

Communication

Outcome 2: Written Communication (Writing)

[INTERMEDIATE 2]

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Acknowledgement

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What this section is about

This Study is one of three that together cover all of the skills required to complete the SQA National Unit Communication (Intermediate 2). This Study Section focuses on Outcome 2, which asks you to produce well structured written communication.

Outcomes, aims and objectives of this section

Communication (Intermediate 2)

Outcome 2: Produce well structured written communication.

Performance criteria

- a) The techniques are appropriate to the writer's purpose and audience and are used consistently and effectively.
- b) All essential ideas/information contributing to the main purpose of the communication are expressed accurately and coherently.
- c) Structure takes account of purpose and audience and clearly delineates the points it presents.
- d) Spelling, punctuation and syntax are consistently accurate; sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary are varied to suit purpose and audience.

Aims

This Study Section aims to:

- Discuss the meaning of well structured written communication
- Show you how to write reports, essays and portfolios of work.

Objectives

By the end of this Study Section, you should:

- Understand how to write well structured communications
- Be ready to write a report, an essay or a portfolio of related work.

Approximate study time for this section

This Study Section will take you approximately 8–10 hours to complete. This time will vary from individual to individual, depending on other circumstances. Additional time will be required to complete the assessment.

Other resources required for this section

The following will be of use to you as you work through this Study Section:

- A good dictionary
- A thesaurus
- Copies of reports/essay/portfolios written by others (your tutor may be able to give you these).

How you will be assessed for this section

Assessment for Outcome 2 of the unit Communication (Intermediate 2) requires you to write an essay, a report or a folio of linked pieces of 500 words. The details of the assessment will be discussed with you by your tutor.

When and where you will be assessed for this section

Assessment for this Unit should normally be done under supervision in your school or college.

What you have to achieve for this section

This Study Section is made up of a mix of the following:

A

Activities. Activities ask you to do something – for example read an article or apply the skills you’ve just learned to a text. Responses to these activities are often given on the following page.

?

Self Assessed Questions. SAQs enable you to check your understanding of the information that you’ve just read. You should try all SAQs before moving on to the next part of the Study Section, as they allow you to monitor your own progress. Answers to SAQs are included at the end of the Study Section.

T

Tutor Assignments. Tutor assignments require you to submit work to your tutor, who will mark it and give you feedback. These assignments are important, as they pull together all of the skills covered in the Study Section, and give you a feeling for the main summative assessment(s) associated with the outcome covered in the Study Section.

As you work through this Study Section, you’ll come across a mix of these. You should try all Activities, Self Assessed Questions and Tutor Assignments. Only by working through all of these will you have full understanding of the tasks set.

Opportunities for reassessment for this section

You are normally allowed one opportunity to be reassessed if you don't meet the performance criteria at your first attempt. You should discuss this with your tutor.

Defining well structured written communication

For this outcome in the unit, you're going to be asked by your tutor to produce well structured written communication. The first question that might occur to you is 'what is well structured written communication?'

Basically, well structured written communication has the following features:

- It is written in a way that is easy to understand by the intended reader
- It takes account of the needs of the reader
- It is structured (put together) in such a way that the reader can easily follow the writer's train of thought
- It has a clear purpose
- It has accurate spelling, punctuation and syntax.

Let's look at each of these in turn.

Easy to understand by the reader

Your writing should be easy to understand by the intended reader. This means that you should write clearly, and present your writing in a logically structured way.

You may wish to include drawings, diagrams or charts to help your reader.

Takes account of the needs of the reader

When you write something you need to be aware of the needs, abilities and knowledge of the person who's going to read your writing. For example, if you write a report for your employer, he or she will read your report to get information on the topic you are writing about – his/her need will be to get information. In this case, your employer would expect you to write a formal, serious piece of writing.

On the other hand, if you wrote an imaginative story, the person reading it would expect to be entertained. If you wrote a personal reflective essay, the reader would expect to learn something about some aspect of your life, and so on. In these cases, you would decide on the level of formality depending on what you were writing about.

It's important that you consider the level of formality that you use, and make sure that your writing is as formal as the situation requires.

Different words, different meanings

It's important that you consider how well your writing meets your readers' needs.

There are so many different ways to write things that sometimes it can seem confusing.

Consider, for example, the following sentences. Don't they all mean much the same thing?

- a) James was annoyed when his friend was unable to lend him some money.
- b) Jim was troubled 'cos his mate wasn't able to lend him any cash.
- c) James was perturbed to find that his friend was in no position to forward a loan of money to him.
- d) Jimmy was raging cos his pal couldn't sub him any dosh.
- e) James's pal couldn't give him a loan. James wasn't too pleased.

In a general sense, you can see that each of the five sentences **does** mean the same sort of thing as the others. There are differences too, however.

The way you use words in your writing can affect the communication in various ways:

- Making it more or less formal
- Making it more or less emotional
- Making it more or less exciting
- Making it subjective (based on your feelings) or objective (neutral, not based on feelings).



Look at the five sentences above again, and answer these questions.

- 1. Which sentence is the most formal? Give reasons for your answer.
- 2. Which sentence is the least formal? Give reasons for your answer.
- 3. Which sentence is the most strongly worded? Why do you say that?
- 4. What effect does the word 'cos' have in sentence D?
- 5. In what ways are sentences B and E different?

Suggested answers to these questions are given at the end of this Study Section. Check your answers against these after you've completed them.

Prior knowledge

When writing, try to consider what your intended reader already knows. For example, if you are writing about a technical or specialist subject, you should consider how familiar the intended reader is likely to be with the specialist language that you are using.

If you were writing a short piece on, for example, car maintenance, for people who regularly repair their own cars, you could use words like carburettor, choke, air filter, etc., without having to explain what these are, or where they are. On the other hand, if you were writing for complete beginners, you would have to explain what these things are, and where they are to be found.



The manager of a small garage asked his employee to report on the types of problems that customers come into the garage with. Read the reply below, and then answer the questions.

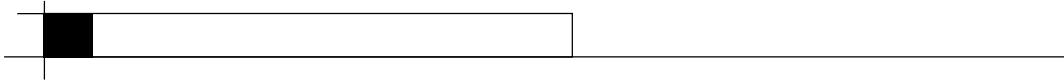
Hi Mr Smith

I've looked at all the car problems coming in. It looks like the majority of customers need oil changes, but some of them come in to get the carburettor adjusted (the carburettor controls the mixture of fuel and air going into the engine). Funnily enough more people come in to have their lights checked and a lot of customers like to have the spark plugs changed.

If there's anything else you want to know, just ask.

Luke

1. Does this communication provide the type of information required?
2. Does it achieve the correct level of formality for the situation?
3. Is it written to take account of the prior knowledge of the reader (i.e. the manager)?



Structuring your writing

It is important to structure your work so that it is easy to follow. 'To structure' means 'to put together', and we're now going to look at putting written communication together.

Having a clear purpose

When you write, you're doing so for a purpose. If this purpose is clear to your readers, then they'll find it easier to follow your points, and to understand the arguments you're presenting.

Having a purpose also makes it easier for you to write. Knowing what you are trying to achieve with your writing makes it easier for you to put in information that is relevant.

Linking and signposting

A well structured piece of writing is made up of paragraphs, each of which usually contains one complete set of ideas.

Linking refers to the ways that paragraphs are linked together, so that the reader can follow your line of thought. For example:

'Clear vision is an important qualification for entry into the army. Army personnel need to have good clear eyesight, or they will fail the medical.

Another area where the army is very strict is in general level of fitness. Recruits must be reasonably fit to get past the medical, and maintaining fitness is a regular part of army life.'

The phrase '*Another area where the army is very strict*' is a linking phrase, because it refers back to the previous paragraph, and allows the reader to see the relationship between the two paragraphs.

Signposting refers to ways in which you tell your reader what you are going to do next. For example, look at this excerpt from an essay:

'Another problem that we have to face is drugs. Drugs are commonplace and some people get a lot of pressure put on them to try them out. Drugs are everywhere – clubs, pubs, school gates and even youth clubs. It can be difficult for some people to say "no"

and they end up with a drug problem. This is not a problem that most of our parents had to face, as drugs were much less widespread when they were our age.

Finally I want to discuss the threat of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Our parents didn't have to worry about AIDS and it only occurred in the 1980s. Young people are under pressure from the media to try sex, and this was probably true for our parents as well. The big difference though is that we need to be aware of AIDS and STDs – and these are things our parents didn't really have to worry about.'

The phrase, '*Finally I want to discuss the threat of AIDS*' is a good example of signposting – telling the reader what you are going to discuss next.

Spelling, punctuation and syntax

Spelling, punctuation and syntax are of obvious importance when you're writing. There is no space here to go into these areas in any depth, and you should speak to your tutor/teacher if you feel you have any problems. He or she will be able to give you extra support or suggest where you can get this.

Don't be embarrassed about having problems with spelling, punctuation or syntax – many people do. The best way to tackle any such difficulties is to be aware of them and seek appropriate support.

That said, we can look at a few of the commonest spelling and punctuation problems here.

There, their, they're

These three are commonly confused. **There** refers to where something is. It's easy to remember if you think about it this way:

Where is it? It is over *there*.

Notice how these two words share some of the same letters – *here*. **There** refers to where something is – it might be *here* or it might be *there*.

Their means *belonging to them*. Sometimes it's easiest to remember something with a silly sentence whose letters spell out the word. Try this one, or make one up for yourself:

Their Hamsters Eat Indian Rice. Whose hamsters eat Indian rice? Their hamsters do!

They're is short for *they are*. It's quite easy to remember too:

They're contains the word *they*, and so it's easy to see it means *they are*.



Each of these sentences needs one (or two) of the words – **there, their, they're** – to complete it. Add the right words to each sentence, then check your answers with those at the end of this study section.

1. The man couldn't see his wife, even though she was standing just over _____ .
2. The postman was terrified of _____ dog.
3. Litter is a big problem. It's here, _____, and everywhere.
4. Although we lost the match today, our players are better than _____ players.
5. Our players are commiserating. _____ in the bar now, drowning _____ sorrows.
6. 'These shoes are perfect!' Jackie exclaimed. '_____ exactly what I want!'
7. The sales assistant said, '_____ expensive, but _____ soles are leather.'
8. The neighbours always take _____ children to the park on Saturdays.
9. The park is located just _____, behind the library.
10. _____ are always many children playing in the park. _____ always very happy as they run about.

Too, to, two

Too means *also* or *in excess*.

To means *towards*.

Two means 2.

Too – meaning *also* – can be remembered like this:

Too contains **one 'O' and also another**. (e.g. I like Tom and I like James too.)

Too – meaning *in excess* – can be remembered like this:

Too has **too many Os**.

I spent too much money.

To – meaning *towards* or used in words like *to write, to do* (we call this the infinitive) – can be remembered like this:

To is part of **towards** (e.g. I moved my pawn to the square next to his king).

If you want to write or to shout or to eat, it means you want **to do** something.

To do – both words only contain one letter 'o'.

Two – the number 2 – can be remembered this way:

When you want 2 (two) of something, always remember that you want:

Two Wee Oranges (the first letters spell the word *two*) (e.g. I have two sisters.)



Insert the right word (**too**, **to** or **two**) into each of these sentences.

1. I would like _____ chocolate bars please.
2. I wanted _____ eat the chocolate straight away, but mum said wait till later.
3. My sister wanted _____ eat her chocolate _____.
4. After I'd eaten the chocolate, I realised that I'd eaten _____ much.
5. I used to have _____ cats, but now I've got three.
6. One cat always goes out first, then the others go _____.
7. The cats like _____ go into the neighbours' garden.
8. 'It costs £60,' the woman said. William replied, 'No thanks, it's _____ much.'
9. She offered to sell him _____ for £100.
10. He decided to buy them, as his friend wanted _____ have one _____.

Apostrophes: dos and don'ts

Contracted words

An apostrophe has two functions. It can be used to show where a letter is missing, or it can be used to show that something belongs to someone.

Many words (called contracted words) have letters missing. Examples include:

can't	(cannot)	I've	(I have)
don't	(do not)	couldn't	(could not)
won't	(will not)	it's	(it is or it has)

In each of these cases, the apostrophe is used to show where letters have been removed.

Apostrophes to show ownership

The other use of an apostrophe is to show ownership or relationship. For example:

Brian's sister	=	The sister of Brian
Carol's pen	=	The pen belonging to Carol
Derek's mobile telephone.	=	The mobile telephone belonging to Derek

The rule is simple. When you want to show something belongs to someone or something, you add an apostrophe and the letter **s** ('s) to the person or thing which has ownership.

So, in the examples above, you can see that we've added 's to Brian, Carol and Derek in order to show ownership or relationship.

Sometimes this results in two s's together:

The diary belonging to James = James's diary
 The uncle of Charles = Charles's uncle
 The car of the Prince of Wales = The Prince of Wales's car

But

The famous story by Dickens = Dickens' famous story
 The epic voyage of Ulysses = Ulysses' epic voyage

In the fourth and fifth example you can ignore the second s. When to use the second s and when not to use it is largely a matter of how it sounds and looks on the page.

So – to show ownership, you add on 's and if you get s's you can sometimes discard the second s. And when the things or people owning are plural we drop the second s:

The pens belonging to the boys = the boys' pens
 The computer belonging to the girls = the girls' computer

Some words change their forms in the plural, e.g. *men, women, children*, etc. The rules still apply:

The jobs of the men = the men's jobs
 The parents of the children = the children's parents
 The house of the Smiths = the Smiths' house

Exceptions to the rule

As usual there are a few exceptions to these rules. Words like:

- theirs
- yours
- his or hers

never take an apostrophe (although *one's* does take the apostrophe):

One was on one's best behaviour.

Its and It's

The word *its* means *belonging to it* (e.g. the dog ate its dinner) and has no apostrophe.

The word *it's* mean *it is* or *it has* (the apostrophe here shows that there are letters missing).

It's only ever means *it is* or *it has*. It never means *belonging to it* (which is *its*). Thus we say:

It's a nice dog (It is a nice dog).

Has the dog lost its ball? (Has the dog lost the ball that it owns?)

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Add apostrophes to each of these sentences. Each sentence needs one apostrophe, except for one sentence which needs two!

1. The greengrocers window displays were very attractive.
2. Dont chase the dogs – it drives them mad.
3. Take any of the chairs except for that one, which is Alis.
4. The mens rowing team won three medals over the last few years.
5. 'Theyll be out in a minute,' shouted the twins mum.
6. 'Do you want Jacks phone number?' asked Vanessa, 'And should I give him yours?'
7. You shouldnt eat those cakes because they are hers.
8. The skyscrapers in New York are huge compared to Edinburghs.
9. The Smiths car was vandalised last night.
10. Id like a packet of crisps and some sweets please.

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How did you get on with SAQ 5? To test you a little bit more, here are some more sentences, and this time you have to rewrite these sentences to make them easier to read, using apostrophes. The first three have been done for you as examples.

1. You cannot make children like cabbage.

You can't make children like cabbage.

2. The pen belonging to Tom is over there.

Tom's pen is over there.

3. The mother of Kerry gave her five pounds.

Kerry's mother gave her five pounds.

4. The dog belonging to David followed him to school.

5. The husband of the woman was late.

6. The playpark of the children was flooded.

7. The dog belonging to the boys is chasing the cat.

8. Do not leave you bike there!

9. You should have gone to see the new car belonging to Lisa.

10. It is always exciting when the weekend comes.

Commas, full-stops, colons and semi-colons

A **comma** (,) is used to break up a list of things, or to add extra information to what you're writing, or to provide a break in your sentence. Here are some examples:

- A computer consists of a base unit, a keyboard, a mouse and a monitor.
- Tom, the man who is standing over there, is the manager of the shop.
- The car ran out of petrol, because I'd forgotten to fill it up.

Full stops are used to show where sentences end. There should be one at the end of every sentence in this pack.

Colons (:) are used to break up a sentence when a full stop would interrupt the flow of the sentence too much. When you have two closely related points to make, it's sometimes better to use a colon rather than a full stop.

For example:

- Information technology is the future. One day computers will run our lives.
- Information technology is the future: one day computers will run our lives.

In this example, the second sentence adds a lot to the first sentence, but the full stop breaks up the meaning. The second sentence links the two points together much better.

Semi-colons (;) are most commonly found separating items in a list, where the individual items in the list contain several words. For example, commas are fine for breaking up a simple list:

- Sam had enough money to buy a roll, crisps, sweets and cola.

On the other hand, a semi-colon would work better in these cases:

- For his birthday, David got a new CD; a book about football; two tickets for a concert in Glasgow; a pair of jeans and new shoes.
- They have offices in Quebec, Canada; Lisbon, Portugal; and Cape Town, South Africa.

Syntax

Your writing should have good syntax. Syntax refers to word order and sentence construction. When you write, you must write in clear sentences, and you must make sure that your sentences are easy to understand. They need to be arranged in an orderly way.

A sentence is a complete statement. This means that a sentence should normally be able to stand alone, and make sense in its own right. For example, the phrase 'William wanted to take the bus home' is a complete sentence, because it contains enough information for us to make sense of what is being said. On the other hand, the underlined phrase below is not a sentence, because it fails to give enough information to make sense:

- Gillian phoned Marianne to ask her about the party. Which was on Friday.

Some simple rephrasing makes this correct.

- Gillian phoned Marianne to ask her about the party, which was on Friday.

Word order

There are always different ways to say things, and sometimes the way we put things across can be difficult to follow because the sentences are too complex, or because they haven't been constructed (put together) very well. Consider this sentence:

- Electricity is very dangerous and pylons, which carry extremely high voltage cables, should not be climbed by anyone other than trained electrical engineers who work for the electricity generating companies, as special training is required to avoid risk of serious injury or death.

This could be written in this way:

- 'Electricity is very dangerous. Pylons carry extremely high voltage cables, and only the power companies' trained electrical engineers should climb them. Special training is required to avoid the risk of serious injury or death.'

Both carry the same information. The second one uses fewer words, is better arranged, and is easier to understand.



Rewrite these 'sentences' so that they are easy to understand and so that they are written in proper sentences.

1. Toby, who is Nikki's brother, wanted to go to the party that was on in the community centre near to his uncle's house at the bottom of the estate, but he couldn't go because he had to stay in and look after his wee brother Tom, who is quite a handful, and can be quite badly behaved.
2. A low-fat diet is healthier than a high-fat diet where a lot of chips, crisps, biscuits, cakes and sweets are eaten, because low-fat diets help people to keep their weight to reasonable levels, and to maintain low cholesterol levels, thereby reducing the risk of heart attacks, strokes and similar health problems.
3. Everybody should have a hobby. Which keeps them occupied. Especially during times when they are lonely. They keep you busy and you can meet people. And make new friends. And learn new skills at the same time.

Summary

So far we've looked at the skills required to be a good writer. We've talked about:

- Taking account of the reader's needs
- Writing so that it's easy for the intended reader to understand
- Writing in a way that is appropriately formal
- Linking and signposting so your reader can follow your line of thought
- Using good spelling, punctuation and syntax.

The remainder of this Study Section is about essay writing, report writing and writing a portfolio of thematically linked pieces.

Whatever you write, try to remember the information we've covered so far. This will guide your writing towards a successful outcome.



Before you carry on with the remainder of this Study Section, write a memo of about 100 – 150 words to your tutor. In this memo, you should tell your tutor how comfortable you feel with all that we've discussed so far. Tell your tutor:

- how comfortable you are with the idea of meeting the reader's needs
- about any spelling or punctuation problems you feel you have
- about your progress in general
- about any other things that are affecting your progress and that you think s/he needs to know.

On the next page you'll see what a memo looks like. You can use this as a template to write your own memo. The parts written in **bold lettering** are the parts that always appear. The other words should, of course, be your own.

Memorandum

To: Colin Adams
From: Paul Dougall
Date: 15 Sept 2001
Subject: Progress in Study Section I of Communication (Intermediate 2)

I'm writing to tell you about my progress with the Study Section so far. I've worked through the first part of it, where we looked at meeting the reader's needs, and I am quite happy with all of the ideas there.

I am not very sure yet about the ideas of linking from one paragraph to another, and would like to talk to you about this at some stage. Also, although my spelling is generally good, I do have a problem remembering some common word spellings. Do you have any information that you can give me to help?

I think my progress so far is good, and the only other thing that I am unsure about is the difference between a report and an essay. Maybe you could help me with this too.

What to write

So far in this study section we've looked at **how** to write. We've discussed meeting your reader's needs, and structuring your writing. Now we're going to look at **what** to write.

There are many different types of writing, of course, but we will concentrate here on four different types. We're going to look at:

- writing a discursive essay
- writing a personal reflective essay
- writing a report
- writing a short portfolio of related pieces.

All of the points we've looked at in this Study Section so far apply to each of these types of writing.

There are differences in how to write in these different forms as well. So we're now going to look at each of these types of writing in turn. You will see what should be included in each type.

Writing essays

An essay is a non-fiction piece of writing in which you discuss some idea or ideas. Essays are intended to make a point, and you should include details that lead you to the point you want to make.

Before you begin writing your essay, you must think carefully about your intended audience. Your essay should be written so that your readership gets the information that they require. Your writing needs to take account of their needs. To do this, consider the following points:

- why they would read the piece
- what they already know about the subject
- what they want to know about the subject
- what they are expecting of your writing.

For example, if you're asked to write an essay about the lack of facilities for young people in the town, you would need to ensure that your essay:

- shows that you know the town well, and are aware of its lack of facilities
- presents an analysis of the current situation
- discusses possible solutions to the problems
- uses reasoned arguments, where you talk about the town, the problems and the solutions in constructive ways.

Essays are written for a purpose. Purposes can include things such as:

- expressing your point of view
- putting forward an argument
- examining different points
- reflecting on an experience
- offering advice to the reader
- considering some point.

Essays usually contain all of the following:

- a beginning
- a middle
- an end
- paragraphs
- a point of view
- examples
- arguments
- conclusions
- references.

Let's look at each of these in turn.

The beginning

At the beginning of your essay (your introduction) you should inform your readers of the subject that you are going to be writing about. *Tell the readers what you are going to be telling them.*

The middle

The middle of your essay is where you discuss your examples, arguments, points of view, and develop your central argument. *Tell the readers what you want to tell them.*

The end

The end of your essay is where you pull together all of the points that you have been making in the middle, and where you reach your conclusions or make your final statements. *Tell the readers what it is you told them: give them your summary.*

Paragraphs

You must break your essay into paragraphs. As a general rule, start a new paragraph for each point that you are making. Your introduction and conclusion should always be separate paragraphs, and the middle of your essay should contain several paragraphs. We talked about linking and signposting earlier on – you should write so that your readers can see the connections between your paragraphs.

Point of view

A point of view is an opinion, or a way of seeing things, or a feeling about something. Essays usually have a range of different points of view. Some of these can be your own, and other points of view might be from other people whom you quote.

Some essays require you to examine different points of view, and to weigh one up against the other. You usually give your own point of view as well.

If you quote directly from another person, you must provide a clear reference so that the readers can check that what you claim someone said is accurate.

Examples

An example is something that you use in your essay to provide evidence to back up your point. The purpose of an example is to give additional information, or to make the point more interesting or easier to understand for your reader. Look at the sentence below – can you see where the example is used?

There are many problems with the environment that we need to address, such as global warming and pollution in our seas and rivers.

In this sentence, the point being made is that: ‘*There are many problems ... that we need to address*’. However, this sentence doesn’t give the readers much information, and so the writer has provided two examples: ‘*global warming*’ and ‘*pollution in our seas and rivers*’.

Remember that examples help your readers to understand the point you're making. An essay with no examples is going to be less interesting to read, and harder to understand.

Arguments

When we talk about arguments in essay writing, we're not talking about two people shouting at each other! In essays, an argument is a point being made, a debate, a discussion, or a viewpoint adopted by someone. Often in essays, you'll look at a range of arguments, and come to your own conclusion about which one is more convincing.

Conclusion

The conclusion of your essay is where you briefly recap on what you've said before, and then state your final feelings about the subject. Whatever you say in the conclusion should be backed up by the main part of your essay. Readers should be able to see that you've considered the points being made, and that you've come to your conclusion based on reasoned discussion.

References

When you quote something in your essay, you must provide a reference to the source of your quotation. In the essay put in the author's name, year of publication and the page number. Then, at the end of your essay, provide a list giving full details of the source of the quotation.

Here is an example:

Pollution is something we all need to take seriously. For example: 'Pollution kills and causes birth defects' (Anderson, 1999, p.43).

Another way of saying this would be like this:

Pollution is something we all need to take seriously. For example Anderson (1999, p.43) says: 'Pollution kills and causes birth defects'.

At the end of the essay, you would provide a full reference which contains the following information:

Surname, Initial (Year of publication), 'Title', Town of publishing: Publisher's name.

And so it would look something like this:

Anderson, D (1999), 'Global Pollution', London: Benson.

Discursive essays and personal reflective essays

You may be asked to write either a 'discursive essay' or a 'personal reflective essay'. The points made earlier apply to both types of essay, but there are some important differences between the two forms.

Discursive essay

A discursive essay (sometimes called an argumentative essay) is one in which you look at a range of points in turn. Discursive essays usually work methodically through all of the arguments, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses.

The word *discursive* means passing from one subject to another. When you're writing a discursive essay, you're looking at different points of view, and bringing the reader to your conclusion by saying which points you agree with and which you disagree with. Possible subjects for this style of writing include:

- Capital punishment
- Euthanasia
- Solving Third World hunger
- Should Britain be in or out of the European Union?
- The school leaving age
- Usage of the private motor car
- Should we have nuclear power?
- What can be done to reduce the destruction of the rainforests?
- Ways of solving unemployment
- Teenage pregnancy
- Ways of solving the problem of homelessness
- Racism
- Voting should be compulsory
- The age at which people can drink alcohol.

The purpose of a discursive essay is to express your opinion through examining a range of different views. It's important that you remain aware of your purpose as you write so that you don't get sidetracked by different arguments.

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There is a discursive essay overleaf. Read it now, and note how the writer has structured these pieces. The essay was written by a social science student in response to the following instructions:

Write an essay of about 500 words suitable for inclusion in the *College Student Newsletter*. It should discuss the issues that teenagers face in the twenty-first century.

Think about:

- Beginning (introduction)
- Middle (body of the essay)
- End (conclusion)
- The writer's purpose
- How the writing meets the writer's purpose
- How the writing meets the readership's needs
- Examples used
- Arguments presented
- How the writer has linked and signposted from one paragraph to the next.

There is no comment given after this activity.

Discursive essay**WE HAVE OUR PROBLEMS TOO**

It's not easy being a teenager in today's world. Parents, teachers, grandparents and other adults all tell us that we have it so easy nowadays compared to them. In some senses they're right of course, because they didn't have computers and designer clothes and their parents didn't have a lot of money either. On the other hand, being a teenager today has many problems that they didn't have to face. I shall use this essay to show four different ways in which it's as hard or harder being a teenager today than it was for our parents.

First of all, it's not easy getting a job nowadays. When our parents and grandparents were young, people could leave school at 15 or 16 and be virtually guaranteed to walk into a job. At 16 now, you either have the choice of staying on at school, getting a Skillseeker placement or looking for a job. The last option is highly unlikely, as most companies only want to take on young people on schemes. Even after finishing a scheme, there is no guarantee of a job because unemployment is such a problem.

This leads onto the next point. Although it *seems* we are very well off with computers and designer clothes, etc., it doesn't mean that we *are* well off. Many of the things which we have today are actually necessities of life. For example, computers are going to be crucial in the future and it's important that we know how to use them. We don't have as much money as everyone thinks either. People forget that things are much more expensive now than they used to be, and money doesn't go as far as it once did. Clothes are expensive, and it's very important to wear the right labels because if you don't then people don't accept you as part of their circle of friends.

Another problem that we have to face is drugs. Drugs are commonplace and some people get a lot of pressure put on them to try them out. Drugs are everywhere – clubs, pubs, school gates and even youth clubs. It can be difficult for some people to say 'no' and they end up with a drug problem. This is not a problem that most of our parents had to face, as drugs were much less widespread when they were our age.

Finally I want to discuss the threat of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Our parents didn't have to worry about AIDS, which only occurred in the 1980s. Young people are under pressure from the media to try sex, and this was probably true for our parents as well. The big difference though is that we need to be aware of AIDS and STDs – and these are things our parents didn't really have to worry about.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that young people don't have the same problems as other generations. This doesn't mean that we don't have problems at all however. The problems we face are every bit as bad as other generations had to face. Try to understand that we are worried about jobs, money, drugs and sex. We have our problems too.

Personal reflective essay

A personal reflective essay is one where you use your own (personal) experiences and where you present your thoughts (reflect) about them. A personal reflective essay is more than just a whinge-list however. The purpose of a personal reflective essay may be to discuss what you did in a certain situation, so that the readers can gain some knowledge about how to deal with the issues. Alternatively, you can offer advice in the essay. You can also write to allow the readers an insight into something that they would not have experienced before. Possible essay subjects for this style of writing include:

- How you quit smoking
- Your experiences on a backpacking holiday
- Tracing your family tree using the Internet
- How you felt when your parents split up/when you and your partner split up
- Changing eating habits
- Your experience of living with a brother with a disability
- Coping with the death of a family member or friend
- The day you left home
- Your experience of becoming a teenage parent
- Overcoming stress
- How your life changed when you (or your mum) had a baby
- Overcoming adversity
- Becoming a vegetarian
- Why you support Inverness Caledonian Thistle (or any other team!)
- How you became interested in your hobby.

A personal reflective essay can allow you to explore your own feelings. This can be a very therapeutic experience, but it can sometimes also be very emotional. At all times as you write, though, you should think what your purpose is. Try to be sure that your writing is meeting that purpose.

When you are writing about a hobby, or a football team, or your favourite film (or similar subjects), try to say how you feel about the subject – don't just say that your team is the greatest ever. Try to say why they're great, and in what ways your life has been influenced by it. Once again, you need to be clear what your purpose in writing is, and make sure that you always meet that purpose.

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There is a personal reflective essay below. This was written by a student on an Access to Social Care course, who was asked to write about a major life event that he had experienced. Read it now, and pay attention to how the writer has structured it. Think about:

- Beginning (introduction)
- Middle (body of the essay)
- End (conclusion)
- The writer's purpose
- How the writing meets the writer's purpose
- How the writing meets the readership's needs
- Examples used
- Arguments presented
- How the writer has linked and signposted from one paragraph to the next.

There is no comment given after this activity.

Personal reflective essay

GROWING UP IN CARE

Most children grow up with one or both of their parents. However some children grow up in care, where they are placed with foster parents, or put into a children's home or a residential school. I was brought up in care, and sometimes it was good and other times it was bad.

Because my parents weren't getting on, and because of problems that I was having at the time, I was taken into care when I was 12. I was taken to a residential school, which meant that I lived in the school all week during term times, and came home for occasional weekends and school holidays. The school wasn't very big – there were only about 70 of us altogether and each of us was there because of things that had happened to us.

As I said, sometimes it was good, and sometimes it was bad. The good things were the other kids (well most of them) and some of the staff. I made many friends in care and got to know people really well. When you make friends at an ordinary school, you only really get to know them to a certain extent. When you're living with people 24 hours a day, you get to know them much better. In many senses it was like having 70 brothers and sisters. Other good things were some of the staff. We had what we called 'house parents' who were people who looked after us. Most of them were very nice, and although they weren't like real parents, they were people to whom we could talk about problems and things that were worrying us.

There were bad things about being in care too. Not all of the other kids were nice, and some of them were bullies. I know that you get bullies at all schools, but living in all day and night it meant that sometimes it was impossible to get away from the bullies and there was nowhere to go to escape. Not all of the staff were nice either. Some were really strict and others were just not interested in the kids. Again, because we were there 24 hours a day it was often difficult if you had fallen out with a teacher or something had happened in the classroom.

The worst thing was being away from home. Although things weren't right at home, I still loved my parents and I know they loved me. I didn't get to see them very often and only used to get to go home every 4th weekend and the school holidays. Living in school at weekends was hard, because there were no lessons and it meant that there was more time for thinking about things. There were activities arranged for the weekends, and sometimes we would go away camping. I loved camping, and had many good times. Other weekends we'd go swimming or ski-ing or canoeing. These were all things that I wouldn't have done if I hadn't been in care.

I met many nice people and did many different things. I also got bullied and missed my parents. I think overall that I would say that going into care is not a good thing, and I don't think that social workers should put children into care unless there is absolutely no other alternative available.

Essay writing: summary

Essays are non-fiction pieces of writing, with a clearly presented beginning, middle and end. An essay usually contains the following:

- a beginning
- a middle
- an end
- paragraphs
- a point of view
- examples
- arguments
- conclusions
- references.

An essay is written in paragraphs, and you should link and signpost from one paragraph to the next so that your readers can understand your line of thought.

The purpose of an essay is to make a point, and all of the information in an essay guides the readers towards the point being made.

Discursive essays allow you to examine a range of views, so that you can come to a reasoned conclusion, after evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of different arguments.

Personal reflective essays allow you to use your personal experiences or feelings to offer people an insight into an issue that they may not have experienced. You can also use this form of essay writing to use your experiences as a means of highlighting what people could do if they ever found themselves in the same situation.

Report writing

A report is an objective investigation into a given subject. When you write a report, you must avoid giving your own opinions, and focus instead on presenting information that you gather from other sources.

Reports have a purpose – usually to investigate some issue or problem, or to gather facts for a particular purpose. When you begin to write your report, you must be clear what that purpose is before you begin. If you don't know why you're writing something, it can be very difficult for you to put the correct information in it.

Reports are also written for a particular readership in mind as well. For example, if your line manager asks you to write a report investigating the number of breakdowns on the production line, you must be sure to write using language which is appropriate for the reader – your manager.

Reports should be written in numbered sections, and they use headings as a way of breaking up the information. The headings that you should use are:

1. Terms of reference

Here you say who requested the report, what the subject was, who was asked to write the report and when the report was requested or when it is due to be submitted.

2. Procedures

In this section, you should outline the steps that you took to gather information.

Possible steps include:

- Interviewing people
- Referring to books, newspapers, other reports and Internet sites
- Consulting newspapers
- Going on a visit and so on.

3. Findings

In this section, you list the information that you actually 'found'. All of the relevant information that you gathered from the steps you took in the **Procedures** should be presented here.

4. Conclusions

Conclusions refer to the implications of the **Findings**. You should examine your **Findings**, and show what the important issues are.

5. Recommendations

Having completed the **Conclusions**, you should now present your recommendations on how best to proceed.

You should write your report in formal tones, and you should avoid contracted words (such as *can't*, *shouldn't*). Slang words and colloquialisms should also be avoided.

Reports are usually written in the third person. This means that you do not refer to yourself in the report (e.g. rather than saying 'I found out that 42% of employees earn less than £5 per hour' you would say 'It was found that 42% of employees earn less than £5 per hour'). The purpose of this is to allow you to distance yourself from the information being presented. It makes the report appear more objective.

You may decide to use charts, graphs and diagrams in your report. This is usually a good idea, as long as any graphics you use add something useful and relevant to the report.

A₃

A report is reproduced on the following pages. Read through this report, and as you do so, think carefully about what information goes into each section. Analyse each section of the report carefully to see how the report's author has followed the format.

There is no comment given after this activity.

Report on sports equipment

1. Terms of reference

At the request of the course teacher/lecturer I have investigated the purchase of equipment which at reasonable cost would benefit personnel and improve facilities in the leisure and recreation section. The report is to be submitted by the final week of November.

2. Procedures

- The current situation in the gym was observed over a month at peak times.
- Measurements were taken of space available in the section.
- Health and Safety rules were studied.
- Catalogues were sent for from main suppliers.
- Sports equipment manufacturers were visited and bikes tested.
- Informed discussion took place with staff and students.

3. Findings

3.1 Keeping fit

This is an important part of life for people in general and students in particular. Some students exercise several times a week. Even if this is done moderately and for a short time it can show benefits to the heart and improve weight and general fitness. Several students felt exercise also helped them to study and concentrate and also to feel more confident.

3.2 The current situation

There is not enough equipment to meet demand. The pool is often used for classes in the lunch hour, and although many join team sports such as football others would like to have access to equipment on an individual basis.

3.3 Other equipment

After various discussions with staff it became clear that the budget available would not allow for purchase of enough machines of quality at a suitable price. More money could not be made available without fund-raising, which would take time.

3.4 Level of use

- Equipment was in use constantly from opening at 8.30 a.m.
- A booking system was not possible because the nature of the class attendance could not be predicted, although some booking had been tried in the past.
- Queues were noted at all break times but particularly from 12–1.15 and 3.45–4.30.
- At times ten people were waiting for a turn on bikes, weights or treadmills.

3.5 Available space

Because of Health and Safety regulations there was not too much extra space. However with some movement there was a small amount of space sufficient to install four exercise cycles.

3.6 Types of cycle

After much investigation and discussion attention focussed on three cycles with the features needed for use.

Cycle A – this has an adjustable padded saddle and handlebars, and large balanced pedals with adjustable toe straps. It has a large-format electronic console which measures time, distance, speed, pulse and calories. With a heavy-duty frame, it can take a weight of 17 stone. Magnetic adjustable resistance to suit varying levels of fitness is a feature.

Cost: £379

With discount for four: £1200.

Cycle B – this is an elliptical trainer for low-impact body workout. It simulates running, etc., with varying resistance levels and has computer displays for speed, calorie and pulse scan.

Cost: £165

With discount for four: £700.

Cycle C – this is a belt-driven cycle with magnetic resistance. Easy grip control, self-levelling pedals and adjustable racing style handlebars are features.

Cost: £189

With discount for four: no discount offered. Cost would be £756.

3.7 Comparison

Cycle A – This machine has a wide range of features, can take a heavier weight and is sturdy, smooth and quiet in use. It stores well and is convenient to transport. Testers found it easy to use.

Cycle B – This machine moved and jerked in operation: it did not seem suitable for heavy use and had limited features.

Cycle C – This seemed quite durable but not all parts were adjustable. It is very popular and there are delays with filling any orders.

4. Conclusions

- Cycles would be appropriate for the space and money available.
- The purchase of four exercise cycles should improve facilities and improve health.
- Cheaper cycles have fewer features and uses.
- Cycle A has the most features and although expensive offers a good discount.

5. Recommendations

Four Cycle A bikes should be bought as soon as practical.

? 8

To check your understanding of the ways that reports are written, answer these questions *in your own words*.

1. What information goes into the **Terms of reference** section?
2. What is the purpose of the **Procedures** section?
3. What information should you put in the **Findings** section?
4. What is the purpose of the **Conclusions** section?
5. What do you include in the **Recommendation** section?
6. What type of language is most appropriate (formal or informal)?
7. What sort of words shouldn't be used?

Report writing: summary

A report is a factual investigation into a given subject. It should be written using formal language, and it should present information that is relevant to the issue being investigated.

Reports are structured using the following headings:

- Terms of reference
- Procedures
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations.

Reports have clearly defined purposes, and you should ensure that the information presented meets those purposes.

Graphics can be used in reports, as long as these add to the report by making something easier to understand, or by providing additional information.

Writing a portfolio

A portfolio refers to a group of pieces of writing. For assessment you may be asked to write a portfolio of work, all related to one theme. This should contain a major piece of writing accompanied by two or three shorter, related pieces.

For example, you could write:

- A letter requesting a placement, a memo to your tutor and an essay or report about your placement
- A report on a subject of interest to you, and two letters seeking additional information about the subject of interest
- An essay, a letter to a company seeking information, and a letter to the press giving your opinion
- Any other suitable combination of texts.

The important thing to remember about portfolio writing is that the pieces you write must be related to each other.

We've covered report writing and essay writing in this Study Section already. The points we've looked at apply regardless of the length of piece that you are writing.

Memo and letter writing are relatively straightforward forms of writing. We looked at memo writing on pages 21–22 of this Study Section. If you can't remember how to write memos, turn back and read these pages then return here.

Letter writing

Many people include a letter as part of their portfolio. Let's look at letter writing now. There are many acceptable ways to write letters, and many of the 'rules' of the past have been relaxed. However, the following points still apply. Letters should contain:

Your address

Your address usually goes at the top right-hand corner of the letter.

The date

You should place the date underneath your own address.

The name and address of the person you're writing to (the recipient)

This usually goes on the left-hand side of the letter, one line below where you've put the date. If you don't know the person's name, you would usually put their job title.

A greeting or salutation

If you know the name of the person you're writing to, you should put it here. In a formal letter you should usually refer to someone as Mr, Ms or Mrs and avoid using first names. If you don't know the person's name, you would usually refer to them as Sir or Madam. When writing to the press, it is traditional always to use the salutation *Dear Sir*.

Subject heading

Some letters contain a subject heading – a line of text after the salutation to introduce the theme or subject of the letter. This can be written **in bold letters, IN FULL CAPITALS, or With Initial Capital Letters**. Bold letters are the most common.

The body of your letter

Arrange your letter into short, easy-to-read paragraphs. The first of these is the introductory paragraph, in which you introduce yourself or explain why you are writing. The rest makes up the body of your letter.

A closing greeting

Letters usually end *Yours sincerely* (when you know the name of the recipient) or *Yours faithfully* (when you address the letter to *Dear Sir or Madam*). Note that *Yours* has a capital and *sincerely* and *faithfully* don't.

Your signature

Sign your letter after the closing greeting, and before your printed name.

Your name

Print your name at the end of the letter, so the recipient can be sure of your name, even if your signature is difficult to read.

Appropriate language

Don't be informal when writing a business letter. Avoid contracted words (*can't, shouldn't, etc.*) and don't use language that is relaxed or colloquial. Try to show the recipient an appropriate level of respect. Remember that in business letters you are writing to strangers – try to make a good impression.

Punctuation

Modern letter writing tends to use very little punctuation. There is no need to insert a comma after each line of the address or after the salutation or the closing greeting. But punctuation should always be used in the body of your letter, of course.

Sample letter

Here is a sample letter. You can use this as a model to guide you when you're writing your own letter.

43 Marley Drive
Possilpark
GLASGOW
G53 3DD
12 June 2001

Martin Mackintosh
Mackintosh Systems PLC
Unit 34 Castle Court
Bellway Industrial Estate
DUNFERMLINE
KY12 9PP

Dear Mr Mackintosh

Request for site visit and interview

I am a student at Kincardine College, studying Environmental Science. As part of a project, I have been asked to investigate recycling waste.

As your firm produces recycled plastic products, I wonder if you would allow me to visit your premises, to see how plastics are recycled.

I would also be grateful for the opportunity to ask some questions.

I hope that you can accommodate my request, and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Robinson

Nicola Robinson

Note

Some letter writers prefer to put their address in the top left-hand corner rather than the top right-hand corner. If you're using printed stationery with pre-printed address details, then there is no need to type or write your address.

A₄

There is a portfolio of written work reproduced on the following pages. Read through the portfolio and as you do so, pay attention to how each section of the portfolio is related to the other sections.

This portfolio was written by a student who was preparing for a work placement. He wrote:

- A letter requesting a placement with the company
- A memo to his tutor
- An essay about his work placement in which he evaluated the experience.

There is no comment given after this activity.

Portfolio of related pieces

86 Dragon Way
Aberdeen
AB43 8NH
16 April 2001

The Manager
Highpoint Catering Ltd
159 Great Eastern Avenue
Aberdeen
AB3 9PP

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am currently a student at Kincardine College, studying hospitality. I need to arrange a placement for three weeks and I am writing to ask if you would consider taking me on a placement with your company.

As you may know, work experience is an important part of the hospitality course, and all students must undertake one work experience lasting 80 hours in order to gain the National Qualification. I can come for an interview at any time if you are prepared to consider my application, and I can supply a reference from my course tutor on request.

I do hope you will consider my application and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Michael Wood

Michael Wood

Memorandum

To: Muriel Vincent, Course Tutor

From: Michael Wood

Subject: Work Placement

Date: 27 April 2001

I wrote to Mr Barrie of Highpoint Catering recently asking him if he would take me on for a work placement. He interviewed me on 23 April, and said that he can take me for the three-week period beginning Monday 7 May.

I will be unable to attend any classes during that period. Can you please let me know if you will be able to visit me on the placement? Mr Barrie suggests Thursday 24 May at 10 a.m. for your visit. Please let me know if this suits you.

Essay: Evaluation of work placement

I recently did a work placement with Highpoint Catering Limited, based in Aberdeen. I started on Monday 7 May. Highpoint Catering prepare food for a variety of outlets and events in the Aberdeen area. They make and sell sandwiches to garages, schools and small shops. They also prepare buffets for events, and can also provide full catering facilities for larger events such as weddings and funerals. As a hospitality student, this proved to be a useful experience for me. Although I hope to work in hotels eventually, this period of work nonetheless allowed me to experience related aspects of catering.

The first week I spent working in the sandwich preparation area. This involved several aspects. Firstly, I had to prepare salad vegetables. I was shown how to wash and prepare tomatoes, lettuce and cucumber. This was a boring job, but I could understand the importance of hygiene. Secondly, I buttered the bread. This was even more boring than washing and cutting the salads, and I didn't realise how many sandwiches Highpoint make in a day. Thirdly, I made the sandwiches and placed them in their boxes. After this I labelled the boxes using a special printing machine which prints the contents, the retail price and the sell-by date. Each sandwich is given a 2-day 'shelf life'. I would recommend others on a similar placement to ask for a wider range of activities in this period. Preparing sandwiches is obviously a large part of Highpoint's work, but I felt that, to an extent, I wasn't being given a wide enough range of experience in this first week.

The second week, I spent three days with Brian Hunter, one of the delivery/sales people. His job is to visit every shop, school and garage on his route each day. He takes the order for the following day, and removes any sandwiches that have passed their sell-by date. He explained that sandwiches are sold on a 'sale or return' basis. This means that shops only pay for the actual sandwiches sold, and so they are not taking a risk with buying stock that does not sell. This was an interesting week, but not one in which I learned much about catering or hospitality! I learned about the importance of stock rotation and customer demands, but really I learned more about selling than the catering industry.

For the rest of the placement time, I worked on preparing and delivering buffets for a variety of functions. This was much more enjoyable than the first week as I was involved in preparing many different types of food. This period was the best part of the placement – and it was here that I learned a lot about hospitality – particularly the importance of presentation, freshness, hygiene and meeting the customers' needs.

People doing the same placement next year should negotiate to spend most of the time preparing buffets. This was a great experience and definitely the most enjoyable part of the placement. Overall, I would say that I really enjoyed the placement, and I would like to thank Mr Barrie, Brian and all the other staff for a good placement.

Portfolio writing: summary

Portfolios of writing should contain a main piece of writing with two or three supporting pieces.

Each piece of writing must be related to the other pieces.

Portfolios can contain any combination of:

- Essays
- Reports
- Letters
- Memos
- Similar pieces of written work.

Summary

In this Study Section, we've looked at how to write in a structured way, and how to write so that you meet your readers' needs.

We've examined writing in the following forms:

- Memoranda
- Discursive essays
- Personal reflective essays
- Reports
- Portfolios of related pieces
- Letters

T₂

Select *one* of the following options. After completing it, submit it to your tutor for comment. Whichever option you choose, you should ensure that:

- It is written in a way that is appropriate for your intended reader and purpose
- It contains all the information needed
- It is structured (put together) so that the reader can follow your train of thought
- It has accurate spelling, punctuation and syntax
- It is written in paragraphs, with varied vocabulary to suit your reader and purpose.

I. Write a short essay of 400–500 words. Choose one of the following topics:

- Global (or local) pollution
- My town is a great place to live because ...
- The day I stopped being a child (use this essay to discuss a momentous event in your life – such as a birth, marriage or death, or something like starting work for the first time, or your first day in a new school)
- 'Homework is an essential part of learning.' Discuss the arguments for and against this statement.

2. Write a short report, of 400–500 words, using the following information.

Ms S Norton (Managing Director) instructed you, the Senior Supervisor, to investigate the workforce's reaction to the introduction of a new uniform. You should also investigate the costs of uniforms from two different suppliers.

To get information, you called Smarter Workwear Ltd, and Casual Workgear PLC. You also wrote a questionnaire, asking staff for comments, and offering them a choice of styles and colours.

You should present the report and recommendations to the MD in one week's time. Use the information here, and make up the other information required.

3. Portfolio

You're organising a health awareness campaign (choose the health topic yourself). As part of this, you need to write a letter (about 200–300 words) to the Principal or Rector, informing him/her what your plans are. You should also write a memo to your tutor, requesting any resources you require. Finally, as part of your campaign, you are producing a leaflet. Write some 'copy' (text for an article) for the leaflet (about 150–200 words).

4. Select a topic of your own, and write a discursive or reflective essay; a report; or a portfolio of related pieces. Altogether, aim to write 400–500 words.

You should now discuss your progress with your tutor, who will help you to decide if you're ready for the assessment. Your tutor will give you the assessment and tell you what form (essay, report or portfolio) s/he would like you to write.

PART 8**? I: Answers**

1. Which sentence is the most formal? Give reasons for your answer.

I would probably say sentence C. The words used – such as *'perturbed'* and *'forward a loan'* – are formal. Some of the language (e.g. *'was in no position'*) is long-winded, and could have been replaced by shorter statements.

2. Which sentence is the least formal? Give reasons for your answer.

Probably sentence D is the least formal sentence. It uses some slang words (*'raging'*, *'cos'*, *'dosh'*) and it also uses a contracted word (i.e. *'couldn't'*). Formally written pieces don't usually contain contractions.

3. Which sentence is the most strongly worded? Why do you say that?

I'd say sentence D is the most strongly worded. It uses words such as *'raging'*, and refers to money as *'dosh'*. This sentence seems to suggest energy and action – it's quite a lively sentence.

4. What effect does the word *'cos'* have in sentence D?

'Cos', short for *'because'*, is a very informal use of language, and because of this the whole sentence seems very informal.

5. In what ways are sentences B and E different?

Sentence B is fairly informal. Words like *'mate'*, *'cos'* and *'cash'* are informal. Sentence E uses contracted words, and so is not overly formal. However, it is not informal either, and by breaking it into two shorter sentences, the writer makes the action seem very dull, and the effect is simply to make the whole piece seem objective – it sounds as if the writer was simply reporting events.

? 2: Answers

1. Does this communication provide the type of information required?

The communication probably provides the manager with some of the information required, although some of it is a little vague (e.g. '*some of them come in to get the carburettor adjusted*'). He had asked Luke to report on the type of problems customers have – he would be looking for more detail than Luke has provided.

2. Does it achieve the correct level of formality for the situation?

I think that this communication is probably too informal. The writer refers to the manager as Mr Smith, yet the language he uses is more like the language that he'd use when writing to a friend.

3. Is it written to take account of the prior knowledge of the reader (i.e. the manager)?

No, it doesn't take account of the reader's needs. Mr Smith must know what a carburettor is and so Luke doesn't need to explain this.

? 3: Answers

1. The man couldn't see his wife, even though she was standing just over **there**.
2. The postman was terrified of **their** dog.
3. Litter is a big problem. It's here, **there**, and everywhere.
4. Although we lost the match today, our players are better than **their** players.
5. Our players are commiserating. **They're** in the bar now, drowning **their** sorrows.
6. 'These shoes are perfect!' Jackie exclaimed. '**They're** exactly what I want!'
7. The sales assistant said, '**They're** expensive, but **their** soles are leather.'
8. The neighbours always take **their** children to the park on Saturdays.
9. The park is located just **there**, behind the library.
10. **There** are always many children playing in the park. **They're** always very happy as they run about.

? 4: Answers

1. I would like **two** chocolate bars please.
2. I wanted **to** eat the chocolate straight away, but mum said wait till later.
3. My sister wanted **to** eat her chocolate **too**.
4. After I'd eaten the chocolate, I realised that I'd eaten **too** much.
5. I used to have **two** cats, but now I've got three.

6. One cat always goes out first, then the others go **too**.
7. The cats like **to** go into the neighbours' garden.
8. 'It costs £60,' the woman said. William replied, 'No thanks, it's **too** much.'
9. She offered to sell him **two** for £100.
10. He decided to buy them, as his friend wanted **to** have one **too**.

? 5: Answers

1. The **greengrocer's** window displays were very attractive.
2. **Don't** chase the dogs – it drives them mad.
3. Take any of the chairs except for that one, which is **Ali's**.
4. The **men's** rowing team won three medals over the last few years.
5. '**They'll** be out in a minute,' shouted the twins' mum. (*Twin's mum* would be correct if we were referring to only one of the twins)
6. 'Do you want **Jack's** phone number?' asked Vanessa, 'And should I give him yours?'
(N.B. no apostrophe in the word *yours*)
7. You **shouldn't** eat those cakes because they are hers. (N.B. no apostrophe in the word *hers*.)
8. The skyscrapers in New York are huge compared to **Edinburgh's**.
9. The **Smiths'** car was vandalised last night.
10. **I'd** like a packet of crisps and some sweets please.

? 6: Answers

1. You can't make children like cabbage.
2. Tom's pen is over there.
3. Kerry's mum gave her five pounds.
4. David's dog followed him to school.
5. The woman's husband was late.
6. The children's play park was flooded.
7. The boys' dog is chasing the cat.
8. Don't leave you bike there!
9. You should've gone to see Lisa's new car.
10. It's always exciting when the weekend comes.

? 7: Answers

Rewrite these 'sentences' so that they are easy to understand and so that they are written in proper sentences.

1. Toby, who is Nikki's brother, wanted to go to the party that was on in the community centre near to his uncle's house at the bottom of the estate, but he couldn't go because he had to stay in and look after his wee brother Tom, who is quite a handful, and can be quite badly behaved.

Nikki's brother Toby wanted to go the party in the community centre, which was near his uncle's house at the bottom of the estate. He couldn't go, as he had to stay in to look after Tom, his wee brother. Tom is quite a handful and can be quite badly behaved.

2. A low-fat diet is healthier than a high-fat diet where a lot of chips, crisps, biscuits, cakes and sweets are eaten, because low-fat diets help people to keep their weight to reasonable levels, and to maintain low cholesterol levels, thereby reducing the risk of heart attacks, strokes and similar health problems.

A low-fat diet is healthier than a high-fat diet (e.g. one including many chips, crisps, biscuits, cakes and sweets). Low-fat diets help people to keep their weight to reasonable levels, and to maintain low cholesterol levels. These help to reduce the risk of heart attacks, strokes and similar health problems.

3. Everybody should have a hobby. Which keeps them occupied. Especially during times when they are lonely. They keep you busy and you can meet people. And make new friends. And learn new skills at the same time.

Everybody should have a hobby, which keeps them occupied, especially at times when they are lonely. Hobbies keep you busy, and you can meet people and make new friends, while learning new skills at the same time.

It's important to note that there are many different ways of answering these questions. Your answers will almost certainly be different from mine. Don't worry about this, as long as you have made the sentences easy to read and have written them in full sentences.

? 8: Answers

To check your understanding of the ways that reports are written, answer these questions *in your own words*.

1. What information goes into the **Terms of reference** section?

In this section, you should name the person requesting the report; say what the purpose was; say who was asked to write it; and say when it was due.

2. What is the purpose of the **Procedures** section?

The purpose of this section is to allow you to describe the steps you took to gather information for the report.

3. What information should you put in the **Findings** section?

Here you present the information that you uncovered following the steps you took in the Procedures.

4. What is the purpose of the **Conclusions** section?

This section is used to examine the Findings and to list the important points of the information uncovered.

5. What do you include in the **Recommendation** section?

Here you present your recommendations to solve the problem or issue.

6. What type of language is most appropriate (formal or informal)?

Formal language must be used in report writing.

7. What sort of words shouldn't be used?

Slang, informal and colloquial words shouldn't be used. Also, contracted words such as 'can't' shouldn't be used.

