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## Listening

As with all comprehension, watch out for **key words** and try to get the gist.

When you are involved in a **conversation** (e.g. on the telephone) or asked to interpret for someone, you can always request the speaker to **repeat or explain** what you haven't understood. When you not only hear but also see people talk, their **body language** helps you to understand what they say.

**Announcements** contain important information, usually in clear, simple language. They are often **repeated** several times to make sure everyone understands them.

Following **radio programmes** is more difficult because the only help you can get is from the speakers' **intonation**.

Be aware of the most important differences between **British and American English**, and be prepared for other variations such as **regional pronunciation**.

When you listen to **longer speeches or interviews**, take notes in a systematic way, e.g. in a grid or a checklist.

Excuse me, can you say that again, please? • Could you repeat that for me, please? • Sorry, I don't understand the word ... • What does it mean? • Can you spell that for me, please? • Have I got that right? • Sorry, would you mind explaining that again, please?

### Useful phrases



## Skimming

Skimming means finding the **main ideas in a text** in order to get an impression of its content.

- Read the title, the introduction or the first paragraph, the first sentence of every paragraph and any headings and sub-headings.
- Note any pictures, charts or graphs.
- Pay attention to any words or phrases in italics or bold print.
- Read the last paragraph, which often offers a short summary of the text.

## Scanning

Scanning is useful for finding **specific information** quickly, e.g. you have a question in mind and read a passage to find the answer.

- Decide what **specific information** you are looking for. Ignore unrelated information.
- Look out for **relevant key words**. Stop when you find one and read that part of the text carefully. Make notes if necessary.
- How might the information be given in the text? For example, if you need a date, only look at the numbers in the text.
- **Headings** can help you to identify sections which might contain the information.
- **The first sentence** in a paragraph should indicate whether the information you need could be there, or not. Do not read the text in detail.

## Understanding non-fictional texts

A **non-fictional text** is a text whose **content is based on facts**. The writer refers to people and places which really exist and incidents which really took place. Typical examples are **newspaper** or **magazine articles, essays, comments** or **advertisements**.

### 1. Reading a non-fictional text

- Read the text carefully.
- Look up unknown vocabulary if necessary, but try to concentrate only on key words that block your understanding of the text.
- Ask yourself the following questions and write notes:  
What type of text is it? • What is its central idea/main theme/message? Can you state it in a single sentence?
- Structure the text. Divide it into different units and underline important passages.

### 2. Analysing a non-fictional text

#### What kind of text is it?

- What kind of text is it? A newspaper/magazine article, an essay, etc.?
- Who is the author?
- When was it written?
- Where was it published? In a newspaper, on the Internet, etc.?
- Why was it written? What is the target group?

#### What is the text about?

- What is the central idea/main theme/message?
- What parts can it be divided into?
- What is the purpose of the text?
- What is the author's point of view/intention?
- What arguments or examples does the author use?
- What is special about the text?

### 3. Interpretation

- When you are asked questions on a text, make sure you **answer** them **precisely and to the point**. Watch out for the way questions are asked: Do exactly as you are told when you are supposed to analyse, describe, discuss, compare or interpret things.
- Explain everything **in your own words**, but use **quotations from the text** to support your statements, marking them clearly as quotations and giving line references.
- Make clear what is **fact** and what is your **interpretation**.
- Only give your opinion if you are asked to and always give reasons for it.

The text is a typical example of ... • It is about ... • It tells ... from the point of view of ... • On the one hand ... • On the other hand ... • At the beginning ... • Later he/she learns/changes ... • At the end ... • This means ... • The way ... is presented suggests ... • The author uses ... in order to ... • He/she probably wants to show ... • In the conclusion of his/her article/speech/... the author claims that ... • One of the best examples of ... occurs in line ... • This can be seen in lines ... and ..., where the author ... • The text is special because ...

#### Useful phrases



## Newspaper reports

We are confronted with a wide range of different newspapers from all around the world. On the one hand there are quality newspapers. They present the news in a neutral way and separate information from opinion so that the reader can form his/her own view. On the other hand, there are popular newspapers (tabloids). Their news reports are often sensational with big pictures and headlines. Popular newspapers often mix information and opinion, offering the reader a ready-made opinion.

### Example:

quality newspaper

popular newspaper

The diagram illustrates the structural differences between a quality newspaper and a popular newspaper. On the left, the front page of *The Guardian* is shown. It features a large photograph at the top, followed by a prominent headline: "Mystery of crash pilot's last message". The text is organized into multiple columns, with a clear separation between the headline and the main body of text. On the right, the front page of *The Mirror* is shown. It has a more cluttered layout with a large, bold headline: "7 MINUTES FROM SAFETY". The text is presented in a more compact, multi-column format. Purple arrows and circles highlight specific elements: the masthead (newspaper name), the headline, the sub-heading, the by-line, and the body of the text.

## Understanding fictional texts

A **fictional text** is a literary work whose content is based on the **imagination of the author** and not necessarily on facts. There are three **literary genres**: **poetry** (poems, songs), **drama** (plays) and **fiction** (novels, short stories, fables, fairy tales, etc.). By reading a fictional text, the reader is transferred into a different world and the author's intention is often a matter of interpretation. Pictures in the reader's mind are produced to create a new reality, and atmosphere and emotions are often more important than hard facts.

### 1. Reading a fictional text

- Read the text carefully.
- Look up unknown vocabulary if necessary, but try to concentrate only on key words that block your understanding of the text.
- Ask yourself the following questions and write notes:  
What is the story about? • What is its central idea/main theme/message? Can you state it in a single sentence?
- Structure the text. Divide it into different units and underline important passages.

### 2. Analysing a fictional text

When you analyse a text, you should follow these steps. Answer the questions and write notes.

#### What kind of text is it?

- What is the literary genre of the text? Poetry, drama or fiction?
- What kind of text is it (poem, song, short story, etc.)?
- Who is the author and when was it written?

#### What is the text about?

- What is the central idea/main theme/message?
- Who is the narrator?
- What is the setting?
- What is the plot?
- Who are the characters?

#### How we learn about the characters in a story:

- outward appearance
- language
- actions, behaviour, mood
- main traits
- motives, influences from the past
- roles, social background
- character's function in the constellation of characters

### 3. Character grid:

outward appearance	<i>athletic, attractive, blond, elegant, fat, tall, young, ...</i>
language	<i>excited, gentle, polite, rude, ...</i>
actions, behaviour, mood	<i>angry, embarrassed, emotional, irresponsible, terrified, upset, ...</i>
main traits	<i>honest, intelligent, jealous, kind, show-off, shy, sympathetic, violent, ...</i>
roles, social background	<i>boss, daughter, girlfriend, broken home, criminal, lonely, married, rich, ...</i>
function in the constellation of characters	<i>enemy, friend, rival, ...</i>

### 4. Special features of the text

- What parts can it be divided into?
- Is there a turning point in the plot?
- What kind of language is used?
- What atmosphere is created and how?
- What else is special about the text?

### 5. Interpretation

- How does the author use these features to support the plot?
- What effect does the text have on the reader?
- What is your personal impression? Is the story convincing? Can you identify with any of the characters or understand their reactions? Do you like the story? Give reasons.

The novel/short story/play/poem ... was written in ... by ... • The author grew up ... • He/she is famous for ... • The text is a typical example of ... • It is about ... • It tells the story of ... from the point of view of ... • It is set in ... • The atmosphere is ... • The main character/s is/are ... • The narrator is ... • We get to know that ... because ... • His/her relationship with ... is ... • He/she feels ... because ... • There is a conflict between ... • Therefore ... • On the one hand ... • On the other hand ... • At the beginning ... • Later he/she learns/changes ... • At the end ... • This means ... • The way ... is presented suggests ... • The author uses ... in order to ... • He/she probably wants to show ... • The text is special because ...

### Useful phrases



## The features of a short story

A **short story** is a short fictional prose text which is meant to be read in a single sitting. It can be as short as 500 and as long as 15,000 words. A lot of short stories follow different patterns but the following points apply to many of them.

- There may be one main **character** or a group of equally important characters.
- There is often only a single **setting** (i.e. the time and place of the action does not change). Longer short stories might have more than one setting.
- The setting helps to create a certain atmosphere.
- The reader may be led into the story through an **exposition**.
- In modern stories the action often starts in the first sentence.
- The action develops logically through **conflicts or crises**, reaching a climax or **turning-point** near or at the end (emphasis on action and suspense).
- Some stories concentrate on a decisive moment in the main character's life (emphasis on character and psychology).
- There is often a surprise **ending**, a happy/unhappy ending or an open ending.

## The features of a play

Plays are very different from short stories or poems because they are not written to be read but to be **performed** and **watched**. Outside school or university, people do not normally sit down to read a play, unless they are planning a trip to the theatre. When a **playwright** or **dramatist** sits down to put pen to paper, he has **directors**, **stage managers** and **actresses/actors** in mind.

- A dramatic text usually consists of two parts: **dialogue** and **stage directions**. In a play, **dialogue** covers all the spoken language, not only the conversation of two characters.
- The **stage directions** give information about how to perform the play. This might refer to the setting, scenery, the characters' movements, tone of voice, etc.
- When you analyse a play, look at the **setting**, the **action** and the **characters** (► Understanding fictional texts p. 106).
- Don't forget to describe the **atmosphere** of the play.
- Finally, give an **interpretation** of the play.



## Dealing with poetry

Poetry may look shorter than other literary forms, but it can be more demanding. Here are some ideas on how to improve your feeling for and understanding of poetry.

- Read the poem and try to get the gist or message of the poem first. Then sum it up in your own words.
- Read the poem aloud to stress the relationship between certain words and ideas.
- Take a close look at structure and form:

**stanza:** the way the lines of a poem are grouped together

**rhyme pattern:** groups of words that rhyme

**repetition:** when words or sounds are repeated

- Look for comparisons and contrasts (metaphors and similes). Identify images and symbols, and what impressions or ideas they give you.
- Find devices that are used to bring out certain feelings and to create an atmosphere, e.g. colours, sounds.
- Describe any characters who appear in the poem.
- Who is the speaker? What do we learn about the setting?

### Example:

Films

Some films are sad – you watch them and cry. A  
 You know that the hero is going to die. A

Some films have spies – they fight, run and jump. B  
 When they crash their cars, there's a very big bump! B

Sometimes aliens come down from space. C  
 That often means trouble for the human race. C

And then there are ghost films – ghosts come out at night D  
 And give everybody an awful fright. D

But the worst films are love films where all the stars kiss. E  
 Those are the films that I want to miss! E

*William Sears*

**stanza:** five stanzas with two lines each

**rhyme pattern:** AABBCDDDEE

**repetitions:** some(times) (lines 1, 3, 5), you (lines 1, 2), films (lines 1, 3, 7, 9, 10)

The poem consists of/is divided into ... stanzas/sections/lines ... • It has an unusual layout. • It follows a clear rhyme scheme. • It is an example of unrhymed verse. • The arrangement of the rhymes is ... (e. g. aabb). • A number of lines do not rhyme at all. • Lines x and y rhyme. • The poet aims to express a certain message poetically. • The vocabulary is simple/difficult. • The words mainly belong to the word field of ... • The repetition of the words '...' creates a ... atmosphere. • There is a strong contrast between '...' and '...'. The tone of the poem is serious/calm/sad/ironical/cheerful/... This is heightened by words such as ...

### Useful phrases



## Dealing with songs

Songs are **similar to poems**, but they additionally contain a **musical aspect**, which is particularly important. It is always useful to look for background information on the songwriter and/or the artist performing the song, who shouldn't be confused as they aren't necessarily the same person. Look at all the information you have got. If something is missing that could help you to understand the song better, try to find out more. The Internet is probably the best source of information for you. You can follow these steps:

### Background information

- What is the title of the song?
- Who is/are the singer(s)/the band?
- Who wrote the lyrics? Who wrote the music?
- When was the song written?
- Was the song a success?

### Music

- What kind of music is it?
- What instruments are used?
- What does it sound like?
- Can you describe the rhythm?
- What feelings are created by the music?
- What is the structure of the song (verses, chorus)?

### Lyrics

- Examine the song text (verses and chorus). Look at form, structure and the language which is used (► Dealing with poetry p. 109).
- Do the lyrics tell a story? What happens and what is the setting?
- What feelings are expressed by the words?
- Is there a message?

## Writing a summary

A summary is a short piece of writing in which you **restate the main points of a text in your own words**.

- A summary is almost always written in the **simple present**.
- Use **your own words** and do not copy any phrases or sentences from the text.
- Do not use statistics, numbers, figures, details or quotations from the text.
- Do not give your personal opinion.
- Your final version should be no longer than between one fifth and one third of the length of the original.

### 1. A summary of a non-fictional text

In a summary of a non-fictional text (e.g. a newspaper article, a report, a factual text, etc.) restate the main points or arguments presented in the text.

- **Read** through the original text at least twice.
- In your own words, make a note of **the main arguments or points in the text**. You can make a list of key words or write one sentence to go with each paragraph.
- **Rewrite** some or all of your sentences to say what the writer's intention was.

The author/writer... • points out that ... • emphasises ... • suggests that ... • describes (how) ... • concludes by saying that ...

Useful phrases

### 2. A summary of a fictional text

In a summary of a fictional text (e.g. a short story or extract from a novel) **describe briefly what happens** in the story or extract and who the **main characters** are.

- **Read** through the original text at least twice.
- Briefly describe the **characters and the setting**.
- Briefly describe what **happens and how the events are connected**.

The scene/story/extract ... • ... takes place in ... • ... is set in ... • ... takes place in the present/past/future. • The main character is ... • There are two/three/... main characters.

Useful phrases

## Writing an essay

An essay is a **clearly structured** piece of writing in which important points on a topic are presented. There are three types of essay:

- In an **expository essay**, a topic is presented with examples that support the topic.
- In an **argumentative essay**, arguments for and against a topic are presented.
- In a **comment**, you express an opinion about a topic.

Essays are generally written in the **simple present**. When you are asked to write an essay, always read the task carefully and make sure which kind of essay you are supposed to write.

### 1. Preparation

- **Define** the topic clearly.
- **Brainstorm ideas**. Write down what you know about the topic in a mind map, diagram or table.
- If necessary, **collect facts, arguments, statistics and other information** from sources, e. g. your library or the Internet.
- Formulate your **opinion** on the topic.

### 2. Arranging your material

- Decide on the **most important facts, arguments or pieces of information** that you want to include in your essay (maximum 5 items).
- For each main argument try to think of two **supporting arguments**.
- Put your facts or arguments in a **logical order**. For example, you could:
  - start with general ideas and then go on to talk about details.
  - put things into chronological order.
  - start by giving all the arguments in favour and then give all the counter-arguments.
  - follow each argument in favour with a counter-argument.

### 3. Writing your essay

#### The introductory paragraph

- The introductory paragraph should **introduce your topic** and catch the reader's interest. You could:
  - give a relevant quotation.
  - make a provocative statement.
  - describe a relevant (humorous) personal experience.
- In your introductory paragraph you should also:
  - say clearly what your essay is going to be about in one or two sentences.
  - ask a question or questions which you will answer in your essay.
  - give a **brief outline** of the problem/topic at present and in the past.

#### The main paragraphs

- Start a **new paragraph for each new idea**.
- Begin each paragraph with a **main idea or argument**. Follow it up with your supporting or counter-arguments.
- Write simple sentences.
- Arrange sentences in a logical order.
- Join sentences using suitable **connectives**.
- Use adverbs to emphasise points.
- Use **examples** where possible.

#### The conclusion

- Do not introduce new ideas!
- Make a **brief concluding statement** summarising what you have said in your essay.
- Include a quotation or anecdote if you can.

### 4. Checking your essay

- Check that all your **sentences are complete** and that they make sense.
- Check your essay for **grammar, spelling and punctuation** mistakes. (Tip: Leave your essay overnight before checking it.)
- Write or **print out the final version** of your essay.

## 5. Writing a model essay

<p><b>Referring to someone's statement/theory/opinion (in a text)</b></p> <p>The author believes/states/suggests/claims that ... • The author holds the view/is of the opinion that ... • The author argues/suggests/demands that ... • According to the text, the problem is that ... • In recent years, there has been a debate on how to ...</p>	
<p><b>Expressing your criticism (in general)</b></p> <p>Whereas the author thinks that ... I feel very different about ... • Unlike the author, I find it hard to believe that ... • Contrary to the speaker, I am doubtful whether ... • To be quite honest, I do not think that/I cannot (fully) agree with .../I am not convinced by .../I would like to question the view that .../I reject the idea that ... • In my opinion/view this argument is wrong/weak/unconvincing because ... • ... the author ignores a fact/forgets to mention sth./is not aware of sth./focuses too much on sth./does not realise that ...</p>	<p><b>Expressing your support (in general)</b></p> <p>The author is absolutely right in saying that ... • I do not think anyone would disagree with the author's statement that ... • The speaker has my full support when he argues that ... • In fact/As a matter of fact, I believe it is fully justified to say that ... • I agree entirely with the speaker saying that ... • I am of exactly the same opinion as ... • I share the view that ... • To my mind, ... • this argument is very strong/powerful/convincing/plausible • the author presents convincing arguments/discusses the topic in detail/bases his case on facts and figures • the author's argumentation is thoroughly convincing/logical</p>
<p><b>Making concessions</b></p> <p>To a certain extent, I can accept ... • However, we shouldn't forget that ... • Most of the arguments are hard to dismiss. • Yet there are experts who ... • I agree in principle, but ... • Personally, I would not go so far as to say that ... • Although ..., we should accept/must admit that ... • In spite of all this, ... • Admittedly, ..., but ...</p>	<p><b>Giving arguments/reasons</b></p> <p>One reason for my criticism/scepticism is that ... • Another/A second/A further/An additional argument I would like to present is that ... • I would also argue that ... • Another point I would like to make is that ... • The main reason, however, is that ... • The most convincing argument is that ... • That brings me neatly to my final and most important point: ...</p>
<p><b>Your conclusion/summary</b></p> <p>To sum up, ... • In short, ... • Considering all these arguments, ... • I would conclude that ... • I have come to the conclusion that ... • It is safe to say that ... • I would support the view that ... • My suggestion is that ... • My appeal to ... is: ... • In conclusion ... • Having weighed up all the arguments, I would like to conclude with a quote: "..."</p>	

## Writing a newspaper/magazine article

The following steps can help you to write a newspaper or magazine article:

- Remember the **ABC of news writing**:  
**Accuracy** (be exact, all the facts have to be correct)  
**Brevity** (keep it short and to the point)  
**Clarity** (make sure everyone understands).
- Remember also the five Ws: **Who? What? When? Where? Why?** (sometimes How? and So what?)
- Give **answers** to these questions.
- Attract the **reader's attention** with the headline and the lead, which is usually the first word, sentence or paragraph of the story. The lead contains the most important, most exciting point and makes the reader go on reading.
- The **structure of a newspaper article** is basically an inverted pyramid: The most important thing is at the top, in the lead. More facts and additional details follow, the least important ones at the end, so that you can stop reading any time after the lead should you feel you have enough information. If the story is written well, however, or if you are interested in the details, you can read on till the end.
- Good news **style** is **active, informative, to the point**. Nothing is repeated and nothing is said that is not necessary. Everything must be logical and easy to understand.
- News articles often contain **anecdotes, examples and quotes**. If you use quotes when writing, make sure they express the speaker's intention. Without the right context, they may be misunderstood. Only use them when they make a point clearer.
- A **good ending** rewards the reader for finishing the article by making some kind of reference to the lead.

## Creative Writing

### 1. Text-based writing

When you have read a text, you may, for example, be asked to tell a part of the story that is not in the text, or to write a text that is the same type but about a different subject, or to change the point of view, or to transform one text type into another telling the same story.

- When you are asked to write something based on a text, make sure you have understood that text completely. **Use your analysing skills and your knowledge about text types** to create a new text that goes well with the original one.
- The **content must fit**: The characters and the way they talk or act must be convincing. The story must follow a certain logic.
- The basis of your **new text** could also be a **cartoon, a film, a listening text or a picture**.
- Finally **check** what you have written for common mistakes (tense, aspect, prepositions, word order, etc.) and improve your text where possible.

### 2. Free writing

- Before you start writing about a free topic, it is a good idea to **brainstorm for ideas** and organize them **in a mind map**.
- Decide on the **target group, the genre/text type and purpose of the text**.
- If you decide to tell a story, **introduce the main characters** (Who?), the **setting** (When? Where?) and the **theme** (What?). Write about the **main action** (How? Why?) in the middle part and don't forget to think of an **interesting conclusion**.
- Use **connectives** and structuring devices to make your text logical. Keep to the same style level throughout the text. If you decide to write a poem, pay special attention to the form.
- Finally check what you have written for common mistakes (tense, aspect, prepositions, word order, etc.) and improve your text where possible.

### 3. Writing a diary/blog entry

- When you write a diary or blog entry, it is often necessary to **slip into the role of a different character**.
- Try to put yourself into the character's situation (age, background, job, sex, etc.).
- Try to imagine **the character's thoughts, feelings and ideas**.
- Although in a diary entry the main focus is on the past, present emotions and dreams and hopes about the future may also play a role.
- Write your entry from the **first-person point of view**.



#### 4. Writing a dialogue/interview

- **Structure** your dialogue.
- In interviews, open the dialogue with a short introduction of the topic.
- **Connect** answers and questions.
- Use **spoken language** (e.g. short forms).

### Making a leaflet

Leaflets are printed sheets of paper which are often used for advertising. The following steps can help you to design your leaflet:

- Decide on a **topic**. What message do you want to get across?
- Make a **sketch** of your leaflet. Include your heading, text blocks and pictures.
- Catch the reader's attention by using **big headings**.
- Keep your **text short** and concentrate on the **main points** you want to get across.
- Make your leaflet interesting by using **coloured letters and pictures**.
- Make your leaflet memorable by using **words and expressions** that are funny or that make people think.

## Writing a personal letter

A **personal letter** is a letter you write to someone you know well **on a personal basis**, e.g. a friend or relative. There are no special rules which you have to follow when you write to people you know well. The model letter below shows you what an informal letter generally looks like in English. You can use **informal language** in a personal letter, as if you were speaking to the person.

Thomas Reiter  
Dinkelstr. 1  
70183 Stuttgart  
Germany

May 3, 200...

Dear Frank,

Just a few lines to let you know I'm still alive! Sorry for not having written for so long, but I've been very busy at college with exams.

How are things with you? What are you doing for the summer? Unfortunately my applications for jobs in the States have all been turned down so far. Oh well, I'll keep trying...

Please drop me a line when you have a minute. We really must keep in touch. Give my regards to the family.

All the best,

Thomas

P.S. If I do get to the States, I'll let you know my address. Maybe we'll be able to meet up!

*Your address goes in the top right hand corner.*

*Write the date under the address.*

*Start the letter: Dear + name,*

*Use a capital letter for the first word.*

*Group your news, etc. in paragraphs.*

*Finish the letter with one of these phrases: All the best • Best wishes • Bye for now • Love • Lots of love*

## Writing a formal letter

A formal letter can be a **letter of application, a reservation, a request for information**, etc. **Commercial correspondence** refers to formal letters written in a business context, i.e. from one company to another. There are different ways of laying out these types of letters. The model letter below is in 'block form', which is probably the best to use because it is accepted everywhere. The parts in **blue** are only necessary in **commercial correspondence**.

**Weltweit Services**  
 Thomas Reiter  
 Dinkelstr. 1  
 70183 Stuttgart  
 Germany  
 Tel: 0711 768232  
 Fax: 0711 768233  
 E-mail:  
 www.

Personnel Manager  
 Import Export  
 11270 White Blvd.  
 Los Angeles CA 91430  
 USA

Dear Mr ... / Ms ...

**Re: Your advertisement in the Sun Times of April 28**

With reference to your advertisement in the Sun Times of April 28, I would like to apply for the position of bilingual buying assistant.

I am particularly interested in this job as I would very much like to gain work experience abroad. As well as speaking fluent English and Spanish, I have a working knowledge of French. My mother tongue is of course German.

I can supply references from former employers if you wish.

I enclose my curriculum vitae. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should require further information.

Yours sincerely  
**Thomas Reiter**  
 Thomas Reiter  
 Trainee buyer

Enc.

*Writer's address. In commercial correspondence you should include the company name, telephone, e-mail, Internet address and fax number.*

*In commercial correspondence include references. 'Our ref:' is usually the initials of the person who wrote the letter. (TR = Thomas Reiter)*

*Date: The British write day, month, year (11.1.200...). Americans write month, day, year (1.11.200...). So it is best to write the date in full to avoid confusion.*

*Main part of letter: State your reason for writing in formal, polite language. Group your points in paragraphs.*

*Punctuation: In 'block style' you don't use commas in the address, salutation or complimentary close.*

*Addressee, including name and position, if known.*

*In commercial correspondence include a subject line beginning 'Re:'*

*Complimentary close*

*Signature*

*Name in full*

*In commercial correspondence: Writer's position in company.*

*Enc. = Enclosures: Indicates that additional material is being sent with the letter.*

Salutation	When used	Complimentary close
Dear Sir or Madam	to a company and when you don't know the person's name or sex	Yours faithfully
Dear Madam	to a woman, when you don't know her name	Yours faithfully
Dear Sir	to a man, when you don't know his name	Yours faithfully
Dear Mr Brown	to a man, whose name you know	Yours sincerely
Dear Ms/Mrs Brown	to a woman, whose name you know	Yours sincerely

**Note:** Nowadays the use of Yours faithfully and Yours sincerely is not always divided up as strictly as given above.

### Explaining the purpose of the letter

We are writing/I am writing ... • in connection with ... • ... with reference/ regard to ... • ... to advise you of ... • ... to confirm ... • ... to let you know ... • ... to tell you that ... • ... to ask/enquire (whether) ... • ...to inform you of ... • ... to request you to ...

### Stating a reference

Thank you for your mail of July 1st. • Many thanks for your letter dated 26th July. • We refer to your order for ... • I have received your enquiry regarding ... • Further to our telephone conversation today, ... • With reference to your mail of June 5th, ... • With regard to your enquiry of June 5th about ...

### Giving good news

I am delighted to tell you that ... • You will be pleased to hear that ...

### Giving bad news

We regret to inform you that ... • I am afraid that ... • We are sorry to have to tell you that ... • Unfortunately we are unable to ...

### Making a request

Please ... • Please could you ... ? • Could you possibly...? • We would be grateful if you could/would ... • We would be much obliged if you could ... • I would appreciate it if you could ... • ... would be very much appreciated.

### Useful phrases



### Offering help

If you wish, we would be happy to ... • Would you like us to ...? • At your request we would gladly ...

### Giving information

We wish to advise you that ... • We are pleased to inform you that ... • For your information: ...

### Enclosing documents

I am enclosing ... • Please find enclosed ... • Please find attached ...  
(= *attachment/papers fixed to the letter with a paper clip/...*)

### Thanking

Thank you for sending me ... • Many thanks for ... • I am grateful to you for ...  
• I am much obliged to you for sending me ... (*formal*)

### Apologising

I am sorry about the delay in replying. • We were (*very/extremely/most*) sorry to hear about the problem. • We regret that this problem has occurred. • We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

### Assuring

Please rest assured that we will do our utmost to help you. • We assure you that we will do our best to put the matter right. • We promise to look into the matter immediately. • You can count on us to ensure smooth delivery in future.

### Making concessions

We agree to reduce the price by (*percentage/sum of money*). • We are happy to grant you a discount of 3% on the goods. • We will let you have the goods at a reduced price of ...

### Closing remarks

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me/us on (*tel. no.*).  
• Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me/us. • If you require further information, please do get in touch/ask. • Should you require further details, please contact us again. • If we can help in any way, we would be happy to be of assistance.

### Referring to future contact

We look forward to hearing from you soon/meeting you next week/seeing you on the 29th. • We are looking forward to receiving your proposal/order.

### Useful phrases



## Writing a CV

CV is short for 'Curriculum Vitae'. There are no rules about how to write a CV in English. Use the following 'Dos and Don'ts' and the model CV below as a guide.

### Dos

Do include skills and interests which are relevant to the job, if possible.  
Do give the English equivalents of German terms, where possible.

### Don'ts

Don't write more than one page.  
Don't necessarily include a photo, unless asked to.  
Don't use handwriting for your CV.  
Don't sign your name at the end.

#### Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Ute Braun

**Address:** Vinckestr. 1, 70183 Stuttgart, Germany

**Telephone:** 0711 / 234567

**E-mail:** u.braun@e-mail.de

**Date of birth:** 6.5.1988

**Nationality:** German

**Schools attended:** 2004 – 2006: Language College, Stuttgart  
1997 – 2004: Pfeiffer Realschule (Comprehensive)

**Qualifications:** Diploma course as a bilingual secretary (English, Spanish)

**Work experience:** July 2005 – September 2005: kitchen work at McDougall's  
July 2004 – September 2004: office assistant in the export department of Bosch

**Skills, Interests and Experience:** fluent English and Spanish, a working knowledge of French;  
good computer skills (Word, Excel);  
clean driving license;  
tennis and member of the local repertory company (latest role: the Nurse in Romeo and Juliet)

## Discussions

### 1. Rules for a discussion:

- Always be polite!
- Look at the person/the people you are talking to but don't stare at them.
- Don't interrupt unless you feel it is really necessary.
- Listen carefully to what other people are saying.
- Keep to the point.
- Don't talk too much.

### 2. The role of a discussion leader

A discussion leader makes sure the **discussion is held in an orderly way** and that participants are always polite to each other. He/She always remains neutral (i.e. doesn't give his/her own opinion).

#### Introducing the topic and the participants

(As you know,) our discussion today is about... • On my right/left I have ... (name of person or group), who is/are in favour of/against ...

#### Choosing whose turn it is to speak

Who'd like to open the discussion? • ... , would you like to open the discussion? • The next person to speak is ... , followed by ... and then ...

#### Making sure everyone has an equal chance to speak, including people who are shy

Is there anything you'd like to say, ...?

#### Making sure no one person monopolises the discussion

I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I'm afraid you'll have to stop there. • Sorry, but I must give the others a chance to put forward their arguments now.

#### Making sure that only one person speaks at a time

Please wait your turn, you'll have a chance to speak in a minute! • If you'd just let ... finish, please.

#### Noting down the most important points and summarising the discussion at the end

Time is running out, so I'd like to sum up what we've been discussing. • We heard from ... that ...

#### Thanking everybody at the end

Thank you for taking part in the discussion! • And finally I'd like to thank all the participants for holding a fair/friendly/... discussion.

#### Useful phrases



### Making a suggestion

Let's consider ... • I suggest/propose that you/we ... • I suggest/propose (+ -ing form) • What do you think about ...? • If I were you, I'd ...

### Responding to a suggestion

That's a good idea!/Fine! • OK/Yes, why not? • OK, if you want, I don't really mind. • I think it would be a better idea to talk about/consider ... • Couldn't we look at this/do this another way? • What about ...? • I'm not sure. How about ...?

### Asking for an opinion

What do you think/feel about ...? • What is your view/opinion on/about ...? • What would you say? • I'd like to hear what you think about ...

### Giving an opinion

As far as I'm concerned ... • I think/feel/believe/am of the opinion that ... • To my mind ... • In my opinion ... • In my view ...

### Agreeing

You're (quite/absolutely) right. • That's a very good point! • Absolutely!/Exactly! • I agree (with you/Susie/...). • You have a point there. • You might/could be right. • I think you're right to a certain extent/up to a point.

### Disagreeing

I disagree (entirely). • I'm sorry, but I completely disagree. • Stop exaggerating! • I think you're oversimplifying things. • That's an interesting point, but ... • That's not the point. • You've missed the point (entirely).

### Interrupting someone

Sorry to interrupt, but could you please explain/repeat the point you've just made. • Excuse me for interrupting, but I don't understand what you've just said. • Sorry for interrupting but ...

### Dealing with being interrupted

Can I just finish what I was saying, please? • Just a second. I haven't quite finished. • Would you let me/allow me to make my point, please. • You could at least let me finish my sentence!

### Changing the subject

There is something else that I'd like to say ... • Have you ever thought of/considered ...? • On the other hand ... • Try looking at things another way/from a different angle. • I'd like to bring up another point.

### Returning to the original subject

Let's get back to what we were saying/discussing. • Let's get back to the point. • As I was saying before, ... • Getting back to what we/you/... said earlier ...

### Useful phrases





### Asking for a further explanation

Did I get that right? • Do you really mean that ...? • Did I understand correctly that you think ...? • Could you explain what you just said/the point you just made/... again, please? • Could you give me/us a concrete example, please?

### Saying that a point has been misunderstood

That's not what I meant to say (at all)! • You've got me (completely) wrong. • You've (completely) misunderstood me. • That's not what I was trying to say! • I didn't make myself clear. I'll try and explain again.

### Useful phrases



## Tips for everyday conversation

Always make sure your **language and behaviour is appropriate for the situation** at hand. If it's a formal situation and you know what will be talked about, prepare by looking up useful words and facts.

When you are talking to older or more **experienced people or to your boss**, you should use more **polite phrases** and not be too direct. With **people of the same age or people you know really well**, you probably feel more at ease and can **be a little more direct**. In any case, always show that you are interested in what the person has to say and that you respect him/her.

Give **precise and clear information** and remember to **be tactful** when telling people something that affects them personally.

Always pick up on what your conversation partners have said to show that you **respect and sympathise** with them, that you are listening carefully and judging the content fairly. Use **supportive intonation and body language** as well as the following phrases, where appropriate.

please • thank you • you're welcome • don't worry • not at all • Could I ...? • Would you ...? • May I ...? • I'd like ... • Yes, I will • No, I don't • Yes, that's true, but ... • I agree, but ... • It's just ... • of course • I see • you know • I mean ... • Really? • Are you sure? • What a pity. • That's very kind of you. • I appreciate that.

### Useful phrases

## Small talk

Small talk is **light (casual) conversation**. It is a way of showing interest in others, communicating in a friendly way and avoiding conflict at all times! At a **social event**, such as a party, you might spend the whole time in casual conversation. At a **business meeting, on the phone, at an interview, etc.** you can start (and end) with a **little small talk**.

### Topics for small talk

- The weather (especially popular in Britain!)
- A journey (to or from the place where you are)
- Where you live/Where your conversation partner lives
- Your family and/or your conversation partner's family (if you know them)
- A recent/well-known TV programme or film
- Tips about what to see and do in a certain town or city (i.e. cultural events, attractions, restaurants, local specialities, etc.)
- Sport (e.g. a current sports event)
- A vacation
- Where you/your conversation partner went to school or university
- What you do for a living/what your conversation partner does for a living
- Hobbies and interests
- An experience/event that you and your conversation partner are both currently involved in or have been involved in
- A non-controversial item in the news

### Starting a conversation

Hi!/Hello! • What are you up to? • Do you mind if I join you? • Nice to see you (again)! • How are you? • How are you doing? • How are things?

### Finding a topic

Did you see ... on TV last night/at the weekend/...? • Have you seen the new ... film yet? • Did you read about ... in the newspaper this morning? • Terrible/Beautiful weather, isn't it? • How was your journey? • How did you get here? • What made you decide to come here? • Have you ever been here before? • Who do you think is going to win ... this evening?

### Making plans

Shall I pick you up? • Let's arrange to meet at ... • Sorry, I can't manage Friday. I'm meeting ... then. • I've got an appointment with ... at ... • Thursday would suit me better/best. • That's no good, I'm afraid. What about ...? • I've got a date with ... on ... • I'm seeing ... then. • Shall we book seats/tickets/a table? • When does the performance start? • It starts at ... • If there's a problem, call me.

### Useful phrases



### Responding & showing surprise

Really? • I don't believe it! • That's incredible! • Well, I've never heard of anything like that before! • That's the funniest/most interesting/strangest thing I've heard in ages! • I've never thought of it like that before. • I couldn't agree more! • That's funny! Exactly the same thing happened to me the other day/two weeks ago/...

### Finishing a conversation

It was nice talking to you! • Goodness/Oh no, is that the time? • Excuse me,/ What a shame, I've got to go now. • Hope to see you again soon. • Hope you get home safely. • Take care. • Give my regards to ... • Don't forget to say hello to ... for me!

### Useful phrases



## Making phone calls

### 1. Preparing a phone call

- **Prepare yourself** thoroughly. Make **notes in English** or write out a rough draft of the main things you want to say. This is especially important when making formal or business calls.
- If possible **find out the name and number** of a direct contact person in advance.
- **Think of things** the contact person is likely **to ask or say** and work out responses.
- **Be prepared to spell words**, especially people's names and names of places.

### 2. During the phone call

- **Speak clearly and slowly.** State your requests clearly and to the point.
- Don't worry about making mistakes.
- **Be polite!** Say *please* when you ask for information and *thank you* when you receive help.  
**Remember:** *please* = *bitte* • *you're welcome/not at all* = *bitte schön; gern geschehen*
- When making a social call, give your first name only.
- When making a formal/business call, give your first name and surname.
- **Address people** you know well by their first names. In a formal/business situation address people using *Mr, Mrs* or *Ms [mz]* + surname.
- **State telephone numbers** as single digits. When the same number occurs twice consecutively, you can say *double* (e.g. *33 = double 3*). *0 = Oh* (BE & AE) or *zero* (AE)  
**Example:** *07145 14406: Oh/zero - seven - one - four - five - one - double four - oh/zero - six*
- **Ask the caller to spell names**, etc. for you to avoid confusion.

- **Repeat important information** (times, names, addresses, prices, etc.) to be sure that you have understood everything correctly.
- Don't expect to understand every single word that is said.
- If you are not sure if you have understood something:
  - **Ask the person to repeat** what they have just said:  
*Could you repeat that, please?*
  - **Ask the person to explain** something in a different way:  
*So what you're saying is ...?*
  - **Ask the person to speak more slowly:**  
*Could you speak a little more slowly, please?*
- If you can't hear the caller properly, **ask the caller to speak more loudly.**
- If you think you've got the wrong number, check and apologise. Don't just hang up.
- If the caller has got the wrong number, explain politely. **Don't just hang up.**

#### The kind of things you may want to say

Hello. Is that Mr Brown speaking? • Could I speak to Mr Brown, please? • This is ... I'm calling from Germany. • I'm calling about ... • I'd like to enquire about ... • I hope I'm not calling at an inconvenient time. • I've got a few questions/a complaint about ... • I'd like to make an appointment to see the doctor/dentist/... • Shall I ring back later? • Could you take a message/give him/her a message, please? • What time would be most convenient? • Could you repeat that, please? • I'm afraid the line's very bad/we've got a bad connection.

#### What you may hear at the other end of the line

Brown and Wilson Car Rentals. Can I help you? • Speaking! • I'll just fetch him. Hang on a moment, please. • I'm afraid he's not available/he's in a meeting. I'm afraid the line is engaged at the moment. • Could you call back later? • Can I take a message? • I'll give you his extension. • I'll put you through to the ... department/... • I'll connect you. Please hold the line. • Sorry. I think you've dialled the wrong number. • The person you are calling is not available at the moment. Please leave a message after the tone. • If you wish to contact the sales/complaints/customer service department, please press ONE/TWO/ ...

#### Useful phrases:



## A job interview

If a company finds your letter of application and CV interesting, their human resource department may invite you for an interview. For the interviewee, the interview process starts beforehand with **good preparation**.

## 1. Preparation

- **Find out about the business or institution** where you will have your interview.
- **Think of questions** that you might be asked, and come up with **suitable answers**.
- Have a friend ask you the questions (plus some surprise ones) and give you a constructive feedback on how you answered them.
- **Think of questions to ask the interviewer** about the business or institution. You want to show that you already know something about them.
- **Dress nicely and arrive early** so that you can collect your thoughts before the interview.

## 2. During the interview

- **Smile and maintain eye contact** with your interviewer (although it isn't a good idea to stare).
- The interviewer knows that you are nervous, so he or she might try to lighten the atmosphere with **small talk** (► Small talk p. 126). Be prepared to chat with him or her.
- **Speak clearly and not too quickly!** It is perfectly alright to pause for a moment and think about what you want to say.
- If necessary, ask the interviewer to repeat or explain a question. This also gives you more time to think!
- **Do not answer questions with only yes, no, or I don't know.** However, keep answers clear and concise. This is your chance to convince the interviewer that you are the right person for the job!
- If possible, **ask the question(s) about the business or institution** that you thought of.
- **Thank** your interviewer at the end.

## 3. After the interview

- After a short time, **send a short, follow-up mail** thanking your interviewer and expressing interest in the position again. If you haven't been told when the decision will be made, ask politely when you can expect a reply.
- **If you don't get the job, don't worry!** Think of what you can do better next time, and work on these points. As with any other skill, the more interviews you do, the better you will get!

As you can see from my CV ... • I trained in ... • I graduated/will be graduating from school in ... • I enjoy dealing with clients/working with people. • I have excellent ... skills/good knowledge of ... • I'm PC literate. • I'm accustomed to working hard. • I'm prepared to work overtime. • During my time at school I did internships at ...

### Useful phrases

## Mind maps

Mind maps are useful for **collecting and organising a large amount of information** about a certain topic. You can make a mind map for yourself or as a group. The basic structure of a mind map is always the same.

### 1. How to make a mind map

- Use a **pencil** so that you can easily delete things or change their position, if necessary.
- Write your main topic in the middle of a page and draw a circle around the word or phrase. (Fig. 1)
- Think of **important things** directly related to the main topic. Write each idea (subtopic) in a **circle** around the outside of your first circle. **Draw lines** connecting the subtopics to the main topic. (Fig. 2)
- Now add more circles with related ideas around the subtopics. (Fig. 3) Instead of drawing circles you can use lines with 'branches' for subtopics. (Fig. 4)

### 2. Ways of using mind maps

- To **brainstorm for ideas on a given topic**: Write the topic heading in the centre circle and add all new and related aspects.
- To **organise information from a text** (or other source): Start with the most important point in the text, add the main subtopics, then add relevant detailed information or quotations from the text.
- To **develop word fields**: Start with the generic term and add all related words.
- To **organise arguments**: Start with the topic of discussion. Add a branch or circle: 'for' and another one 'against'. Continue by adding further branches/circles with arguments 'for' and 'against'.

Fig. 1



Fig. 2

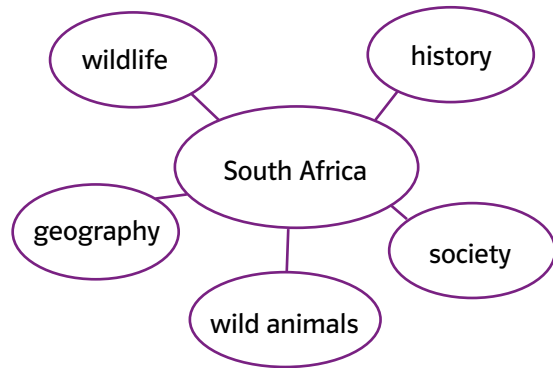


Fig. 3

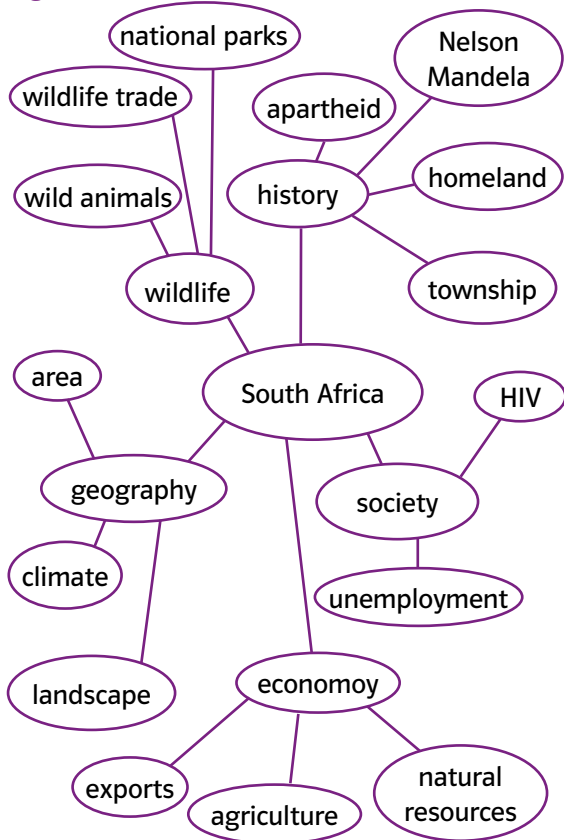
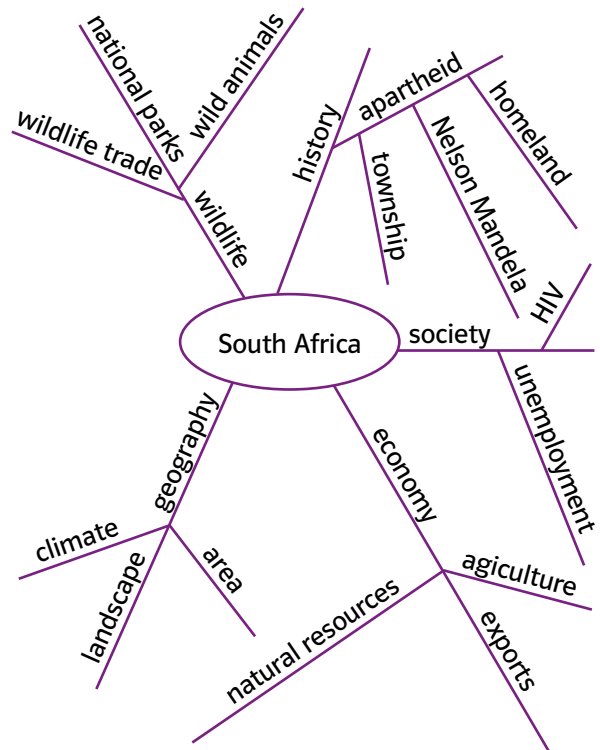


Fig. 4



## Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the first step when you want to **collect ideas on a specific topic**. You can brainstorm on your own, with a partner or in a group.

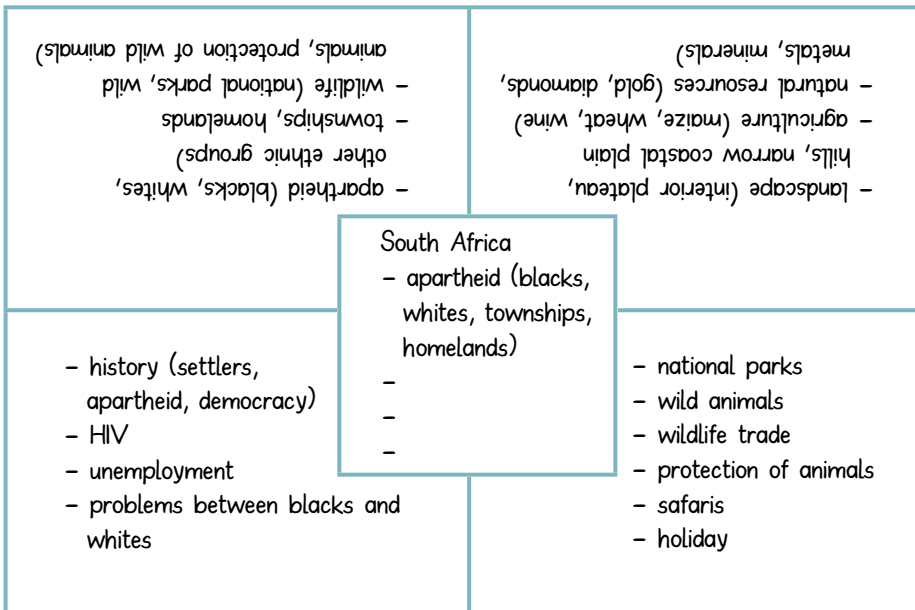
### 1. Individual Brainstorming

- First write down **each idea that comes to mind** when you think of the topic.
- In a second step, go through your collection of ideas and choose those which you really want.
- **Structure** your ideas in a grid or a mind map.

### 2. Brainstorming in a group (placemat)

- Form groups of four. Write down the topic in the middle of a big sheet of paper (placemat). Each of you works in one corner.
- Collect your ideas on the topic and write them down in your corner.
- Discuss all ideas and decide on the ones you find best or most important. Write them in the middle of your placemat.

### Example:





## Taking notes

Taking notes means writing down information from a spoken source (speech, interview, etc.) in short form.

- Only write down the **most important information**. It is impossible to note down everything.
- Only write down **key words**, never complete sentences. Key words are often names, times, numbers and places.
- Try to order your notes systematically. If possible, use headings, sub-headings or grids.
- Use **symbols** for certain relationships, for example: = ≠ →
- Make sure that you can read your handwriting!

## Marking up a text

When you read a text, it can be useful to mark up **information that you will need later** for answering questions, etc. Remember that you can only mark up texts **in photocopies or in books that belong to you**.

- When you read the text, keep in mind **which information** you are looking for.
- Mark relevant information by **underlining, circling or highlighting** the words or phrases.
- If you want to mark different kinds of information, choose **different colours**.
- You can also write down **key words in the margins**.
- When you read the text again later, you can **concentrate on the marked words** and phrases and on your notes in the margins.

**Example:**

**The struggle against apartheid**

Apartheid (meaning *separateness* in Afrikaans) was a system of legalised racial segregation in South Africa. Apartheid had its roots in the history of colonisation and settlement of southern Africa.

definition and roots

The first Europeans who settled in South Africa were the Dutch in 1652. In 1806 the British arrived. The discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886 led to increased immigration and brought wealth which, however, native Africans were denied. The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 and racial segregation was generally accepted although the policy of apartheid didn't become official until 1948, when the National Party came to power.

first settlers

Apartheid classified inhabitants and visitors into racial groups (black, white, coloured, and Indian or Asian).

apartheid

South African blacks had to move to small and economically unproductive areas of the country known as 'homelands'.

examples

Blacks who worked in factories and mines had to live in 'townships', i.e. poor and underdeveloped living areas which were built around the major cities. The government also segregated education, medical care and other public services. The services for black people were greatly inferior to those of whites and the black education system was designed to prepare blacks for life in the labouring class.

**Guessing new words**

Don't be afraid of texts containing new words. You already know many different ways of guessing their meanings. After applying your guessing technique there will still be some words you don't know, but don't worry, you will probably understand the most important points in the text.

<p><b>Guessable words</b></p>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words that are used in a German context.</li> <li>• Words that are similar to German words → but watch out for false friends!</li> </ul>	<p><i>bestseller, boycott, clown, laptop, track, ...</i></p> <p><i>individuality, inner, install, parallel, to wander, ...</i></p>

Guessable words	Examples:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words that are similar to words you know from another foreign language (French, Latin, Spanish, Italian) → but watch out for false friends!</li> </ul>	<p><i>academic, announcement, artificial, descendant, dignity, disrespect, individuality, junior, minor, pasta, phase, ...</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compounds of words you already know.</li> </ul>	<p><i>handwriting, heartfelt, mixed ability, single-sex, washing machine, wholeheartedly, ...</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words from a word family you already know.</li> </ul>	<p><i>adventurous, announcement, importation, to mirror, nationalism, relevance, ...</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words you already know, but with a different meaning, the new meaning being guessable from the context.</li> </ul>	<p><i>to admit, light, plain, pretty, to report sb...</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words whose meaning you can guess from the context.</li> </ul>	<p><i>(he) dozed off (in his chair); (it's old-fashioned) out of date</i></p>

## Working with a dictionary

### 1. English-German, German-English

This type of dictionary is best used for translating or **understanding new words quickly**. Check the following information in your dictionary:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What part of speech is the word?</li> <li>• What does it go together with?</li> <li>• What topic or word field does it belong to?</li> <li>• How is it pronounced?</li> <li>• Are there irregular forms?</li> <li>• What translations are given?</li> <li>• Which of the translations can only be used in a limited context (AE, formal, slang, etc.)?</li> <li>• Which of the translations fits the context?</li> </ul>
---

### Example:

**fo-cus** [ˈfəʊkəs] <pl **focuses, foci**> [pl ˈfəʊsaɪ] **I.** **s** ① (MATH OPT) Brennpunkt **m** ② (fig) Brennpunkt, Herd **m**, Zentrum **nt**; **in (out of)** ~ (un)scharf eingestellt; **bring into** ~ scharf einstellen **II.** **vt** ① (OPT PHOT) einstellen (on auf) ② (fig) konzentrieren (on auf); **focus group** **s** (in marketing) [ausgewählte] Test-

## 2. English-English

This type of dictionary is best used for **writing an English text** when you are not quite sure which is the best word in a given context. The more English you read, the more you will improve your language! An English-English (monolingual) dictionary provides you with the following information:

- What part of speech is the word?
- What does it go together with?
- What topic or word field does it belong to?
- How is it pronounced?
- Are there irregular forms?
- What synonyms and/or definitions are given?
- Which of the given meanings fits the context?
- Examples show how the word is typically used.

### Tips for using an English-English dictionary

- Before looking up a word identify whether it is a verb, noun, adjective, adverb, etc.
- When you have found the entry for the word, make sure you look at the meaning for the correct class of word.
- Read any additional information which the dictionary gives you about the word.
- Take your time to read the entry carefully.
- Make sure you find the entry which matches the use of the word in the given context.

### Example:

different uses of air

pronunciation in Britain and America

word class

noun  
without a plural form

other usages and where to find them

**air** [GAS] / eə / ɛə / er / noun [U] the mixture of gases which surrounds the earth and which we breathe: *I went outside to get some fresh air.* 'You should put some air in your tyres – they look flat to me.

➡ See also **airy** LIGHT; **airy** NOT SERIOUS; **airy** DELICATE.

- be walking / floating on air, to be very happy and excited because something very pleasant has happened to you: *Ever since she met Mark, she has been walking on air.*

**air** [MANNER] / eə / ɛə / er / noun [S] manner or appearance: *She has an air of confidence about her.*

- airs and graces, false ways of behaving that are intended to make other people feel that you are important and belong to a high social class.
- put on airs (and graces) (ALSO give yourself airs (and graces)), DISAPPROVING to behave as if you are more important than you really are.

**air** [DRY] / eə / ɛə / er / verb [I or T] to become try and/or fresh, or to cause to become try and/or fresh: *My mother always airs the sheets before she makes the beds.* 'Leave the window open to let the room air a bit.

intransitive or transitive verb

examples to show typical contexts

## Describing pictures

### 1. Types of pictures

photo(graph) • print • transparency • slide • painting • drawing • sketch • picture  
 • illustration • image • collage • electronic image • snapshot • skyline • panorama  
 • close-up • action photo • still (from a film) • scene • sequence

### 2. Describing a picture

#### First impression

- Where is the image from?
- What type of image is it?
- What does the image (roughly) show?
- Who created it?
- When and why was it drawn/taken?

#### Description

- Describe in detail what can be seen in the picture.
- Talk about what you can see in the foreground and in the background, from the left to the right and from the top to the bottom.
- Don't forget to look at the details. Describe the setting or situation, the quality of the picture, the characters and their appearance and body language.

#### Interpretation

- What message is given by the picture?
- Is it aimed at a particular target group?
- Did the person who created the picture intend it to have a certain effect on the viewer? If so, how is this achieved?

#### Evaluation

- Do you think the picture has the intended effect?
- Which elements are responsible for its success or failure?
- If it is a historical picture, compare the effect it might have had in its original context with the one it has on a viewer now.

#### First impression

This is a photo/an illustration of ... • This photo was taken in ... • The illustration shows ... • In this illustration/photo you can see (that) ... • My first thought when I saw the picture was ... • The photograph is shocking/disgusting/amazing/spectacular/special ... • The picture reminds me of ... • It shows ... • It was probably taken in/at ... • The photograph looks as if it was staged to achieve a certain effect. • It is a realistic picture.

#### Useful phrases



### Description

on the right-hand/left-hand side of the picture • in the centre • in the foreground • in the background • at the top • at the bottom • in the upper right-hand corner • in the lower left-hand corner • The picture was painted by ... • It is a portrait/cartoon/still life/landscape/an oil/watercolour painting. • In the middle/centre of the picture there is ... • to the left/right of ... • in the top left-hand/bottom right-hand corner • There is a contrast between ... • ... is clearly visible • The focus is on ... • The field size is a close-up/medium shot/long shot • The colours are bright/dark. • ... is seen from above/below/the front/the back • This creates a ... atmosphere.

### Interpretation

The person in the picture looks ... (+ adjective, e.g. happy) • The photo/illustration supports the point made in the text that ... • The photo/illustration gives you the impression that ... • The illustration makes me feel ... (+ adjective: e.g. worried) • The colours the artist has chosen make me feel ... (+ adjective: happy/sad/worried/...) • In my opinion the illustration would be better, if ... (+ simple past: e.g. if it was more life-like)

### Evaluation

The artist aims to present ... • The picture is (not) convincing because ...

### Useful phrases



## Describing cartoons

A cartoonist aims to be both **funny and critical**. When looking at a cartoon, the most important thing is to try to work out what point the cartoonist is making. Generally **the point is made by a combination of the text and the illustration**, so it is important to analyse and understand both. **Illustrations** generally show caricatures of **well-known people or particular stereotypes**. To understand a cartoon, you need to recognise and define the person or group of people illustrated.

To analyse a cartoon, you can follow the steps in the skill 'Describing pictures' ► p. 137.

### Describing the cartoon

The cartoon consists of an illustration of ... • The illustration shows ... • There is a caption under the cartoon, which says "...". • In the (first) speech bubble it says "...". • The text in the speech bubble is spoken by ... • The figure is a stereotype/caricature of ... • The drawing is detailed/clear/sketchy/abstract.

### Talking about the point

The cartoonist is making fun of ... • The cartoonist is satirising ... • The cartoon is funny because of the misunderstanding between ...

### Useful phrases



### Giving your opinion

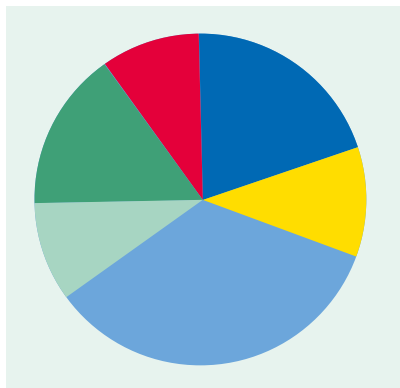
I think/I don't think the cartoon is (very) funny because ... • I get the joke/point. /I don't get the joke/point. • I think/I don't think the cartoon is easy to understand because ... • I agree/I don't agree with the point the cartoonist is making because ...

### Useful phrases

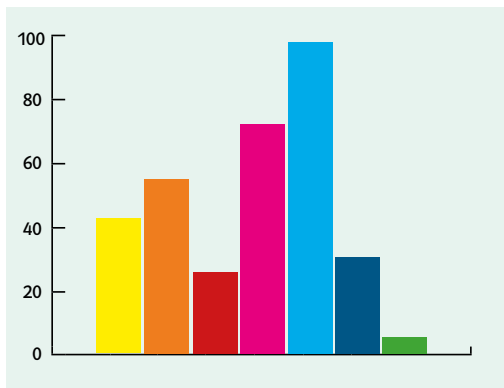
## Describing diagrams

As you know, **diagrams sum up a lot of statistics or information in very little space** and can make information easier to understand. The kind of diagram you choose to use (bar chart, pie chart, flow chart, line graph, etc.) depends on what you want to show.

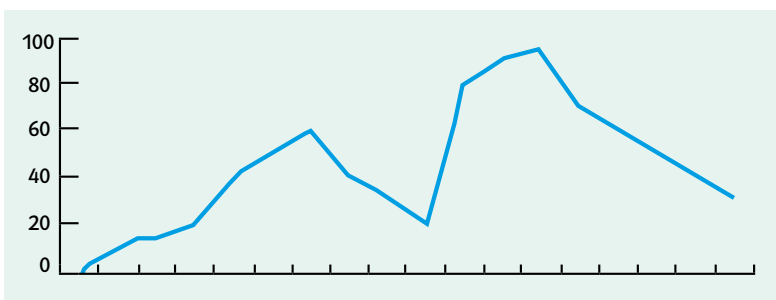
**A pie chart shows percentages of 100 %:**



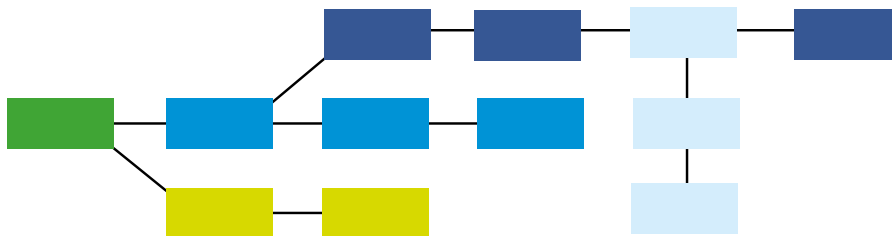
**A bar chart is used to compare figures directly:**



**A line graph shows a development over a certain amount of time:**



A flow chart shows the links between elements and their influence on each other. It is best used to describe processes that contain decisions at certain points, where alternatives need to be shown:



### Describing an increase

to rise • to increase • to have increased by • growth • an increase/a rise (in the number of ...)

### Describing a decrease

to decrease • to drop • to decline • a decrease • a decline • a drop (in the number of ...) • a reduction (in the number of ...)

### Useful adjectives and adverbs

sharp(ly) • slow(ly) • steady/steadily • continuing/continual(ly) • gradual(ly) • significant(ly) • insignificant(ly) • negligible/negligibly • large • high • small

### Expressing numbers & figures

the figures for the last year/the last month/... • the latest figures • the total number of ... • a (significant/insignificant/...) number of ... • a (high/...) percentage of ... • the statistics • a majority/minority of ...

### Useful nouns

amount • proportion • sum • level • figure(s)

### Useful verbs

to show that ... • to indicate that ... • to suggest that ... • to give information about ... • to make it clear that ... • to illustrate ... • to represent ... • to depict

### Qualifiers

a total of • over • under • nearly • more/less than • between • the same number as • the same amount of • from over/under ... to just over/under • half • a third • two thirds • a quarter • (25) per cent • twice as many • three times as many • on average • averagely • roughly • exactly • precisely

### Useful phrases





## Working with maps

When you are asked to find information on a map, it is important to know **what kind of map** it is. **Read the legend** to understand the colour coding and all the symbols used. There are different types of maps for different purposes. Here are two of the most important ones:

### 1. Physical maps

These show the **surface of the earth** or a specific area. Colours and shades represent differences in altitude. You can see what the landscape is like and draw conclusions about what life is like there. Physical maps may contain additional information, e.g. on boundaries or capital cities.



### 2. Thematic maps

Thematic maps present a **special topic in an area**, e.g. climatic conditions, land utilisation, natural resources or administrative units. Special symbols are used for these additional bits of information. This type of map is the most common found in school books. Some contain special information about just one topic, others combine different interesting aspects of an area.



The map shows • It is divided into ... • It gives an outline of ... • The main road runs ... • ... is situated near the coast • in the valley • next to the river • along the mountain range • on the border with • forest • desert • plain • agriculture • cotton • wine • maize • coal • iron ore • The capital of the state/province/district/country is ... • It belongs to ... • The capital lies ... • There is a area where ... is grown/produced/mined. • south/east/west/north of

### Useful phrases

## Working with films

An interesting way of dealing with a specific topic is by watching and analysing related films. A film usually tells a story, so you **can analyse the plot, setting, characters and narrative techniques** exactly the way you do with a fictional text (► Understanding fictional texts p. 106). In addition to the content, you can analyse the **audiovisual aspects** of the film.

### 1. Important film genres

action • adventure • comedy • crime • drama • epic/historical • horror • musical • science fiction • war • western • fantasy • romance • melodrama

### 2. Choosing a film

- If you are looking for a film that deals with a specific topic, you can search on the Internet. Use a search engine or check the *International Movie Database*.


### 3. Analysing a film

- **Choose a scene** from the film.
- Make a **list of the types of camera shots**.
- Say what effect each shot creates, e.g. it shows a character's emotions, it includes the viewer in the scene, it shows where the action is going to take place, etc.
- If you have access to **different versions of the film**, compare the same scene in both. What similarities/differences do you notice?
- If the film is **based on a novel, short story or play**: How much of the original plot has been used in the film? Have characters been cut out/added in? Why is this the case, do you think? Compare the message of the film with that of the original text. Which do you prefer – the book or the film? Why?
- Is the **music** memorable? Does it create a particular atmosphere? What effect does the music have on the scenes?
- If you have the film on DVD, also watch the **special features** (director's commentary, interviews, cut-out scenes, trailers, etc.)
- If you have got the **film script**, compare it to the film version, concentrating on one or two scenes. What changes were made in the film?
- Choose two actors/actresses from the film. Find out about other films they acted in. Then say whether you found them suitable in their role in the film you are analysing.
- Describe the **film poster and/or film trailer**. What aspects of the film does it emphasise? Most modern films have homepages which include the poster and trailer.


- Write a **review** of the film in which you **outline the plot and the roles** played by the actors. Say whether you liked the film and would recommend it or not. Explain why.
- Check the Internet for online reviews and comments by people who have seen the film. Compare their evaluation with yours.

#### 4. Camera operations


**Field size**  
(Bildausschnitt/Bildgröße)




long shot (*Totale*): people/objects shown from distance




full shot: shot of the whole body/object



medium shot: upper body/part of an object




close-up (*Nahaufnahme*): head and shoulders




extreme close-up: (*Detailaufnahme*) face only; detailed shot


**Camera movements**



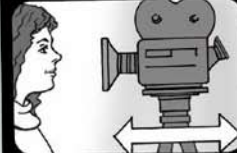
static shot: camera does not move




to pan left/right (*horizontal schwenken*); to tilt up/down (*vertikal schwenken*)



crane shot (*Kranfahrt*): camera moves flexibly in all directions on a crane



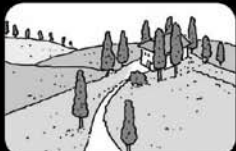
to zoom in on/out of s.th. (e.g. a face)




tracking shot (*Kamerafahrt*): camera is on a vehicle moving on the ground

**Camera positions**


E.g. A point-of-view shot is seen through a character's eyes.  
Other examples are:




establishing shot: shows location (long shot/pan) at the start of a scene



overhead shot: bird's eye view



over-the-shoulder shot



reverse-angle shot: from the opposite side, usually shows a dialogue partner

**Camera angles**



high-angle shot (from above)



eye-level shot



low-angle shot (from below)

## 5. Important aspects of one or more film scenes

setting	contemporary/historical? • science fiction? • city/country? • exterior/interior?
characters	how many? • who? • appearance? • costumes? • body language?
story and storyline	dialogue? • interaction? • fight? • narrative structure?
camera	field size? • view? • zooming? • panning? • tracking?
light	colours? • brightness/darkness? • atmosphere?
cut	tempo? • rest? • correspondence with actions?
sound and music	voices? • atmosphere?
special effects	animation? • slow/fastmotion?

## 6. Presenting a film in class

- **Start by giving your audience more information** than just the title:
  - Who directed it?
  - Who acted in it?
  - Who produced it?
  - When was it made?
  - Who wrote the music?
  - Was it a success?
  - If the film is based on a literary text, say which one.
- Then briefly **introduce the setting and the characters and sum up the plot.**
- Say what is **good or bad** about the film and why you like it or not.
- **Present a scene** that has an important function in the film. The scene should enable you to say something about the characters, their relationship with each other, their role in the plot, their language and body language, the atmosphere of the film and what is typical of the way it tells its story. You should also be able to say at what point in the film it comes and what its function is.

In the foreground/background there is ... • The camera takes a long/medium/close-up/extreme close-up shot. • This brings us close to .../creates a distance between ... • The camera position is ... • The view of ... is frontal/from above/below/behind. • The focus is on a ... detail. • The camera zooms in/out of ... • The camera pans from ... to ... • ... is introduced in a panning shot. • The movement of ... is followed in a tracking shot. • The shots follow each other quickly./The ... shot lasts for a while. This creates a/an ... atmosphere. • ... is shown in slow/fast motion.

### Useful phrases



## Mediation

Mediation means **communicating the main points of a text**, written in one language, **in another language**. For example, the text may be in English and you have to formulate the main points in German, or the text may be in German and the text you produce should be in English. Mediation is not a word-for-word translation. Instead, it is about **getting a message** or **the main points of a text** across in a different language.

### Tips

- Read the **task description** carefully to understand what you are supposed to do.
- Read the text and **underline the words** you need to look up in a dictionary.
- Read the text again and **mark the most important points** based on the task description. You can also write **key words** in the margin.
- Pay attention to words such as 'but', 'however', and other signals which indicate a new point.
- You do not normally need to include examples in your mediation text as these usually only illustrate the main points in the original text.
- **Plan the structure** of your mediation text: Think of a good introduction to your text. Which points will you start with? Do you want to include a conclusion?
- Your mediation does not need to have the same structure as the original text.

## Internet research

### 1. Subject searches and key word searches

- Browse a **subject guide or directory**, e.g. *Yahoo*, to choose a category, then a subcategory and so on, e.g. *travel > travel guides > United States > Las Vegas*.
- Use a **search engine**, e.g. *Google*, to look for certain key words, e.g. *history apartheid Mandela*.
- Most of the search engines use OR as a default. This means that you will get a list of sites that include any one of any of the key words you entered, e.g. you will get sites for South Wales (in Britain) as well as New South Wales (in Australia) if you enter *new south wales*.  
With most search engines you can **use + or – signs in front of certain key words** to make sure they are included or excluded from your search, e.g. *+martin +luther -king*. If you look for a certain phrase, like the title of a book, put it in **inverted commas**, e.g. *"lord of the rings"*.
- To get better results, it may help to put the **most unusual or relevant word first**.
- If you don't get many hits, check your spelling, try similar key words or use fewer words.
- If you get too many hits, be more specific and add some words.

### 2. Bookmarks (Favoriten)

- To make it easier to return to a site you like, you can add a **bookmark** either by clicking on the bookmarks (*Favoriten*) menu, by pressing Control-D (*Strg-D*) or by clicking on your right mouse button.
- If you forgot to add a bookmark, you can go back to sites you have visited during the last few sessions by using the forward or back buttons or by pressing Control-H (*Strg-H*).

### 3. Evaluating your results

- Don't believe everything you read! Remember that anyone can publish anything on the Internet. **Judge the reliability** of a website before using information from it. Is it similar to *www.harvard.edu* or more like *www.aol/users/joedoe*?
- Is it a commercial website? Then it might be interested in selling something rather than giving objective information.
- Does it contain **facts or just opinions**?
- Is the **author** someone who is likely to know something about a subject, e.g. a university teacher or a journalist?
- Also check if the website has been **updated recently**, especially if you are looking for the latest news on a topic.



## Projects and group work

### 1. Finding information

Set up an **'information centre'** in your classroom (or of your own) in which you keep a record of where to find information. Find and keep a record of:

- The name, address, e-mail address, telephone and fax number of:
  - your local library
  - the nearest university or college library
  - your twin-town association (if your area has one)
  - the nearest newsagent or bookshop which stocks English newspapers and magazines. (Tip: Try your nearest main station.)
- The **website addresses** of search engines, schools and colleges, youth organisations, political parties, newspapers, magazines, government agencies in America and the UK.
- The names of classmates who have **contacts** (penfriends, relatives, friends, etc.) **in the English-speaking world**, and who might be willing to help you.
- The names of classmates or people in your neighbourhood who have an **English-speaking parent/parents** and who might help you. Collect **brochures** from travel agencies and tourist information bureaus. Collect material while you are on holiday (leaflets, magazines, postcards, advertisements, menus, timetables, etc.). Add information and addresses to your files when you find new material.

### 2. Doing a project

- Read the information you are given about the **project task** carefully.
- In your groups, **brainstorm** to find ideas about:
  - what you all already know about the topic.
  - which aspects you want to concentrate on.
  - where you can find information.
- If necessary, **decide which points are more important** (concentrate on these) and which are less important (and can possibly be left out).
- Decide **which tasks each member of the group are going to do**. Make sure the workload is divided equally.
- If not specified in the task, decide how you want to **present your material**. You can produce: a talk using visual aids • a video • a CD • a leaflet • a brochure • a file of written information • a written report • a poster or wall chart • a website.
- Remember to **keep a record of your sources**, i.e. where you found material, where quotes or extracts from original material were taken from, etc.

## Questionnaires and surveys

### 1. Before doing a survey

- It is important to have a clear idea of **what kind of information** you hope to get from your survey.
- Write one or two **sentences describing your topic** and explaining why you are doing the survey. (Later you can include these sentences at the start of your questionnaire so that the people you ask (interviewees/ participants) have a clear idea of what the survey is about.)
- Briefly **state what you expect the results of your survey to be** – or give alternatives.
- Decide **how many people** you want to interview and **which social groups** they should belong to. For example, is the age of participants important? Should they be male or female? Should they have a certain job or hobby?

### 2. The questionnaire

- The success of a survey depends largely on **how good your questions** are. If possible, ask an independent person to answer your questions before you carry out the survey to make sure your questions are clear.
- Decide what **type of questions** you want to ask. The most common types of questions are described in the box below.
- Your questions need not all be of the same type, but it is best not to include too many different types.
- Always keep the **aim of your survey** in mind when you are formulating questions.
- Word your questions **clearly and concisely**. Use formal language.
- **Don't ask too many questions** (between 10 and 15 is usually enough).
- Put your questions in **logical order**.
- Group questions relating to particular aspects together.
- Start off with simpler, more general questions and then go on to more detailed questions.
- Your last question can be an open-ended question.



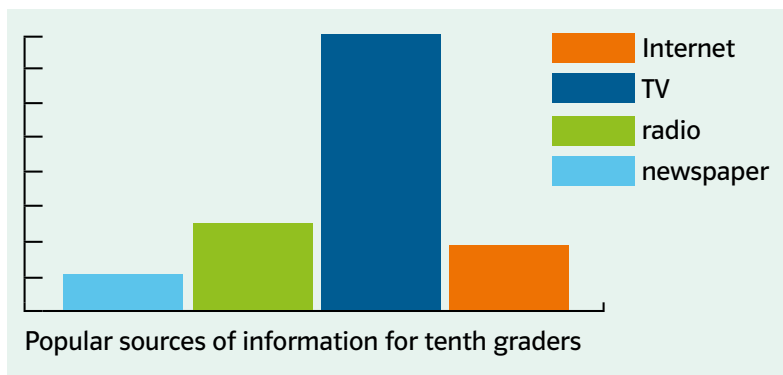
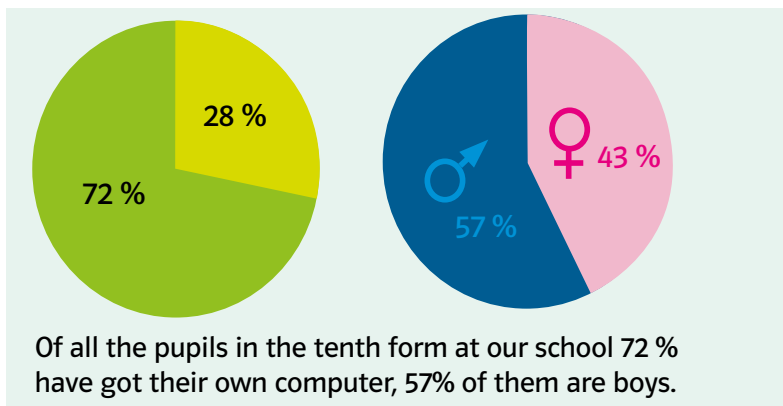
### 3. Types of questions

<p><b>Multiple choice questions</b></p> <p>The interviewee chooses from given answers.</p> <p><i>Which of the following do you own?</i></p> <p>a) a TV            <input type="checkbox"/>    b) a DVD player   <input type="checkbox"/>  c) an MP3 player   <input type="checkbox"/>    d) a CD player   <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Yes/No questions</b></p> <p>Questions that can be answered with 'Yes' or 'No'.</p> <p><i>Do you exercise more than three times a week?</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES            <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
<p><b>Graded questions</b></p> <p>The interviewee has to choose to what extent they agree/disagree with, like/don't like/... something.</p> <p><i>How often do you eat fruit or vegetables on average per day?</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never  <input type="checkbox"/> less than three times  <input type="checkbox"/> more than three times</p>	<p><b>Open-ended questions</b></p> <p>Questions to which the interviewees must give their own answer. The questions usually begin with a question word: who, what, when, where, why or how.</p> <p><i>How, in your opinion, could the recycling system in your area be improved?</i></p> <p>_____</p>

#### 4. Presenting the results

- When you summarise and present your results, always **think of your aims**, for example:
  - proving a certain expectation right or wrong
  - comparing the answers of different groups
  - giving the majority opinion
  - presenting the most surprising results.
- Never forget to say **how many and what kind of people took part** in your survey! Most answers can be turned into statistics straight away, so you can present your statistics as percentages and use diagrams to support the presentation visually.

#### Example:



- Ratings may require a different **form of presentation**, e.g.:  
*When asked about the importance of foreign languages, 26 out of 30 people answered that foreign languages were generally very important to them, 3 out of 30 thought foreign languages were only important in some situations, and only one person said they were not important at all.*
- Presenting **answers to open-ended questions**, you may be able to make a top three, five or ten using similar answers or you may quote the most surprising ones, e.g.:  
*The top three breakfast favourites in our class are: 1. rolls 2. cereals 3. jam.*

## Presentation

### 1. Preparation

#### Gather material on your topic:

- Brainstorm to find ideas on the topic and make a mind map.
- Find information from relevant sources (library, school books, the Internet, newspapers, etc.)

#### Choose which main points you want to talk about.

Make a set of prompt cards in English, which you can look at during your talk to remind you of what you want to say (▶ prompt cards p. 152).

- Write down the key words, phrases and vocabulary which you will need.
- Note down any examples or quotations.
- Note down any visual aids (OHPs, photographs, posters, flip charts, etc.) which you plan to use.

#### Arrange your prompt cards in logical order. You could present points:

- in terms of importance, from the most to the least important (or vice versa)
- chronologically
- with all those in favour first, followed by all those against.

Make a prompt card for your introduction (▶ card 1 p. 152). Catch the listeners' attention with:

- an interesting question or fact
- a quote or joke
- a picture or cartoon on an OHP transparency.

Make a prompt card for your conclusion (▶ card 7 p. 152):

- Note the point(s) you want to emphasise.
- Write down key words and phrases.
- Make a note of a final quotation or an example you wish to use.

## 2. Giving a talk or presentation

- **Practise your talk or presentation** out loud, preferably in front of a mirror, or ask a friend/relative to listen to you!
- **Speak slowly and clearly!**
- Use short, clear sentences.
- **Vary your voice** so that you don't sound boring. For example, emphasise particularly important points by speaking a little more loudly.
- **Look at your audience** as often as possible. Don't look at your prompt cards all the time.
- Try not to make distracting movements such as waving your hands, etc.
- **Smile!** (But don't laugh nervously!)
- **Start by introducing yourself** (if necessary) and your topic. **Finish by thanking** your audience for listening. Ask if anyone has any questions.

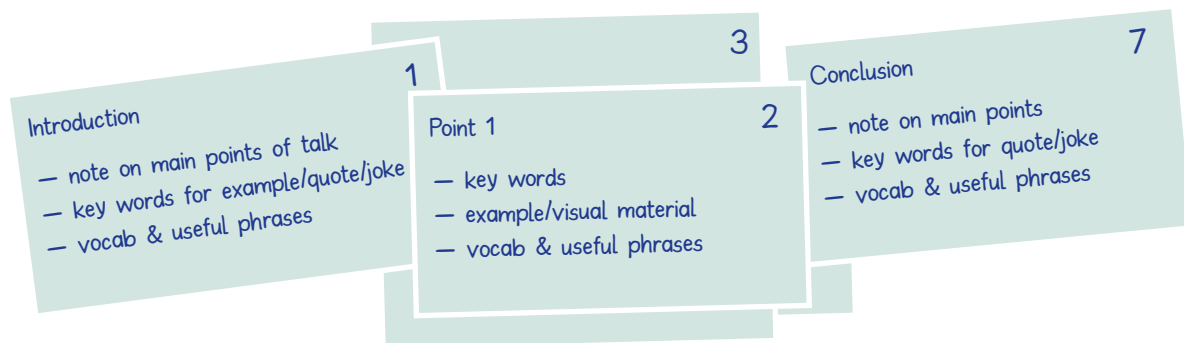
## 3. A market place

- **Form groups** and **prepare** your product.
- Choose a **speaker** for your group.
- **Present** your product in the classroom. Your classmates walk around and look at the different products. The **speaker** presents the product to the people who pass by and answers their questions.
- **Discuss** the products in class.

## 4. A gallery walk

- **Prepare** your product (on your own or in a group).
- Prepare an **evaluation sheet** in class.
- **Present** your product in the classroom and give the evaluation sheets to your classmates.
- Your **classmates** walk around, look at the different products and **fill in the evaluation sheet**.
- **Discuss** the results of the evaluation sheets in class.

## 5. Prompt cards



Good morning/afternoon, my name is ... • Today I'm going to talk about ...  
 • The subject of my talk today is ... • Can everyone hear me alright? • Can everyone see the board/screen/etc.?  
 • I'd like to begin by (+ *-ing form*) ... • Let me start by saying a few words about ... • Let me give you an example. • As you can see on the chart/graph/cartoon ... • I'd like to finish/conclude by (+ *-ing form*) ... • Let me finish by (+ *-ing form*) ... • Finally ... • Thank you very much for your attention. • I hope you all enjoyed my talk. • I'd be happy to answer any questions.

### Useful phrases

