful, governing forces allow.

However, as in all science fiction texts, Orwell's novel and Niccol's film features protagonists who struggle against the grimness of the oppressive society they find themselves in. The characters mirror each other, not just in their attitudes, but in their physical characterisation. Winston is a "smallish, frail figure", while Eugene's non-genetically engineered body has a defective heart which precludes him from the job as astronaut with Gattaca which he desperately wants. Unlike the other characters in their world who seemingly accept their fate, both characters dream about defying the oppressive societies they find themselves in. Winston believes "there is hope" and constantly thinks of ways he would like to defy Big Brother and its lackeys, fantasising about infecting "the whole lot of them with leprosy." Yet while Winston dreams about insurrection, Eugene's acts upon his guiding belief that "There is no gene for fate," and he sets out on a path in the film to overcome genetic discrimination by faking his genetic credentials. Portrayed as physically inferior, the characters of Eugene and Winston each capture the powerlessness of the individual in their bleak societies, with Orwell emphasising the pointlessness of individuals attempting to rise up against the system but Niccol celebrating the potential of individuals to triumph.

Similar as they appear, Eugene and Winston differ significantly in the courage and strength they ultimately display in each text. While Winston fantasises about destroying Big Brother, in the end he lacks the moral and physical capacity to do this. He is not able to endure pain - something he must confront when arrested by Big Brother and taken to the infamous room 101 - where "you could not feel anything except pain and foreknowledge of pain". When confronted by his deepest fear of rats gnawing his face, Winston not only capitulates himself to Big Brother, but also betrays his lover Julia. The words "All you care about is yourself" which Winston says at the end of the novel, highlight the bleakness of Orwell's nightmare world in Nineteen Eighty-Four. It's bleak because there are no heroes who can stand up and fight the system.

Uses alternatives to starting sentences with 'In both...'

Topic sentence contains both transition phrase and key idea (protagonists who struggle)

May discuss one text less than the other in a paragraph (but discussion of both texts should balance out over the course of the whole essay)

Conclusion to body paragraph refers to both texts emphasising the similarities and differences

Strong verbs to compare the texts - not just 'are' or 'is'.

Use of short quotes

Winston is an ordinary person who represents the weaknesses of ordinary people. Eugene, in contrast, is a much more heroic figure in Gattaca. Throughout his journey in the film he displays physical heroism in his endurance of brutal surgery that extends the height of his legs, his success in daily training regimes designed for people without his heart problem and his fearless swimming into the ocean. While Eugene doesn't succeed solely because of his own efforts, the help he receives from other characters in the film is a product of their admiration for his resilience and resolve. So although Gattaca's world of genetically determined futures is a bleak one, Eugene provides hope that humans can - through courage and determination - overcome the forces that seek to dehumanise us.

In the final analysis, the worlds of Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four are fundamentally the same. They each imagine a bleak society in which individuals must conform and live out lives controlled by powerful forces. What makes Gattaca a less grim version of a dystopian world is that it offers us hope, that even in the grimmest of societies, humanity can triumph. In contrast, George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four presents us with a story without such hope, whose 'hero' is weak and is finally crushed by the system, and which serves as a stark warning to readers about what will happen if we let powerful organisations destroy our individuality.

Word length: 1007 words

Use of adjectives or adverbs to identify the extent of similarity between texts

Identification of key differences - there will always be at least one.

Conclusion to essay discusses the message of the texts.

Word length is longer than an essay on just one text

Planning a Compare & Contrast Text Essay:

BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE TEXTS

Before you begin to write about both of the texts you are comparing, you must be familiar with each of them as individual texts. You will be, in all probability, discussing one or two main themes that connect the texts and then a series of smaller themes that may be common across the texts, or may be different in each of them. Generating ideas that connect the two texts will be your first step to analysing them.

One effective tool to use when brainstorming ideas to write about in response to a compare and contrast essay topic is this planner below. The process of using this planner begins with identifying the key idea of an essay topic. After this, the questions in the left hand column become a checklist for considering points of similarity and differences between the two texts in terms of the key idea.

A BLANK COPY OF THIS BRAINSTORMING CHECKLIST CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM:
www.tickingmind.com.au/comparative-brainstorming-checklist.

KEY IDEA:		
	Text 1:	Text 2:
1. Point of comparison: Setting - How does the setting show this idea? - How does the setting affect the lives and experiences of people in the world of a text in a way that shows this idea?	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
2. Point of comparison: Major characters How do major characters act or how are they affected in a way that shows this idea throughout the text?	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
3. Point of comparison: Supporting characters How do supporting characters act or how are they affected in a way that shows this idea throughout the text?	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
4. Point of comparison: Techniques/Devices How do techniques/devices show this idea throughout the text?	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:
5. Point of comparison: Ending/Overall Message What does the ending of the text ultimately show about this idea?	Both:	
	Just this text:	Just this text:

Planning a Compare & Contrast Text Essay:

GENERATING STATEMENTS TO TURN SMALL IDEAS INTO BIG IDEAS

The comparative brainstorming checklist opposite is great to identify concrete similarities and differences between the texts. But remember: good compare and contrast writing is about the big ideas, not small, concrete details. So, you need to be able to turn your concrete connections between the texts into ideas which connect the texts.

The table on the next page is a tool to help you articulate how concrete features of texts, such as characters and setting, represent ideas like fear' and 'identity' which bond the texts.

In the left hand column of the grid, are words which represent features of texts. Based on the brainstorming you did on each of these features with the comparative brainstorming checklist, connect these concrete text features with a verb, idea phrase and idea to articulate a bigger picture statement about the connection between texts.

At the bottom of the grid are some basic sentence starters and extra information words which you can use to begin your sentences and add more detail.

IDEAS CHART			
CONCRETE TEXT FEATURES	VERBS	IDEA PHRASES	IDEAS
protagonist central characters minor character supporting characters symbol imagery of... setting world of the text... the society/ies of... the cultures in... narrator author/director/ playwright motif	investigates reflects on portrays challenges illustrates captures questions asserts explores considers emphasises scrutinises comments seeks illuminates creates	confrontation with the challenge of failure to... fear of... anxiety of... attempt to... conflict of/ between/over... the search for... the coming to terms with... the striving for control over... the achievement of... the struggle for... the desire for... the need for... the experience of... the experience of... a journey of...	power identity control autonomy relationships men and women discrimination prejudice misunderstanding family friendships conformity adapt to new situations grief loss redemption destiny love understanding courage justice powerlessness disconnection isolation forgiveness
- In each text, in both texts, for both texts, similar in the texts, common to both [text name] and [text name] - because, since, in order to, through, by, with, in, for, from, along with, not only...but also, creating, showing, causing, illustrating, emphasising			

Planning a Compare & Contrast Text Essay:

CREATING A PLAN

So far, you have completed two preparatory activities: The brainstorming template provided you with concrete connections between the texts, and the Ideas Chart which helped you turn concrete features into ‘big picture’ writing. This big picture writing can then become the basis for your essay plan. Effective essays begin with effective topic sentences. You’ll see in the essay planning template on the next page that there is a space at the start of each body paragraph to write your topic sentence.

- Using the Ideas Chart you should:
1. Pick out the best 3-4 sentences which will be the start of your 3-4 body paragraphs
 2. Merge some of your similar sentences together to reduce your ideas down to 3-4.
- Once you’ve put your topic sentences in, you should:
3. Use the brainstorming template to help you fill in examples to support your idea
 4. Consider statements you might make in your introduction and conclusion.

A BLANK COPY OF THIS PLANNING TEMPLATE CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM:
www.tickingmind.com.au/comparative-essay-planning-template.

TEXT 1	TEXT 2
Introduction Important vocabulary:	Introductory statement: Both: Just this text:Just this text:
Body Paragraph 1 Important vocabulary:	Topic sentence: Both: Just this text:Just this text:
Body Paragraph 2 Important vocabulary:	Topic sentence: Both: Just this text:Just this text:
Body Paragraph 3 Important vocabulary:	Topic sentence: Both: Just this text:Just this text:
Body Paragraph 4 Important vocabulary:	Topic sentence: Both: Just this text:Just this text:
Conclusion Important vocabulary:	

Writing introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions:

THE INTRODUCTION

Write a big picture statement about the purpose of texts which explore the same ideas as the texts you are comparing

Good introductions to compare and contrast essays don't simply start by discussing the two texts which you are being asked to compare. The first sentence or sentences of a good compare and contrast essay typically identifies how the big theme, idea or genre which connects the texts is commonly explored in literature and how:

Since science fiction texts are concerned with how humans utilise technology, the genre generally presents us with a picture of oppressive societies where science is used to control individuals. In other words, science fiction explores our fears about how we might use technology to gain power over each other. This is certainly the case in George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the film *Gattaca*, directed by Andrew Niccol.

Here is another way this introduction could have started:

Coming to terms with the future and the kind of society we will face is an eternal source of material for writers and directors. George Orwell's classic dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* depicts an unrelentingly hopeless view of the future, where unseen governments control both the actions and thoughts of their people and any resistance is futile.

These phrases, or your own variations of them, can be used to formulate opening introductory paragraph sentences such as the ones above:

- Texts which deal with the idea/topic/ issue of...seek to explore/depict represent...
- Films and plays/novels which explore frequently/commonly explore/depict/ represent...
- The idea of/theme of/issue of...is commonly explored in texts which shows us/reveal to us/depict how...
- The idea of/theme of/issue of...is commonly explored through stories/narratives of...
- Dealing with/confronting/exploring/ coming to terms with/facing....is an idea/ issue which...

Identify the obvious link between the texts and directly engage with the essay topic

After the opening, big picture statement, effective introductions to compare and contrast essays will then identify the broad link between the texts in a way that is relevant to the essay topic:

Both texts show us a grim world where there is limited, if non-existent privacy, and where technology is used by powerful organisations to control citizens.

The sentence starter below can be coupled with the phrases underneath it to craft statements which articulate the basic connection between texts:

Both texts show us/give us/depict/ portray/ represent/reveal...

- ...worlds of/worlds where/societies in which...
- ...lives of...
- ...characters who...
- ...struggles against...
- ...journeys to/of...

Identify the less obvious similarities between the text or key differences between them

The next few sentences of the introduction are where you write about connections between the text which are more interesting than just the obvious, big link. A connection might be further similarities, but importantly it could also be key differences:

But there is an important difference in the message each text gives us in the end about the capacity of humanity to overcome de-humanising societies. Orwell’s text says to us at its conclusion that humans, working as individuals, are ultimately too weak to defeat more powerful groups who have dominant technology. However, Niccol’s version of the science fiction story is much more hopeful. In his text, the individual’s humanity is not only able to overcome the powerful forces that oppress him, but provide an inspiration to others around him.

Try experimenting with writing statements that use two or more of the words and phrases on the next page to express the deeper similarities or differences between texts. You can use the words and phrases below in the order you feel best works, and, of course, you can modify them to better suit the sentences you are writing or the texts you are writing about. But one thing that does need to be stressed about compare and contrast writing is this: when comparing two texts, it’s important to find different ways of referring to the texts other than just constantly using their titles. So try using variations of the phrases in the ‘Ways of referring to texts’ list to label the texts in different ways.

WORDS FOR DESCRIBING THE DEGREE TO WHICH PARTS OF TEXTS ARE SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT:

- subtle/subtlety
- significant/significantly
- essential/essentially
- fundamental/fundamentally
- crucial/crucially
- in part/partly
- partial/partially

PHRASES FOR INTRODUCING HOW SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT TEXTS ARE:

- at their core/heart/centre
- central to both texts
- on the surface each texts...But beyond this is...
- at a basic level both texts...However, on a deeper level...
- in essence
- fundamental to each text
- shared by each text
- common to each text
- where the texts differ
- the difference/separation/divergence in the texts comes where/because/since...
- most
- far more
- far less

WORDS FOR DESCRIBING THE CENTRAL IDEAS IN A TEXT

- message of...
- purpose to/of...
- representation of...
- depiction of...
- characterisation of...
- perspective
- viewpoint

WAYS OF REFERRING TO THE TEXT

- The (Author’s/Director’s/Playwright’s)
- text/narrative/story
- version of...
- representation of...
- depiction of...
- narrative/story of...
- *vision/imagining of...
(importantly, each of these words/phrases above can be preceded by describing words: i.e uplifting representation, ultimately tragic depiction of...)

Writing introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions:

THE BODY PARAGRAPH

Write topic sentences with strong verbs and variation

As discussed in the previous chapter on text response writing, good topic sentences should focus on ideas and feature strong verbs. In the examples of topic sentences below, ‘struggle’ ‘feature’ and ‘create’ are instances of such strong verbs.

Another simple, but important feature of effective topic sentence writing for compare and contrast essays, is variation. Notice how the topic sentences below each start in a different way and refer to the texts in different ways. You can get ideas about how to refer to the texts differently by looking at the ‘Ways of referring to texts’ list in the section above, and for starting your sentences differently by looking at the ‘Transition words’ section below.

Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four are each set in a world where powerful organisations seek to control its individuals in order to create what it believes is a better society.

However, as in all science fiction texts, Orwell’s novel and Niccol’s film features protagonists who struggle against the grimness of the oppressive society they find themselves in.

Yet similar as they are, Eugene and Winston differ significantly in the courage and strength they ultimately display in each text.

It doesn’t just need to be about the words you use, punctuation - particularly the colon - can be used to create variety in topic sentences and introduce more complex ideas.

Here’s an example:

Orwell’s novel is imbued with the fear of the loss of autonomy, and Niccol’s film echoes this concern: their worlds are places where citizens are sorted, grouped and controlled by the arbitrary decision-making of governments.

CONSTRUCT COMPARE & CONTRAST SENTENCES IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

By using a mix of transition words:

Because you are linking two texts in compare and contrast writing, the fluent use of transition words is a crucial part of your writing.

In the left hand column of the grid below is a list of basic transition words - you’ll need to use a variety of these throughout your writing and monitor that you’re not routinely using the same ones.

In the right hand column is a list of more advanced transition words and phrases.

Try using at least one or two of these throughout your writing. By doing so, you’ll not only achieve variety in your writing, you’ll also use sentence constructions that will prompt you to think more deeply about the connection between the texts.

BASIC TRANSITION WORDS AND PHRASES	ADVANCED TRANSITION WORDS AND PHRASES
Moreover	Further to this
Furthermore	In addition to this
However	Providing a point of contrast...
Yet	Providing a further point of similarity is...
Although	Mirroring...
While	Paralleling this...
On the one hand	Appearing on the surface as similar, but in fact quite different, is...
On the other hand	Departing from...
Similarly	Diverging from...
Likewise	Starkly contrasting this...
Unlike	Offering a (different/similar)...
In comparison	Creating a (different/similar)...
In contrast	Corresponding to this...
Conversely	This...is mirrored by/through/with...
	This...is paralleled b/through/with...

By structuring your sentences in different ways:

Students often have a ‘default’ way they begin their sentences and then structure them. This ‘default’ can become a problem when nearly every sentence sounds the same. As a rule, try to do something different with each sentence in your body paragraphs. This might be starting them differently or adding extra information in different ways.

Below is a basic guide to how to open and extend your sentences in a variety of ways. Use this chart as a reference when writing a body paragraph slowly, concentrating on crafting a range of sentence types.

OPENER	MAIN PART	EXTRA INFORMATION PART
With a basic transition word: While, Although, Despite, On the one hand	the author/direct/playwright/s the text/s the idea/s the character/s the technique/s + verb	An extra information word: or, either, which, who, that, because, since, and, along with, such as, for, from, at, in, into, by, with, through, not only...but also...
With an -ing transition word: Mirroring, paralleling, echoing, departing, contrasting		A list: The portrayal of Winston’s actions show us the fear of the citizens, the depth of of Big Brother’s power and the destructiveness of totalitarian regimes.
With an -ed word: Pervaded by fear, the setting of...		An -ing word: i.e - showing, illustrating, emphasising, depicting, portraying, causing, resulting in
With a -ly word: similarly, differently, conversely, alternatively		
With an extra information word: with, by, through, throughout, since, at, for, from		

By using a variety of compare and contrast verbs

Compare and contrast writing can easily become formulaic. If you don’t think carefully about how you’re crafting your sentences and employing a variety of ways to express the connection between the texts, you will rapidly begin to produce writing that features the same sentence structures and transition words and is very simplistic because of it.

One of the traps you can fall into in producing formulaic compare and contrast writing is to constantly use the verbs ‘is’ and ‘are’ in sentences like: Both texts are similar in the way they.../ Each text is....

Below is a list of verbs which can be used to express similarities and differences between texts. For example: Both texts share a vision of the future which... Or: To Kill A Mockingbird varies from In The Name of The Father through.

Try using these verbs once or twice in your body paragraphs:

INSTEAD OF WRITING ‘ARE SIMILAR’	INSTEAD OF WRITING ‘ARE DIFFERENT’
compares	contrasts
echoes	differ
follows	diverge
shares	depart
converges	deviate
unites	varies
connects	reverses
links	inverts
parallels	

THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion of any essay should never just be a rewording of what was in your introduction. It should be a thoughtful selection of the most important perspectives you discussed in your essay along with an insight into the importance of the message of one or both of the texts. Three to four sentences is a good length for a conclusion, as can be seen in the example conclusion below.

First sentence of the conclusion begins with an authoritative statement:

In the final analysis, the worlds of Gattaca and Nineteen Eighty-Four are fundamentally the same.

The middle of the conclusion summarises what is most essential about the similarities or differences:

They each imagine a bleak society in which individuals must conform and live out lives controlled by powerful forces. What makes Gattaca a less grim version of a dystopian world is that it offers us hope, that even in the grimmest of societies humanity can triumph. In contrast, George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four presents us with a story without such hope, whose 'hero' is weak and is finally crushed by the system,...

The end of the conclusion offers insight into the importance of the texts or their message

...and which serves as a stark warning to readers about what will happen if we let powerful organisations destroy our individuality.

The words in the grid on the next page can be used in the beginning, middle and end of your conclusion.

Keep in mind, conclusions do not necessarily need to begin with a concluding word or phrase, it just needs to an authoritative statement interpreting the texts.

In your conclusion, try using a more interesting verb than 'show' or 'explores' to discuss what texts do. At the top of the middle column below are a series of suggestions.

CONCLUDING WORD/PHRASE	POINTS OF CONNECTION AND DIFFERENCE	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT, TEXTS OR THEME
In the final analysis Ultimately In the end	imagine, create, envisage, construct, express, articulate, demonstrate, convey, caution, warn, advocate, point out, highlight, underline, emphasise, provide, give the reader	reminding showing illustrating serves to show illustrating providing
Fundamentally In essence At their core	underling both texts connecting each text throughout both texts	powerful portrayal/ depiction/representation
	separating the texts differentiating the texts the essential point of difference	poignantly/powerfully representing
	+ Any of the 'basic' transition words from the body paragraph section	the idea of what happens when/if the message that

AN UPPER RANGE EXAMPLE OF A COMPARE & CONTRAST ESSAY

The essay annotated at the beginning of this chapter is an example of a strong response. However, it is by no means a perfect essay. The example below is a more sophisticated essay which makes use of different constructions and language to compare and contrast *Gattaca* and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*. Read through it and consider and identify the features that make this a strong essay:

Coming to terms with the future and the kind of society we will face is an eternal source of material for writers and directors. George Orwell's classic dystopian novel Nineteen Eighty-Four depicts an unrelentingly hopeless view of the future, where unseen governments control both the actions and thoughts of their people and any resistance is futile. Moderating this bleak view of the future, Andrew Niccol's Gattaca encapsulates both the pervasive fear of a world in which bureaucrats determine the fate of our genetic material and a nostalgic yearning for the simplicity of a 1950s lifestyle. While both texts point an accusing finger at an unreasonable level of government control, and the increasing bureaucratization of society, Niccol's uplifting and hopeful ending creates, for his audience, a sense of relief in the idea that individual ambition and talent will triumph: Orwell gives his reader no such hope for the future, committing his reader to a bitter and bleak end where society breaks all that we hold most dear.

SOPHISTICATED FEATURES OF THE INTRODUCTION:		
STRONG VERBS	DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEGINNING SENTENCES	TRANSITION WORDS/PHRASES

Orwell's novel is imbued with the fear of the loss of autonomy, and Niccol's film echoes this concern: their worlds are places where citizens are sorted, grouped and controlled by the arbitrary decision-making of governments. In Orwell's world, everyone 'accepted the lie which the Party imposed' and allowed themselves to be controlled by 'an unending series of victories over [their] own memory'. It is therefore nearly impossible for people, who have a shifting sense of reality, to gain a clear path for determining their own future; Orwell argues that 'who controls the past controls the future' - by removing control from their past, Orwell's government removes individual autonomy. In a similar manner, Niccol's government has 'discrimination down to a science' - people's lives are determined by their genetic code, rather than the aspirations of the individual. However the protagonist of each text has a completely different response to the governmental controls of their society; while Vincent complains that he will 'never understand' why his mother didn't ask 'her local geneticist' to create him, suggesting his acceptance of the cultural mores, Winston 'kept his back turned to the telescreen' - both metaphorically and literally rejecting the control of his government. But it is the message of the texts that holds the overwhelming philosophical difference - ultimately Niccol suggests that the individual can overcome the strictures of a totalitarian society, while Orwell demonstrates that the individual will never have enough strength or courage to defeat cultural norms.

The power that societies have to create cultural rules stems, in each text, from the advances in technology, which both Orwell and Niccol are critical of. In each, the technological advances are a product of the cultural context in which the text was created - Orwell views surveillance as the greatest tool for control, while Niccol critiques the scientific discoveries that can lead to genetic manipulation. Both texts are critiquing the technologies relevant to their own time frame, extending the possibilities these developments offer, so that they become insidious instruments of governmental control of the people. Rather than envisaging technology as a way of helping society evolve and as a tool for the people, these men present it as a weapon to be used against the people, to control the individual and repress personal expression. While the technologies themselves are superficially different - one is a method for watching people, while the other is designed to manipulate the health of people - Orwell and Niccol suggest that any technology is dangerous when placed in the hands of bureaucrats. Niccol expresses this as 'the burden of perfection' while Orwell points out that surveillance means that nothing is 'your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull'.

However, the way in which power is most insidiously wielded is not through technology, but through the means by which governments control and manipulate the minds of its citizens. Orwell is far more explicit about this in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, writing that '[p]ower is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing' - by manipulating the language in which its people speak, the Party can control the ways in which they think and communicate with each other. The control in *Gattaca* is not so categorical, but it is nevertheless apparent that the characters within this world accept the premise that genetically modified people are 'the best' of their parents' DNA. In both texts, the cultural setting is such that it prevents alternative ways of viewing the world, the dominant paradigm is so successful that people are brainwashed into accepting a certain viewpoint. Orwell is extremely critical of the way in which people accept these dominant societal thought patterns, observing that the 'choice for mankind lies between freedom and happiness' but that the vast majority believe 'happiness is better'. For the reader, this is both observation and warning - Orwell cautions that we surrender freedom at our peril.

The message that Niccol offers is both subtler and more hopeful. On the one hand, he cautions that to accept a scientific measure of perfection is both flawed and dangerous, but the chain of characters who allow one man to overcome this system of discrimination demonstrates to his audience his point that ‘there is no gene for the human spirit’. Niccol’s film suggests that each person, from Jerome, to Dr Lamar to Irene, are each willing to buck the system into which they have been indoctrinated, allowing Vincent to achieve his dreams. While Orwell suggests that people lose their sense of self when their minds are controlled, Niccol is more optimistic, allowing that individuals will never be defeated by the strictures of society.

Of course, the settings in which each society is placed profoundly influences the individual freedoms of the characters within them. Winston lives in a bleak, comfortless world that smells of ‘cabbage and old rag mats’ - his costume is limited to the blue overall that is the uniform of the Party and artwork is limited to enormous posters of the mustachioed Big Brother. By allowing the characters of his world to have no individuality, Orwell indicates that the societal control is far greater. It is only outside the city limits that Winston and Julia have the illusion of freedom, but Orwell disproves even this - while wilder environments might encourage wilder thoughts, returning to the ‘civilised’ world means returning to its strictures. Niccol’s version of the future is far more nostalgic, conjuring the fashions of the 1950s and the seditious atmosphere and speak-easies of the 1930s. While the evocation of the 1950s suggests that people are conformist, the presence of unknown bars allows for freedom and individual thought. The settings of each text represent the limits of their societies.

SOPHISTICATED FEATURES OF THE BODY PARAGRAPH:

STRONG VERBS	DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEGINNING SENTENCES	TRANSITION WORDS/ PHRASES

Ultimately, each text critiques an idea of the future and the sorts of societies that are made possible by combined effects of the people, the settings and the technologies they produce. Both Orwell and Niccol advocate for maintaining individual autonomy and thought, and caution against allowing governments and institutions to control this. Both texts point out the limitations their protagonists face if they accept the dominant cultural paradigms presented, although Niccol is far less certain that this acceptance is the fate of individuals. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is far less sanguine in its outlook, and Orwell admonishes his readers not to accept happiness while giving up freedom. The settings of each text provide a clue to the amount of individual autonomy its characters can accept, with both Orwell and Niccol suggesting that abandoning simple individual freedoms of dress and housing lead to the acceptance of complying with other strictures. Each text, in its own way, is fundamentally a cautionary tale about placing too much confidence in technological advances and turning our backs upon the human.

SOPHISTICATED FEATURES OF THE CONCLUSION:

STRONG VERBS	DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEGINNING SENTENCES	TRANSITION WORDS/ PHRASES

4. WRITING CREATIVE RESPONSES TO TEXTS

This chapter on creative writing will begin by outlining the types of ways you can creatively respond to a text. It will then investigate the different ways texts are constructed, which you need to be familiar with for your own creative responses. The second half of the chapter will explain procedures for planning your creative response, basic creative tools which you can use in any creative response and advice about how to write a written explanation of your creative response. It will also provide an example creative response with a written explanation.

1. Generating ideas for creative responses

- Responses set ‘within the world of the text’
- Response set ‘outside the world of the text’

2. Identifying the voice and style of a text

- Text level
- Word level
- Sentence level
- Paragraph level

3. Planning creative responses

- Settings
- Characters and problems
- Plot devices
- Planning template

4. Basic creative writing strategies

- Words other than ‘then’
- Better adjectives than ‘good’
- Structuring similes in different ways
- The creative writing paragraph

5. Writing a written explanation

6. Example creative response

GENERATING IDEAS FOR A CREATIVE RESPONSE TO A TEXT

In responding creatively to a text, you can choose to write a piece that is set ‘within the world of a text’ or ‘outside the world of a text’. Responses set ‘within the world of the text’ use actual characters, settings and events from the novel, short stories or play you are responding to. Typically this would involve writing a new scene or rewriting a scene from the text in the same style as the author but from a different perspective to the one the scene was originally written in.

Creative responses written ‘outside the world of the text’ involve students coming up with their own, unique story ideas, characters and settings that are not from the text. Though set outside the world of the text, these stories must meaningfully connect to the text being responded to.

This means the stories must explore ideas and employ literary devices and techniques which are found in the original text.

CREATIVE RESPONSES

‘WITHIN THE WORLD OF THE TEXT’

Writing about a ‘gap’ in the text:

A ‘gap’ in the text is any action or event which we know must take place in the lives of the characters in the text but is not directly represented in a scene or passage in the text.

Here are some ways to identify gaps in a text:

- What happens next? Identify some important scenes in a text. Read through the passages and ask yourself: After this scene ends, what happens immediately next? Would this make a good story to write? This can include exploring what happens after the story ends. Is there anything unresolved at the end of a story? Can we write a scene that takes place after the end of the story in the text?
- What happens between chapters? If the text you are studying for creative response is divided into chapters, there is an easy opportunity to identify gaps between events at the end of one chapter and the beginning of the next. Identify all these gaps and consider which one might be best to explore in writing.
- What happens before the story? Is there something in the life of a character that has happened before the start of the story in the text that we know about or can imagine? Can we write a scene about what takes place before the start of the story in the text?

- What did they say about it? Identify some important events in the text. Who are some major characters who must have had opinions about these events? Could we write a passage about these characters confronting each other with their opinions about these events?

Writing a scene from the perspective of a different character or with a different voice

- **First Person / Third Person Change:**
If a text has been written in first person (i.e I did this...) then identify a scene that would be interesting if it was rewritten not in the first person voice of the narrator, but in third person about them
Alternatively, if a text has been written in third person (i.e He/She did this...) identify a scene that would be interesting if the main character (or another character wrote this in their own first person voice.
- **Supporting Character Perspective:**
Whether in third person or first, stories are nearly always told from the perspective of one character (or a small group of characters). What about the perspectives of supporting or minor characters? Pick a crucial scene in the text where the main character along with smaller characters are present. Would this scene be interesting if it was retold from the perspective of the minor character?

Introducing a new character

- Rewrite an existing scene and swap one character with another character:
Pick a crucial scene from the text. What would happen if you swapped the presence of one character for another? Would it be interesting?
- Invent a new character who could fit into the world of the text and insert that character into an existing scene.

CREATIVE RESPONSES 'OUTSIDE THE WORLD OF THE TEXT'

Ultimately, any creative response set outside the world of the text will need to effectively incorporate the three elements below. However, at the idea generation stage, you can start by just focusing on any one of these elements. You might, for example, brainstorm a problem: i.e What would happen if someone faced....? Alternatively, you could begin by picking a setting. For example, you might say: We could update the setting of the historical small town from the novel we're studying if we set it in a place like... All of these elements below will be elaborated on throughout the rest of the chapter.

The fundamental features of the setting of the text

Setting can be physical, social or cultural. Physical settings - such as cities, small towns or outside spaces - can influence the opportunities characters have and how they view life. Social and cultural settings are the way the society a character inhabits is organised and what people in this world think is normal. You will need to identify a setting for your creative response which adopts features of the physical, social or cultural setting of the text you're responding to.

The attributes of the major character

Protagonists of the text you're responding to have unique personalities and behaviour. Your task is to create characters for your own response with similar attributes or behaviour and to consider how these attributes might be impacted by the events or other characters of your own story.

The problems this character faces

The protagonist in your story must face a problem and this problem needs to be clearly related to the issues which confront characters in the text you're responding to. The problem doesn't necessarily need to be identical, but must have elements of the same difficult choices or moral dilemmas from the text you're responding to.

IDENTIFYING THE VOICE AND STYLE OF A TEXT

'Voice' is a crucial part of any creative writing but perhaps the hardest thing for students to re-create in their creative responses to texts. In simple terms, 'voice' is what makes a writer's writing unique. It's their style that separates them - or at least one of their pieces of writing - from other authors and other pieces of writing. Just like an individual's personal style is made up of different elements - like the way they speak, the clothes they wear and the music they listen to - so too is an author's style made up of component parts which we call 'literary techniques'.

The types of techniques an author uses throughout their piece to create their unique style and voice can be divided into four levels of categories:

- **Whole text:** This is how the narrative of the text is structured and from whose view point it is told
- **Word level:** This is the individual vocabulary choices an author makes in describing characters, setting and events
- **Sentence level:** This is the pattern an author uses to form sentences
- **Paragraph level:** This is the choices an author makes in how they begin or end paragraphs and how much or little they include in a paragraph

Below are detailed checklists of techniques an author can utilise at each of these different levels. In studying a text in order to write a creative response to it, a crucial step is to identify the stylistic features an author uses to create a unique voice at each of these different levels. Your creative piece will need to either adopt or transform some of these stylistic features. But more on that later. For the time being, cast your eyes through these lists of stylistic features and consider whether they are present in the text you are studying for creative responses.

WHOLE TEXT LEVEL

Whole text level techniques are devices which underscore a reader’s entire view of a text. These are the techniques which are most easy to identify at a glance and which you will probably be able to recall after one reading of a text and without revising it. The most fundamental of whole text level devices is the narrative person a text is written in. Perhaps the second most important device is the structure of the narrative and underneath this, techniques which contribute to the structure such as tense.

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE AND EFFECT
1st Person	Most of the novels you read now are written in first person ('I did this and then I did something else, while I felt...')	Writing in first person gives the reader the sense of understanding the inner thoughts of the writer, it is more intimate.
2nd Person	This is the rarest form to find in any writing, it is usually only found in short stories ('You do this and then you do something else, while you felt...').	It gives the reader a direct sense of involvement and ownership over the story, but it is very difficult to achieve.
3rd Person	This is the style of more old-fashioned types of novels and used to be the most common form of writing ('S/he did this and then s/he did something else, while s/he felt...').	The great advantage of this style of writing is that the writer can give the reader equal insight into multiple characters, giving the impression that the writer is all-knowing.
Chronological narrative structure	This is the most basic narrative structure in which the narrator relates events one after another in the order they occur.	The reason this is such a pervasive structure is because readers are motivated to find out what happens next.
Circular narrative structure	This is when a story is bookended by the same event. The ending of a story is somehow directly referred to at the beginning before the narrative goes back in time to the start of events.	In this style of writing the reader becomes like a detective. They know what the ending of a story is, but they are curious about how this occurs.
Flashback narrative structure	The flashback narrative means that there are two parallel narratives happening - one in the present, and one in the past which helps the reader understand the present narrative.	The flashback narrative structure emphasises for the reader how the past has impacted on the present.

Multiple voice narrative structure	In this narrative structure, the story typically is told chronologically but from the perspective of two or more characters.	This narrative structure allows the reader to see the same events from multiple perspectives and form an opinion about what actually might be the truth.
Past Tense	This is the most common tense to find in writing; in this tense, everything has already happened, the writer is able to reflect on it and give an accurate account of the 'truth' ('Everyone who saw what happened was astonished...').	In this tense, the writer has an authority about all of the events being related.
Present Tense	In present tense the action is unfolding as it is being written, like a sports-commentary ('Everyone who sees what happens is astonished...')	Writing in present tense gives the reader a more immediate and urgent sense of the action or character's feelings.

WORD LEVEL

In thinking about how an author creates voice, we need to consider the text not just as a whole, but as separate, individual parts. The smallest parts in a text are the words and phrases an author uses. What is unique about these words and phrases? Read through 4-5 passages carefully and focus on individual words which are used or combinations of words. Consider this list of word features below. Which of these are present in the passages you read through?

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE AND EFFECT
Verbs	Verbs are ‘doing’ or ‘action’ words like ‘I jump’ or ‘He screams’ or ‘She believes’. Author think carefully about the types of verbs they use to describe the actions, thoughts or feelings of characters in a text.	Verbs are important in creating a specific picture about how individual characters act. They allow the reader to focus on what the characters do and how they do it.
Adjectives	Adjectives are ‘describing’ words like green, ugly, quiet, complex or hurtful. Adjectives are essential to describing the setting, the appearance of characters, their emotions and actions.	Authors use adjectives to paint a visual picture of the world characters live in and of the characters themselves.
Similes and metaphors	Similes (His eyes were dark like the night) and metaphors (Her eyes were a forest) are regularly used by authors to create rich descriptions of characters or their settings. The key thing to identify in how authors use similes or metaphors is what types of things they compare or link people, places or objects to. Is there are pattern?	Similes and metaphors help an author associate ideas or feelings with people, places or events. For example, by constantly using nature similes or metaphors to describe a character, an author will establish for the reader that a character is like a force of nature.

Symbols and images	Within a narrative, a writer will use a range of symbols and images which visually reinforce the nature of characters, events or settings or key elements of ideas being explored in the text. Common symbols and images and their meaning in texts are: roads (or vehicles): journeys, longing the moon: female power, intuition, cycles, dreams fire: power, purification, light, passion, comfort wind: change, adversity storms: passion, danger and threats mirrors: self reflection nature: growth, fertility clouds: oppression, confusion light: enlightenment, safety, good darkness: evil, ignorance flowers: beauty, innocence seasons: turning of time, growth, ageing water: life, renewal stars: eternity, aspirations windows: freedom colours: red (passion, anger, blood); green (growth, envy, money); yellow (sunshine, happiness); blue (serenity, depression)
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SENTENCE LEVEL

The above techniques are about the way individual words are used in a sentence. These techniques below are about how authors shape sentences as whole to create voice in their piece. Consider the same 4-5 passages you did for the techniques about, but now, think about how the techniques work in a sentence as a whole:

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE AND EFFECT
DIALOGUE	Dialogue can be: *Direct: “Get out of here,” he said. *Indirect: He told the stranger to get out. *Used frequently/ infrequently by the author *And can be used to represent the attitude, nature, background and education of a character	Narratives are usually a mix of observations from the narrator - in which we are directed as an audience to think or feel a certain way about events or characters, and characters speaking for themselves. Dialogue allows us as an audience to directly judge a character and what they say for ourselves.
SENTENCE BEGINNINGS	Authors will often have a style to how they begin their sentences such as: *Beginning lots of sentences with prepositions (see list in next column) *Beginning sentences with -ly words (Slowly, suddenly) *Beginning sentences with pronouns (He, she, it, I, they) *Beginning a series of sentences in the same way for emphasis	Authors create rhythm and connection between sentences through how they start sentences. The type of rhythm authors create with their sentences can reveal something about the narrator or events being written about. Prepositions (small words that tell you where and when something is happening): to, in, on, with, through, at, about, since, by, above, below, around, among, beneath, from, under, without, within, up, upon, onto, into
PUNCTUATION	Authors can vary in how they use these types of punctuation: , commas to create long, flowing sentences dash to add extra information within a sentence () brackets to add extra information within a sentence ; semi colons to connect two sentences	Generally more punctuation in a sentence means that an idea - or an emotion a character or narrator is feeling - is more complex. The narrator is trying to be quite specific and guide the reader towards understanding exactly what is happening. Short sentences with no internal punctuation represent simple thoughts and actions.

LENGTH AND VARIETY	In creative writing, authors will typically vary the length of sentences - from quite long, to very short, to any where in between. However, authors will use sentences of different lengths in a variety of ways.	Longer sentences: typically give the reader more information, allowing them to feel more informed about a setting or a character’s feelings or actions; longer sentences also take longer to read, so the action of the writing is slower and more reflective. Short sentences: tend to leave the reader to fill in blanks - this can either mean that the reader feels more involved in the writing (because the writer is ‘speaking’ in a more informal, conversational style), or make the reader feel distant from the action (because it is minimalistic and emotionless).
FRAGMENTATION	Sentences need a noun and a verb to be complete: The dog (noun) ran (verb). However, authors will often write incomplete sentences: The dog. Running. Closing in. These sentences are called fragments because they don’t have either a noun or verb to make a complete sentence.	Sentence fragments often have a jarring, chaotic rhythm to them. Authors do that to provide a stronger picture for the audience for how a particular moment or character feels.

PARAGRAPH LEVEL

Unlike paragraphs from essays, creative writing paragraphs change in length and content (there is more on paragraph writing later in this chapter). Look again through the same 4-5 passages you have been reading to identify the presence of the above devices. This time, look at the length and structure of the paragraphs in the passage. What do you notice about these paragraph techniques below?

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE AND EFFECT
Beginnings and endings	Look carefully at the type of sentences authors use to start their paragraphs or finish them. Is there a pattern to what they write about or the types of sentences they use? Also, what types of paragraphs does an author use at the beginning or end of a chapter? Is there a pattern?	Authors might begin or end paragraphs with short sentences, long sentences, dialogue, action, descriptions of the setting or cliffhangers (a sentence that makes you want to see what happens next). See if there is a pattern to the way paragraphs begin in the text you are responding to.
Length and variation	Paragraphs can be anything from one sentence in length to a dozen or more sentences in length. Authors will always vary the length of their paragraphs, but every writer will have a particular style or way they vary the length. Some writers might prefer shorter paragraphs, other might write longer paragraphs more frequently.	Every paragraph has an idea or action. Paragraphs which are very short (like one sentences paragraphs), will emphasise something important about the idea or action, while paragraphs which are long in length will allow an author to develop detail and nuance about the idea or event.

PLANNING RESPONSES

Whether your creative response is set within the world of the text and uses actual characters from the text or whether it is set outside the world of the text and writes about characters of your own invention, all responses need to include these same basic elements:

- A setting
- A character who has a problem
- A plot device/event
- Resolution/Ending

On the next page is more information about each of these elements, some tools to help you identify how these elements are present within the text you’re responding to and how you might utilise these in your own response.

SETTINGS

Your creative writing needs to be set in a particular place. If you're writing a piece set within the world of a text, then you need to identify the settings present in that text and how these settings make the characters feel. You need to choose a setting which would be the most appropriate for the piece you're writing.

If you're writing a piece set outside the world of a text, then you need to identify the settings present within a text, how these make the characters feel and how you might set your original piece in a place which creates similar or the same feelings for your own characters.

Below are four broad categories of settings, with examples of specific types of spaces for each category. Use this as a checklist to identify which types of settings are present in the text you're responding to. Go through each column and circle the settings which are present in the text. If a particular type of setting from the text you're studying is not in one of the columns below, write it in the column you think it belongs in. After this, identify which 3-4 settings are the main ones in the text you're responding to.

DOMESTIC SPACES	WORK/LIFE SPACES	URBAN SPACES	NATURAL AND NON URBAN SPACES
House	Office	City	Small town
Bedroom	Workplace	Large town	Small buildings
Kitchen	School	Suburb	Parks or forest
Loungeroom	Classroom	Large building	Quiet roads
Backyard	Supermarket	Malls and shopping complexes	Isolated area
Hotel/Motel	Factory	Busy roads	Island
Someone else's house	Bar	Slums	Farm
New house	Attractions that people visit for interest/fun: playground, museum, cinema, concert		Beach
Mansion			Desert
			The sea/Ocean
			Valley
			Mountain
			River

The next thing to consider is how characters (the characters you're writing about or responding to in particular) feel about the settings they occupy in the text.

Is this an ordinary space for the character? Does the character regularly occupy this space or is it new and unfamiliar?

- Which of these words describes how the ordinariness of the space makes the character feel: bored, restless, certain, focused
- Which of these words describes how the unusualness of the space makes the character feel: alert, interested, curious, unsure, uncertain
- Are there other words you can add to this?

Is this a comforting, secure space for the character?
Are they able to inhabit this space without worry or concern?

- Which of these words describes how the comfort of the space makes the character feel: comfortable, secure, calm, assured, relaxed, content, happy
- Which of these words describes how the discomfort of the space makes the character feel: anxious, frightened, disconcerted, jumpy, worried, paranoid, nervous, unhappy
- Are there other words you can add to this?

Is this a space of freedom for the character?
Do they feel as if they can achieve anything, or go anywhere?

- Which of these words describes how the openness of the space makes the character feel: free, unrestrained, hopeful, ambitious, enthusiastic, empowered
- Which of these words describes how the restrictedness of the space makes the character feel: trapped, confined, jailed, miserable, hopeless, limited, powerless
- Are there other words you can add to this?

At this point you’ve worked out the settings which are present in the text and how these make the characters feel. If you’re writing a new scene for the text you’re responding to, the next step is to consider which of these settings will you choose and how you will represent a character’s feelings. If you’re writing an original response, you need to decide how it will be set in a place similar to the setting from the text you’re responding to. The chart below can help you organise your thoughts.

EXAMPLE CHART FOR CREATIVE RESPONSE TO BURIAL RITES		
TEXT SETTINGS IN BURIAL RITES	MAKE THE CHARACTERS FEEL	IDEAS FOR SETTINGS IN MY OWN RESPONSE TO BURIAL RITES WHICH COULD CREATE SIMILAR FEELINGS
Very small house	Makes Agnes feel: confined, at home, without privacy, safe, part of a family	Shared office, shared dorm room, plane/bus seat
Isolated farm - Illugastadir	Makes Agnes feel: free, lonely, grown up	A house on the very edge of town
Blondal’s house	Makes Toti feel: intimidated, antipathy	Fancy hotel or restaurant, Large corporate office

A BLANK COPY OF THIS CHART CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM:
www.tickingmind.com.au/settings-and-characters-brainstorming.

CHARACTERS AND PROBLEMS

Interesting characters have problems. If they didn’t, they wouldn’t be worth writing about. After all, who really wants to hear about someone whose life is perfect? If you are responding to a text by writing a new scene or rewriting a scene, you need to identify the problems the character or characters you are writing about have and then begin to think about how you will represent these in your scene. If you are writing your own original piece set outside the world of a text, then you need to identify what problem an important character in the text has, and how a character in your response will confront the same or similar problem.

This sentence formula can help you clearly articulate an issue a character is struggling with:

- [Insert character name] is a... [insert description of who the character is]... who [*see list of words you can use here below] + [insert problem]...

A sentence explaining a character’s problem might look like this:

Kate is the youngest member of a tour group (of just women)who feels she isn’t able to make decisions or to confront conflict like the other people in the group.

These are the words and phrases you can use to help you express the problem a character has:

- ...feels/thinks/believe they aren’t
- ...feels/thinks/believes they can’t...
- ...doesn’t like/want to...
- ...doesn’t realise/know...
- ...doesn’t believe/accept...
- ...is frightened of/by...
- ...is angry/bitter/sad about...
- ...can’t overcome/move on from...

Once we’ve begun to think about the challenges a character faces, we can begin to ‘flesh’ the character out: to imagine what they look like and how they act. A good starting point for the next stage of character development is to identify adjectives that describe the personality of the character. Below (on the next page) is a list of personality traits – positive and negative. Pick ten which describe the personality of your character. There should be some conflicting traits – such as caring and violent – because all humans have contradictory traits.

An important part of imagining the character you’re writing about is to appreciate the conflicts of feelings they can experience: how they can be both kind and selfish, loving or brutal. To help you think about the complexities and contradictions within your character, write some statements pinpointing the conflicts within them. The more you imagine and think about this, the better you will be able to ‘get inside the character’s head’ and write about the character.

These formulas can help you write such statements:

- [Insert character’s name] is...but also often/sometimes...
- [Insert character’s name] can be..but is also...
- [Insert character’s name] could be...but is usually/normally...

PERSONALITY TRAITS – POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

• Adventurous / Unadventurous • Aspiring / Unenthusiastic • Calm / Irrational • Capable / Incapable • Caring / Insensitive • Compassionate / Unkind • Confident / Insecure • Considerate / Inconsiderate • Courageous / Cowardly • Curious / Incurious • Decisive / Indecisive • Dramatic / Unexciting • Dutiful / Unfaithful • Efficient / Inefficient • Faithful / Betraying • Firm / Infirm • Flexible / Inflexible • Friendly / Unfriendly • Fortright / Dishonest • Generous / Ungenerous • Gentle / Forceful • Good natured / Bad natured • Helpful / Unhelpful • Heroic / Fearful • Honest / Dishonest • Humorous / Morose • dealistic / Cynical • Independent / Dependent • Individualistic / Unselfish	• Intuitive / Calculating • Kind / Unkind • Logical / Emotional • Loyal / Disloyal • Observant / Unobservant • Objective / Subjective • Optimistic / Pessimistic • Passionate / Apathetic • Peaceful / Violent • Practical / Impractical • Principled / Unprincipled • Protective / Hurtful • Purposeful / Aimless • Realistic / Unrealistic • Responsive / Non-responsive • Responsible / Irresponsible • Secure / Insecure • Selfless / Selfish • Sensitive / Insensitive • Sociable / Unsociable • Strong / Weak • Thorough / Thoughtless • Warm / Cold
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For example: *Kate could be confident, but is usually insecure.*

The last part of imagining a character is to think about what they look like, sound like, think like and act like.

These questions will help you start thinking about the ways you can describe a character to show your audience what they’re like:

- How does the character’s appearance (their physical appearance and their dress) show us what they are like?
- What objects might a character carry with them that show us something about them?
- How does a character move or act that shows us what they are like?
- How does a character interact with others that shows us what they are like?
- What words does a character use that shows us what they are like?
- What does the character see when they think about themselves?
- What does a character see when they think about the world around them?
- What does a character see when they think about other people around them?

In identifying words a character uses, look back at the ‘Word Level’ table earlier in this chapter. A stronger creative response will utilise the same or similar words that the model text employs.

PLOT DEVICES/EVENTS

There are two types of problems in a story:

1. Character problem: a character feels inside them that they can’t do something or be something
2. Plot device: an event occurs which creates a problem

In the previous section you looked at the problems characters have. In an effective creative narrative the plot device creates a situation where a character needs to confront the problem within them. For example, a character may think they are incapable of being a leader. However if, by some plot device in a story, this character finds themselves on a desert island with a group of people, a situation exists which will challenge this character to overcome their insecurity.

Plot devices don’t always need to be big events (like the desert island example). In fact, for creative responses to texts - where you are writing a new scene or an original story - it will be more effective to make your plot devices something small and manageable (see the example creative response later in this chapter). Here are some examples of common plot devices in scenes from novels and short stories:

- A character is confronted by an unfamiliar character.
- There is a conversation between one character and another character where the new character has an opinion perspective which challenges the first character.
- There is a conversation between one character and another character where one of the characters has a hidden agenda.
- A character hears news of some kind.
- A character observes the behaviour of other characters.
- A character witnesses an event of some kind.
- A character moves from one setting to another setting.

You can use this formula to help you express the relationship between the character problem and the plot device:

- When [insert event] happens the main character is forced to/must/must confront/is challenged to...

These are words you can use to describe how the main character will respond to the situation they find themselves in:

- Overcome
- Gain
- Use
- Accept
- Realize
- See
- Feel

RESOLUTION/ENDINGS

Ending a creative piece well can often be the hardest part of writing. It can be relatively easy to create an engaging opening, but how to manage a satisfying end? The trick is to realise that in a narrative moment, not everything needs to be wrapped up and resolved. In fact, if you try to do this – to explain how everything worked out – it’s likely not to work. In rewriting a scene, writing a new scene or writing a short story, things need come to some kind of end, but not all of the problems need to be resolved. To help you think about how you might end your piece, read through the last paragraphs in the chapters, stories, sections or passages from the text you’re responding to. Is there a pattern in how the author brings things to a conclusion?

Here are some examples of how scenes or short stories can end:

- Character makes some type of key decision

Kate turned and looked around the room and began, for the first time in a long time, to think about what to do next.

Notice that the conclusion doesn’t explain all the details about what happened in the end – it just brings the moment to a close.

- A concluding action

Kate turned and looked around the room with an idea spreading in her head about what to do. She began by reaching down to Jenni and helping her stand up.

- Dialogue

Still with the security man’s hand in hers, Kate said, “I think I know what we need to do now”.

- A description about a character

The shadow that had sunk onto Kate’s brow began to move away like a cloud. She pulled her hair back and looked, as if for the first time, around the room.

- A description about the setting/scene

Kate stood up and walked resolutely to the front of the group and began to speak. Outside, the frenetic pace of the airport seemed to calm, like the ocean comes to a rest and, though there were no windows letting in natural light, there was a sense that the day was coming to an end.

PLANNING A CREATIVE RESPONSE

This template can be used to help you map out your creative response. In the text you’re responding to, an author will use a considerable range of techniques to create the text’s unique voice. You cannot adopt or respond to all of these. Pick 2-3 that you think you can do well.

What is the setting of your story?		
If this story is set outside the world of the text how does the setting relate to the text?		
If this response is set within the world of the text, what specific part of the text is it responding to?		
Main theme from the text being explored:		
The point of this piece is to show:		
What are 2-3 key features the author in the text being responded to uses to create voice that will be employed in this piece?		
	What will happen?	What will be shown about the character, setting or ideas?
Opening/Orientation		
Body		
Closing/Resolution		

FIND A BLANK COPY OF THIS TEMPLATE AT:
www.tickingmind.com.au/creative-response-planning-template

SOME BASIC CREATIVE FEATURES

We have said again and again in this book that variety is important – no matter what type of writing you are doing. Variety, in particular, is the lifeblood of creative writing. You need to mix things up to keep the reader engaged and to keep creating striking combinations of words. The text you’re creatively responding to will do one or more of the things below to produce consistently good creative writing. It is a good idea to consider how the text you’re responding to typically utilises these stylistic elements and think about how you could adopt them in your own writing.

Use a range of alternatives to ‘then’:

‘Then’ is one of the most basic words we use to show how one thing happens after another. Like we’ve said elsewhere – there’s nothing wrong with employing a common word like ‘then’, it’s only a problem if you over-use it (which we can easily do). The words listed below aren’t all straight substitutes for ‘then’ – but they are all words which can be used at the beginning of sentences to indicate when something happened or is happening.

The words and phrases have been arranged into groups according to ‘what time’ they show events as occurring:

• <u>already</u> • <u>prior to</u> • <u>previously</u> • <u>before</u> • <u>earlier</u> • <u>at last</u> • <u>at that moment</u> • <u>at that time</u> • <u>at that point</u> • <u>at that instant</u> • <u>next</u> • <u>after</u> • <u>afterwards</u>	• <u>soon</u> • <u>soon after</u> • <u>soon afterwards</u> • <u>subsequently</u> • <u>from there</u> • <u>from that point</u> • <u>later</u> • <u>sometime later</u> • <u>eventually</u> • <u>finally</u>
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Avoid using common adjectives like ‘good’:

If you’re going to use an adjective, make sure it’s interesting. Underlined below, are a list of the most frequently used adjectives in English.

Try to avoid these. If you’re thinking about using one – experiment with one of the alternatives listed next to it.

- **Good (and great):**
excellent, perfect, fine, first class, superb, exceptional, acceptable, wonderful, marvellous
- **Nice:**
friendly, gentle, kindly, helpful, pleasant, fair, lovely, genial
- **Fun:**
enjoyable, entertaining, amusing, lively, diverting, convivial, merry, delightful
- **Bad:**
awful, dreadful, lousy, poor, rough, unacceptable, atrocious
- **Beautiful:**
gorgeous, appealing, alluring, delicate, handsome, graceful, splendid
- **Big/huge/massive (and great):**
colossal, enormous, immense, vast, tremendous, considerable, large, mammoth
- **Important:**
essential, necessary, significant, influential, serious

Employ different ways to describe a thing

Adjectives – describing words – are an essential tool in any creative piece. The most regular way we use adjectives is before a noun (the name of an object, person, place, feeling or idea) such as in this example: **the large mountain**. But there are many other ways we can employ adjectives to describe a thing. Here are a few:

- **the large, dark mountain** (two adjectives)
- **the large, dark, rugged mountain** (two adjectives plus an -ed adjective)
- **the twisted, shadowed mountain** (two -ed adjectives)
- **the elephant-like mountain** (a noun hyphenated with ‘like’ to create an adjective)
- **the large, elephant-like mountain** (an adjective plus a like-hyphenated-noun)
- **the elephant shaped mountain** (a noun plus an -ed adjective)
- **the rising mountain** (an -ing word)
- **the rising, twisting mountain** (two -ing words)
- **the bulk of mountain** (a noun plus ‘of’)
- **the vast bulk of mountain** (an adjective, noun plus ‘of’)
- **the dark rising of the mountain** (an -ing word plus ‘of’)
- **the mountain, dark and gloomy** (adjectives after the noun)
- **the mountain, rising into the night** (an -ing word after the noun)

After you’ve drafted some creative writing, read back through it and circle the adjectives you have used. With the help of the list above, consider whether you can vary any of the ways you have used adjectives in your draft.

Structure similes in different ways:

Similes are a core element of creative writing and there are many ways of structuring them. In the table below you will find examples of numerous variations of the basic simile structure. What types of simile structures does the author in the text you’re responding to use?

SIMILE TYPE	EXAMPLE
Basic, short simile	• He looked like a beetle. • He was small and beady eyed as a beetle.
Basic simile with explanation	• He looked like a beetle, small and scuttling.
Basic simile with tricolon	• He looked like a beetle, small, scurrying and insignificant.
Basic simile at start of sentence	• Like a beetle, he scuttled away. • Just as if he were a beetle, he scurried away.
Basic simile - mid sentence	• He scuttled, just like a beetle, away to his office.
Simile with additional information.	• He looked like a beetle - the small nasty sort - as he scuttled away.
As if’ simile	• He looked as if he were a beetle, scuttling away.
Follow on simile	• He was like a beetle. He crept, scurried and hid here and there. • He was like a beetle: he crept, scurried and hid here and there.
‘Appear’, ‘look’, ‘seem’ simile	• Scurrying here and there, he seemed like a beetle. • He had the appearance of a beetle, small and scuttling. • He had the look of a beetle about him, small and scuttling.
Multiple comparison simile	• He was like a beetle, a slug or an insect. • He was like a beetle, a slug or an insect. His arms were like sticks, his back hunched like a shell, and his eyes were small and beady like a cockroach.

Be creative with paragraph length and structure:

Like an essay paragraph, the creative writing paragraph has a topic or point. Unlike essay paragraphs which aim to be the same length (usually 5-8 sentences) and generally follow a set structure of a topic sentence, body and concluding sentences, creative writing paragraphs might be anything from 1 to 20 (or more) sentences in length and vary greatly in their structure.

Here is an example creative paragraph from Naomi Shihab Nye’s collection of short stories *There Is No Long Distance Now* and a discussion of how it has been constructed.

Something crashed in the kitchen. Danni got up, slipped into moccasins, and tiptoed to see. A tiny blue glass vase had fallen from the windowsill and smashed on the floor. She looked for a broom. It was always so hard to find anything useful. She wondered if it were safe to be that close to the window herself. GIRL BEHEADED BY FLYING WINDOW!

The following general rules about creative writing paragraphs are based on the above example:

1. There is one main action, feeling, description or idea in a creative paragraph (this could be conveyed in only one sentence). In the above paragraph this is it:

Something crashed in the kitchen.

2. The main action, feeling, description or idea could be conveyed in the first sentence of a creative writing paragraph in a range of ways. The first sentence of the example paragraph above could have also been written like this:

- Dialogue/Quote: “Crash” - there was the sound of something breaking.
- An action/description which leads into the main action/description: Danni looked out the window at the falling rain. Behind her she suddenly heard the sound of a crash in the kitchen.

3. The body of the paragraph can include further details about the main action, feeling, description or idea. This may include:

- Reactions/subsequent actions:
Danni got up, slipped into moccasins, and tiptoed to see.
- Further descriptions:
A tiny blue glass vase
- Descriptions of associated feelings, actions (such as prior events) and ideas that the main action causes:
It was always so hard to find anything useful. She wondered if it were safe to be that close to the window herself.
- A powerful/strong description or action to conclude the sentence:
GIRL BEHEADED BY FLYING WINDOW!

4. The list of above further details may be used in any order (remember it’s creative writing, mix things up) and to any extent (paragraphs don’t need to be the same length - but they must be effective at conveying a main idea, action, feeling or description).

WRITING AN EXPLANATION ABOUT YOUR CREATIVE RESPONSE

Creative responses to texts will need to be accompanied by a written explanation which outlines how your piece meaningfully responds to a text. If you've thought critically about the choices you make in your creative effort, and have used tools and techniques from the first part of this chapter, then putting together a written explanation should be easy enough. An effective written explanation should be about three paragraphs long and include these three sections (an example is included at the end of the chapter):

What is the text about?

The first paragraph of a written explanation should read almost like the introduction to a text response essay. The purpose of this part of the written explanation is to show your understanding of the key themes of the text you're responding to and the purpose of the author.

What is your creative response? How does it link with the text you're responding to?

Having established what the text you're responding to is about, the task of the second paragraph of the written explanation is to outline how your own creative effort links in with this. It should include:

- An explanation of the central idea behind your piece
- An explanation of where it the piece would fit in the text you're responding to if it's a new scene or a rewriting of a scene; or which particular features of the settings, characters and problems your story is adopting if it is an original response
- A reflection on why you think the moment you explore in your creative piece is important and what you think it shows us about the themes and characters from the text

What technique do you use in your response?

The final paragraph of the written explanation must focus on how your creative piece adopts the specific techniques of the text you're responding to. You should describe at least 2-3 techniques an author uses, why and how they use them, and outline how you use them in your own piece. This may include citing actual examples/quotes from your own piece or from the text you're responding to.

EXAMPLE CREATIVE RESPONSE

The final section of this chapter is an example creative response. This creative effort is a response to Hannah Kent's *Burial Rites*, a novel which retells the real story of the last woman executed in Iceland in the 19th century.

Example written explanation

Take careful note of the three paragraph structure of the example written explanation - particularly how it starts with a discussion of the key ideas in the text and how it finishes with specific examples of techniques used in the student's own creative piece.

<i>Hannah Kent's Burial Rites is an exploration of a woman as a outsider in conservative and brutal 19th century Iceland. Agnes Magnúsdóttir, the novel's protagonist, who is sentenced to death because of her role in the murder of Natan Ketilsson, is an educated woman of profound emotions who finds herself at odds with a society that expects women to be obedient wives with a healthy fear of God. Kent's narrative alternates from first person narration, giving the historically voiceless Agnes a voice, and third person narration, allowing the reader to judge and empathise with a range of characters who are involved with Agnes' journey towards her death.</i>	Opening sentence which is very much like an introductory statement from a text response essay. This establishes that the student understands the broad theme and purpose of the text. A more specific comment about how a key technique in the text allows the author to establish an important theme.
<i>My creative response is a new scene that could be inserted about midway into the narrative as a flashback. It relates the moment where Agnes meets Toti for the first time, when he helps her to cross a river. This moment is alluded to a number of times by Agnes, but never fully described. I felt that this moment from Agnes' life was an important one to tell more fully, because it can reveal a number of the complexities of her character. I imagine that having left a farm and being confronted with a flooding river, Agnes felt alone. Loneliness and the experience of being an outsider are important theme throughout the text. In this scene, as in the book, Toti is not meant to be a heroic character. Rather, for Agnes, he represents the idea of compassion and hope. This is what I try to show in my story.</i>	An outline of the basic idea behind the creative response and where it would fit into the text being responded to. An explanation about why the student believes this creative response will show something important about the protagonist of <i>Burial Rites</i>.

There are a vast range of techniques that Kent employs to give Agnes her voice in <i>Burial Rites</i> and to give her narrative as a whole a voice and character. In my piece <u>I've chosen to focus on a few key techniques. I've chosen to write my narrative in first person. I've also adopted some key features of Agnes' first person narration which she uses throughout her story such as writing the scene in present tense, this gives the reader the sense that they are there with Agnes as she tells her story. I've also used the technique of the short, sometimes fragmented sentences Agnes often writes with. These sentences emphasise the emotions Agnes feels and force the reader to focus on particular words. An example of this is my sentence "A bad omen" which highlights the foreboding, supernatural quality of the landscape Agnes lives in.</u>	A discussion of specific types of techniques used by the author in the text being responded to and how the student is employing them in their response. An example of where the student uses one of the techniques in their own response.
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Example creative response

For the creative response, pay attention to how this piece captures a ‘narrative moment’ - something which unravels over 10-15 minutes. Not a lot actually happens.

The best student text response creative writing happens when students focus on characterisation, setting, mood and a few actions.

This means students write richly descriptive pieces, exploring character feelings and thoughts, rather than pieces which are jam-packed with events but don’t meaningfully link to the text being responded to or adopt the author’s ‘voice’.

<u>I have been wondering why I asked for Toti. This man who is no more than a child really. But sometimes, as I sit with him, I go back to that time in the valley. The time he helped me cross the river. The time before I had met Natan, before I had fallen into a dark love. Before I was a murderess. When I was still Agnes Magnusdottir.</u>	Written in present tense like the first person narrative parts of <i>Burial Rites</i>. Creates a sense of immediacy about the narrative.
<u>It is raining the day I first meet Toti. The sky is blue-gray when I leave Fannlaugarstadir and as I walk away, the blue deepens into a purple. There is a thin mist, suspended in the air as if a veil has been thrown over the valley, cloaking it not only in a white cloth but also in silence. Standing on the edge of Fannlaugarstadir and looking back over the farm where I have spent the previous 8 months, my gaze follows a single raven rising from behind a hill. It flies over me towards the river in the direction I know I must follow. I can not hear it as it passes overhead. I feel it, though. Feel the beating wings. Feel its beating heart. Feel its yellow eyes. Too much feeling. A bad omen.</u>	A focus on describing the setting and mood rather than filling the narrative with action. Repetition of sentence starts and use of sentence fragments as Hannah Kent does in <i>Burial Rites</i>.

<u>I had lasted longer at Fannlaugarstadir than the previous farm. I had lasted as long as I could. The Farm Mistress had seen me off that morning without thanks and with barely a glance, just the words, "We have no more work." On her lips I could see the unsaid words, "For someone like you for you." There'll be work across the river, she said. She didn't wish me ill, I could see that. But she was uncomfortable. It was true that now winter had come, there was little work, yet I was the first of the servants to go. I didn't fit easily with the other workers. I was alone, like the raven.</u>	The first sentence of the paragraph introduces the broad topic/question: Why doesn't Agnes manage to stay for long periods at any farm? Short sentence to finish paragraph.
<i>The mist envelops the raven and I follow its silent path towards the river. I am heading back towards the Hunavatn District, back towards the valley and Kornsa. I hope, as the Farm Mistress has said, that there will be work there. But I know the chances are slim.</i>	Short paragraph after longer previous paragraph.
<i>And suddenly the river is before me. <u>It's brown and deep and the current looks like a thousand people rolling under a wide, dirt rug. I did not expect this, like I had not expected to be making this journey today. The mist seems to be reaching down into the current, brushing against it like a cat might brush against your leg. The current rolls on without a backwards glance. I look across the river. I am not frightened to cross. I do not worry about drowning, about being swept away, rolled over again and again in the swollen, hungry stomach of water. It's not fear that I feel. It's despair. What if I were to disappear now? What would be left of me to remember? Who would there be left to remember me?</u></i>	Use of a nature simile as Hannah Kent does in <i>Burial Rites</i>.
<i>I test the water with one foot as if it were a bridge and I am feeling the strength of the boards beneath my weight. Since it is no wooden bridge, the heel of my foot immediately sinks into the sludge. The bottom of the long woollen shawl I'm wearing drags in the water and in a moment the shawl, along with the despair I feel, become heavier.</i>	Varying the way sentences start with a preposition.
<i>I stop, hearing my deep breathing - not having gone further than a step. 'Wait!' I hear. And then I realise it's not my breath that I hear, it's the breath of a horse. <u>I turn and see him.</u> There is the boy I come to know as I wait for the axe that will swing down on my neck. Against the purple sky his hair is a sharp red, his face darkened, though I can see it is boyish and that he is looking down at me with concern. 'Let me help you across,' he says.</i>	Short sentence followed by longer sentences.

<i>He hops down and helps me onto the horse, guiding my foot into the stirrup and giving me what I can tell, for him, is an awkward push up. The mist is clearing slightly. I turn and look at him and laugh. I laugh from happiness. I laugh because I won't have to get wet crossing the river. I won't have to drown today. I can see my way through the mist. I laugh because when I look down at Toti he looks back at me with nothing on his face but the countenance of someone who wants to help.</i>	A longer sentence called an 'action chain' - i.e, a series of actions happen in the one sentence. This is common sentence structure in nearly all creative writing.
<i>Perhaps I ask him his name or perhaps he tells me as he pulls himself onto the horse. 'Toti,' he says. 'My name it Toti. I'll help you get across the river.' <u>This, I know, is why I have asked for him now.</u></i>	The resolution to the narrative moment is a 'bookend' - i.e, it comes back to the topic introduced at the start.

5. WRITING LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

This chapter will look at three types of tools and strategies you can use to construct insightful language analyses:

- 1. Annotating persuasive examples:
Effective analytical writing begins with insightful annotation of others' writing. This section will provide tips for fast, effective annotation using two different methods.
- 2. How to structure a language analysis:
There are several different ways you can structure a language analysis. This section will provide you with a run down of the different structures you can use and why you would use them.
- 3. Improving your sentence structure and vocabulary for insightful analysis:
This part of the chapter looks at the nuts and bolts of good analysis of persuasive language. It takes you through which particular types of words and sentence structures to use so that your ideas are represented in the best possible way.

ANNOTATING PERSUASIVE EXAMPLES

CONTENTION-SECTIONS-TECHNIQUES

When reading through a persuasive piece it's easy to fall into the trap of simply circling examples of persuasive techniques and labelling them.

However, for language analysis the task is not simply to create a list of persuasive techniques that an author employs - it's to write about how language is manipulated to support a contention.

This means that on reading through a persuasive piece our task is to:

- identify the central contention of a persuasive piece
- then to identify the different sections of a persuasive piece
- and finally to identify specific examples of persuasive language within these sections which the author uses to make their case

DOWNLOAD THIS CHART FROM:
www.tickingmind.com.au/contention-arguments-techniques

As a graphic organiser, it looks like this:

CENTRAL CONTENTION	DIFFERENT SECTIONS / TECHNIQUES AND EXAMPLES IN THESE SECTIONS	VERBS TO DESCRIBE AUTHOR USE OF TECHNIQUES/ AUDIENCE RESPONSE
	OPENING	
	BODY	
	CLOSING	
	VISUAL: Which section/techniques does visual re-inforce?	
	HEADLINE: Which section/techniques does headline re-inforce?	

As you read through a persuasive piece, you will find it useful to identify the contention, sections and persuasive techniques using these annotation strategies and tips:

Put a rectangle box around the contention:

The contention isn't necessarily in the first few lines. The trick is to find a sentence or part of a sentence which best summarises the contention of the author. This often isn't in the first line, but could in fact be in any part of the persuasive piece, including the heading.

Put circles around the opening, body and closing:

An important part of analysing how an author builds their case over the course of a persuasive piece is to appreciate the different sections within a piece and how techniques are used differently in each section. Longer pieces will always have these three sections, though shorter pieces such as blog comments or letters-to-the-editor may only have two of these sections:

- **The opening:** This is the part of piece which is designed to engage the audience's attention and to establish a connection with the audience. Typically this is the first body paragraph, but it may be longer
- **The body:** This section normally takes up the majority of a persuasive piece and will include one or more different arguments and further details about these arguments
- **The closing:** Usually the last paragraph (though it could be more than just the last paragraph). In this section, an author will often call their audience to take action, make a decision or emphasise what is most significant about the case being made.

Draw lines under persuasive language:

Don't underline whole sentences, but pick out the words and phrases within sentences which are most persuasive. The best language analysis focus on examining in detail the nuances of individual words and phrases.

ANNOTATING A PERSUASIVE PIECE BY CATEGORIES OF TECHNIQUES

Instead of dividing a piece into the sections of opening, body and closing and identifying examples of persuasive language within these sections, an alternative way to annotate a piece is by identifying examples of three broad categories of persuasive language.

An easy way to annotate a piece with this system is to use different colour highlighters. For example we might:

- Highlight language designed to connect to the audience in green
- Highlight emotive language in yellow
- Highlight appeals to reason and logic in blue

An advantage of highlighting the persuasive piece like this, is that it can make it easier for you to identify the changes in tone.

CATEGORY OF TECHNIQUE	SPECIFIC TYPES OF TECHNIQUE
Inclusive: Establishing a connection with the audience	• Inclusive language • Appealing to shared values • Rhetorical questions
Emotive: Emotionally appealing to the audience	• Appeals to fear, greed, compassion, justice, tradition and history, patriotism • Emphatic language - particularly adjectives
Logical: Appealing to reason and logic	• Appeals to common sense • Expert evidence, statistics, facts

The graphic organiser to note examples of these categories of techniques would look like this:

CENTRAL CONTENTION	DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF TECHNIQUES	VERBS TO DESCRIBE AUTHOR USE OF TECHNIQUES/ AUDIENCE RESPONSE
	ESTABLISHING A CONNECTION WITH THE AUDIENCE	
	APPEALING TO AUDIENCE EMOTIONS	
	APPEALING TO REASON AND LOGIC	
	VISUAL: Which section/techniques does visual re-inforce?	
	HEADLINE: Which section/techniques does headline re-inforce?	

DON'T JUST LABEL A TECHNIQUE, DISCUSS HOW THEY SUPPORT THE CONTENTION

You will have noticed that in the above graphic organiser for annotating a persuasive piece there was a column for ‘verbs to describe author use of technique/audience response’. While in the initial stages of reading a persuasive piece and identifying examples of persuasive language, it’s important to think beyond merely labelling examples of persuasive language with terms such as ‘rhetorical question’ or ‘appeal to the hip-pocket’. Although these terms can often be helpful, simply labelling a technique is not enough. We need to consider how techniques support an author’s contention. That’s where the verbs come in.

To help explain why verbs are important, let’s look at an example of a persuasive piece, following by an excerpt from a typical average student analytical response.

Issue background:

Public transport policy has increasingly been debated in Australia as our roads have become more congested. Some state governments have proposed spending more on roads, other state governments have supported increased funding of public transport. The following opinion piece on the issue appeared in a national newspaper.

A Free Ride
By Benita Smith

There are many reasons that, as a society, we believe more people should use public transport, but while we may wish more Australians utilised trains rather than cars, this does not necessarily change people’s habits. There is a simple solution to this conundrum - make public transport free. Nothing appeals more to a public under increasing credit stress than an appeal to their hip pocket. While the initial costs to governments would be high, saving money on the health costs of road traffic accidents would more than make up for this in the long term. Reducing the number of cars on our roads would also lead to safer bicycle travel and could help boost the numbers of people using this mode to travel, decreasing our national obesity levels and leading to better national health.

Australian’s use of public transport is abysmal. Too often drivers excuse the distances they must travel each day as a reason for their reliance upon cars and the increasing urban sprawl of our major capital cities certainly contributes to this. However while the furthest reaches of suburbs of Melbourne are 55kms from the city centre, it does not follow that all commuters are heading for the city to work. People tend to find excuses to use their cars, rather than not use them. This means that those people on the outer reaches of Melbourne are less likely to use public transport at a cost of \$51 per week, if they believe that the distances they travel are too long and inconvenient. Taking away the significant cost of public transport is one less excuse for using a car. If people travel for free, they are more likely to take a method that they may at first see as inconvenient. Distance would not be as significant as the savings that commuters would make.

It is not only commuters that would make savings. The cost of road traffic accidents is some \$15 billion per year, or \$41 million each day. This includes the costs of ambulance and emergency vehicles, road cleanup, hospital and rehabilitation - it does not even begin to include the human cost of road deaths and trauma. If governments want to save money on these figures, the simplest way to do so is to encourage people to drive less, and people to use public transport more. Making public transport free would require government investment, but it would not be as significant as the current investment they have in managing the disasters that occur on our roads everyday.

The direct savings on our roads are nothing compared with the potential savings on health. Recent studies have put the costs of obesity at \$21 billion per year for Australian governments. Obesity researcher Dr Barnewell has suggested that increasing incidental exercise could have a significant impact upon obesity levels. “Simply walking to and from the bus each day can have a dramatic effect upon their weight,” she suggests. “Car reliance is one of the biggest factors relating to the current increase in obesity levels we are seeing in Australia.” If governments want to save money on health services currently directed towards the obesity epidemic, they should invest money in programs designed to get people moving. Using public transport encourages people to increase their levels of incidental exercise as they walk to and from bus, train and tram stops each day. Making public transport free would provide an incentive for people to walk to and from their bus, train or tram stop each day.

There are many reasons we would like people to use more public transport, to increase their health and reduce the burden on our roads, but there is little incentive for people to take this option. It is currently far easier and therefore more attractive to drive. Making public transport free would increase its appeal to the general public. Rather than finding excuses not to use public transport, people would see it as a cost-effective way to travel. Governments would save money on the health problems created by driving as well as find a simple solution to help curb increasing obesity. Making public transport free is the fastest way for governments to start saving money.

If we read through this piece and first labeled the techniques that are used, we might end up with a list that looks like this:

- Attack:
“Australians’ use of public transport is abysmal”
- Appeal to logic/common sense:
“...it does not follow that all commuters are heading for the city to work.”
- Fact:
“...the furthest reaches of suburbs of Melbourne are 55kms from the city centre.”
- Appeal to hip pocket:
“Taking away the significant cost of public transport.”

It’s a good list – but that’s the problem: it’s a list.

This is an excerpt from an average student language analysis which uses a list such as the one opposite:

The author uses an attack when she says, “Australians’ use of public transport is abysmal”. The attack makes Australians look like they need to do a much better job. The author then writes that “it does not follow that all commuters are heading for the city to work”. This is an appeal to logic that makes it seem that the writer is reasonable and should be listened to. Next, the writer uses statistics when she says “the furthest reaches of suburbs of Melbourne are 55kms from the city centre”...

The writing above might look like a paragraph, but it reads pretty much just as a list. The problem is that when we start by labelling examples with the names of techniques, it encourages us to simply list these techniques in our analysis and when we list them we then tend to give a fairly generic outline of what the author is doing, not the affect it has on the readers. In other words, we’re not saying something insightful about how language supports an author to further their overall contention. Let’s return to the table from the opening of the chapter and see how it can provide a structure for us to annotate this same persuasive piece more effectively.

CENTRAL CONTENTION	DIFFERENT SECTIONS / TECHNIQUES AND EXAMPLES IN THESE SECTIONS		VERBS TO DESCRIBE AUTHOR USE OF TECHNIQUES/ AUDIENCE RESPONSE
Public transport should be free	OPENING		
	Emphatic language: “simple solution”		describes
	Emotive language: “credit stress”		links
	Listing of benefits: “saving money on the health costs”, “safer bicycle travel”, “decreasing our national obesity levels”		lists, outlines
	BODY		
	Attack: “abysmal”		laments
	Emphatic language: “significant cost of public transport”		stresses
	Statistics: “\$15 billion per year, or \$41 million each day”		highlights
	Emotive language: “the human cost of road deaths and trauma”		shocks
	Emphatic language: “simplest way”		contends
	Expert evidence: Obesity researcher Dr Barnewell		refers to
	Emphatic language: “significant impact”		emphasises
	CLOSING		
	Emphatic language: “simple solution”, “fastest way”		reassures
	Appeal to hip-pocket: “free”, “save money”, “save money”		repeats
HEADLINE: Which section/techniques does headline re-inforce?			
“A free ride” emphasises the value of free public transport - particularly links to conclusion which emphasises cost saving.			

Thinking about the verbs you'll use to write about the author's persuasive techniques means that you think more deeply about how a particular technique supports the overall contention and what the impact is. Here's an example sentence analysing the impact of the word "abysmal". Notice how employing a strong verb to begin with leads the student to write thoughtfully about the impact of the language and its connection to the contention:

When she laments our use of public transport as "abysmal", Benita Smith triggers a sense of shame in her audience that more is not being done and reinforces her overall contention that "free" public transport would provide an effective "solution" to what is currently a poor situation.

In the example language analysis above, 'laments' is the action the author performs, while 'triggers' denotes the impact on the audience. The table below lists a whole range of verbs like this you can use to initially annotate the author action in a persuasive text. You can later refer back to the right hand column in this table to help you write analytically about the impact of persuasive words on an audience.

AUTHOR ACTION		IMPACT/READER RESPONSE
The author writes/thinks/says	urges, posits, puts forth, makes the case, reasons, contends, disputes, challenges, opposes, contests, demands, claims, calls on, calls for action, appeals for action, believes	• addresses the reader's • activates the reader's • alarms the reader that... • allows the reader... • captures the reader's... • challenges the reader to see...as • clarifies for the reader... • confronts the reader... • compels the reader to... • creates for the reader... • directs the reader to... • elicits from the reader... • encourages the reader to... • engages the reader... • forces the reader to focus on... • fosters the reader's view that... • impresses upon the reader... • invites the reader to see... • influences the reader to see...as.. • leads the reader to... • prompts the reader to • provokes the reader... • positions the reader to • reassures the reader... • results in the reader... • serves to... • simplifies for the reader... • shocks the reader... • startles the reader... • triggers in the reader...
The author is supportive	praises, celebrates, champions, supports, approves, advocates, applauds, credits	
The author is negative	labels, dismisses, attacks, insults, rejects, denigrates, criticises, lambasts, demeans	
The author emphasises	emphasises, underscores, underlines, repeats, reiterates, reinforces, strengthens, exaggerates	
The author connects two or more things	links, connects...with, likens...to, compares...to, associates...with/to,, relates...to, equates..., parallels....	
The author creates an association	suggests to the reader, creates in the reader's mind, evokes for the reader, draws for the reader, invites the reader to picture or imagine, triggers for the reader, prompts the reader to see, implies, creates the connotation, establishes for the reader	
The author uses evidence	cites, refers (to), references, draws on, quotes, provides, points out/to, presents, lists, outlines	
The author uses a technique	utilises, employs, demonstrates...by/with, supports their case with	
The author tries	attempts, endeavours, aims, seeks	

Important note: All verbs can be used in two ways in sentences

- In the form they appear in the above table: The author attacks our “abysmal” use of public transport.
- Put putting an ‘-ing’ at the end: By attacking our record of public transport use as “abysmal”, the author appeals to the readers’ guilt about not doing more for public transport.

HOW TO STRUCTURE A LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

This section of the chapter will look at how to structure language analyses and how to write each part of a language analysis well. The examples of language analysis which are used are based on the following persuasive pieces.

Background:

‘Energy drink’ is the popular name for caffeinated soft drinks in Australia, which includes brands like Monster. Energy drinks are widely consumed, particularly by teenagers. In the last five years there has been debate about the health impact of these drinks, prompted by several drinks attributed to their consumption.

The following blog post on the issue of regulating energy drinks is from the website: *Smart Parents*.

Ban ‘Energy’ Drinks So We Can Raise Energetic Kids

By Sherryn Furter
Posted: 19/2/2015

I can’t remember the last time I was talking with other parents and we discussed how many short blacks our toddlers were consuming in the morning. I can’t remember it because it never happened. I don’t know a single parent who thinks it’s okay to serve their child caffeine. But somehow, we seem to ignore the caffeine our children consume in energy drinks. We ignore this on a personal level, and, more alarmingly, we ignore it on a societal level.

As a society, we must ban the sale of energy drinks to children. Caffeine is a substance suitable for adults and must be marketed as such.

While ad campaigns of people sipping a short black are usually of the George Clooney, sexy older man type, ad campaigns for energy drinks are typically of young men playing video games. Even though energy drinks usually have over twice the amount of caffeine in them.

Children’s bodies are not designed to absorb caffeine - they’re generally smaller than adults, so caffeine will affect children more; their heart rate is faster than that of adults, so they don’t need caffeine speeding it up any more; and children need far more sleep than adults, and we all know that caffeine can disrupt sleeping patterns.

This is looking at caffeine consumption at a basic level, without taking into consideration current trends in childrens’ health. By now, anyone who doesn’t live under a rock will know that anxiety levels in children are generally climbing. Caffeine increases the experience of anxiety. So more caffeine equals more anxious children.

But this is still too simplistic: energy drinks are more than caffeine, they also contain bucket-loads of sugar. And we all know that the obesity epidemic is getting worse. Energy drinks are encouraging a whole generation of obese, paranoid teenagers. And still we do nothing about it.

Look at the ad for Mountain Dew Kickstart: three young men sit soporifically on the couch playing a computer game. At least one of the boys is overweight. This is the demograph PepsiCola are appealing to. Even the Vikings in V’s advertising campaign are fairly lethargic and large. Obesity is an accepted phenomenon in the world of energy drinks. Purveyors of energy drinks know their demograph: average, overweight young men.

Of course, this is not to say that energy drinks can’t be aspirational as well: many ads for energy drinks portray elite, muscled athletes at the height of their skills. It’s just that most of the people who are drinking energy drinks aren’t actually burning though energy at these levels. Most of the young men who are drinking energy drinks are spending the vast amount of their time on their backsides, watching TV.

There is very little parents of teenagers can do against the juggernaut of popular culture. Our personal values of health and well-being are increasingly marginalised by the ad campaigns of multi-million dollar corporations. Increasingly, to the jaded ears of our teenage sons, we sound like the toothless counsellor from South Park, Mr Mackey, who intones, ‘H’m, drugs are bad, okay?’ We need public support and campaigns to support our efforts.

Seat belts are compulsory. Cigarette smoking has been banned in most public spaces. Alcohol consumption is restricted. But in spite of our interest in public health campaigns, nothing has been done to restrict or monitor the sale of energy drinks to children. This is unacceptable and must change. We need to act now. We need to help our children. We need to restrict the sale of energy drinks.

The following blog post appeared on the [Beware The Nanny State](#) website

It's About Your Freedoms and Responsibility To Make Your Own Choices, Stupid!

By Clive Post

Posted: 4/10/15

Most adults begin their day with a coffee - it's an ingrained part of our culture, and no one questions it. But many people don't like the taste of coffee. Their energy requirements (their desire for a caffeinated jolt to kick start their day) are just as high, but they'd prefer to drink something else. That's where energy drinks come in. And that's OK.

For some reason - perhaps it's because of the tremendous success of the Monster Energy Drink, which markets itself with the number of the devil, 666 - energy drinks have taken a place in modern, moralistic culture as some kind of demon. But they're just a drink, a bit of caffeinated fluid to help us through the day. Not a malignant force of evil.

Let's take some of the emotion out of the debate and focus upon the facts.

Fact Number One: Most energy drinks have the same amount of caffeine as the average cup of coffee.

Fact Number Two: Energy drinks are not targeted at small children, most consumers are young adults (and no one is preventing them from drinking coffee).

Fact Number Three: Energy drinks ARE regulated by the same bodies that regulate the rest of the food we consume.

Fact Number Four: No one is being forced to drink energy drinks.

Amidst all the hype of energy drinks, we all seem to have missed the point that people have a choice in what they consume and parents have a responsibility to monitor what their children are drinking. If parents don't want their children drinking energy drinks, they have a simple solution: don't buy them.

For some reason, there is a significant body of parents who want to give up on their responsibilities and ask others to make decisions for them. They want a nanny state. Rather than asking for a nanny state, I have some simple advice for these parents: If you can't do it yourself, hire an actual nanny.

Let the rest of us get on with making our own decisions for what we consume. Let the rest of us drink our caffeine in any form we damn well choose.

THE INTRODUCTION:

There are some basic things that should happen in the introduction of all language analyses.

They should all have:

- a one sentence summary of the issue the persuasive piece or pieces are responding to
- an overview of the two sides to this issue
- an identification of the author and text type (speech, blog, column, etc...)
- an overview of the contention or contentions of the pieces being analysed
- an indication of the likely audience of the pieces

Further along in this chapter you will find two persuasive pieces on the issue of energy drinks. An introduction to an analysis of these persuasive pieces might look like this:

Debate about energy drinks has arisen over the last five years as the caffeinated soft drink has become more and more popular, particularly amongst younger people. Writing on this issue - both on blogs but on separate websites - are Sherryn Furter and Clive Post who present opposing points of view. Furter's post appeared on the parenting website Smart Parents, and she contends in her blog that energy drinks are harmful for children and that "We need to restrict the sale of energy drinks". While Furter is concerned with the health implications of energy drinks, Post tackles the issue on the Beware The Nanny State website from the perspective of freedom of "choice", maintaining that we should be able to "drink our caffeine in any form we damn well choose."

These are some phrases you will find useful to use at the start of your introduction to summarise the issue and the text type the author is writing in:

- Debate about the issue of...has arisen because....
- Recently there has been debate about... due to/because...
- In response to this issue there has been a number of points of view. One such point of view is...
- Presenting their point of view on this issue is...who...

Something you will notice in the example introduction is that an actual quote from the persuasive piece is used to identify the author's contention. This can be a very effective element of a good introduction. If, in your annotations, you have circled a phrase or sentence that best summarises what the author is arguing (this might be the headline, the first sentence, the last sentence or any line in the body of a the piece), use this in your introduction:

- [Author's name] contends/argues/believes [insert quote]...

The introduction below, also analysing the two persuasive pieces on the issue of energy drinks, is a better example of identifying the tone of a piece:

The popularity and prevalence of energy drinks has recently come under fire as a number of deaths has been attributed to their consumption. Parental groups and health professionals have advocated for a greater control over their sale and distribution, while civil libertarians and purveyors of energy drinks have argued that energy drinks are already clearly labelled and are intended only to be used by adults. In a blog post on the parenting website ‘Smart Parents’, Sherryn Furter launched a scathing attack on energy drinks manufacturers, linking these drinks to a range of health issues, including the increasingly pervasive problem of obesity. On an unrelated website, ‘Beware the Nanny State’, Clive Post has argued conversely, suggesting that individuals are the best people to make their own health choices; he dismisses the arguments of people like Furter as hysterical.

There are two effective ways this example introduction identifies tone. The first is the phrase ‘scathing attack’. This phrase identifies the particular type of point of view (‘attack’) and then chooses an appropriate adjective to go with it (‘scathing’). The table below provides some words which will help you do this yourself. In the left hand column is a list of words that can help you identify the particular type of case which is being made and in the middle column are adjectives which can be used to describe the case which is being made.

The second way the example introduction identifies tone is through the verb ‘dismisses’. This verb is more specific than ‘contends’ or ‘argues’, neither of which really provide a sense of the particular tone an author brings to their point of view. In the right hand column of the table below is a series of suggestions of more specific verbs that can be used in this way.

WHAT TYPE OF POINT OF VIEW IS BEING PUT FORWARD?	HOW CAN THIS POINT OF VIEW BE DESCRIBED?	WHAT VERB DESCRIBES HOW AN AUTHOR IS PUTTING THEIR POINT OF VIEW FORWARD?
point of view case	emotional / emotionally passionate / passionately earnest / earnestly urgent / urgently	outlines the case advances the point of view
plea appeal call to action call for support	angry / angrily scathing / scathingly	appeals to calls for supports
attack critique dismissal	reasoned / with reason measured / measuredly sarcastic / sarcastically humorous / humorously	attacks makes the case against critiques dismisses rejects
urging bid proposition recommendation	dismissive / dismissively critical / critically disdainful / disdainfully enthusiastic / enthusiastically ardent / ardently	urges bids proposes recommends

THE BODY:

There are generally two ways of structuring a language analysis:

- By analysing the opening, body and closing of a piece and having at least one body paragraph on each of these sections
- By grouping similar techniques together and writing different body paragraphs for each group of techniques

Included below is a dissection of these two ways of structuring an analysis.

Opening-Body-Closing Structure

This style of language analysis is built around analysing a piece from beginning to end. Read through a whole example of this way of structuring an analysis below. The example is followed by a discussion of tools and strategies you can use to structure your own analyses like this.

<i>Debate about energy drinks has arisen over the last five years as the caffeinated soft drink has become more and more popular, particularly amongst younger people. Writing on this issue - both on blogs but on separate websites - are Sherryn Furter and Clive Post who present opposing points of view. Furter's post appeared on the parenting website Smart Parents, and she contends in her blog that energy drinks are harmful for children and that society needs "to restrict the sale of energy drinks". While Furter is concerned with the health implications of energy drinks, Post tackles the issue on the Beware The Nanny State website from the perspective of freedom of "choice", maintaining that we should be able to "drink our caffeine in any form we damn well choose."</i>	Introduction includes: • The background to the issue • Identification of author • Identification of author's contention • Identification of text type
<i>Furter begins her piece by targeting her audience of parents. She points out that she doesn't "know a single parent who thinks it's okay to serve their child caffeine." Here, Furter is appealing to her audience's strong need to have an attitude that is in line with what is deemed to be normal and good. By emphasising that she doesn't know a "single parent" who has a different attitude, it means the reader would not want to be different in their attitude either. Furter follows this up by employing the word "alarmingly" to describe how "we seem to ignore the caffeine our children consume in energy drinks." "Alarmingly" instantly triggers in the mind of the reader a vision of this issue being about sudden and horrifying danger.</i>	An effective Opening-Body-Closing analysis typically starts by analysing how the opening engages directly with the audience. 'Points', 'emphasising' and 'triggers' are all examples of specific verbs to describe the actions of the author.

In the body of her piece, Furter seeks to build upon the alarmist association she created in the opening of her piece, by outlining the dangerous health implications of energy drinks. There are a two main arguments Furter puts forth about the health consequences of energy drinks. Firstly, Further characterises energy drink ads as being about "young men playing video games." She later describes that in one such ad the boys play these games "soporifically" and that "at least one of the boys is overweight". The combined effect of the words "soporifically" and "overweight" is to appeal to her audience's fears that if their children drink energy drinks, they will become obese sloths. Both the headline and the visual of Furter's piece re-inforce the irony that energy drinks don't in fact encourage kids to run around, but instead to be "lethargic". The picture of the energy soft drink can, with the startling image of a toxic waste symbol and, underneath it a "Government Health Suggestion" which labels the contents of the can as "toxic spew", further underscore this argument that energy drinks don't provide actual energy to young people, but are in fact "toxic" to their energy levels and general health. In particular, the toxic waste symbol - which audiences would immediately associate with extremely hazardous substances - would heighten fears about the health damage of energy drinks, such as causing children to become "overweight" or "lethargic".

The second main argument Furter presents in the body of her piece is that "energy drinks...contain bucket-loads of sugar". Importantly, Furter doesn't put a number on exactly how much sugar there is in the energy drinks. Rather, the description "bucket-loads of sugar" deliberately exaggerates how much sugar there is in an energy drink, creating an image for the reader of colossal amounts of unhealthy ingredients in the energy drink. Furter links the amount of sugar in energy drinks to the "obesity epidemic" returning to the fear she created for the audience with her previous argument that energy drinks lead to "overweight" and "lethargic" children.

The topic sentence of each body paragraph in an Opening-Body-Closing analysis identifies:

- A key argument/strategy an author is using in a particular section of their persuasive piece
- How this links to the previous section of their persuasive piece

Effective analysis focuses on describing in detail the impact of specific words and phrases.

The headline and visual are incorporated into analysis of the written piece. They are discussed in terms of how they support a key argument this author is making.

Describing the associations words and phrases create is essential to good language analysis. The important part of this skill is to be detailed in describing the association a word or phrase creates.

Having made her case about what is wrong with energy drinks, in the closing of her piece Furter contends that action should be taken: “We need to restrict the sale of energy drinks”. Furter argues that such restrictions should be put in place because there is “very little” parents can do to persuade their children not to drink such drinks when advertising for the drinks is promoted by “multi-million dollar corporations”. With these descriptions Furter contrasts the relative powerlessness of parents against what readers will now see as supremely influential companies. Since parents now see themselves as powerless, it leaves them with no other logical choice than to agree with Furter that the sale of energy drinks should be restricted, especially since Furter further compares energy drinks to “cigarette smoking” and “alcohol consumption” which are already restricted.	This paragraph doesn’t analyse everything in the body of the persuasive piece. It picks out a few things and writes about those things in detail.
Interestingly, Clive Post’s blog which argues that we shouldn’t restrict the sale of energy drinks, begins, like Furter’s piece, by positioning the audience to want to be part of a normal attitude to coffee drinking. Unlike Furter’s piece which wants readers to see that normal parents don’t think it’s fine for children to drink coffee, Post argues that “Most adults begin their day with a coffee” but that some prefer to drink energy drinks “And that’s OK”. These last words, particularly the use of the everyday “ok” allow the reader to see energy drink consumption as part of the normal, everyday act of drinking coffee which they probably carry out themselves.	Transition to the next piece acknowledges similarities in differences in how each piece begins.
Manipulating his readers to see energy drink consumption as normal and just like other things in society is the key argument behind the body of Post’s blog. Post argues that energy drinks are “just a drink” and “a bit of caffeinated fluid”. The words “just” and “bit” deliberately minimise the negative health consequences of energy drinks, just as Furter’s words “bucket loads of sugar” seek to exaggerate them. To support his minimisation of the health problems that energy drinks can cause, Post lists four “facts”. In two of these “facts” Post emphasises how energy drinks are the “same” as something else - they have the “same” amount of caffeine as an “average” coffee and are regulated by the “same” bodies as other foods we consume. By showing how things are the “same” Post attempts to remove readers’ fears that energy drinks are somehow different and worse to other things.	Beginning sentences with ‘-ing’ words is one way this example language analysis writes more detailed and varied sentences. The analysis uses compare and contrast words such as ‘just as’ to discuss how two persuasive piece are similar or different.

Post’s piece closes with a <u>call-to-action</u> about the attitude we should have towards energy drinks. He argues that parents have “responsibilities” to look after their children’s health and if they are concerned by the health consequences of energy drinks then there is a “simple solution: don’t buy them”. The adjective “simple” is a powerful way to influence an audience to think that an issue has no complexity and solving it is common sense. In this case, readers will be lead to think that the issue actually is as easy as parents just not buying energy drinks. <u>The last sentences</u> of Post’s piece repeat the phrase “let the rest of us” as well as employing the related inclusive language, “any form we damn well choose”. This inclusive language returns Post’s readers to the argument he made at the start of the piece, that “we” all drink coffee, that it’s part of our normal lives and that it’s the people who want to regulate it who are different.	The language analysis identifies the type of action the author expects the audience to take. The last sentence of a persuasive piece can often be important to analyse.
Both Furter and Post aim to make their readers see that their attitudes are the most normal and acceptable ones. Each author also exaggerates the health impact or non-impact of energy drinks in an attempt to persuade the reader. However, in the end, Furter’s piece is <u>most effective</u> at manipulating her specific audience of parents who would be more frightened by the image of fat, unhealthy kids that Furter creates.	The language analysis evaluates not which piece the student thinks is best, but which piece they consider most likely to persuade its intended audience.

Topic sentence/transition phrases to use in an Opening-Body-Closing analysis:

Below are basic models of topic sentences and transition phrases which can be used at the start of body paragraphs in an Opening-Body-Closing analysis to acknowledge contention and arguments and link to previous paragraphs:

OPENING • The author opens by... • The author commences the piece with... • The author initially sets out to... • The author’s initial strategy is to...
BODY • Having established... • Having created for the reader... • Having argued.... • Having dismissed.... • Having positioned the reader to see... • Following on from this, the author... • ...the author moves onto • ...the author turns their attention to • ...the author next • ...the author follows on/up with • The author’s argument that.../dismissal of/...provides a springboard/launching pad for... • The author’s intention in the body of the piece is to... • Central to the author’s strategy in the body of the piece is... • Essentially, in the body of the piece the author is... • For the majority of the body of the piece the author is... • Not content with just...the author also wants... • The author builds upon... • The author capitalises on...
CLOSING • In the conclusion, the author seeks to show... • In the conclusion, the author builds upon/capitalises on... • The conclusion of the author’s logic is to..

Identifying and discussing the audience of a persuasive piece

Every persuasive piece begins by attempting to engage the audience. In an Opening-Body-Closing analysis it’s important to discuss who the audience of a persuasive piece is and how the persuasive piece tries to engage this particular audience in the first body paragraph of your analysis. These are three essential questions to consider when analysing the opening of a persuasive piece:

- Who does the author assume is reading this piece?
- What does the author assume is the attitude or level of knowledge of a group of people reading this persuasive piece?

- What does the author do in the opening of their piece to address, engage with or challenge the attitude or level of knowledge they assume a group of people reading this persuasive piece has?

In terms of this last question, these four strategies below are not an exhaustive list of techniques used by authors at the start of a piece, but they will help you begin to answer the question.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FACTS	Openings will often outline the known facts concerning an issue. While there might not necessarily be anything new or startling about what is said, it’s a basic way of ensuring the audience is engaged by starting from a common point of understanding.
STARTLING/ENGAGING INFORMATION, FACTS, PICTURES	Rather than just starting with well known facts about an issue, this method relies upon more shocking or interesting stories, statistics or examples to anger or surprise the audience.
CHALLENGE TO AUDIENCE ASSUMPTIONS	This method attempts to shake readers from a sense of complacency about the issue, to establish that there is work to be done, and that the audience needs to be engaged in the process.
INCLUSIVITY	Inclusive language is a technique which is typically used in conjunction with any of the above procedures. Inclusive language can be used strategically by an author right from the start of a persuasive piece in order to stress to the audience that they have a connection with the issue.

Transition words to link analysis of different pieces

Opening-Body-Closing analyses will typically discuss one persuasive piece and then move onto further pieces. These words below will help you transition from one piece to another.

THE PIECES ARE DIFFERENT	THE PIECE ARE SIMILAR
• Counters • Claims otherwise • Asserts differently • On the other hand • Contrary to this • Counter to this • Opposing this • A competing perspective is offered by • With a different tone	• Similarly • Likewise • From a similar perspective • In agreement to this • Agreeing with this • Also arguing/stating/contenting/believe this • [Insert author name] also argues/states/ contends/believe this

Grouping Similar Techniques Together Structure

This style of language analysis is structured around comparing the groups of techniques in persuasive pieces. A key advantage of this style of structuring an analysis is the richer level of comparison of two or more pieces that is often achieved. As you read through the example below, notice how it groups the techniques together.

<i>The popularity and prevalence of energy drinks has recently come under fire as a number of deaths has been attributed to their consumption. Parental groups and health professionals have advocated for a greater control over their sale and distribution, while civil libertarians and purveyors of energy drinks have argued that energy drinks are already clearly labelled and are intended only to be used by adults. In a blog post on the parenting website ‘Smart Parents’, Sherryn Furter launched a scathing attack on energy drinks manufacturers, linking these drinks to a range of health issues, including the increasingly pervasive problem of obesity. On an unrelated website, ‘Beware the Nanny State’, Clive Post has argued conversely, suggesting that individuals are the best people to make their own health choices; he dismisses the arguments of people like Furter as hysterical.</i>	Introduction establishes: • background to issue • competing perspectives on the issue • the author, contention, text type and tone of pieces in response to the issue
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<i>Both writers begin their pieces with an attempt to connect with their audience: because Furter is writing for a parenting website, she begins with an anecdote about conversations between parents. In her opening two sentences, she outlines the kind of conversation she cannot imagine parents ever having. As she is herself a parent, her audience of equally concerned parents are likely to find this opening both sympathetic and amusing. She further connects with her audience with the use of the inclusive ‘we’ and, particularly highlights the shared experiences of parents, with phrases such as ‘we all know’. Moreover, she connects with values she shares with her audience - ‘personal values of health and well-being’ - aligning herself with a vast audience of parents who believe they are acting in the best interests of their children. Furter also appeals to an audience who is probably predominantly female and heterosexual, by highlighting the sex appeal of coffee drinkers like George Clooney, against ‘young men playing video games’. Post is also attempting to connect with the adult audience, but in his post he focuses upon adults who are not necessarily parents, connecting with them in their desire to consume caffeine in any form they choose. He distances himself from parents with the use of the pronoun ‘they’ and supports readers who want to make their ‘own decisions’, clearly establishing an ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy, forcing his readers to dismiss parents as over-anxious and ridiculous. Both writers clearly establish themselves as belonging comfortably with a readership who will share their concerns and side with their arguments.</i>	The first body paragraph focuses on techniques designed to build a connection with the audience. The first half of the body paragraph concentrates on just one of the persuasive pieces. The second half of the body paragraph looks at the other persuasive piece.
<i>Any issue involving children is a highly emotive one, and both writers take full advantage of this to press their point. Furter uses words such as ‘alarmingly’, to evoke the idea that parents should be on the alert about this issue, that alarm bells should be ringing for them. She also attacks consumers of energy drinks, characterising them as ‘soporific’ and ‘overweight young men’ - by doing so she creates an image of these consumers as undesirable and far from the ideal of healthy, thriving children that her readers aspire to. While Post writes that his aim is to ‘take some of the emotion out of the debate’, his second paragraph attacks a ‘modern, moralistic culture’, suggesting that people who are opposed to energy drinks are little more than proselytising bible-thumpers, and that their opinions are therefore not based in scientific fact. He further dismisses the opposing side of the argument as being nothing but ‘hype’, suggesting that people who are opposed to his position are incapable of thinking rationally. In this manner, readers of Post’s blog are lead to believe that his opinion is more rational than that of others’.</i>	The second body paragraph analyses emotive techniques. Note that the topic sentence describes the emotional nature or aspect of the issue rather than just simplistically writing ‘Both author use emotive techniques to...’ The piece analyses the connotation of individual words and phrases. Words like ‘while’ and ‘further’ are used to link sentences and explain how one technique builds on another.

However, beyond all the emotion, both writers are at pains to suggest that their position is based upon reason and logic, rather than a knee-jerk reaction. Furter provides many facts about the physiological impact of caffeine on children's heart rates and upon their subsequent mental health. In this way, she presents her argument as reasoned, informed and plausible to readers who are looking to maximise the health of their own children. She also closes her argument with a tricolon about different health campaigns which have made a difference to public health, including seat belts, smoking and the restriction of alcohol. This argument is further enhanced by an image of an energy drink labelled with a health warning, suggesting that a public health campaign would reveal energy drinks to be 'toxic spew'. In this way, Furter's argument neatly balances parents' disgust with energy drinks with a logical call to action which seems simple and easy to enact. On the other hand, Post emphasises his logic by numbering the facts that his article includes. By numbering his arguments, Post is further characterising his argument as one that is step-by-step and with impenetrable logic. The impression of logic is further epitomised by short, simple sentences that leave little room for emotional manipulation, giving Post's readers the impression that he is a clear, logical thinker who is not distracted by sentiment.	The third paragraph analyses techniques of logic. The topic sentence indicates how the techniques of logic offer a balance to the emotional techniques described in the previous paragraph.
Both blogs tap into the particular predispositions of their readers. Furter argues passionately, logically and clearly that parents need help in raising their children, establishing a culture of support within her readers, while Post pushes for a culture of individual autonomy, which would appeal to readers of a website against governmental regulation.	The conclusion evaluates how successful the persuasive pieces are likely to be in meet the interests of their audience.

Write topic sentences to acknowledge the use of a category of technique and the purpose of this use

Language analyses which group techniques together require topic sentences at the start of body paragraphs which acknowledge not only the general technique which will be discussed, but the point of the technique and how it contributes to the author's overall aim. These topic sentence prompts provide some models for topic sentences you can use and the order in which you can use them:

- It's important for both authors to establish a connection with the audience on this issue since...
- Since it's likely that their audiences....both pieces attempt to create a connection with their readers by...
- Fundamental to both pieces is an attempt to create a connection with the audience in order to...
- This issue is likely to inspire a range of emotions within readers because Consequently, each pieces deploys emotive techniques to...
- For many readers, feelings of...and...will be associated with this issue. Both pieces seek to manipulate these emotions in order to...
- Balancing the emotional techniques are the appeals to logic which can be found in both...and
- However, rather than just emotionally appealing to their audience, each piece \ also seeks to build the reader's belief that their case is logical and reasoned...

In each body paragraph write about how a type of technique is used throughout a whole piece

After the topic sentence, a body paragraph will typically begin by giving the clearest, most emphatic or first example of this technique being used in a piece. Other examples of the same type of technique being utilised will then be cited. Rather than always using the word 'also' to supply extra examples, try to write with a variety of words and phrases such as:

- In addition to this
- Additionally
- Following on from this
- Further
- Continuing with this technique
- Reinforcing this
- Strengthening this further
- Adding to this effect
- Adding to the overall impact of this

THE CONCLUSION:

The conclusion should evaluate the likely effectiveness of the piece or pieces being analysed. Importantly, this effectiveness needs to be measured in terms of how well a piece would have appeal to their specific audience as in this example:

Both blogs tap into the particular predispositions of their readers. Furter argues passionately, logically and clearly that parents need help in raising their children, establishing a culture of support within her readers, while Post pushes for a culture of individual autonomy, which would appeal to readers of a website against governmental regulation.

The other example of a conclusion demonstrates the evaluation of the effectiveness of one piece in appealing to its audience compared to another piece:

Both Furter and Post aim to make their readers see that their attitudes are the most normal and acceptable ones. Each author also exaggerates the health impact or non-impact of energy drinks in an attempt to persuade the reader. However, in the end, Furter’s piece is most effective at manipulating her specific audience of parents who would be more frightened by the image of fat, unhealthy kids that Furter creates.

These are all words and phrases that can be used in an evaluation of the effectiveness of a piece:

- Key to/central to/fundamental to both pieces is their attempt to...
- Both pieces seek to come across as...
- Both pieces attempt to position the reader to see their argument as...
- Both pieces claim to be...
- Overall
- Ultimately
- The most successful in their efforts is...
- In the end

IMPROVING YOUR SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND VOCABULARY FOR INSIGHTFUL ANALYSIS

Using evidence and analysing its impact:

An important feature of this book has been its emphasis on different ways of doing the same thing. We’re strongly suggesting that having variety in your writing improves it greatly. In the body of your language analysis writing there is one thing you need to do: identify and analyse examples of persuasive language. But there are a whole variety of sentence structures you can utilise to do this. Consider the grid below which demonstrates three different sentence types each analysing the same piece of evidence from this example piece of persuasive writing.

The cost of road traffic accidents is some \$15 billion per year, or \$41 million each day. This includes the costs of ambulance and emergency vehicles, road cleanup, hospital and rehabilitation - it does not even begin to include the human cost of road deaths and trauma. If governments want to save money on these figures, the simplest way to do so is to encourage people to drive less, and people to use public transport more. - Jonathan Smith, excerpt from ‘Why We Need A Free Ride’

Standard structure	Smith cites evidence of “\$15 billion” in costs in responding to the road toll each year. This figure is startlingly high and works to dramatically show the reader how much money roads actually cost.
Using an ‘-ing’ word	Smith cites evidence of “\$15 billion” in costs in responding to the road toll each year, establishing for the reader with this figure the startlingly high costs of roads.
Starting with ‘by’, ‘through’ or an ‘-ing’ word	By citing the figure of “15 billion” in costs in responding to the road toll each year, Smith dramatically shows the reader how much money roads actually cost.

The first example is a fairly standard two sentence structure. This structure can work perfectly well – but as we’ve said elsewhere in the book – not if you do it all the time.

Your task is to develop the variety of sentence structures you use in your writing. Using variety doesn’t just result in a more interesting sounding piece –it results in a more insightful sounding piece.

When you use different structures to write your analysis, you will write different types of analysis, bringing a greater richness to your writing.

Starting the second sentence with ‘by’ or ‘through’	Smith cites evidence of “\$15 billion” in costs in responding to the road toll each year. <u>By</u> citing this figure, Smith dramatically shows the reader how much money roads actually cost.
Starting the second sentence with ‘from’ or ‘with’	Smith cites the figures of “\$15 billion” spent in responding to road accidents each year. <u>From</u> this evidence the readers sees the startlingly high costs of roads each year.
Using a colon to introduce an example	Smith cites evidence about how much road accidents cost each year: “\$15 billion, or 41 million each day.” This figure is startlingly high and works to dramatically show the reader how much money roads actually cost.
Use multiple examples in the one sentence	Smith cites the figures of “\$15 billion” spent in responding to road accidents each year and “21 billion each year” on dealing with the obesity “ <u>epidemic</u> ”. These figures force the reader to acknowledge the startlingly high costof roads and lack of exercise.

Whenever you write some analysis of an exam-
ple,two key questions to ask yourself are:

- Can I say any more about what this is doing to the reader?
- Can I say any more about how the reader is responding to this?

These questions might seem the same but how a technique impacts on a reader and how the reader responds are actually two distinct things. See it illustrated in the example below:

Smith cites the evidence of “\$15 billion” in costs spent in responding to the road toll each year. This figure is startlingly high and works to dramatically show the reader how much money roads actually cost (impact on the reader). From this the reader begins to acknowledge that these costs can be reduced – something needs to be done (the reader response).

Often in language analysis we have a limited number of ways of writing about how a persuasive device is affecting a reader. We tend to use (and overuse) phrases such as:

- Impacts on the reader
- Makes the reader
- Tries to make the reader

The more we think about the words we can use, the less likely we are to over use phrases like “impacts on the reader” or “makes the reader” (there’s nothing wrong with these phrases – but they do become boring when we use them again and again).

Below are three different types of ways we can write about a reader’s response to a technique:

As we annotate an example of persuasive language with a word to describe the author’s action, we can also annotate it with a word to describe the reader’s response. This might not always be possible (it is difficult), and it might be something we come back to when we’re actual-ly writing our analysis. But again: The more we think about the words we can use, the less likely we are to overuse phrases like “impacts on the reader” or “makes the reader” which result in dull, plodding analysis.

WORDS IMPACT THE READER	THE READER IS IMPACTED BY WORDS	THE READER SEES FROM THE WORDS
<i>The author attacks Australians’ use of public transport as “abysmal.” This attack prompts readers to feel disgust towards our lack of efforts in using public transport.</i>	<i>The author attacks Australians’ use of public transport as “abysmal.” The reader is positioned by this attack to see our lack of efforts in using public transport as disgraceful.</i>	<i>The author attacks Australians’ use of public transport as “abysmal.” The reader sees from these words that our efforts in using public transport may in fact be far less than what we should be aiming for</i>
(the word/technique)... ensures, influences, positions, prompts, causes, makes, forces [the reader], targets (the reader’s...), results in, impacts on [the reader’s], leads the reader to	(the reader)... is...positioned (by this/from this/because of this), prompted, influenced, persuaded...add more*	(the reader) ... (from these words/because of this), acknowledges, realises, thinks, comes to accept, comes to feel, associates

ANALYSING VISUALS

As we emphasised earlier in this chapter, look for opportunities to connect the visual to the persuasive text. If you are writing about emotive techniques, and the visual is emotive – then write about them at the same time. If words within a text create an image which the visual graphically represents – then write about these alongside each other.

This was what part of one of the example analyses above looked like when it discussed the visual:

Both the headline and the visual of Furter’s piece re-inforce the irony that energy drinks don’t in fact encourage kids to run around, but instead to be “lethargic”. The picture of the energy soft drink can, with the startling image of a toxic waste symbol and, underneath it a “Government Health Suggestion” which labels the contents of the can as “toxic spew”, further underscore this argument that energy drinks don’t provide actual energy to young people, but are in fact “toxic” to their energy levels

and general health. In particular, the toxic waste symbol - which audiences would immediately associate with extremely hazardous substances - would heighten fears about the health damage of energy drinks, such as causing children to become “overweight” or “lethargic”.

These are some words and phrases that you will find useful in describing and analysing a visual:

Create a link between the visual and the text:

- Reinforcing the author’s contention...
- Complementing the...
- Visually representing the author’s argument is...
- Allowing the audience to visualise this argument is...
- Enhancing the author’s approach to/ appeal for...is...
- Contributing to this overall...is the visual which...

USE ADJECTIVES TO DESCRIBE THE PERSUASIVE IMPACT OF ELEMENTS OF THE VISUAL:		
• accentuates • calls attention to • features • emphasises • signifies • underscores • startling • shocking • stupefying • distressing	• shameful • heartbreaking • troubling • pleasant • delightful • euphoric • joyous • comforting • uplifting • inspiring	• amusing • droll • comical • laughable • antagonising • irritating • aggravating • prominent • attention grabbing • dominant • primary

6. WRITING FOR THE CONTEXT

Context writing is about discussing big ideas. It is about examining how we as humans experience aspects of life on this planet. For example, what common experiences do we have of conflict? Or, how do we share (or fail to share) understandings of alternate realities? Are all of our identities shaped in the same way? Or, is it true that we all interact with the landscape in different ways? Central to all of these questions, is an exploration of how an idea is present in the actions of people around us and represented in literature.

This chapter looks at three different ways we can write about big ideas and how they are both portrayed in literature and are evident in the world around us. These three types of writing are:

1. Expository:

‘Expository’ quite simply means the exploration of an idea. This can be in a range of different forms. This chapter will look at two: the formal essay and the personal reflective essay.

2. Persuasive:

A persuasive piece on a big idea should argue either the attitude we should have towards an idea or the actions that should spring from it. A persuasive piece is a ‘call to arms’ - a call to action. This chapter will look at how to plan a persuasive piece in response to a context task.

3. Creative:

A creative response to a big idea will either explore a gap in a text or provide an original creative interpretation of a big idea in a text. This response type is explored in detail in the chapter titled ‘Creative Responses’.

WRITING A FORMAL EXPOSITORY ESSAY

At the root of the expository essay are three elements:

- Defining an idea and what influences this idea
- Illustrating a definition of that idea with examples
- Discussing the significance and impact of the idea

A typical expository task is to respond to a prompt such as this:

‘Conflict of conscience can be just as difficult as conflict between people.’

Prompts such as the ones above contain a ‘premise’ - a statement which purports to present a truth about an idea or topic. Actually, they contain a series of premises:

Basic premise:

- The most simple, basic statement in the prompt - i.e:
Conflict of conscience can be difficult.

Extended premise:

- Anything in the premise beyond the most basic premise - i.e:
Conflict of conscience can be just as difficult as conflict between people.

However, insightful responses will go beyond just the most obvious elements of a prompt and explore aspects of an idea which are implicit in the prompt.

Counter or Additional Premise:

- *Any premise which can be offered as a counter to one in the prompt - i.e
Conflict of conscience isn’t always as difficult as conflict between people.
- *Or, any premise which extends one of the premises from the prompt even further - i.e
Conflict of conscience can be just as difficult as conflict between people and can often do more damage.

Here is another example of a prompt and its breakdown:

‘Misrepresenting reality can have serious consequences.’

Basic premise:

- We misrepresent reality.

Extended premise:

- When we misrepresent reality it has serious consequences.

Counter premise:

- Not every misrepresentation of reality has serious consequences.

What does this mean for planning an expository response? Pulling apart a prompt is the first step towards brainstorming a range of examples from within and outside a text to use in a discussion of a big idea. The grid below is an example of how a prompt can be split into different premises and these premises then used to identify examples to discuss.

The grid is in response to this prompt:

‘Discovering who we are and where we belong can be challenging.’

Listed in the left hand column of the grid are the three different premises from the above prompt. Each column is labelled with types of examples which increase in size:

- **Individual character/Individual people:**
Discuss one character or one type of person from real life
- **Group of characters/Group of people:**
Discuss a group of characters from the text or a group from real life such as men/women, families, friendship groups, people of different ages/generations
- **Society within a text/Society in real world:**
Discuss one character (or real person) or group and how their actions or beliefs conform to or reject the values of society

By identifying the different groups who illustrate the big ideas in the context we can show how complex our understanding of the issue is. Individual, group and society examples allow us to discuss both a micro and macro view of the big ideas involved in the context.

Each of the columns will become the basis for a body paragraph. The body paragraph can begin by discussing the basic premise and one example which illustrates it, then build to discussing the whole premise and finally the counter or additional premise. In doing this, you can utilise the In-But-And-So body paragraph structure discussed in the Text Response chapter.

	INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER/ INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE EXAMPLE	GROUP OF CHARACTERS/ GROUP OF PEOPLE EXAMPLE	SOCIETY WITHIN A TEXT/SOCIETY IN REAL WORLD EXAMPLE
Basic Premise We (always want to) discover who we are and where we belong.	The kewpie doll which Roo gives to Olive each year is a symbol of their constant need to affirm their youth	Barney, Roo and Olive all knew who they were when in a group with Nancy, and when Nancy leaves, they try to maintain their group identity by replacing her with Pearl.	From the clothes we wear, to the food we eat, to the people we are friends with, everything is about understanding who we are. We show our need to have identity by labelling each other in society.
Extended Premise: It can be difficult to discover who we are and where we belong.	Barney is torn between his identity as a member of the original group in <i>Summer of The Seventeenth Doll</i> and his exclusion now that Nancy has left.	- As Roo ages in <i>Summer of The Seventeenth Doll</i> he finds that the group that he has belonged to all his life now no longer accepts his changing identity. - At different points in our lives - like the end of high school, friendship groups change and this changes how we see ourselves.	Barney and Roo find it difficult to fit into the society they always have now they are no longer young and fit.
Counter / Additional Premise For some people, finding belonging can be simple.	Emma knows who she is and is comfortable with her belonging.	Some people remain friends with people from primary school throughout their whole lives.	- Olive is comfortable being an outsider in society: i.e she is in a unmarried relationship in a society where marriage is the norm. - Many people in society define themselves as outsiders: i.e Goths, anarchists

Writing A Formal Expository Essay:

THE INTRODUCTION

Unlike a text response essay which is concerned with the ideas in just one text, an expository essay is about looking at a big idea and discussing a few different examples of that idea.

Here is an illustration of an effective expository introduction in response to the prompt below:

‘Conflicts of conscience can be just as difficult as physical conflicts’:

Our experiences with physical and emotional conflicts and how we respond to them are both a product of our personalities and a force that shapes them. Along with expressions of affection, interactions of conflict are the most common form of communication underlying our lives. Yet these interactions of conflict aren’t always with others. A conflict of conscience - a situation in which we can be torn between doing one thing, because it might be best for us, or another thing - is a personal struggle which plays out in our own minds. These moments can be agony, certainly as much a wrenching encounter as physical confrontation between one person and another. Solving these conflicts of conscience are nearly always a challenging proposition.

This expository introduction should include the following things:

- A big picture statement about the broad topic behind the prompt: identity and belonging, encountering conflict, imaginative landscapes or notions of reality.
- Elaboration on this big picture statement.
- Direct engagement with the prompt and an indication of the types of points or examples which will be used to discuss it further.

This is what the example introduction looks like when we divide it into these sections:

Our experiences with physical and emotional conflicts and how we respond to them are both a product of our personalities and a force that shapes them (Big picture statement about the broad topic of conflict). *Along with expressions of affection, interactions of conflict are the most common form of communication underlying our lives* (Elaboration on the big picture statement about the broad topic of conflict). *Yet these interactions of conflict aren’t always with others. A conflict of conscience - a situation in which we can be torn between doing one thing, because it might be best for us, or another thing - is a personal struggle which plays out in our own minds* (Direct engagement with the prompt). *These moments can be agony, certainly as much a wrenching encounter as physical confrontation between one person and another. Solving these conflicts of conscience are nearly always a challenging proposition* (An indication of the type of points which will be discussed).

Let’s think a bit more about the big picture statement which begins the introduction:

Our experiences with physical and emotional conflicts and how we respond to them are both a product of our personalities and a force that shapes them

Notice the verbs ‘respond’ and ‘shapes’? These types of verbs about cause, effect and influence are important tools in crafting strong introductory statements about the essence of an idea or topic.

These are some structures and words you can use to craft such statements:

The ‘is’ statement:
Conflict is a fundamental interaction which dominates all aspects of our lives.

- This type of statement needs to provide a rich description of the topic. This means that the simple verbs ‘is’ or ‘are’ need to be followed by a complex labelling of the topic such as “fundamental interaction” and “dominates all aspects”

The ‘shapes/influence’ statement:
Our experiences with physical and emotional conflicts shape our personality and lives.

- Words to use: shapes (is/are shaped by), moulds (is/are moulded by), influences (is/are influenced by), impacts (is/are impacted by), causes, affects (is/are affected by), underlies, develops

The ‘can/has/will’ statement:
Conflict can always have the potential to profoundly shape and change our lives:

- Words to use: always, often, usually, generally, typically, sometimes, at some points, at one point, during, throughout, as, while

Importantly, introductory statements don’t just need to be crafted in any one style. You can combine the structures and words from any of the above statements to build a powerful opening line.

Something else important needs to be noted about introductory statements to expository writing.

Look carefully at the words which have been underlined in the example below:

Our experiences with physical and emotional conflicts and how we respond to them are both a product of our personalities and a force that shapes them. Along with expressions of affection, interactions of conflict are the most common form of communication underlying our lives. Yet these interactions of conflict aren’t always with others. A conflict of conscience - a situation in which we can be torn between doing one thing, because it might be best for us, or another thing - is a personal struggle which plays out in our own minds. These moments can be agony, certainly as much a wrenching encounter as physical confrontation between one person and another. Solving these conflicts of conscience are nearly always a challenging proposition.

All of these words are used to refer to people in general. An essential part of expository writing about topics such as conflict, identity, reality or the imaginative landscape is to demonstrate how we experience and respond to an idea. In other words, what is the collective experience of people? Listed below are a range of words that are regularly used in good expository writing to discuss how people may universally (or not) experience an idea.

WHO CAN EXPERIENCE AN IDEA? • We • (All, many of, some of, few of) Us • Groups • Individuals • Humans • Society • Everyone • (Most, Many, Some) People • (One, Another) Person • Others	WHAT ARE RELATED BIG IDEAS? • Culture, Our culture, The culture of • Belief, Our beliefs, The belief of • Value, Our values, The value of • Existence, Our existence, The existence of • Knowledge, Knowing, The knowledge of • Attitude, Our attitude, The attitude of • Minds, Thoughts, Perceptions • Behaviour, Our behaviour, The behaviour of • Who we are • Our sense of ourselves • Understanding, Our understanding • Character, Our Character, The Character of • Life, Our Lives, The lives of
WHEN DO WE EXPERIENCE AN IDEA? • Always • Often • Usually • Generally • Typically • Sometimes • At some points • At one point • During • Throughout • As • While • Despite • When	HOW DO WE THINK, FEEL OR RESPOND TO IDEAS? • We see, think, feel, know, believe, understand, accept • We desire, want • We face, struggle with, confront, relate, are challenged by, find difficult, respond • Experiences, struggles, confrontations, challenges, difficulties, responses, relationships
A good way to develop your confidence with using these words is just to practise writing single statements using them. Another way to practise writing introductions is to try starting each of your sentences with a word or phrase (or your own version of them) from a different box in the grid.	

Writing A Formal Expository Essay:

THE BODY PARAGRAPHS

Body paragraphs should use examples – but the topic sentence should focus on an idea. In the start of this body paragraph below we can see how the topic sentence focuses on an idea before moving on to using a text as an example of that idea in action:

Conflicts of conscience often arise from the tension between selfish motives and the knowledge that we should be doing something selfless: in other words, wanting to act in our own interests but feeling guilty about it. This type of struggle is particularly evident in Kate Grenville's The Lieutenant. In Grenville's novel, the protagonist Daniel Rooke...

Writing about examples

Focusing on how a text illustrates an idea in action is an effective form of analysis in the middle of a body paragraph.

The example of the body paragraph we began above might continue like this:

Conflicts of conscience often arise from the tension between selfish motives and the knowledge that we should be doing something selfless: in other words, wanting to act in our own interests but feeling guilty about it. This type of struggle is particularly evident in Kate Grenville's The Lieutenant. In Grenville's novel, the protagonist Daniel Rooke struggles with his conscience about how to respond to the colonial, racist attitude towards indigenous people. Rooke's initial decision to take part in a murderous expedition demonstrates how so often in life the decision to go along with authority contradicts what we know in our conscience is the right thing to do...

To introduce and discuss examples from a text we can employ phrases like this:

- In [author's text]
- This is illustrated in
- This is apparent when
- This demonstrates
- An example of this in action is portrayed depicted/represented in...
- The text reveals/shows us/demonstrates to us...
- The situation/scenario/lives of the characters in.../world of the text [insert text name] tells us/demonstrates for us reveals to us
- The character(s) of...from demonstrate(s)/The actions of the character(s) of...from...highlight/emphasise/illustrate...

When considering how to introduce examples from the text into the body paragraph of a good expository essay, utilise the information from the Text Response chapter earlier in this book.

To introduce and discuss examples from 'real life' we can use phrases such as:

The difference between a context essay and a text response essay is that you need to articulate how the examples you have used link to real life and wider society

The last sentence of the example body paragraph above began like this:

Rooke's initial decision to take part in a murderous expedition demonstrates how so often in life the decision to go along with authority contradicts what we know in our conscience is the right thing to do...

This sentence seeks to link the example from the text to an example of life in general. After all, an important part of the expository essay is not just to look at one example exclusively, but to analyse how an idea is evident or acted upon in a range of places or situations. These phrases below are all ways of linking an example from a text to an example from elsewhere in the body of a paragraph:

- Illustrating this...
- Proof of this...
- Powerfully/dramatically/poignantly/clearly illustrating/showing us this...
- This is powerfully/dramatically/poignantly clearly evident in...
- Witness to this is...
- A case in point is the instance of...
- This shows us what can be seen elsewhere...
- This is also evident in other places/aspects of life...
- This is so often the case in...
- It shows that in life...
- It demonstrates that in our world...
- We can see this again in...
- Yet another illustration of this is in....

THE CONCLUSION

The task of an introduction is to provide a big picture for the context being discussed, the role of a body paragraph is to discuss the evidence and the job of the conclusion is to guide your reader to see what has been most significant in your discussion:

As difficult as struggles in conscience may be, humans inevitably find a way to resolve them that is beneficial. The real difficulties are the ones that arise between people as a result of struggles of conscience where the selfish side triumphs. Inevitably, one person or group's decision to act in their own best interest will create problems with another person or group that can't easily be solved.

There are two key parts to this conclusion:

A reference/distillation (boiling something down to the key point) of the different aspects of the idea under discussion:

- ***As difficult as struggles in conscience may be, humans inevitably find a way to resolve them that is beneficial.***

A judgement about the significance or truth of one side or the other:

- ***The real difficulties are the ones that arise between people as a result of struggles of conscience where the selfish side triumphs.***

These are words you can use to distill different parts to an idea at the beginning of your conclusion:

- Though: Though struggles with conflicts of conscience are difficult....
- Although/even though: Even though our struggles with conflict may be tense...
- While/Despite: While the confrontations we have with our consciences are difficult...
- Might/Can be: While the confrontations we have with our consciences can be/ might be difficult...
- As...as: As difficult as struggles with conscience...

These are words you can use to assess why one part of an idea is more significant than another in the middle and end of your conclusion:

- Ultimately
- In the end
- In actual fact
- It's only
- The reality is
- Results in/leads to
- Determines
- Inevitably
- What it comes down to

WRITING A PERSONAL REFLECTIVE ESSAY

The personal reflective essay does much the same thing as the formal expository essay discussed above – the difference is that it is all written through the perspective of 'I'.

A common example of the personal reflective piece is the newspaper column or blog post both of which can have a very clear structure. A form of this structure is shown below:

Introduction:

What does the idea mean to me?

For me, a conscience is the knowledge of what is the right thing to do. I have always believed that it's easy to have a conscience, but difficult to know what to do with it. In my experience, this difficulty can be...

Or

When I was at university, everyone was listening to Meredith Brooks singing, 'I'm a bitch, I'm a lover, I'm a child, I'm a mother, I'm a sinner, I'm a saint.' At the time, although not all of the labels applied to me, I remember singing it loudly in the shower, on campus and at friends. Fast forward a decade and a half and more of the labels in the song apply to me, although I'm not necessarily as comfortable singing all of them.

The introduction still defines an idea – as in the formal expository essay – but it defines what an idea personally means to the person writing.

Here are some phrases that will be useful to do this:

- I have come to realise...
- I have always thought/believed/felt...
- For me
- In my experience
- In my life I have come to see
- I have often thought
- I tend to think that
- Recently/Last week/The other day
- When I was.../Once

Body Paragraph:

How do I personally view/think about the examples of this idea in action?

A conflict of conscience seems to me a tricky thing to resolve. Watching through the Iranian film A Separation, I could understand why a character like....

Typically, a body paragraph will give an example of an idea in action from a text or from a personal example. The writing should emphasise how the person writing the piece personally interprets or thinks about the examples.

These are phrases you might use to do this:

- Looking at a text such as...I think that...
- Reading a text like...I feel/can see understand/empathise with...
- It's evident to me that in...
- It's apparent to me that...
- What this tells me is that...

Body Paragraph:
What are related ideas or examples?

I see behaviour like that of Nadir from A Separation around me everyday...

In this part of the personal piece, you need to link examples from the text to other examples from wider society.

- Just like...
- Of course, there are plenty of others...
- In many ways this reminds me of...
- We all know people like this...
- This sort of behaviour is endemic in wider society...
- Look around you and you will see these actions/behaviours everywhere...

Body Paragraph:
What is an exception or alternative example?

The lone selfless voice in A Separation is the daughter....

In this part of the personal piece, you provide an alternative example or perspective to the points you have made thus far. The important thing to do in this paragraph, is to emphasise how the alternative example is not a typical or usual representation of an idea. It's unusualness highlights how people behave usually.

- The exception to this is...
- Despite...
- Going against the flow is...
- Standing out from the crowd is...
- Rising above this is...

Conclusion:
What do I believe is essential to understand about the idea?

In all of this discussion about conflicts of conscience and conflicts between people, what I believe is most essential is that...I think that we...

The conclusion should be about evaluating what is most important about an idea. Again, this should be phrased with personal language. These are all combinations of words that can achieve this:

- It's critical/essential/vital in my view...
- What seems most important to me is that...
- As I look at the world around me I know...
- My experiences tell me...

WRITING A PERSUASIVE ESSAY ABOUT A BIG IDEA

We've written extensively already about persuasive responses so we'll keep this section short and sweet. The trick with persuasive writing on a big idea is to argue something rather than discuss something. Many context tasks invite discussion – thoughtful analysis of different aspects of an idea – rather than a forceful response that one action or way of thinking is better than another.

Consider these prompts:

- **'Losing touch with reality is often dangerous.'**
- **'Without connection to others there is no me.'**
- **'The ability to compromise is important when responding to conflict.'**
- **'The inner landscape and its relationship to the outer world is significant in people's lives.'**
- **'It is difficult to remain a bystander in any situation of conflict.'**
- **'It is the victims of conflict who show us what is really important.'**
- **'To be true to yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you some thing else is the greatest achievement.'**

Each of these prompts provides opportunities to consider different elements to the key ideas. But in a persuasive response we want to forcefully argue that one way or one thing is correct. In planning a persuasive response to an expository task, the first step is the most important: turn the task into a proposition you can argue for or against. How do you do this?

Underline the key words in a prompt and see how they can fit into one of these argument phrases:

- We should (not)... so..
- We should (not)... because
- We should (not) ...when...
- We must (not) ...believe /accept/value that/the idea of...because

For example, let's say we were responding to this prompt task:

'The ability to compromise is important when responding to conflict.'

The key words could fit into the 'We should (not)... when...' phrase like this:

We should not compromise when responding to conflict.

Let's look at a trickier one. How about:

'The inner landscape and its relationship to the outer world is significant in people's lives.'

This could fit into the 'believe/accept/value' phrase like this:

We must value the idea that the inner landscape is significant in people's lives.

Once we've thought through a basic contention, we can fine tune it by changing or swapping around some of the words or adding modifiers to the statement.

Below is an example of the imaginative landscape contention being modified by changing and swapping some of the words:

We must accept the significance that the inner landscape and its relationship to the outer world has in the lives of people.

Modifiers are words that give us extra information about when or how often. These modifiers below can be used to add extra emphasis to a contention:

- Always / Never
- Often / Rarely
- Sometimes / Occasionally
- Only / Only ever
- In cases of / In times of / In situations of

For example, the contention that 'We should not compromise when responding to conflict' might seem a bit blunt. We could fine tune it like this:

We should rarely compromise when responding to conflict.

Alternatively, as we consider our proposition, we might realise that we haven't got enough to argue if we are too black and white in our statement. We can modify our statement to be less black and white like in this example:

We should always consider compromise first when responding to conflict and only refuse to compromise when...

Once we know what we're arguing, then we can begin the process of generating and structuring ideas.

You can find lots of strategies for this in the Persuasive Writing section of this book.

Using examples from a text

One last thing about persuasive pieces: how do you use examples from a text in them? The key is to do it in way that doesn't sound fake or forced. Let's say that we turned this expository prompt into the contention below:

'Our fantasies can be more powerful than our reality.'

We should never let our fantasies blind us to the reality of life.

An introduction to a persuasive piece arguing this contention might look like this:

We should never let our fantasies blind us to the reality of life. Fantasies can be a healthy escape to the grim and boring aspects of the everyday – but that's all they are – an escape. If we come to believe that fantasies are a reality – then the dangers are great. Many examples from current events, our personal lives and literature show again and again the reason why we must be able to differentiate fantasy from reality, and the tragedy that can occur when we don't.

The introduction signposts that in this persuasive piece we will use examples from different places – including from a text. These are examples of sentences we can use in an introduction to signpost how we will include a text as an example in the persuasive piece:

- *There are many examples about why we should....in current events, history and literature.*
- *It is evident that we should....in many examples: from our own lives, from current events, from history and from literature.*
- *It's not only our own experiences which show us this is true – it's current events, history, books and films.*
- *The dangers of what can happen if we don't...is clear from examples both in real and fictional life.*

A topic sentence from the body paragraph of an essay which continues on from the example introduction above might read like this:

There is perhaps no better example from literature about the dangers of confusing fantasy with reality than Arthur Miller's play The Death of A Salesman. In this play...

Here are some more suggestions of ways to phrase topic sentences introducing a text as an example in a persuasive piece:

- *One text which shows that...is...*
- *In [insert text name] we see a profound disturbing/pointed example/illustration representation of why we should.../....of what happens when.../....of what happens if we don't...*
- *The text [insert name] offers a powerful illustration/case in point of why we should...*
- *There is perhaps no better/more powerful/clearer/more pointed/more disturbing example/illustration representation of why we should...than the text [insert name].*

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