

1 Recognising text types

One of the more useful skills for those who need to be able to read and understand longer texts is to understand how texts are structured. Most of the texts you will be dealing with belong to the following categories:

Text type	Use	Characteristics
Narrative writing	Stories, novels, essays, historical accounts, some news writing	Time sequences to show order of events, characterisation and plot (People focus, past tense, adverbs of time, temporal development)
Descriptive writing	Often included within another text type, for example a descriptive introduction of a character in a narrative	Strong use of sensory language. Language <i>shows</i> rather than <i>tells</i> the story (more adjectives, adverbs, modifiers, metaphors) (present simple, spatial development, lot of adjectives)
Expository Writing	To inform, explain, clarify, define or instruct. e.g. (parts of) reports, research papers, newsletters, guidebooks, catalogues	Strong organisation, logical order, logical supporting facts. Details, explanations and examples (present tense, general to specific (organisation))
Argumentative writing	To convince the reader of a stated opinion or belief e.g. speeches, editorials, advertisements, opinion pieces	Stated position, persuasive argument, factual support (claim and support, modal verbs, judgmental adjectives)
Instructive writing	To tell the reader what to do or what is expected. Used in manuals, books of rules, recipes.	Strong organisation. Clear layout. Imperative form.

Informative/Expository: Definition (Text)

Informational / explanatory writing conveys information accurately. The writer's purpose is to increase the reader's knowledge, to help the reader better understand a procedure or process, or to increase the reader's comprehension of a concept. Information writing begins with the **assumption** of **truthfulness** and **answers questions of why or how**. Writers draw information from what they already know and from primary and secondary sources. They must select and incorporate **relevant examples, facts and details**.

- strong organisation: **clear introductory paragraph** which provides an **overview** of the text; **paragraphs** focus on one aspect of the XXX
- **logical order**
- **logical supporting facts**, such as details, explanations and examples: throughout the text
- **conclusion**

While writing, keep the following points in mind:

- **Structure** (introduction, body, conclusion)
- **Content** (interesting and informative)
- **Language** (appropriateness, grammar, vocabulary, linking words, punctuation)

Don't write sentences that are too long. Limited amount of words: 230-250 (exam)

When preparing for any writing assignment, you are advised to follow the steps below.

Step 1	Read the task description carefully and make sure that you know exactly what is required of you.
Step 2	Gather information and ideas (with the help of a mind map, for example).
Step 3	Have a clear picture of your reader(s) in mind. What do they (not) know? What would be of interest to them? What style of writing is appropriate?
Step 4	Group your ideas into paragraphs, each dedicated to one particular topic or aspect of your overall topic.
Step 5	Decide on the best/most logical order for your paragraphs.
Step 6	Check that the list of ideas for each paragraph does not contain any irrelevant ideas or ideas that belong in a different paragraph.

2 Creating well-formed paragraphs

Well-structured texts have a clear beginning, middle and end. When you are writing texts, make sure that these parts are clearly indicated and recognisable.

Well-formed paragraphs also have a typical structure, which consists of three parts:

1. **The topic sentence:** this is normally the opening sentence, and it should reveal the *main idea* you wish to explore in that paragraph.
2. **Developers:** these are the sentences that help you to develop the idea that you introduced in the topic sentence. They include supporting material, such as examples or arguments.
3. **The terminator:** this is the sentence that concludes the paragraph. In this sentence, you may wish to show that you have finished discussing a particular aspect of the topic, or you might wish to provide a bridge to the next paragraph.

3 Indicating new paragraphs in English

Layout

When writing in English, you should make sure that your paragraphs are clearly distinguishable. There are two ways of doing this, namely:

- a) by using **block** style
- b) by using **indented** style

These lesson notes are written in block style, with a free line between each paragraph. Block style is frequently used in business correspondence. In newspapers, magazines and books, on the other hand, where the publishers want to make full use of the space available, indented style is favoured. In indented

style, there is no free line between paragraphs. The beginning of a new paragraph is formed by pressing the TAB (tabulator) button on the keyboard. (indented style = eingerückt, neues Absatz mit TAB weiter vorne beginnen)

4 Punctuation

See [Punctuation guidelines](#). Some comma rules:

- If **connective adverbials** like 'however' are used at the start of a sentence, they are followed by a comma. If they are used later in the sentence and signal a contrast to the idea of the previous sentence, they are surrounded by commas
- **Extra information** can be separated by a comma. **If the information is necessary: NO comma!**
- **No comma** after verbs like 'said', 'thought', 'believed' etc
- **No comma before 'that' clauses:** She said **that** she was tired.
- **Comma after introductory phrase** and before the subject of the main clause
- **Two main clauses** need a comma to separate them (sometimes comma followed by and). If 2 main clauses better to make 2 separate sentences...
- **Coordinate main clauses** linked by 'and', 'but', 'or', 'nor'
- Numbers with commas: 3,000 and percentages with periods: 4.75.
- Non-finite (participle) clauses either preceding or following the main clause: **Having spoken** to the doctor, he felt reassured.

5 Verb patterns

There are certain grammatical patterns that follow verbs:

- to infinitive, e.g. I want **to go** home.
- Object + to infinitive, e.g. I want **you to go** home.
- Object + bare infinitive, e.g. He let **me go** home.
- that ... construction, e.g. I know **that he went** home.
- ... ing form, e.g. He risked being expelled by **going home** without permission.

6 Linking words

Function category of linking words:

- manner (how? as if, ...)
- addition (and, in addition to, besides, moreover, ...)
- contrast (but, on the contrary, however, nevertheless, ...)
- concession (**what precondition?** even though, although, despite, whereas, ...)
- reason/cause (**why?** since, therefore, ...)
- purpose (**what for?** so that, ...)
- condition (**when? If what?** in case, unless, if, otherwise, ...)
- time (**when?** while, later, after, eventually, when, ...)

Grammar and punctuation:

Co-ordinating conjunction	Subordinating conjunction	Connective adverbial
OR	PROVIDED THAT	NEVERTHELESS
AND	IF	THEN
BUT	AFTER	LATER
	SO	FIRST
	WHEN	AFTERWARDS
	UNTIL	CONSEQUENTLY
	BECAUSE	THEREFORE

- **but** is used to join two clauses of equal status or importance. We find it at the middle of sentences, preceded by a comma if each clause has its own subject. It can also be used at the beginning of a sentence in informal style. (*but* is a **co-ordinating conjunction**)
- **although** is used to introduce a subordinate clause. The subordinate clause can be positioned first or last in a sentence, depending on what is to be emphasized. (*although* is a **subordinating conjunction**.)
- **however** is used to connect two independent main clauses. It provides a semantic link between a clause or sentence and what has come before it. (*however* is a **connective adverbial**.)

Can **although** and **even though** be considered synonyms? **Even though** is the right choice when we want to make a stronger contrast between the expectation and the actual result. But don't really differ very much.

Even though: auch wenn, obwohl, ...

Although: obwohl, dabei, wenn auch, ...

Though: aber, jedoch, dennoch, obwohl, ...