

How to write

On Track⁷

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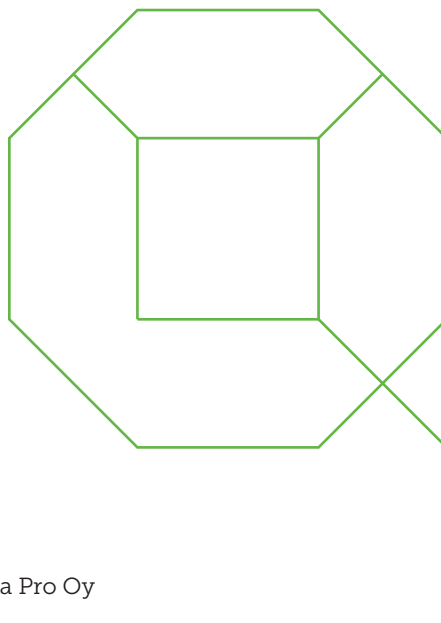


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HOW TO WRITE



an application for a job / a covering letter

A job application or a covering letter is a formal letter or email that explains to a potential employer why you are the right person for a job they have advertised. Since it is accompanied by your CV which gives more information, just focus on the skills and experience that are relevant to the specific job you are applying for.

Structure for a job application

Your address

Date

Recipient's name,
title and address

Salutation

Heading stating the subject of the correspondence

Opening paragraph: State purpose of letter and where you saw the advertisement.

Paragraph 2: Give relevant personal details. (background, current situation)

Paragraph 3: Give relevant qualifications.

Paragraph 4: List relevant experience.

Paragraph 5: Give any other details that qualify you for the job.

Paragraph 6: Give a brief statement of your interest in this job.
You could also mention how the employer will benefit from hiring you.

Final paragraph: State when you are available for interview.

Close

Signature

Your name printed below your signature

Example of a job advertisement:

Summer camp activity instructor

Queenswood Youth Camps offer highly motivated people the opportunity to train and work as an Activity Instructor. The role involves teaching young people adventure activities and/or ICT programmes. You must have experience of the outdoors, an enthusiasm for teaching and a willingness to learn and develop. Full training provided to deliver all sessions. Superb rural and coastal locations. Working at a Queenswood Centre is a world away from any other kind of work. You are part of a lively and enthusiastic team, living and working together in a stimulating community atmosphere that thrives on friendship and informality.

For an example of a letter of applying for this job, see On Track 6, p. 178.

Tasks

On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 15, exercise 15C



HOW TO WRITE



an argumentative essay

An argumentative essay argues the case (given in the title) for and/or against a subject. Showing that you've thought about both sides of a topic can make your essay seem thoughtful and balanced. It is not enough to just state your opinion; you should also give some examples, facts or reasons to support what you say.

Possible structure of an argumentative essay

Opening

State either

- the subject of the essay
- the problem or
- your opinion

In the first paragraph you can already say whether you agree or disagree with the statement.

Body Body paragraph 1

Give some arguments for the case.

Body paragraph 2

Give some arguments against the case.

Closing

Conclude your essay by summing up why you are for or against the argument.

Example:

Is graffiti art or vandalism?

Anyone walking through an urban cityscape will have seen the colourful, provocative, illegal spray painting that is graffiti. For some these brightly coloured creations are an eyesore, whereas others regard them as a legitimate form of art. In my view they can be both.

To my mind, tagging, or the stylized writing of a person's name, can be classed as vandalism. Simple tags are ugly and annoying. They take very little skill, and do nothing to enhance the appearance of the bus shelter or wall on which they have been sprayed. All tags do is give graffiti a bad name.

On the other hand, a colourful mural can be stylish and a pleasure to look at. Not only does this graffiti have aesthetic value, but it may also have a powerful message about consumerism or police brutality, for example. This requires thought and talent, and it is the kind of graffiti I would call art.

Clearly the art community shares my opinion, because nowadays graffiti art is being exhibited in various galleries around the world. In addition, artists are often commissioned to do legal murals and other work for art shows. Not only is good graffiti art, it can be great art, too.

(208 words)

See also: How to write a composition (essay).

Tasks

On Track 7, Unit 1, Topic 3, exercise 3O/B
 On Track 6, Unit 2, Topic 8, exercise 8I/C
 On Track 6, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9O/A, C
 On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1M/A
 On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2M/B
 On Track 5, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13N/A

On Track 4, Unit 2, Topic 4, exercise 6M
 On Track 4, Unit 4, Topic 16, exercise 16K/A
 On Track 3, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5K/B, C
 On Track 3, Unit 4, Topic 16, exercise 16L/C
 On Track 2, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4H/A, B
 On Track 2, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6L/A

HOW TO WRITE



a bio

A bio is short for biography. Or if you are writing about yourself, it is short for autobiography. A bio is a brief description of someone's life. It is different from a profile which deals with a specific time period or series of events.

A bio should include:

- Date and place of birth and death
- Family background
- Main achievements
- Key life events
- Effects/impact on society, historical significance

Example:

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)

Da Vinci was highly influential as an artist and sculptor, but also a talented engineer, scientist and inventor.

He was born on 15 April 1452 near the Tuscan town of Vinci, the illegitimate son of a lawyer. He worked as an apprentice for the sculptor and painter Andrea del Verrocchio in Florence, becoming an independent master in 1497.

Later he moved to Milan where he painted a mural of 'The Last Supper' in the refectory of the Monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan. However, he had to flee to Florence when the French invaded the city in 1499. During his time in Florence, he painted several portraits, but the only one that survives is the famous 'Mona Lisa' (1503–1506).

Although he painted many famous works of art before his death in 1519, da Vinci's notebooks, which were written in a left-handed mirror script, reveal a fascination with science. There are diagrams and sketches for a bicycle, an aeroplane, a helicopter and a parachute, all created some 500 years ahead of their time.

(175 words)

Tasks

On Track 3, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13K/B

HOW TO WRITE



a citation

If you write a text that refers to content published in a book, newspaper, magazine or on the internet, you should say where it came from. This is called citing the source. There are many ways to cite your sources. Here is one way to cite the source of each text type.

BOOKS

How to cite a book in print

Structure: Author, Initials. (Year of publication). Title of work. City: Publisher.

Example: Rowling, J.K. (1997). Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. London: Bloomsbury.

How to cite a book from an e-reader

Structure: Author, Initials. (Year of Publication). Title of work [E-Reader Version]. Retrieved from <http://xxxx>

Example: Eggers, D. (2008). The Circle [Kindle Version]. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

How to cite a newspaper or magazine article in print

Structure: Author, Initials. (Date of Publication – Year, Month Day). Article title. Newspaper or Magazine, pp. xx-xx.

Example: Campbell, D. (2016, March 22). Obesity is the new smoking. The Guardian, p. 25.

WEBSITES

How to cite an online newspaper or magazine article

Structure: Author, Initials. (Date of Publication – Year, Month Day). Article title. Newspaper or magazine.
Retrieved from newspaper or magazine homepage URL

Example: Easter M. (2016, March 31). 3 Things the Fittest Man on Earth Does Every Day. Men's Health.
Retrieved from <http://www.menshealth.com>

How to cite a blog post

Author, Initials. (Year, Month Date of Publication). Article title. Retrieved from URL

Greenfield, R. (2016, March 17). From Clueless Consumer to Real Food Dude. Retrieved from <http://robgreenfield.tv/realfood>

How to cite a Wikipedia article

Structure: Article title. (Year, Month Date of Publication). Retrieved from URL

Example: Ellis Island (2016, March 16). Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

How to cite a video file

Structure: Person or group who posted video. (Year, Month Date of posting). Video title. [Video file].
Retrieved from <http://xxxxx>

Example: Big Train comedy team (2008, December 20). Do you speak English? [Video file].
Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxUm-2x-2dM>

HOW TO WRITE



a comment

Writing comments is often an important part of being visible on the internet.

When writing a comment the most important thing is to be quite clear what you are commenting on (mention the original entry or summarise it).

Language

Fairly formal language is best suited for all comments. Remember to be polite even when being critical about something.

Structure

Usually you are simply asked to comment, so there is no need to give your comment a heading. Many websites automatically add a date to your comment. Comments are generally quite short, usually a paragraph (or sometimes two).

e.g. A comment from a football fan after a game

I'm a big guy and one of the most annoying things is the tiny seats in the stadiums. At most games you have to sit in these tiny, uncomfortable chairs made for elves, holding a soda in one hand and a hot dog in the other. During this process, you basically can't move, cheer or do anything until the drink and food have been completely consumed. As a result, I now avoid drinking and eating when I go to games. Good for me, but bad for the vendors!

Tasks

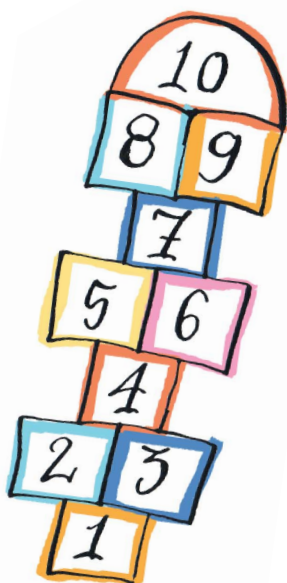
On Track 3, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2K

On Track 3, Unit 3, Topic 10, exercise 10I/B

On Track 2, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1M

On Track 2, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9M

On Track 1, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5L/A



HOW TO WRITE



a composition (essay)

Step 1: Read the title carefully

- Make sure you focus on exactly what the title asks you to do. In other words, do not go off the topic.
- Before you start your composition, it helps to make notes or a mind map of the points you want to make on scrap paper.
- Stick to the word limit (e.g. maximum of 250 words). Count your words about three quarters through your essay, and also at the end.

e.g. A family holiday. Describe a childhood memory of going on vacation with your family.

This question asks for a holiday description (practical details such as where you went and how you travelled), but also expects you to mention your family (who was with you and what they did), your childhood (your age when it happened) and how you remember it (thoughts, impressions and feelings).

Step 2: Write an opening paragraph

- Here you focus your composition

e.g. One day when I got back from school, my father was already home. Smiling happily, he told me that he had a surprise for the entire family, but that I'd have to wait until everybody was there. Finally, when my sister and mother came home, my father took us to the back of the garage to see his surprise. It was a brand new caravan! This was the start of many enjoyable family trips with the caravan we named Elvis.

Step 3: Write the body paragraph(s)

- Using your notes you can now go into more detail.
- If you give examples of your own personal experience your composition will be more unique and interesting.

e.g. The family trips would usually start spontaneously without much planning at all. The caravan was parked in the middle of our yard, and my mother would start filling the kitchenette cupboards with tins and packets of dry food. Dad would make sure there was gas and water. My sister and I would mainly just be in our mom's way. There was always a lot of excitement in the air. We didn't really care where we were going. The most important thing was that we were going, no matter where.

Step 4: Write the closing paragraph

- The conclusion can be a general comment about what you wrote in the body paragraphs, or it can offer a final thought on the subject.
- Try to end on a strong note.
- Make sure you are still focused on the topic.

e.g. I loved those summers when we had Elvis. We saw a lot of Finland and got to know many campsites. My sister and I were the best of friends on these trips, which was not always true when we were at home. The best memories of travelling as a child come from the little things: the excitement before leaving, the new places, the small sandy beaches, the open-air meals, the simple things that we did together as a family.
(248 words)

Tasks

On Track 7, Unit 1, Topic 3, exercise 3O/A
 On Track 7, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6O/B
 On Track 7, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9O/A
 On Track 7, Unit 3, Topic 11, exercise 11L/A

On Track 6, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1M/A
 On Track 6, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2M
 On Track 6, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4F/A
 On Track 6, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6N/A
 On Track 6, Unit 2, Topic 8, exercise 8I/A
 On Track 6, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9O/B
 On Track 6, Unit 3, Topic 10, exercise 10M/A, B
 On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13P/A

On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1M/B
 On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4H/A
 On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4H/D
 On Track 5, Unit 3, Topic 10, exercise 10J/A, B
 On Track 5, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13N/C

On Track 4, Unit 2, Topic 2, exercise 5L
 On Track 4, Unit 3, Topic 12, exercise 12I/A, C
 On Track 4, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14O/A

On Track 3, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6L
 On Track 3, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9K

On Track 2, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2M
 On Track 2, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6L
 On Track 2, Unit 4, Topic 16, exercise 16G

On Track 1, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1N
 On Track 1, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5L/B
 On Track 1, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14G
 On Track 1, Unit 4, Topic 15, exercise 15D

HOW TO WRITE



a conversation between two or more people (dialogue)

Language and style

Depending on who is talking, the language can be formal or informal. In a conversation remember to use shortened forms to indicate the spoken form even if the conversation is formal. Try to write sentences that sound as if they are spoken aloud.

Structure

There are a number of ways to write dialogue. Below is one way to do it. Remember that in a written dialogue there are often sentences that give context to the conversation. So, not all the sentences need to be said by someone and marked as speech.

e.g.

It was a hot summer's day. Jamie was on his way into town when he saw Caz standing in the shade of a maple tree.

- Hi Caz! said Davey
- Hey!
- What's up?
- Nothing.

Caz was playing with her phone. It was clear that she didn't want to meet Jamie's eyes.

- Can we talk about yesterday? he asked.
- Please go, she said. - I really don't want to talk about it.

Another way to write dialogue is in the form of a play script. A simple script usually has the following elements:

- a title
- a list of the characters and some basic information about them
- a few details about the setting
- stage directions which tell the reader what is happening and how the characters feel.

e.g. When Sarah met Darren

Characters

Sarah, a sixteen-year-old high school student

Darren, a classmate

A busy city street. It's raining. Darren standing under an umbrella with a huge hole in it.

Sarah: Hi Darren.

Darren: (pleased to see her) Oh, hi Sarah.

Sarah: You've got a massive hole in your umbrella.

Darren: I know. (He holds the umbrella up and inspects it.) I put it there.

Sarah: (surprised) Why on earth would you do that?

Darren: So I can see when it stops raining.

Tasks

On Track 4, Unit 2, Topic 7, exercise 7E/B

On Track 4, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13M

On Track 4, Unit 4, Topic 16, exercise 16K/B

On Track 3, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6L/C

On Track 1, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6L/B

On Track 1, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13N/B

HOW TO WRITE



a curriculum vitae

A CV (curriculum vitae) or résumé is one-page history of your education, skills, work experience and interests. It allows a potential employer see whether you are the right person for a job they have advertised. It will be read quickly, so it needs to be concise, clearly laid out and relevant to the job you are applying for.

Layout

There are many ways to write a CV, but they usually include the following information:

Personal details

Write your name, address, phone number and email.

You can add your date of birth if you think it is important.

In some countries a CV may include a passport-sized photograph in the top right-hand corner.

If you do include a photograph, it should be a head and shoulders shot, you should be dressed suitably and smiling.

Education and qualifications

List the schools you have attended. The last one is at the top of the list.

Work experience

Use action words to describe your responsibilities. e.g. assisted, supervised, organised.

If you haven't had any proper jobs, mention work practice places or voluntary work.

Skills

These usually include languages, computing and driving.

Interests

Your hobbies and interests will reveal your character. Are you are a team player?

Are you an organiser? Do you have leadership skills? Do you like challenges?

So think about the picture of yourself you would like to create.

References

Unless the advertisement specifically asks for referees it's OK to omit this section completely if you are running short of space or to say "References are available on request."

Normally two referees are sufficient: one academic (e.g. a teacher or study counsellor) and one from an employer (e.g. your last summer job).

For an example of a CV, see On Track 6, p. 176.

Tasks

On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 15, exercise 15C

HOW TO WRITE



a video CV

Your video CV is a brief opportunity (1–3 minutes) to tell your employer about your skills and qualifications, as well as to show your personality. Video CVs are usually submitted for jobs in media and jobs that involve working with the public.

Here are some tips to help you write your script.

- Tip 1** Project yourself positively. Look at the camera, smile and speak in a clear, natural, friendly way.
- Tip 2** Explain why you are the right person for the job and what you can offer.
- Tip 3** Describe relevant experience and skills.
- Tip 4** Be creative. A little humour, clever editing, music and inventive visuals are recommended.
- Tip 5** Be professional. Dress appropriately, use appropriate language and film in a tidy environment.
- Tip 6** Avoid reading your script. Your video needs to sound natural and fresh, so use only a few notes to help you. If you memorise your script, then make sure you recite it with life and energy in your voice.

Example:

Hi, my name is Sara Hämäläinen. I live in Tampere, my address is Kaitilontkatu 3, 33580 Tampere. I've lived in Tampere over 10 years, and before that I lived in Rovaniemi. I was born in 28th of June 1997. I just turned 19. I'm Finnish by nationality.

I started Pirkkala Upper Secondary School in 2013 and I will be graduating in spring 2017. I was an exchange student in the U.S for one academic year, 2014 to 2015, to be precise. Before Upper Secondary School I studied at Sammon koulu which is a Tampere comprehensive school.

I have some work experience. dating back to the summer of 2014 when I was 16. First, I got a summer job at Aste Finland. Aste Finland is a company that customizes and tailor-makes commercial plug-in cooler solutions. I worked there for five weeks during the summers of 2014 and 2015. I was an assistant and I helped around the factory, mostly cleaning. Since it was my first job it taught me how to act appropriately in an adult working environment.

In 2016 I got a sports certificate to teach sports to 5–7 year olds. In summer 2016 I was a track and field coach for a children's sports school for two months. During the summer I learned how to improvise while trying to make the exercises both effective and fun in the same time. The work was both creative and physical at the same time.

I started working in a family sports center in the winter of 2016 and I'm still working there now. My job involves a lot of interaction with children of all ages. I help them improve their physical control. I also work at the counter serving customers. The best part of my job is to see the progress the children make. It has also improved my social and leadership skills. It can sometimes be demanding keeping children under control, but I enjoy the challenge.

My first language is Finnish. I also speak excellent English and my Swedish language skills are in good shape. I also know the basics in German.

When it comes to additional skills, I have a hygiene passport that qualifies me to work with food. My IT skills are up to date, and I can handle the most common Office programs used at school.

In my free time I do track and field on a weekly basis. I'm also involved with the student council in our school. This has taught me leadership skills. I also enjoy reading and travel.

Jussi Salonen is willing to give me a reference. He is the CEO at Aste Finland.

For an example of a CV, see On Track 6, p. 176.

Tasks

On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 15, exercise 15D

HOW TO WRITE



a description

Language and style

Use formal language when writing a description of an event, a place or person.

Structure

Divide your composition into 3–4 paragraphs.

The following questions might help you develop your description

Introductory paragraph

- Who is the person? / What is the place/event?
- How do you know about him/her/it?
- Why did you choose him/her/it?

Body paragraphs (1–2 paragraphs)

- What does the place/person look like?
- What kind of a character is she/he?
- What kind of atmosphere does the place/event have?
- Use your senses: What are the sights, sounds, smells, tastes or touch sensations connected with the event or place?

Closing paragraph

- How would you sum up your thoughts or feelings about the event/place/person?

e.g. A description of an orienteering event

Earlier this year I participated in my first-ever orienteering competition – not because I love orienteering – but because my friend needed a running partner. The event took place in Iloranta on the shores of Lake Iso-Roine. There were over two hundred orienteers taking part, and the atmosphere was very friendly – lots of jokes about the bears in the woods!

The area was very beautiful: a shimmering lake, lots of hills, bluebells under the trees, and the smell of the pine forest. However, once we started running, I discovered another side to the forest: swampy ground, scratchy tree branches, and sticks all over the ground ready to trip you up. Thank goodness it was early summer so there were no mosquitoes.

We had a map marked with the control sites we had to visit. Unfortunately, we got a little lost and ended up finding the flags in the wrong order. Luckily, we found our way to the finishing point. It would have been really embarrassing if the organisers had had to send out a search party.

I don't think I'll be entering another orienteering competition any time soon. It took three days for the blisters on my feet to go down, and my legs were covered in cuts from tree branches. On the other hand, it was a totally new way to see the forest. Normally, when I walk my dog, I stick to the forest path so I never see how wild and scary the woods can be.

Tasks

On Track 7, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1P/A

On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2M/A

On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4H/B

On Track 4, Unit 3, Topic 10, exercise 10L/B

On Track 3, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14J/A, B

On Track 2, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5I/B

On Track 2, Unit 2, Topic 8, exercise 8F

On Track 2, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14J/A

On Track 1, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9J/B

On Track 1, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13/c

HOW TO WRITE



a graph: a short text explaining a graph

Here are five tips on how to explain a table or graph using the following graph as an example.

Carbon dioxide concentrations in Antarctica over 400,000 years

- Tip 1** Use the correct term. Is it a line graph, a bar graph/chart or a pie chart?
e.g. The line graph shows/illustrates/presents...
- Tip 2** Explain what the graph aims to show. The title usually tells you this.
e.g. The line graph shows carbon dioxide concentrations in Antarctica over 400,000 years.
- Tip 3** Summarise the information
e.g. Carbon dioxide concentrations are higher today than at any time in the past 400,000 years.
- Tip 4** Mention the overall trend, but highlight the differences too.
e.g. In the past there have been regular rises and falls in the level of carbon dioxide every 100,000 years. The 100,000 dips show the ice-age cycle that affects the global climate. The last two centuries, however, have seen a dramatic rise in carbon dioxide concentrations.
- Tip 5** Offer some explanation for the results shown in the graph. This might be your own interpretation or the interpretation put forward by the researchers who produced the graph.
e.g. The period from 1850 onwards shows the effect of the industrial revolution. Burning coal, and later oil, raised the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Key verbs

- 400,000 years ago the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere stood at 290 parts per million (ppm).
- Over the next 50,000 years this fell/dropped/went down/decreased/dipped to just 100 ppm.
- The level of carbon dioxide reached its lowest point 150,000 years ago.
- 325,000 years ago the level of carbon dioxide peaked at/reached a peak of 300 ppm.
- After 1850 carbon dioxide levels rose/went up/increased dramatically.
- There is no sign of carbon dioxide concentrations levelling out/off.

Tasks

On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14L/C

On Track 5, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5O

HOW TO WRITE



instructions

Writing clear instructions and rules is a valuable skill in life.

Before you can write instructions or rules for anything, you need to know exactly how to do the task and what the end result should look like or what is achieved.

Instructions can take the form of a recipe, how to assemble a piece of furniture, directions to a place etc.

Rules can be about a game or about how to behave in a certain area (campsite, sports field, gym etc).

Language

Start sentences with verbs. Use short clear main clauses. Warn and instruct the reader when needed.

Structure

Depending on the topic, you could use bullet points or use numbers to show the order which should be followed. You must tell what is done first, second, third.

e.g. Describe how to make a cup of English tea.

First, you put some cold water in the kettle. Then you turn on the kettle and wait for the water to boil. While you wait for the water to boil, you spoon the tea into the teapot – one teaspoon of tealeaves for each person, and one extra. When the water has boiled, you carefully pour the hot water into the teapot. You have to wait for about five minutes for the tea to be ready. After five minutes, you pour the tea into each separate cup or mug. You have to use a tea strainer, otherwise you may get tealeaves in your mouth.

Tasks

On Track 2, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2M/C

On Track 2, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5I/A

HOW TO WRITE



an interview

Focus

An interview should focus on a key aspect of the person being interviewed e.g. an achievement, something that happened to them, something they were involved in.

Structure

Opening

An interview should be preceded by a short text explaining who the person is, and why they are being interviewed.

Middle

Then the interview follows with the names of the speakers listed on the left.

e.g.

Interviewer: So tell me about your first novel? I heard it started life as fan fiction?

Cassandra Clare: That's right, I was always an admirer of Harry Potter...

End

Interviews often end by looking to the future.

e.g.

Interviewer: So what's next? Are you working on anything at the moment?

Cassandra Clare: Well, I've been thinking about...

For model see:

On Track 3, Unit 2, Topic 6, Laughter: a serious business

You may not know much about him, but the South African stand-up comedian Trevor Noah landed one of the biggest jobs on US TV. The boy from Soweto has been appointed as the host of *The Daily Show*. But who is he and why does it matter? Simon Brown from *Baltimore Today* interviewed Trevor's friend, the journalist Karen Landman, to find out more about the man behind the comedian.

Simon: I heard that he had a rather unusual childhood?

Simon: What about his break into the stand-up circuit? I heard that it happened quite by accident.

Karen: Apparently – and this is hearsay, but it makes such a good story that I think people are starting to take it as gospel – he was at a gig one night and not laughing at any of the jokes. The host, getting a bit irritated, said to him, “Do you think you can do any better?” And he got up on stage, totally unprepared, and just spoke about his day. The audience loved him. He got a standing ovation, and he's never looked back. He took to stand-up like a fish to water.

Karen: Well yes, stand-up comedy is very often politically incorrect, and Trevor Noah has certainly raised some hackles with some of the things he has said. But you raised an interesting point there: many stand-up comics now use the internet to reach a wider audience, don't they? Post some skit online, then remove it after a while... also, downloads, social media, that sort of thing.

Simon: Right. But somehow I feel that laughing by yourself, in front of a screen, is not quite the same as laughing with others, in a theatre or a club – you know, with a stand-up comic standing in the spotlight on stage. When it comes to stand-up comedy, I think old-fashioned live performance is always better, don't you?

HOW TO WRITE



a journal and a blog

Both a journal and a blog have entries. Sometimes you may be asked to write an entry about a topic for either a journal or a blog.

Language and style

Language in a blog and a journal can be formal, but if you are writing a personal blog which is meant to be shared between you and your friends, it can also be informal. A journal may be very personal, but today more and more journals appear online and are often open to anyone.

Structure

If you are given a title, use it. If not, invent a heading for your blog. The simplest heading for a journal is the date.

If you are asked to write between 150–250 words, divide your blog entry or journal entry into paragraphs (3–4 paragraphs). In a blog and a journal the paragraphs may have separate subheadings.

You may also include a comment box in your blog for the readers' comments.

Tasks

On Track 6, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4F/B

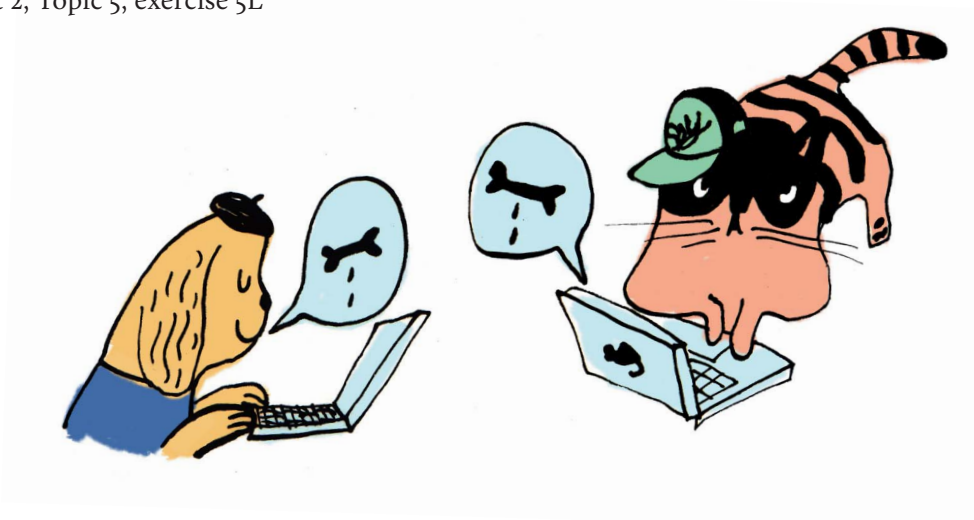
On Track 6, Unit 2, Topic 8, exercise 8I/B

On Track 4, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9P/A

On Track 3, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2K

On Track 1, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2K

On Track 1, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5L



HOW TO WRITE



a letter and an email

Language

It is best to use formal language in a letter to a person you do not know well. If you write to a close friend or family member, you can use informal language with shortened forms, e.g. it's (it is), they're (they are), would've (would have).

Structure

Both a letter and an email can have the same basic structure shown below. The same phrases can also be used. However, in an email you do not need to worry about writing your address or the date.

Your own address

The date

Greeting

Dear...

Opening paragraph

Thank you... It was good to hear from you...
Sorry that it has taken me so long to write to you...

1–3 paragraphs

Closing phrases

Well, time to go to bed now... I hope to hear from you soon again...
Looking forward to seeing you in...

Closures

Love, All the best, Best wishes, Best regards

Your signature

e.g. Dear Kathy,
Thanks for showing me around London. I know it was only three weeks ago, but it seems like I've been back in Finland for ages. I really enjoyed seeing all those places you took me to, especially the outdoor markets. A lot of people have complimented me on the jacket I bought in Camden.

Back in Finland, I've been busy with schoolwork. I've also volunteered to help out at the international gaming convention in Helsinki. There will be people coming from all over the world so I'll need my English skills. Luckily, I got plenty of practice in London!

How's your new flat mate? Did you get someone who's tidy? The nursing student you shared with last year sounded like a complete nightmare!

Anyway, hope you're well and enjoying the sunshine. According to my computer it's 18 °C over there right now. Give Jason my best wishes, by the way. It was really nice of him to get up at 4 am and drive me to the airport! If I ever pass my driving test, I'll do the same for you and him one day.

Take care!
Niko

Tasks

On Track 6, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4F/C
On Track 6, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6N/C
On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4H/C
On Track 5, Unit 4, Topic 16, exercise 16E/C

On Track 4, Unit 3, Topic 10, exercise 10L
On Track 4, Unit 3, Topic 12, exercise 12I/D
On Track 4, Unit 4, Topic 16, exercise 16K/C, D
On Track 1, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13N/A

HOW TO WRITE



a letter to the editor

Usually you write a letter to the editor as a response to something that has been published in the paper previously, or to take part in a discussion that you feel passionate about.

- 1 Take into account the kind of audience the newspaper is aimed at.
- 2 Be clear about the reason for writing the letter. It can be a response to a specific article, but it can also be a response to an event or issue in your community.

Language

Since you are not writing to a friend, it is best to write your letter in a formal style.

Structure

Start with: To the editor (or whatever salutation the newspaper uses)

Refer to issue or article you are talking about.

e.g. Having read Mr Males' article "Why raising the smoking age to 21 is a bad idea" (May 9), I wish to add a teenage perspective to the issue.

Summarise the argument you're responding to and state your position.

e.g. He argues that there is no research to suggest that changing the law will cut smoking among young people. This is simply not true.

Make your point (and it is usually just one point) and offer some evidence.

e.g. statistics, a recent event, a personal experience.

End with a sentence that makes your point clearly and forcefully.

e.g. Mr Males' article is not only inaccurate, it is irresponsible.

Sign off with your name and the name of your town. If it is a small town, add the name of the county.

If you live abroad, simply sign off with your name and the name of your country.

Style

You may show emotions in your letter: anger, disappointment, joy etc. Often these are the kinds of letter to the editor that get published.

Check other letters to the editor and follow the way they open and close.

Your letter should be to the point and not too long (max 250 words). Remember to divide your letter into paragraphs.

Example:

To the Editor:

I was amazed to read Mr Males' article "Why raising the smoking age to 21 is a bad idea" (May 9). He shamelessly states that there is no research to suggest that changing the law will cut smoking among young people. Hard to believe he hails from Massachusetts where a 2015 study found a larger reduction in smoking among teens in Needham, Massachusetts—which raised the minimum purchase age in 2005. And that's despite the surrounding communities allowing cigarette purchases for those under 21. If it goes into effect for the whole state, it will have a larger effect.

Smokers don't just affect themselves. They affect other teens who see them and want to fit in. They affect others who inhale their smoke (e.g. increased ear infections in exposed children). And they affect their families when they themselves develop side effects from smoking: higher rates of impotence, emphysema, poor wound healing, bad breath, stomach ulcers, higher rates of suicide, and higher medication costs.

Does Mr Males have tobacco company funding, by any chance?

DR. A. SCOTT
Wellesley
Massachusetts

Tasks

On Track 7, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1P/C

On Track 6, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1M/C

On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13P/C

On Track 4, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4G

HOW TO WRITE



linking words

How do we use linking words? Read this before writing a paragraph.

Linking words and conjunctions make a text more unified and cohesive. Think of linking words as the glue that holds the sentences and paragraphs together.

Conjunctions link main and subclauses.

They won't be allowed to leave the class **unless** they get a written permit.

They boys were dancing **while** the girls just watched.

Not only is sports good for your physique, **but** it is **also** good for your mental health.

Linking words link clauses.

The Indian people I know prefer tea to coffee. **However**, when in travelling in Europe, they also drink coffee. A dip in a cool lake is very refreshing after a sauna. **Similarly**, a roll in the snow can be an invigorating experience.

Airports around the world have beefed up their security. **Therefore**, there are often delays during peak season.

CONJUNCTIONS

- **after** sen jälkeen; sitten
- **as / as long as** kuten; koska; niin kauan kuin
- **as soon as** kun; heti kun
- **because** koska
- **before** ennen kuin
- **but** koska
- **for** sillä
- **not only ... but also** ei ainoastaan ... vaan myös
- **since** sen jälkeen kun; siitä lähtien kun; koska
- **so** jotta; joten; eli
- **so that** jotta; että
- **unless** jollei; ellei
- **when** koska
- **while** sillä aikaa kun; samaan aikaan kun; vaikka

e.g.

Let me explain what has happened here **before** you get the wrong idea Nina!

Oh Carlos, I knew that you would cheat on me **as soon as** I left Brighton.

Nina, **not only** are you the most beautiful girl in the world, **but** you are **also** the smartest.

That is why I am breaking up with you, Carlos, **because** I am smart.

LINKING WORDS

- **gradually** vähitellen, hiljalleen, asteittain
- **however** kuitenkin; silti; kuitenkin
- **instead** sen sijaan; sijasta
- **meanwhile** sillä aikaa; samaan aikaan; sillä välin
- **nevertheless** kuitenkin, kumminkin; sentään
- **on the one hand – on the other hand** toisaalta – toisaalta
- **on the contrary /contrary to** kun taas; päinvastoin
- **similarly** samalla tavoin, samoin; yhtä lailla
- **subsequently** myöhemmin; jälkeen pain; sitten
- **therefore** siksi; sen takia; joten
- **yet** silti; huolimatta; kuitenkin

e.g.

I liked reading and I **therefore** preferred to spend my free time indoors. **However**, I couldn't be indoors all the time, so I went jogging every now and then. **Gradually**, and quite by accident, I found that I could run further and further. Now I'm running marathons **instead** of reading books.

HOW TO WRITE



a mini-research paper

What is it?

A mini-research paper is a short summary of a topic you have researched.

What do I do?

A mini research project involves

- choosing a topic.
- checking relevant sources of information.
- making notes on what is important to the topic. (Use your own words; don't copy and paste.)
- compiling the notes into a short report.

What does it look like?

A mini-research paper often follows this structure:

TITLE	State the focus of your paper as clearly as possible.
INTRODUCTION	Explain why the topic is important. Explain key terms and issues.
SOURCE REVIEW	Summarise the different points your sources make about the topic. State what you have learnt from the sources you used.
DISCUSSION	Give your personal opinion on the topic and explain the reasons behind it. Mention any questions about the topic that were unanswered by your research.
LIST OF SOURCES	Cite the print and online sources you have used. (This avoids accusations of plagiarism.) See <i>How to write a citation</i> p. 5.

Example:

Are GM crops harmful to humans?

Genetically modified (GM) crops are plants whose genes have been artificially altered to modify their characteristics. Since their use is spreading in agriculture, it is important to know how safe they are for human consumption.

Opinions are divided on this issue. The researchers who develop these products and the companies who sell them point out a range of benefits. These include better yields, better resistance to disease, and an ability to grow in soils where other crops can't grow. They also argue that GM crops can improve human health by containing, for example, healthier oils or higher levels of antioxidants.

On the other hand, groups campaigning against GM foods worry that the genes in bioengineered foods may harm human health. They are also concerned about the damage to the environment caused by the herbicides sprayed on GM crops. In addition, they worry about the risks posed by GMO crops pollinating natural plant varieties in the wild.

Despite the passion the subject arouses, neither side of this debate can be sure whether GM crops are harmful or not. GMOs have only been part of our food supply for a few decades, so we have no long-term data about the effects of these crops on human health. The simple answer to the question is that nobody knows yet.

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Tasks

On Track 5, Unit 2, Topic 8, exercise 8]

HOW TO WRITE



a news item

When is an event newsworthy?

In general, something is considered newsworthy if it includes one, or several, of the following aspects:

- Magnitude (One person getting food poisoning after eating a bad cucumber is not news. 1 Million people getting food poisoning after eating bad cucumbers? That is news.)
- Famous people (If your parents adopt an orphan from Malawi, it is not news. When Madonna adopts an orphan from Malawi, it is.)
- How close is it to home? (is a Finn involved?)
- Weirdness (Dog bites man is not news. Man bites dog is.)

Content: Any good news story tries to give answers to each of the following questions:

- Who? Who are the people involved?
- What? What happened?
- Where? Where did the events take place?
- When? Date and time of the event.
- Why? The reason for the event. What led to it?
- How? Details about the way in which the event happened.

Structure: Most news stories take the form of “the inverted pyramid”:

- The first paragraph gives the reader a good overview of the entire story
- The rest of the article explains and expands on the beginning.

Keeping readers interested: To hold readers’ interest most newspaper articles

- have a gripping headline.
- focus on people. How are they affected? How do they feel?
- have an angle. What’s your approach to the story? This helps give the story focus.
- quote people. This makes your article sound more authentic and varied.
- keep sentences and paragraphs short. Avoid heavily descriptive language.

e.g. Robot vacuum cleaner ‘attacks’ woman

A 52-year-old Korean woman left the robot to clean the floors while she took a nap, but soon came to regret the decision.

Ms Lee Su-jin, a housewife from the South Korean city of Changwon left the device to clean the floors and decided to take an afternoon nap on the floor. But the rogue machine, which either thought her hair was dirt or was striking back at its human overlord, scooted over and sucked up the strands. Her hair got caught up in the machine and the pain of having her scalp tugged woke her up. She realised she was trapped and was forced to call emergency services to get free of the rebellious robot.

South Korean newspaper Kyunghyang Shinmun reports paramedics were able to free her without injury, but it is not known if she intends to keep the mechanised marauder.

Robotic vacuum cleaners have soared in popularity in recent years and it is estimated that there are now more than 30 million units worldwide.

Tasks

On Track 7, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1P/B

On Track 7, Unit 1, Topic 3, exercise 3O/C

On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14L/B

On Track 5, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14N

On Track 4, Unit 3, Topic 10, exercise 10L/C

On Track 4, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14K

On Track 4, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14O/B

HOW TO WRITE



a personal statement

If you are applying to a university outside Finland you are often required to write a personal statement about yourself. This includes

- the reason you are applying. What are your ambitions and what interests you about the subject and the course being offered?
- why you are a suitable applicant. Do you have any relevant skills, experience or achievements gained from education, work or other activities?
- the reason you would like to study abroad rather than your own country. Mention your English language skills and any courses you have taken.

Example of a personal statement from a student applying to study Food Science

My passion to study food science and technology was sparked when I was accepted to the “Food Science and Technology” group at the Millennium Youth Camp, an international youth camp for young science-orientated students. I spent a week with specialist professors studying proteins in legumes, in well-equipped laboratories at the University of Helsinki. Our group, which included students from Asia, Europe and the US, investigated the impact of food sources on the environment and encouraged us to see food and farming in a wider context. It was this week which inspired my future career plans, as I discovered the wealth of exciting opportunities that food science offers. Eventually, I hope to work with developing food products that have a sustainable future.

At comprehensive school I chose to study courses such as “Food Chemistry”, which fostered my interest in food and nutrition. Another major factor contributing towards my curiosity about food is my gluten intolerance. Being unable to eat gluten made me curious about what our food is made of, and what makes it unsuitable for me. As my school only provided a limited amount of food science related courses, I began researching the topic independently online and by reading books.

I study at Tampereen lyseon lukio, a high school where we have opportunities to undertake practical lab work. I especially enjoy this hands-on method of studying Biology and Chemistry. My school provides excellent optional extra curricular activities, such as science lectures by innovative international scientists and visits to local laboratories and scientific institutions which I regularly take part in. These events have broadened my knowledge of natural sciences. I also enjoy organising and taking part in school activities, such as being a member of the senior student council.

Sports, writing and music provide a refreshing break from my studies. I have played the violin for 13 years at the local music college, and football and tennis for 10 years. I enjoy organising events such as class trips abroad and tournament trips abroad for my football team, for which I applied for EU-funding. Arranging such events has encouraged me to take responsibility, show leadership and to communicate effectively with a variety of individuals.

Because food science is a subject of international importance, studying in English would be a valuable advantage. I hope that studying in an international environment would be not only an enriching experience, but also an invaluable asset for a career in food science, which is likely to involve working with people from a variety of cultures.

Tasks

On Track 6, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5N

HOW TO WRITE



a poem

Writing a poem means taking a close look at the world around you. Or the world inside your head. A poem can be about anything – love, a computer game, a wasps' nest outside your window. A good poem will pack the description about the experience into a few well-chosen words.

Here are some tips to help you write one.

1 Find the spark

Choose a subject that is personal to you in some way.

e.g. something you were scared of as a child, a person you know well, a memory that won't go away, a situation that made you see things in a new way

2 Make notes

List the all details you can about the subject. Don't think too critically. Include

- observations of tiny details.
- sensory references: sights, sounds, touch, smell, taste.
- your feelings.

Don't worry about sentences; single words and phrases are fine.

Can you compare what you are writing about to other things?

e.g. The school walls were as grey as a winter sea.
e.g. Grandpa groaned like an old door.

3 Structure your notes

Now try putting things to put things in a logical order.

- Have a strong opening line to hook the reader.
- Have a strong last line that leaves the reader thinking.
- Leave out all unnecessary words.
- Remember that a poem does not have to rhyme.

4 Rewrite

When you have got a first draft, write it again.

- Keep the parts that are fresh and interesting.
- Throw out anything that seems over-familiar or clichéd or fake.

5 Revisit

- Put away your poem for a day or two.
- Reread it and try to make it better.
- You could a friend to read it and get their opinion.

Practical exercises for poetry writing

One way of writing poems is to follow a pattern. Here are three examples.

1 Use opposites to introduce a topic.

What I like
I like X
I like Y
I like Z.
But I don't like A.

e.g.

Snowboarding
I like the feel of the board under my feet
I like the rush of cold air
I like the tight turns and the jumps
But I don't like hospitals.

What a ____ is
A ____ is ____
A ____ is ____
A ____ is ____
It isn't ____.

e.g.

Weekend
A weekend is sleeping late
A weekend is time with your mates
A weekend is watching television
It isn't two days of exam revision.

2 Activating your senses: hearing, smell, taste, touch, vision.

Think about a phenomenon or an object and describe how it sounds, smells, tastes, feels and looks.

e.g.

Procrastination

Sounds like a must-see video clip
Smells like another cup of coffee
Tastes like ice cream from the fridge
Feels like the screen of cell phone
Looks like the shortest essay anyone has ever written.

3 A poem of five lines (cinquain pattern).

If you write a poem with this pattern, you can make it look like a diamond.

Line 1: the title of the poem (one word)
Line 2: two words describing the subject
Line 3: three words expressing an action by the subject (-ing-forms)
Line 4: four words telling about a feeling you as the writer have about the subject
Line 5: a synonym for the title to sum up the poem.

e.g.

Cabin

Up north
Carries family memories
A place of peace
Home

Tasks

On Track 5, Unit 4, Topic 16, exercise 16E/A, B

On Track 3, Unit 1, Topic 3.1, exercise 3.1B

On Track 3, Unit 1, Topic 3.2, exercise 3.2B

HOW TO WRITE



a profile

A profile is a magazine or newspaper article that explores the background and character of a particular person (or group). The focus is usually on one aspect of the subject's personal or professional life, and begins with explaining why they are currently in the news.

Tips for writing a profile

- Mention relevant background e.g. the subject's interests, career, education, family.
- Mention surroundings as well as the subject's habits and mannerisms.
- Encourage your subject to express their thoughts, feelings or opinions.
- Interview other people about this person so you get a variety of perspectives.

e.g. The cyclist who is fighting for justice on our roads

Lewis Dediare is a man with a mission – to make London's roads safe for cyclists. Now he is back in the spotlight after a taxi driver appeared in court accused of knocking him off his bicycle.

I've never met a superhero on a bike, but self-styled 'Traffic Droid' a.k.a. Lewis Dediare comes close. Dressed from head to foot in black lycra, with five video cameras mounted on his cycling helmet, Lewis rides around the streets of London with one aim – to rid the streets of 'idiot' drivers who are a threat to cyclists.

As we ride together through the rush-hour traffic, Dediare, a 49-year-old telecoms supervisor, attracts attention. He rides steadily, at a slower pace than most other cyclists, and often sits in the middle of the lane. His arms signal so often that he seems to be doing a prolonged robot dance. And the cars around him slow down as though they've seen the police.

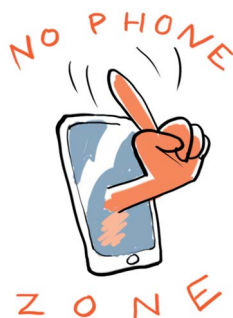
If he sees anyone breaking a traffic rule he will confront them immediately.

"Infringement!" yells Dediare when he spots two cyclists jumping a red light. "Put that mobile down," he shouts at a lorry driver that has stopped in traffic.

People's reactions vary. Some apologise, some ignore him. Others shout back. After one argument with a driver, the passenger turns to me and yells, "Knock him over, would you?"

Tasks

On Track 4, Unit 2, Topic 8, exercise 8F



HOW TO WRITE



a quote

When you want to quote a speaker...

Make your point e.g. Oscar Wilde enjoyed being a celebrity.

Then give the quote e.g. He said, "The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about."

e.g.

Selfies can make you feel good about yourself. Emma Kirby, a 22-year-old Instagram user from Durham, says, "It's always nice to document a good hair day, or an outfit you love."

Singer Bob Dylan does not feel he has to please his fans. He once famously told them, "Just because you like my stuff doesn't mean I owe you anything."

When you want to quote from a text...

Take the part of the quote you think is important

Then blend it into the sentence.

e.g. The writer explains that *The picture of Dorian Gray* "upset many people when it was first published".

e.g.

The writer describes Oscar Wilde as "wild" and "controversial".

According to the article we should "take more selfies".

NightNotes argues that church music in the middle ages was slow "because it had to work within the four-second echo of the stone-walled cathedrals".



HOW TO WRITE



a response

Responding to online posts or discussions will help you learn discussion skills, practice your writing skills, and learn from others. To be successful, try to imagine you are having a face-to-face discussion with strangers.

- Keep the tone polite and semi-formal.
- Be respectful when disagreeing.
- Put forward your ideas clearly and support them with examples.
- Engage with what others have written.
- Don't go on too long. Two to three paragraphs are usually enough.

e.g. A discussion forum post from the online magazine Young Minds

I'm worried about the effect the digital world is having on the young. They spend so much time on social media or watching videos that many of them lack the skills they will need to manage in the real world. The ability to read facial expressions and other nonverbal cues to emotion only comes from spending face-to-face time with other people. There are no emojis in real life! How will young people manage in the work place where so much work is now done in teams? And how will they cope as parents who need to respond the real-life needs of children? That thought is truly terrifying.

- Lifelong -

A response to Lifelong:

There's really no need to be terrified. Social media is just another way for people to interact with one another. In fact, it can enrich the relationships we have with one another because we are continuously aware of what family and friends are up to. All those images, comments and posts give us glimpses of their lives and thoughts at any given moment. This kind of interaction brings us closer together. It also means we have plenty to talk about when we meet up in real life.

As for the work place you mention, both businesses and public sector organisations will certainly expect employees to have the ability to communicate successfully online, as well as face-to-face. In our globalised world social networks are essential for communicating with customers and clients.

When it comes to the future, I believe young people's experience of the digital world will be an asset rather than a liability. Besides, knowing which emoji can diffuse an awkward situation is a handy life skill for anyone – young or old.

Tasks

On Track 7, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9O/B

HOW TO WRITE



a review (general)

Reviews can be written about a variety of topics: accommodation, a product or a service, for example. Reviews are based on your personal experiences. So, do not use general opinions or vague statements. Your readers want to know about your experience – and based on that even decide whether to try out the product or service or not.

Language

Language in a review is usually quite formal, especially if it is written on a public site, and meant to be taken seriously. However, if you are writing a review to a restricted audience, it can also be informal and humorous. The best reviews are often personal.

More and more reviews are written online on various sites.

Structure

Opening

First give a brief description of the product or service. The description will give a rough idea of what you are writing about.

Body

Think of some specific details and evidence you can give to support your opinion in the review. For example, if you are reviewing a hotel site, mention the location, rooms, quality of service, etc. Remember to be polite, fair and truthful, but also try to be creative and interesting.

Closing

In one or two final sentences a review usually either recommends a place, or advise people against it.



HOW TO WRITE



a review of a film

The title of the film

The film

- What type of film is it (e.g. romantic, realistic, political, action, comedy etc.)?
- What genre does it represent? Can it be classified?

The director

- Who directs the film?
- When was it released?

The setting

- Where does the film take place?
- Does the location change often? Why? Was it shot on location or in the studio? – Does this affect the film in any way?

The plot and the characters

- What is the main storyline of the film? How well does it hold your interest?
- Who plays the main characters? How well do they play their roles?

The photography

- How realistically is the film shot? Or does it look unreal? Why?
- How successful is the photography in creating atmosphere and conveying the theme of the film?
How is colour used?

The special effects and the stunts

- Describe the special effects and the stunts: how important are they to the film?
- What would the film have been like without them?

The soundtrack

- How is sound used to back up the story? What role does music play in the film?

The theme or the message

- Analyse the message or the main theme of the film.

Your opinion

- How does the film make you feel?
- What is good about the film? What could have been better?
- Is it worth seeing? Who would you recommend it to?

Example:

The Martian – A review

Directed by Ridley Scott and released in 2015, it is difficult to say what kind of genre the film *The Martian* represents. It is not a typical sci-fi film, so I would probably classify it as a survival space drama.

The plot is straightforward. Matt Damon plays the botanist Mark Watney on an expedition to Mars. He is left alone on the planet after his crew are forced to flee the planet. Most of the film, and the most enjoyable part for me, concentrates on how he overcomes one difficulty after another before he is eventually rescued.

What I found interesting about the film is what was left out: there are no aliens, there is no love interest, and there are no villains at all. The hostile planet itself is the antagonist Watney has to fight in order to survive. The only other characters in the film are his crew and the scientists on earth who have to come up with a plan to save him. Matt Damon dominates the film in every way. Most of the actor's lines are monologues, and it is a testimony to his acting skills that this never becomes boring.

The Martian was shot on location in Jordan, but it is so realistically done that it is easy to believe you really are looking at Mars. There are many technical elements in the film, but they are clearly explained, and it was easy to follow what was going on. I highly recommend this film.
(249 words)

HOW TO WRITE



a review of a novel

The writer and the title

The setting

- Where and when does the story take place?
- Is there a special importance in the choice of setting?

The characters

- Who are the main characters?
- What are the relations between them like?
- What are your feelings about them?
- Can you identify with any of them?

The plot

- Outline the plot briefly.
- Pay special attention to the highlights and turning points.
- Stick to the same tense when outlining the plot.

The message

- Is there a message in the book?
- If there is, is it convincingly presented?
- If not, what is the purpose of the book?

The language

- Did you find the language easy or difficult?
- Was it enjoyable?
- Can you say anything about the style?

Your opinion

- How did you like the book?
- Was it worth reading?
- Who would you recommend it to?

Final point: Make sure everything is described using the present simple tense.

Example:

A review of *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

This dystopian science fiction novel was published in 2005. The story takes place in England during the late 1990s, although there are flashbacks to the past. The narrator, 31-year-old Kathy, looks back at her school days, and describes how she and her friends then grew up in cottages in the countryside. Kathy's closest friends are Tommy and Ruth, a couple who are the same age as her. Ruth, a confident, outgoing person, and Tommy, a boy who was bullied by other pupils, both studied with Kathy at Hailsham boarding school.

The characters feel realistic because Ishiguro gives us many details about their lives. And when I realised the terrible situation they were in, I felt strong sympathy for them. It is easy to identify with Kathy as she keeps going back over difficult memories.

The plot is structured around Kathy's memories. She remembers meeting her best friend Ruth, and describes the things they worried about and enjoyed as children. Hailsham is an isolated community and this is why the children have strong relationships. There is also a mystery about why the children are there and this keeps the reader interested in the story.

The language is easy to follow, but the story moves slowly so some readers might lose patience. I think the slow pace is important because I got to know the characters well. This means that when the reason they are being raised at Hailsham is revealed, it is truly shocking. This is a book about why science has to be linked to ethics. The moment we stop treating people as human beings, terrible things can happen.

In my opinion *Never Let Me Go* is an excellent novel. The story is touching and cleverly constructed so we are curious to find out more about the life of Kathy and her friends. I would recommend it to readers who are looking for a book that is gripping and refreshingly different to anything they have read before.

HOW TO WRITE



a review of a musical performance or an album

Introduction to the artist(s) and the concert / the album

artist: singer, musician, band, group, orchestra, soloist, conductor, guitarist, bass player
genre: instrumental, vocal, orchestral, chamber, classical, folk, choral, recital, pop, rock, soul, reggae, R&B, hip hop, emo, rap, funk, jazz
venue: concert hall, sports arena, music festival, club, recording studio

The concert / The album

symphony, concerto, opera, set, cover version, lyrics, chorus, composition, accompaniment
track, compilation, charts, album cover
applause, standing ovation, extra piece

Comments

chord, key, bar, major, minor, rhythm, beat, tempo, pitch, volume, tune, melody, note, harmony, duration, arrangement, special effects
technique
audience

Personal comments

the feelings it aroused in you
comparisons with past performances and other bands/singers/albums
predictions for the future
who would you recommend this to?

HOW TO WRITE



a review of an exhibition

Introduction to the artist(s)

artist: painter, sculptor, photographer, graphic artist, ceramist
 genre: drawing, painting, sculpture, mural, fresco, print
 venue: art gallery, art museum, museum of modern art

Exhibits

still life, portrait, landscape, statue, bust, relief, print
 abstract, representational, surreal, caricature
 canvas, oil, water colour, tempera, pastel, brush, charcoal, pencil

Comments

recurring themes
 impressions as a whole
 appeal it might have for others
 names of works
 Layout and organisation of the exhibition

Personal response

focus on the most interesting works, advice and suggestions for visitors
 development of the artist, the future, comparisons with other artists
 final impression this artist makes on you

Tasks

On Track 5, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1M
 On Track 3, Unit 2, Topic 5, exercise 5K/A
 On Track 3, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13K/A
 On Track 2, Unit 3, Topic 9, exercise 9M/A

HOW TO WRITE



a speech or a presentation

Three things to remember when writing a speech:

- 1 be clear what the speech/presentation is about.
- 2 give the audience two or three things to think about afterwards.
- 3 keep sentences short. Short sentences are easier to say.

Language

You don't have to use complicated words even if you knew some. You may use words and expressions that you would normally use when talking. Remember, though, to take into account who your audience is. If you are talking to young people it is alright to use colloquial expressions and even slang (to spice your speech up), but if you're talking in a more official situation or to an audience you don't know, it is best to use more formal, standard language and expressions.

Structure

Opening

Signal the start of your speech/presentation with a clear opening.

e.g. *Ladies and gentlemen. / Good morning everybody. / Hello.*

Tell your audience why you are there and what you are going to be talking about.

Body

Make two to three points. If you can, make references to real incidents or personal experiences.

Remember, in a speech, it is OK to repeat things!

Closing

Signal that your speech is over.

e.g. *Thank you for coming... / Thank you for your attention...*

So, welcome to our school.

And finally, I'd like thank you all for making this evening such a success. Thank you.

And now, over to Jackie.

Can we give Jackie a round of applause.

e.g. Introducing a visiting speaker

Hello. Today, we have a special visitor from London. He works at Queen Mary University and has an unusual job title. He is a stand-up mathematician. This means that in his work he is able to combine his two great passions in life: mathematics and comedy. If you are wondering how that is possible, you are going to find out.

Our speaker's name is Matt Parker, and he has done shows in many countries. We are very lucky to get him to our school, because he's only in Finland for two days. The presentation he will give today is called Number Ninja.

Matt Parker, welcome to our school.

Tasks

On Track 7, Unit 2, Topic 6, exercise 6O/A
 On Track 7, Unit 3, Topic 11, exercise 11L/B
 On Track 6, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1M/B
 On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13P/B
 On Track 6, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14L/A
 On Track 5, Unit 3, Topic 10, exercise 10J/C

On Track 5, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13N/A
 On Track 4, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2O
 On Track 4, Unit 3, Topic 3, exercise 9P/A
 On Track 4, Unit 3, Topic 12, exercise 12I/B
 On Track 4, Unit 4, Topic 14, exercise 14O/C
 On Track 2, Unit 4, Topic 13, exercise 13K

HOW TO WRITE



a summary

A summary is a shorter version of a larger text (or a speech, TV show etc). To write a summary, use your own words to briefly express the main idea and relevant details of the piece you have read, listened to or seen. The aim in writing a summary is to give a basic idea of the source material.

It is easier to write a summary if you take notes. When taking notes, these questions may help you: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Then use your notes to write the summary.

e.g.

A summary of a newspaper article

The article is about a new technique police in the UK are using to catch bicycle thieves: bait bikes. A bait bike is a bicycle fitted with a hidden GPS device. Then it is left unlocked on the street by the police. If a thief steals the bike, the police can track it and arrest the criminal.

The advantage of using bait bikes is that they dramatically cut cycle theft. When the idea was used in London 30% fewer bicycles were stolen.

The problem with bait bikes is that they encourage people to steal. If an impulsive young person sees an unlocked bike, they might try to ride it. This is the reason bait bikes are not being used all over the UK.

Tasks

- On Track 2, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1N
- On Track 2, Unit 3, Topic 10, exercise 10D
- On Track 2, Unit 3, Topic 12, exercise 12H
- On Track 1, Unit 1, Topic 1, exercise 1C
- On Track 1, Unit 1, Topic 2, exercise 2L
- On Track 1, Unit 1, Topic 4, exercise 4G



HOW TO WRITE



a summary of an article

When you summarise a text you make it shorter by just giving the main points.
Here is one way to do it:

- Read the text quickly and decide what it is about. What is the overall idea? Why was this article written?
- Reread the text more carefully and underline the main points. These are often in the first sentence of each paragraph.
- Now list the main points in a logical order using (mostly) your own words. You can normally leave out examples that illustrate points.
- Cut most adjectives and adverbs.
- Make sure the title or the first sentence clearly says what the summary is about. Often the idea is to make the summary a quarter of the length of the original.
- When you have finished, count the number of words. If it is still too long try using shortened clauses.
e.g. Researcher who are working in this field have funding problems. (10 words) → Researchers working in this field have funding problems. (8 words)

Example:

**A summary of “Processed food bad, natural food good? We’ve got it so wrong”
from New Scientist magazine**

The article argues that not all processed food is bad for the consumer. In fact, the word processed is difficult to define. It can refer to food that is heated, frozen or dried. This means flour, milk, rice and many other things we cook with can be described as processed. The important point is what the food contains, not whether or not it is processed. Food that is good for us has a high nutritional value, and a lot of processed foods contain healthy ingredients. Unhealthy eating is not caused by processed food, it is caused by poor food choices.

Original article

Warner, W. (2016, April 28). Processed food bad, natural food good? We’ve got it so wrong. New Scientist. Retrieved from <https://www.newscientist.com>

HOW TO WRITE



a survey

A survey is a way of gathering information on what people think about a specific subject. Here are some hints on how to design an effective survey.

- 1 Have a clear goal.** What exactly do you want to find out? Prepare short, clear questions that will give you that information.
- 2 Choose a method for collecting information.** What will work best for your survey? Face-to-face interviews? A questionnaire? Online inquiries?
- 3 Choose the type of question.** What is the best way to ask for a response?
 - If you're collecting new ideas, unstructured questions can be useful.
e.g. How would you improve the quality of science education in our school?
 - If you are gathering data about things you already know, structured questions can be useful.
e.g. Which science subject do you like most?
 - a) biology
 - b) chemistry
 - c) physics
 - d) no answer
 - e.g. Are you lactose intolerant? yes/no
 - If you are using structured questions but want to leave room for free responses, you can add spaces for respondents to fill in.
e.g. Where does your knowledge of science come from? (Tick as many boxes as you like.)
 - ☐ school
 - ☐ science websites
 - ☐ documentaries
 - ☐ news articles or books
 - ☐ parents
 - ☐ friends
 - ☐ other _____

AFTER THE SURVEY

Decide how to present your results

- visually: Chart? Graph? Table? List?
- in writing: State what you wanted to find out.
- Describe the people questioned and the method used.
- Point out trends or specific findings that are worth highlighting.
- Mention similarities and differences in the answers given by respondents.
- Offer an explanation for your results.
- State whether there is anything we can learn from the data.

HOW TO WRITE



a thank you note

In many cultures it is considered good manners to send a message thanking someone for a gift or for hosting them. This can take the form of a card, an email or even a text.

Here are some useful phrases:

Starting

Hi (informal)

Hi Robin (more friendly)

Dear Robin (a little more formal)

Thanking

Thanks for looking after me when I visited London.

Just a quick note to say thank you for a great party.

Thanks for the Union Jack socks you sent me.

Showing appreciation

It was great to see you and your family.

I had a really good time.

I'm wearing the socks to my English lessons.

Ending

Love (informal)

All the best (more formal)

Best regards or Best wishes (neutral)

Jill

e.g.

Dear Uncle Robin,

Thanks very much for the money you sent me for my birthday.

I'm saving up for my driving lessons at the moment so I really appreciate it!

Love,

Jill

Tasks

On Track 1, Unit 2, Topic 8, exercise 8G

Writing topics for On Track 7

On Track⁷

UNIT 1

We need more national parks in Finland!

No more national parks to Finland!

Write a speech where you argue for or against having more national parks in Finland. Your audience is your local city council members who have invited a young person to give a talk on the topic.

Living with the animals

“Urban development and overpopulation are bigger threats to the survival of wild animals than illegal hunting or poaching.”

Do you think it is important to protect wild animals? What measures can realistically be taken to protect them? Can we, or should we, protect all of them, or only some?

No animal testing!

You are strongly opposed to using animals in any form of research. Write an email to a company that uses animals to test their products on, explaining your point of view.

On Track⁷

UNIT 2

Flying prohibited

“Restricting air travel is the most effective way to restrict air pollution.”

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give some examples to illustrate your point of view.

Urban setting in a book I have read or a film I have seen

Describe the urban setting in a film or a book that you have read (e.g. *Lost in Translation*, *Slum Dog Millionaire*, *Avatar*, *Wall-E*). What role did it play in the book/film? Would it be an environment where you would like to live?

Individual vs. global

Some people think that climate change is a global problem that could only be tackled by governments. Others believe individual choices are the cause of, and the solution to, climate change. What is your opinion?

Forest clearance

“Forests are cut down for a reason. We need the timber, as well as cleared land for our farms and cities.”

Write a letter to the editor in response to this comment from a reader in an online magazine.

UNIT 3

Zoos

“Zoos are not ideal. But they are essential for educating people, especially children, about different kinds of animals.”

What do you think about zoos? Write a letter to the editor in response to the comment, taken from an online article about zoos.

My favourite trees

Think of the trees that you see every day in your neighbourhood – in parks, around your home, near school, etc. Describe your favourite trees and the impact they have on your life.

Urbanisation

Two thirds of the Finnish population live south of Tampere. The government feels that this needs to change. They have asked young people for ideas and recommendations. Write an email to the Department of Planning, expressing your opinion and suggesting ways to address this problem.

I love my town

Write an essay where you describe your town. What do you like or dislike about it? What are the pros and cons about living there?

Green cities

Is a city without cars a utopian dream, or would it soon become a reality? How could the number of cars in cities be controlled? What would it be like to live in a carless city?

Write a speech where you consider these questions. Your audience is a group of high school students.