

Name: Date: 

## Writing clearly and appropriately



You probably write something every day, whether it is a personal shopping list, a text or note to a friend or a telephone message to be passed on to a family member or workmate. You may also occasionally need to write things like a CV, a letter of application for a job or a letter to a newspaper.

Writing is an important form of communication. In this topic you will find out about and practise ways of improving your writing to help you communicate clearly and appropriately. You will need paper and a pen or pencil, and you will need to print part of this assignment to complete it.

### What you will learn about

- initial planning
- purpose and audience
- appropriate language
- format
- presentation
- handwriting problems
- analysing your own handwriting
- word processing fonts
- proofreading
- tips for clearer writing.

You will find suggestions and answers for the Activities, Practices and Mini-test in the **Answer** pages.

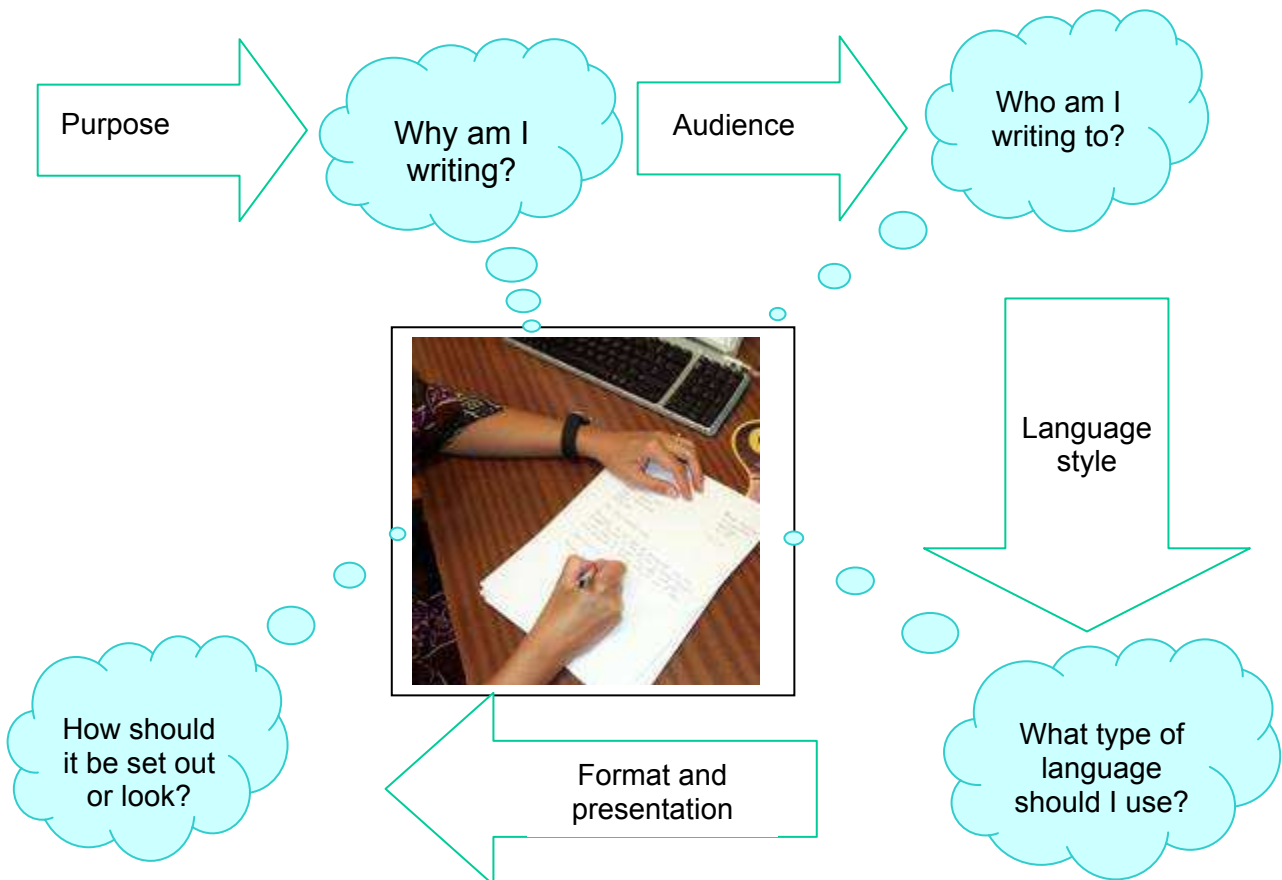
## Learning

### Initial planning

When you write anything, there are four main things to consider or plan for before you start:

- your purpose
- your audience
- appropriate language style
- format and presentation.

Planning these things carefully will help you to make your writing clear and appropriate.



You may not consciously ask yourself these questions, but you apply at least some of them each time you write.

Consider, for example, the differences in the way you would write the following things:

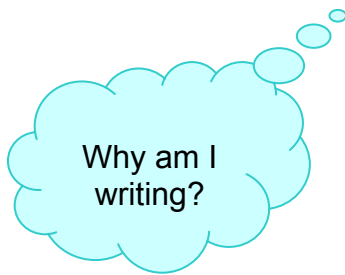
- a shopping list for yourself
- a message to a friend
- a letter to your child's headmaster
- a membership form for a local club.

They all use different ways of presenting the information and styles of language. They are also all written for different purposes and audiences.

## Learning

### Purpose and audience

Your purpose for writing, and the audience you are writing for, make a difference to how you write.



#### Purpose

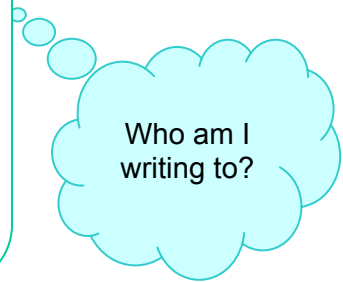
Writing is a form of communication. It is a way of noting ideas, thoughts and information.

The purpose of a shopping list is to remind you what to buy.  
The purpose of a message is to pass on information to another person.  
The purpose of a letter might be to give, ask for or share information with others.

#### Audience

You probably change your language when you talk to different people. You are likely to use an informal 'chatty' style of language with a friend but a more formal style of language for interviews.

The same is true of writing. The audience you are writing to or for can range from yourself (as with the shopping list) to a complete stranger (such as a job application letter).



Here is a summary:

The purpose affects the **contents** (what you write). The audience affects the **style** (the way you write).

Both the content and style will change depending on how formal or informal the situation is.

#### Hints and tips:

You will find more information on formal and informal language on page 4.

**A**

#### Activity 1

Are the situations described below **Informal** or **Formal**? Type an 'I' or an 'F' in each box.

a. Writing to tell a friend about your holiday.	
b. Writing a letter of complaint to a company about an electrical item that does not work.	
c. Writing a reminder list of jobs for yourself.	
d. Writing a reminder list of jobs for a family member.	
e. Writing a text message to a friend to ask if you can borrow a CD.	
f. Writing a letter to an employer to explain that you accept a job offer.	

## Learning

### Language

The language you choose to use is important, because it helps to communicate your ideas to others. If your language is not clear or appropriate, you will confuse or annoy your audience and not communicate effectively.

Here are several styles of language used in message writing:

What type of language should I use?

1

To: Jane McNeath  
Date: 12th June 2007

Adele Kaminski rang at 10.31 this morning. She would like to speak to you about Liam's advertisement before the midday meeting.

Please could you call her back as soon as it is convenient for you? Her telephone number is 09876 987654.

This is a formal style. It is written in correct grammar and with full punctuation. It is polite in tone and includes quite a lot of detail.

This is less formal than the previous style. It includes the main details, but it does this in a shorter way by leaving out some words and using hyphens to connect the ideas.

2

Jane,  
Adele Kaminski rang 10.30 a.m. - would like a word before meeting - Liam's advert. Please call back - 09876 987654.

This is an informal style of writing using abbreviations (short version of words) and no punctuation. It is the type of writing people use in text messaging. It relies on the reader to know the abbreviations.

3

Hi J can u call Adele K  
back asap & b4 meeting 2  
chat abt Liam ad tel no  
09876 987654 CU l8er

This is the most informal style of writing, using abbreviations, no punctuation and selecting only certain details.

4

AK 09876 987654 b4 12 re: ad

## Learning

A

### Activity 2

Type your answers in the boxes below.

a. Which of these message styles do you find easiest to understand and why?

--

b. Which style of language is most appropriate for the following audience? Type the correct number from the examples on the previous page.

your friend	
a work colleague whom you know quite well	
a senior work colleague, e.g. your manager	
yourself (as a personal reminder)	

# Learning

## A Activity 3

Here are some examples of different styles of language from very informal to formal. Read them carefully, and then answer the questions below.

1  
Gone shopping - back approx. 4.  
Please get washing in if it rains.  
CU later.  
Jy x.

2  
Dear Mrs Mutesi  
Your kind invitation was received with sincere thanks. It is with much regret that I have to decline this year. However, I will definitely continue to help with fundraising events, and I hope that everyone has a pleasant evening.

4  
When did it happen? 11 o'clock in the morning  
Where did it happen? Floor 1 Unit 3  
Describe what happened:  
I had just started my shift when I noticed that there was some water on the floor near the tanning machine. There was no one else about, so I went to get a mop and bucket. When I returned, I saw Jim lying on the floor. He was conscious but his arm was in a twisted position.

3  
Dear all.  
Having a great time  
and enjoying some excellent  
Swabbering. Heather's  
good but its so warm its  
melting the snow.  
Regards Ben

6  
Dear Sir  
I am writing in response to your advertisement for a Sales Assistant, which appeared in the Caddley Gazette on Thursday 4th June.

5  
PARTY @MINE 7 2NITE DONT B L8.

a. Which three examples are written to close friends?

**Hints and tips:**  
You should always use language that your reader will understand.

b. Which example do you think is the most formal?

What makes it so formal?

c. Which example gives a description for official use?

## Learning

A

Activity 4

The text message in number 5 uses a lot of abbreviations including numbers for words.

Write it out again in the space below, using the full version of the words, full sentences and adding any necessary punctuation to make the message clear for any reader.

# Learning

## Format

You can often spot different types of writing from the way they are organised or set out (the format).

1

Mr L Goran  
Headmaster  
Marston Primary school  
Station Road  
Grimsby

10<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Dear Mr Goran

I write further to our telephone conversation of 9<sup>th</sup> March regarding my son Peter's recent absence from school.

I confirm that Peter was taken into hospital a week ago for a routine appendicitis operation. He was only due to be in for a couple of days. However, due to complications, he has had to stay for longer. We are hoping he will be well enough to come to school next week.

Yours sincerely  
JD Hanifian

3

Please print in black ink

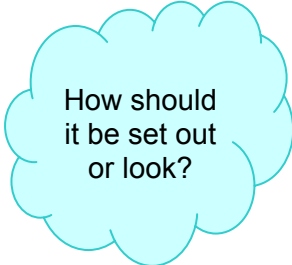
NAME: LINDA RICHARDS.....

ADDRESS: 3 WOODLAND CLOSE.....  
NEWHOUSE NOWHERE.....

POSTCODE: N027 5PZ.....

TEL NO: 01234 567890.....

D.O.B: 21.03.83.....



2

shopping  
pots  
bread (brown)  
cheese  
2pt milk (skimmed)  
biscuits  
veg

4

Hi Linda  
Called round, but you were out  
Will phone you when I get home  
- Got something juicy to tell you!  
Nagis

**A** Activity 5

Can you tell what the examples above are from the way they are set out? (Don't worry if you can't read all the text; the format is what's important.)

a. Which is a form?	
b. Which is a letter?	
c. Which is a shopping list?	
d. Which is a note?	



## Learning

### Format *(continued)*

Sometimes you might use pre-set formats, such as forms where you are given definite places to put particular information.

Sometimes you might use a partly pre-set format, such as a letter template on the computer. This gives a guide as to where you can put your information and how you can present it.

However, you will always need to make some decisions about:

- how much information to give
- the appropriate style of language
- whether to use short or long sentences
- whether to write in a list or in paragraphs.

**A**

#### Activity 6

For which two of these would you usually use paragraphs? Insert an 'X' in the boxes beside your choices.

a) a note for the milkman	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) a short story for a magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) a text message	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) a job application letter.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Learning

### Presentation

Your writing says a lot about you to others. It may be the first impression people such as employers get of you.

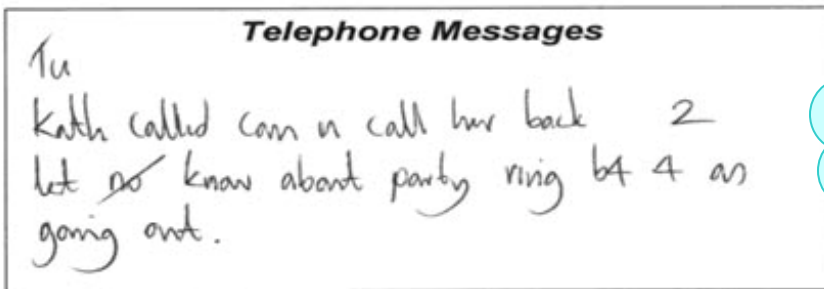
How you write can also help or hinder communication between you and other people.

The following things can stop your writing communicating effectively with others:

- unclear handwriting or word processing font
- inappropriate use of language and abbreviations
- incorrect spelling, grammar and punctuation
- lots of mistakes and crossings out.

**A**

#### Activity 7



How should it  
be set out or  
look?

Can you read what this message says?

Type what you think this message should say in the space below. Use full words, sentences and punctuation where you think they help to make it clearer.

Now check what it says on the answer page. Were you able to read it all? Were some words easier to read than others?

Whatever you write, you need to consider:

- how neat the work should be
- how important it is to spell and punctuate accurately
- how to organise it – for example, as a list or as full sentences with paragraphs, etc.

## Learning

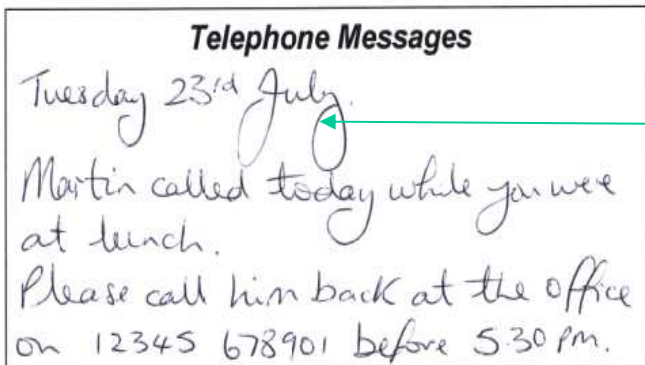
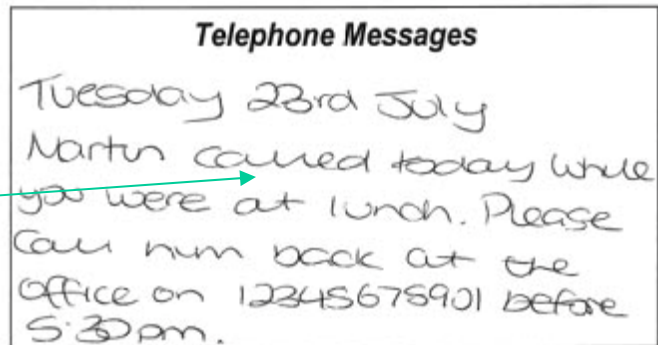
### Handwriting problems

Your handwriting is an important part of your writing presentation. Everyone has different handwriting but confusion for the reader can occur when:

- letters are inconsistent (not written the same way each time)
- the upstrokes and tails of letters do not go above or below the other letters
- letters are very decorative
- there are some irregular letters
- letters are so small that they just look like lines
- letters are not 'finished off' properly
- letters are squashed together.

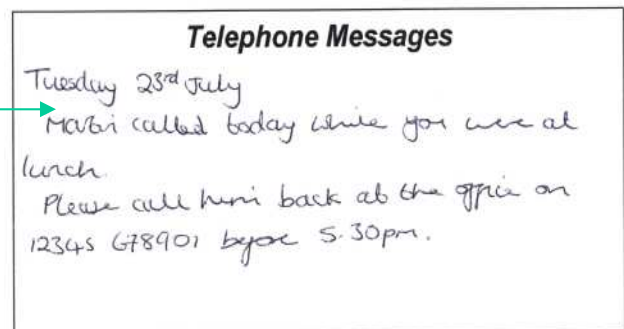
Have a look at these examples:

In this example, the **upstrokes** of letters do not clearly go above or below the other letters. The word 'called' looks more like 'caued'.



In this style, the letter **tails** have such large **decorative** loops that they sometimes touch the words on the line below them. The capital J on 'July' is **irregular**. It has a tail that makes it look like a lower case 'g'.

There are some **inconsistent** letters here. For example, sometimes the 'f' has a loop and sometimes not. Some of the letters such as 'o' and 'u' are **squashed** together. Some letters such as 'i' are very **small**. Other letters are **not finished off** clearly. For example, the 'e' sometimes looks like a 'c'.



## Learning

**A****Activity 8**

- a. Choose the example on the previous page that you find the easiest to read. Print out this page, and then write the message in the space below in your neatest handwriting:



- b. Ask a friend to read the message and write comments on what is clear or not clear about your handwriting in the space below.



## Learning

### Analysing your own handwriting

What do you think of your handwriting? Is it clear or could it be improved?

This short extract from a story includes every letter of the alphabet. It will help you to look at your own handwriting style.

My great aunt kept a sweet shop. On the shelves there were dozens of jars of sweets, rock, liquorice and boxes of chocolates.

**A**

#### Activity 9

- a. Print out this page and copy the extract in the space below using your normal handwriting. Don't try to make it any neater or any less neat than usual.

- b. Look carefully at your handwriting and describe it. Try to include as many of the following areas as you can:

- letter size and shape
- letter style
- the amount of space between letters and words
- straightness of lines
- general neatness or untidiness.

Describe your handwriting:

Think about how you could improve your writing. Are there any small changes you can make to help?  
You will find tips and suggestions on page 17.

## Learning

### Word processing fonts

There may be times when you want to word process rather than write information by hand. Like handwriting, the different styles and sizes of font may make things easier or harder to read.

The sentence used in the examples below includes all the letters of the alphabet. The sentence is also shown in both lower case and capital letters to show you the style of lettering.

*The quick brown fox jumps  
over the lazy dog.*

The fancy serifs make words run into one another.  
The slanted writing may also make it more difficult to read.

#### Hint and tips:

Capital letters are not easy to read. You should only use them at the beginning of sentences or proper nouns.

The capital letters are not a consistent size. For example, the U is taller than the Q or the I.

*THE QUICK BROWN FOX  
JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG.*

This is quite an **informal** font. It is fancy, not consistent and looks like handwriting.

It is important to choose a font that can be easily read. However you may also choose a font because:

- you like the look of it (you have a personal preference)
- it is more suitable for the type of writing you are doing. For example, formal fonts are better for job applications than informal ones.

You should experiment with different fonts and font sizes to help you choose the one that is most suitable.

**A**

#### Activity 10

Use the sentence above to experiment with different fonts and font sizes on your computer.

Choose the one that you think is the most suitable for a piece of formal writing and print it out. Make a note to remind yourself which font it is and what size you used.

## Learning

### Proofreading

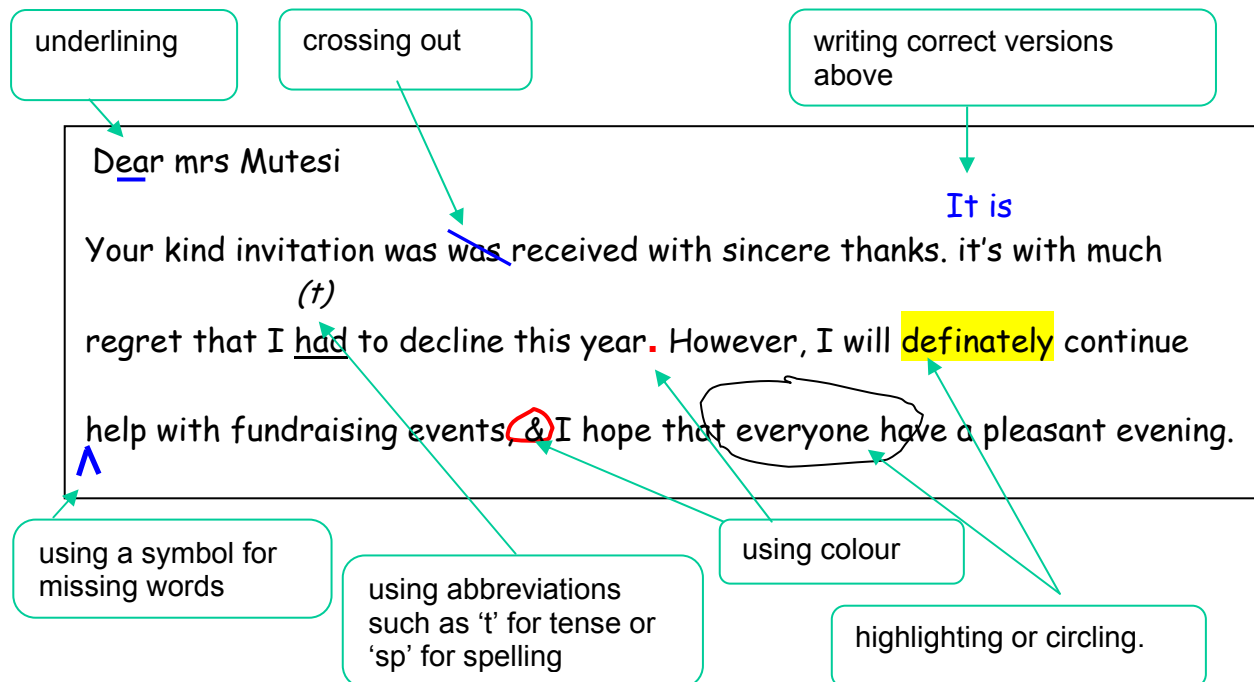
One of the most important things you can do to improve the readability of your writing is to proofread it. This means checking it slowly and carefully for grammar, spelling, punctuation and general sense. If you are word processing, your computer may point out errors, but you still need to proofread.

The types of errors people make are:

- incorrect use of capitals or lower case letters
- incorrect subject-verb agreement
- incorrect use of tense
- missing or incorrect punctuation
- spelling errors
- omitted words
- repeated words.

If you do a rough copy first, you can make corrections to it before you write it up neatly. If you have written your rough copy on a computer, you can edit it onscreen, but it is sometimes easiest to proofread it on paper.

You can decide on how you want to make corrections, but here are some examples:



## Learning

**A****Activity 11**

Here is the uncorrected paragraph from the previous page. Type the corrections that need to be made in the box underneath.

Dear mrs Mutesi

Your kind invitation was was received with sincere thanks. it's with much regret that I had to decline this year However, I will definately continue help with fundraising events, & I hope that everyone have a pleasant evening.



## Learning

### Tips for clearer writing

Here are some ideas for improving your writing.

#### General writing tips

- Always consider your purpose and audience.
- Use an appropriate style and language to suit the purpose and audience.
- Write in the most suitable format for your purpose.
- Choose a legible and appropriate font style to word process formal letters or documents.
- Proofread work to check spelling, punctuation and grammar. Remember – your writing gives others an impression of you.
- Ask a reliable person to read it for you to check that it reads clearly.

Why am I writing?

How should it look?



Who am I writing to?

What language style is appropriate?

#### Tips for improving handwriting

- Experiment with different pens – you may write better with certain types of pen.
- If you hold your pen awkwardly, try a pen with a grip or a different shaped pen.
- If your lines tend to slope, use lined paper or draw pencil lines to help keep your writing straight. (You can rub pencil lines out later.)
- If you tend to make a lot of errors, write a rough copy first, so that you can check and correct it before writing it out as a neat copy.
- If your handwriting is quite untidy, try writing at a slower speed or printing for a while.
- If your writing makes an imprint on the other side of the paper, it means you are pressing too hard. Practise with a softer and freer flowing pen and soften your grip.

**Now try the practice questions.**

## Practice

P

### Practice 1

- a. This paragraph from a letter contains a total of nine errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Use any of the methods shown on page 1, or your own methods, to make corrections with a pen or pencil. You will need to print out this page first.

Dear Mr green

My sister and I have receive you're letter regarding the school reunion in  
march I writing to thankyou for the invitation & to confirm that we will  
will be coming.

- b. Make a neat handwritten copy of the corrected letter below.

- c. Proofread your work carefully for any errors. Make any necessary corrections. If there are still errors, or you think you can make it neater, make another copy below.

## Learning

P

### Practice 2

A colleague, Jim Daly, has broken his arm at work. He explains to you how the accident happened. This is what he says:

I had the accident last Wednesday. The doctor at the hospital told me my arm's broken in two places. I'd just gone on lunch so it was about half twelve when it happened. I was walking towards the counter in the canteen when I slipped on some water on the floor. I got taken to hospital after I said I couldn't feel my left arm. It got twisted under me when I landed, see. I'd put my arms out to break my fall, and I'd landed heavily on my left arm.

Print this page, and use the information Jim gives to fill in the extract from an accident report form. Handwrite the information as neatly and clearly as possible using formal language.

<b>Date of accident:</b>
<b>Time of accident:</b>
<b>Place of accident:</b>
<b>Description of what happened:</b>

You may want to show your work to your tutor.

#### Hints and tips:

- Remember that you are writing on Jim Daly's behalf so use the pronoun 'he' or his name.
- Make sure you put the details in the correct places on the form. Use last Wednesday's date.
- Put the events in the order they happened (he gives some of the events out of order).
- Check grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- You can make a rough copy first, if it helps.

## Practice

P

### Practice 3

In this letter, the writer gives her opinions about which books should and should not be read in schools. This is based on her own experience, and on what her son reads at school.

Dear Sir

I write in response to your article in Monday's paper entitled 'To Read or Not to Read' about whether the booklist for secondary school children should be changed.

I left school over 20 years ago and I am surprised to see that my son's book list for his GCSE course includes most of the books I read at school. Of course, there are classics like *Great Expectations* and Shakespeare's plays, but I think it is time to add some more modern writers. The old classics are an interesting slice of history but are too far removed from the modern world to be of enough interest to young people.

I think that the books studied by secondary school children should be a better mix of old and new writers. I am concerned that if they only read classics it might put them off reading for pleasure when they leave school.

I also think there should be more detective stories and thrillers. There are plenty of them on the television, so they must be quite popular. These types of books would encourage young people to problem solve as they work out the clues. It would also keep them interested.

a. Draft a rough copy of your response to this letter on a piece of paper.

You can:

agree or disagree with the writer's opinions  
include examples from your own experience  
recommend some books, and explain why you would not include others.

b. Check your work carefully and make any corrections.

c. Make a typed copy of your letter, choosing an appropriate font.

Show your work to your tutor.

#### Hints and tips:

- use appropriate language
- use paragraphs where required
- check for any errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Go on to the Skills review checklist on the next page.

## Skills review

Now you have completed the topic, how do you feel about the skills you have learnt? Insert a tick in the box that is true for you.

**Topic: Writing clearly and appropriately**

	I'm OK	I'd like more practice	I need some help
Initial planning			
Purpose and audience			
Appropriate language			
Format			
Presentation			
Handwriting problems			
Analysing your own handwriting			
Word processing fonts			
Proofreading			
Tips for clearer writing			

**How did you get on?**

If you feel confident, have a go at the Mini-test questions.

If you need more practice, work through the learning activities again.

If you feel you need more help, speak to your tutor.

## Mini-test

**M**

Mini-test

Insert a tick in the box next to the right answer to these questions.

1. For which of these types of writing would it be appropriate to use very informal language?

- a) a job application letter
- b) a CV
- c) a wedding invitation
- d) a message to a friend

2. With which of these types of audience would you use the most formal written language?

- a) a best friend
- b) an employer
- c) a work colleague
- d) a new neighbour

3. Which of these things would be least helpful when writing a set of instructions for a new trainee at work?

- a) using abbreviated language
- b) numbering each instruction
- c) writing each instruction on separate lines like a list
- d) putting the instructions in the order they should be carried out

## Mini-test

I'm having a great time here in Egypt. The camel trip to the Sahara dessert was really intresting. The whether is lovely and the food superb. I'm eating a lot of fruit and vegetables because its all fresh produce. The hotel is living up to its good reputation too. Everyone on the staff is helpful and friendly.

Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Line 4

4. How many spelling errors are there in this postcard extract?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4

5. On which line is there an apostrophe missing?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4

**Please tell your tutor that you have completed this workbook.**

## Answers

### Topic activities

#### Activity 1 (page 3)

- Informal (You know the person well.)
- Formal (You may not know the person, and you are making an official complaint.)
- Informal (You are the only one who needs to be able to read it.)
- Informal (You know the person well.)
- Informal (You know the person well.)
- Formal (You would need to write in an official, polite way.)

#### Activity 2 (page 5)

- There is no answer to this part – it is personal preference.
- You may have matched them like this:

your friend = 3                      a work colleague you know quite well = 2

a senior work colleague = 1                      yourself = 4.

#### Activity 3 (page 6)

- 1, 3 and 5.
- You may have chosen number 2, because some of the language such as 'with sincere thanks' and 'with much regret' sounds quite formal.  
You may have chosen number 6, because it starts 'Dear Sir' and is written in one long sentence with some formal words.
- 4 (an accident report form).

#### Activity 4 (page 7)

You may have written something like this:

I am having a party at my house at 7 p.m. tonight. Do not be late!

#### Activity 5 (page 8)

- 3
- 1
- 2
- 4

#### Activity 6 (page 9)

- a short story and d) a job application letter



## Answers

### **Activity 7 (page 10)**

You may have written something like this:

Tuesday

Kath called. Can you call her back to let her know about the party? Please ring before 4 o'clock as she is going out.

### **Activity 8 (page 12)**

Self-assessed.

### **Activity 9 (page 13)**

There are no answers, but you can get another person to comment on your descriptions and give a second opinion.

### **Activity 10 (page 14)**

There are no answers, but you can get another person to comment on your choice of font.

### **Activity 11 (page 16)**

The corrected copy should read (corrections noted in blue):

Dear Mrs Mutesi

Your kind invitation **was** received with sincere thanks. **It is** with much regret that I **have** to decline this year. However, I will **definitely** continue **to** help with fundraising events, **and** I hope that everyone **has** a pleasant evening.

## Answers

### Practice activities

#### Practice 1

a.

The errors are:

Dear Mr green

My sister and I have receive you're letter regarding the school reunion in march I am writing to thank you for the invitation & to confirm that we will will be coming.

b. or c.

The neat copy should read:

Dear Mr Green

My sister and I have received your letter regarding the school reunion in March. I am writing to thank you for the invitation and to confirm that we will be coming.

#### Practice 2

You may have written something like this:

<b>Date of accident:</b> <i>(whatever the date was last Wednesday)</i>
<b>Time of accident:</b> 12.30 p.m.
<b>Place of accident:</b> Canteen
<b>Description of what happened:</b> Jim Daly was walking towards the counter in the canteen when he slipped on some water on the floor. He put his arms out to break his fall. He landed heavily on his left arm. His arm was twisted under him, and he said he could not feel it. He was taken to hospital. The doctor told him that his arm was broken in two places.

#### Practice 3

Tutor marked.

## Answers

### Mini-test

1. d) a message to a friend
2. b) an employer
3. a) Using abbreviated language. (It is not precise enough, and the trainee might not understand your abbreviations. This can lead to mistakes and confusion.)
4. c) 3 (dessert = desert; intresting = interesting; whether = weather)
5. c) Line 3 (The word 'its' should be 'it's' – short for 'it is'.)