



Materialien

zum selbstständigen standardorientierten Lernen in der
gymnasialen Oberstufe im Fach Englisch – Text production

Überarbeitete und erweiterte Neuauflage

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Vorwort

Die vergangenen Jahre waren auch für den Englischunterricht geprägt von vielen Veränderungen, die sich in neuen Bildungsstandards für die Allgemeine Hochschulreife, Rahmenlehrplänen, Bewertungssystemen, Lernstandserhebungen, zentralen Prüfungen und einem gemeinsamen Abituraufgabenpool der Länder widerspiegeln. Mittlerweile hat vieles den Praxistest bestanden, was zu Beginn noch Unsicherheit und Misstrauen erzeugte, und wird von Lehrenden und Lernenden erfolgreich angewendet.

Trotzdem müssen wir uns weiter bemühen, die Schülerinnen und Schüler immer besser zu befähigen, die an sie gestellten Anforderungen zu erfüllen. Dabei geht es nicht nur um ihr gutes Abschneiden in Prüfungen. Ziel des kompetenzorientierten Lernens, der standardorientierten Prüfungen und Vergleichsarbeiten ist es, den Lernenden eine optimale Vorbereitung auf Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf zu ermöglichen. Darüber hinaus soll die Beschäftigung mit aktuellen Themen und die Nutzung moderner Medien im Unterricht dazu beitragen, dass das Lernen in der Schule in erfolgreiche, selbstbestimmte und individuell befriedigende Lebenswege mündet. Um dies zu erreichen, müssen Schülerinnen und Schüler auch Techniken lebenslangen Lernens trainieren, denn nur so können sie die Herausforderungen des globalisierten Zeitalters bestehen.

Der so oft geforderte erstklassige Unterricht, der diesen Erwartungen gerecht wird, ist nicht allein Ergebnis intensiver Vorbereitung der Unterrichtenden und Nutzung motivierender Materialien und Medien. Entscheidend für den Erfolg von Unterricht ist es auch, dass Schülerinnen und Schüler bereit sind, ihren Lernprozess zunehmend selbst in die Hand zu nehmen. Dies bedeutet, dass sie sich zunächst bewusst werden, wo ihre Stärken und Schwächen liegen. Aus diesem Wissen können sie selbst ableiten, in welchen Bereichen sie Übungsbedarf haben und möglichst auch, welche Art des Übens für sie geeignet ist.

Individualisiertes Lernen verlangt aber darüber hinaus, dass Schülerinnen und Schüler wissen, was von ihnen verlangt wird. Das vorliegende Material zum selbstständigen Lernen im Englischunterricht soll einen Beitrag in diesem Sinne liefern: Es bietet den Lernenden eine Grundlage, um eigenständig festzustellen, wo für sie Übungsbedarf besteht. Zusätzlich werden praktische Tipps, Hinweise und Beispieltex te für den individuellen Übungsprozess im Bereich Schreiben in der Sekundarstufe II bereitgestellt.

Darüber hinaus bietet das vorliegende Material Schülerinnen und Schülern die Möglichkeit, Selbsteinschätzung zu trainieren, Kriterien für die Bewertung der Ergebnisse eigener Arbeit zu entwickeln und anzuwenden und somit im Sinne der zu erreichenden Standards ihre Kompetenzen weiterzuentwickeln.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Note to the teacher

Learner autonomy is essential for successful work in the English classroom. Therefore, self-evaluation and self-correction are necessary prerequisites for individual work. Students must be enabled to critically examine their own work and to evaluate it with the aim of taking the necessary steps to improve their competencies.

This material is meant to help students develop their skills in working with texts and to improve their ability for self-evaluation and self-correction. In contrast to most of the current material used in the classroom, it does not only list **criteria for various genres** required in the curriculum, such as analysis, comment or letter to the editor, it also provides **supplementary pages with phraseology, sample texts and general advice** on writing. In addition, **self-assessment grids** will help students to revise their own texts. It also helps if they collect successful samples of their work to document their progress.

In order to accommodate diverse learning situations, this material consists of learning modules, each containing:

- **criteria for different genres** such as comments or emails
- **supplementary pages** with useful vocabulary and phrases
- **sample texts**
- **self-assessment grids**
- **general advice** on writing
- a **documentation section** in which students collect samples of their own work (usually at least two per genre) to document their learning progress.

There is a lot of material here and a lot of things to think about and practice. Your students are not expected to learn all of it at once. Break it up, pick and choose areas of focus in terms of individual weaknesses and reinforcement and support. Guide your students to use it as needed and helpful throughout their two/three years of preparing for their final exams.

Of course, you are invited to deal with additional genres in class and to hand out corresponding worksheets to your students.

1.2 Note to the student


“Learning by doing” is an important way to develop and improve individual skills. Therefore, this material is based on self-evaluation and self-correction. It aims at helping you to examine your own work with a critical eye.


As help for checking your work samples, this material consists of


- **criteria for different genres** such as comments or emails
- **supplementary pages** with useful vocabulary and phrases
- **sample texts**
- **self-assessment grids**
- **general advice** on writing.


There is a lot of material here and a lot of things to think about and practice. You are not expected to learn all of it at once. Break it up and use it as needed and helpful throughout your two/three years of preparing for your final exams.

While checking your work, answer the questions on the self-assessment grids and tick:

 – Yes. / Excellent.

 – Good, but can be improved.

 – Satisfactory, but needs some improvement.

 – No. / Needs improvement.

To document your progress, you should collect successful samples of your work in the **documentation section** of this material.

2 Summing up and outlining information

Summary writing or outlining information means that you briefly pass on the main information of a text to someone who has not read it.

The language used must be neutral and objective, paraphrasing the author's main points and providing only the most important details.

You may have to

- a) sum up a complete literary or non-literary text, an excerpt from a text or
- b) outline certain aspects of a text.

2.1 Writing a summary

2.1.1 Criteria for summary writing

If you have to sum up an article, a short story, a novel or an excerpt from any of these genres, present the main information from the original text **in a condensed form**.

PREPARATION

- 1) Look at the headline/title/subheadings, source, any illustrations and captions in order to determine the genre you are going to work on, then anticipate what kind of information you expect from that particular text.
- 2) Read the text carefully.
- 3) Highlight key words and/or key sentences.
- 4) Divide the text up into sections and pay attention to subheadings.
- 5) Take notes.
- 6) In your own words, list the main points of each section/paragraph.
(Do not include any minor details.)
- 7) Make sure the order of your items is logical.

WRITING A SUMMARY

If the task is e.g. *Sum up/Summarize the excerpt of the novel/article/...*

INCLUDE

an **introductory sentence / introductory sentences** with

- the overall idea/topic of the text
- the genre
- the headline/title of the text
- the author's name
- the year/date of publication
- name of the newspaper/magazine (if given)

e.g. *In the short story ... [title] published in ... [newspaper/magazine] on ... [date/year], ...[author's name] deals with ... [topic]*
The article ... [title] by ... [author's name] published in ... [newspaper/magazine] on ... [date/year] is about ... [topic]

a **main part** with

- the essential aspects of the text in a logical order

e.g. *The author shows/explains ...*

DO NOT INCLUDE

- pronoun "I"
- any personal opinion
- comments
- quotations
- direct speech
- minor points
- examples
- statistics
- unnecessary explanations

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use your own words.
- You do not need to follow the structure of the original text.
- Focus on summing up the main information of the text.
- Do not interpret the text.
- Do not offer any personal opinion on the text.
- Use simple present tense. However, there might be exceptions, e.g. flashbacks or references to future events demanding past tense, present perfect or future.
- Change direct speech into indirect speech,
e.g. *Greene* [author's name] *says/claims/believes/suggests* ...
- Connect the main ideas and supporting points in order to show how they are related to each other (see 7.5 "Linking ideas and sentences").
- Paraphrase or use umbrella terms to avoid enumerations:
Instead of e.g. *dishwasher, fridge and microwave oven*,
write *household gadgets*.
- Shorten your sentences, e.g. by using participle constructions.
Instead of e.g. *After they have purchased the house, they realize ...*,
write *Having purchased the house, they realize ...*
(see 7.5 "Linking ideas and sentences").
- Make sure the length of your text is not more than one third of the text you are summing up.

2.1.2 Sample summary

Text: Misti Crane. "Teen loses a leg, not his dream." *The Columbus Dispatch*, July 10, 2013. Accessed Sept. 23, 20018. <http://www.dispatch.com/article/20130710/NEWS/307109700>.

Task: Sum up the article.

In her article "Teen loses a leg, not his dream," published in *The Columbus Dispatch* on July 10, 2013, Misti Crane describes how a young man, Zach Hanf, has overcome severe obstacles while not giving up on his childhood dream of becoming a surgeon.









When he was 18, he caused a car accident resulting in serious injuries and the loss of his left leg. Dr. Daniel Eifermann, the trauma surgeon who treated him, has not only helped him medically, but has also become his friend.

He and Hanf's family were impressed to see that Hanf showed extraordinary determination when, in spite of his pain and disability, he did not give up, but learned to walk with a prosthesis as soon as possible.

Recently, Hanf has attended a program at Ohio State University for young people who want to become doctors. As a result, he wants to begin studying medicine only 9 months after his near fatal accident. He feels he can make use of his experience to understand what other patients are going through.

Crane ends her article by quoting Dr. Eiferman, who believes that Hanf will become a good doctor, but states that if Hanf should find out that he cannot deal with the physical demands of working in an operating room, he can still have a bright future as a prosthetist.

2.1.3 Self-assessment grid: Summary writing

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Preparation | | | | | | | | |
| I have read the text carefully. | | | | | | | | |
| I have highlighted key words and/or key sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have divided the text up and taken notes on the main points in a logical order. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated the overall idea/topic of the text. | | | | | | | | |
| I have mentioned | | | | | | | | |
| - the genre | | | | | | | | |
| - headline/title, when summing up an article, also the name of the newspaper/magazine | | | | | | | | |
| - the author's name | | | | | | | | |
| - the year/date of publication. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up the content of the text in my own words and in neutral language. | | | | | | | | |
| I have included all the essential information and left out irrelevant details. | | | | | | | | |
| I have not used any quotations. | | | | | | | | |
| I have changed direct into indirect speech, using verbs like say, claim, believe or suggest. | | | | | | | | |
| I have neither used "I" nor expressed my personal opinion or made any comments. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| My text is not longer than 1/3 of the original text. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

2.2 Outlining information

2.2.1 Criteria for outlining information

If you are asked to outline or sum up certain aspects of a text, only focus on the information relevant to the task. Do not sum up the complete text, as you are expected to do when writing a summary (see 2.1).

PREPARATION

- 1) Look at the headline/title/subheadings, source, any illustrations and captions in order to determine the genre you are going to work on, then anticipate what kind of information you expect from that particular text.
- 2) Read the task carefully. Focus on the required aspect(s).
- 3) Read the text carefully.
- 4) Highlight key words and/or key sentences relevant to the task.
- 5) Collect information on the required aspect(s).
- 6) Take notes.
- 7) In your own words, outline the information required in the task (if necessary include details).

OUTLINING CERTAIN ASPECTS OF A TEXT

INCLUDE

an **introductory sentence**

- relating to the issue(s) the task requires you to focus on
- genre, headline/title, etc. **may be mentioned** if given
e. g. *The excerpt from the article ... [title] by ... [author's name] deals with the situation of migrant workers in California. It contains information concerning ... [topic]*

a **main part** with

- all the essential information concerning the task

DO NOT INCLUDE

- a mere restatement of the task
- repetitions
- smaller/irrelevant details
- pronoun "I"
- any personal opinion
- comments
- unnecessary explanations
- quotations or direct speech
- information not relevant to the task

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use your own words.
- You do not need to follow the structure of the original text.
- Focus on information from the text. Do not interpret the text or give your opinion.
- Use simple present tense. However, there might be exceptions, e.g. flashbacks or references to future events demanding past tense, present perfect or future.
- Change direct into indirect speech, e.g. *Greene [author's name] claims/believes/suggests ...*
- Connect the main ideas and supporting points in order to show how they are related to each other (see 7.5 "Linking ideas and sentences").
- Paraphrase or use umbrella terms to avoid enumerations:
Instead of e.g. *dishwasher, fridge and microwave oven*,
write *household gadgets*.
- Shorten your sentences e.g. by using participle constructions: Instead of e.g. *After they had purchased the house, they realized ...*, write *Having purchased the house, they realize ...*
- Make sure you write less than about one third of the whole text.

2.2.2 Sample outline

Text: Misti Crane. "Teen loses a leg, not his dream." *The Columbus Dispatch*, July 10, 2013. Accessed Sept. 23, 20018. <http://www.dispatch.com/article/20130710/NEWS/307109700>.









Task: Outline the information about what Zach Hanf has done and is planning to do in pursuit of his dream.

Zach Hanf has overcome severe obstacles while not giving up on his childhood dream of becoming a surgeon.

When he was 18, he caused a car accident resulting in serious injuries and the loss of his left leg. After that he showed extraordinary determination when, in spite of his pain and disability, he did not give up, but learned to walk with a prosthesis as soon as possible.

Recently, Hanf has attended a program at Ohio State University for young people who want to become doctors. As a result, he wants to begin studying medicine only 9 months after his near fatal accident. He feels that he can make use of his experience to understand what other patients are going through.

2.2.3 Self-assessment grid: Outlining information

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Preparation | | | | | | | | |
| I have read the task and text carefully. | | | | | | | | |
| I have highlighted key words and/or key sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have taken notes on the ideas relevant to the task and listed all the main points in a logical order. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have written a general statement referring to the aspects the task focuses on. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have only outlined the information from the text that is relevant to the task. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used my own words and neutral language. | | | | | | | | |
| I have not used any quotations. | | | | | | | | |
| I have transferred direct into indirect speech if necessary, using verbs like <i>claim</i> , <i>believe</i> or <i>suggest</i> . | | | | | | | | |
| I have neither used "I" nor expressed my personal opinion or made any comments but focused on outlining the relevant information from the text. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the relevant points from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

3 Analyzing texts

3.1 Analyzing written texts

3.1.1 Criteria for analyzing written texts

In an analysis, you are expected to show your understanding of the underlying **meaning** of a text and how it is conveyed. In a written test or examination, you may be asked to look at a particular aspect of a text in detail and to reveal the means employed by the author to achieve a certain **effect on the reader**.

Your task might be to show how the central idea of a text / the author's attitude towards a certain issue / the prevailing atmosphere / etc. is conveyed. In order to perform successfully, examine the following aspects:

- **central idea/message**
- **style/register** (e.g. neutral, formal, colloquial, slang)
- **tone** (e.g. emotional, objective)
- **rhetorical/stylistic devices** (e.g. comparison, contrast, repetition, imagery, etc.).

With regard to literary texts also consider

- **narrative technique(s)** (e.g. point of view, mode of presentation).

With regard to non-literary texts also consider the

- **structure** of the text (e.g. order and nature of paragraphs, subheadings, topic sentences, complexity of sentences, graphics).

For your analysis, it is important to distinguish between fictional and non-fictional texts and to decide which **features** are **typical of the text** you have to deal with.

Remember, your main goal is to explain how and why the author uses all kinds of means to make his/her point and to explain the effect this has on the reader.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully.
- 2) Skim the text to get a general impression of the aspect required in the task, e.g. the general approach to the topic, the tone or atmosphere of the text, and consider your findings.
- 3) Scan the text, identifying the stylistic/linguistic/structural means and highlighting the examples relevant to the task (e.g. extraordinary use of language or structure), and then evaluate possible effects on the reader.
- 4) Visualize relationships in the text, e.g. between characters or literary devices and their effects (see 7.3 "General advice on writing – Using graphic organizers to get started").

WRITING AN ANALYSIS

While writing your analysis, keep some important points in mind:

- Begin with a central assertion/statement: e.g.
The author takes a critical viewpoint on ...
In this excerpt, character X seems completely distraught ...

- Explain the use of relevant linguistic/stylistic/structural devices, give examples and evidence from the text and analyze their effect on the reader: e.g.
The author employs ... to show/illustrate ... as you can see in lines x-y (“...”).
The reader gets this impression because the author uses ... to ... e.g. “...” (ll. x-y).
- Combine similar devices and examples meaningfully. Several stylistic devices might be used, for example, to show that a fictional character is not trustworthy, that a speaker does not agree with a certain opinion, or to create a certain effect on the reader, e.g. to amuse the reader.
- **Always focus on how formal/stylistic/structural means help to convey the meaning of a text and what effect they might have on the reader.**

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use a dictionary to discover the various meanings of words if you are not sure whether your understanding of a certain text passage is correct.
- Use appropriate structures and words to show how your arguments and supporting points are related (see 7.5 “Linking ideas and sentences”).
- Use quotation marks (“...”) when quoting from a text, and do not forget to give the lines you are referring to.

It is often preferable to quote only words or short expressions from the text rather than copying complete sentences, e.g.

At the beginning of the story, the dominating atmosphere is rather tense and unpleasant. This impression is, for once, created by the use of words with a negative connotation such as “gripping pains” (ll. 14/15), “tormented” (l. 25), “sadness” (l. 37) and a number of words denoting anger or angry feelings like “irritation” (l. 22), “furious” (l. 24), “rage” (l. 25), “fury” (l. 28).

- Use “l. ...” when you are referring to one line and “ll. ...” when you are referring to two or more lines.

3.1.2 What to focus in when analyzing written texts

Remember, your main goal is to explain how and why the author uses all kinds of means to make his/her point and the effect this has on the reader.

The following lists are meant to give you some ideas on what to focus on.

Do not just enumerate devices without drawing any conclusions.

When analyzing **literary (fictional) texts**, you can check the following aspects:

- genre (e.g. poem, one-act play, short story, excerpt from a novel)
- theme(s) (e.g. love, loneliness, conflict between partners/different groups)
- characterisation (e.g. direct, indirect, explicit, implicit; flat, round; (telling) names, outward appearance, way of thinking and speaking, behaviour)
- setting (e.g. time, place, atmosphere, characters' social background – in a drama this is often given in the stage directions)
- action/plot (e.g. internal, external action; exposition, rising/falling action, climax, turning point; surprise/open ending; suspense; flashback, foreshadowing, anticipation)
- point of view (e.g. first-/third-person, limited/omniscient narrator)
- mode of presentation (e.g. telling, showing; panoramic, scenic; interior monologue, stream of consciousness, reported thought)
- rhetorical/stylistic devices (e.g. metaphor, anaphora, symbol, alliteration, contrast, enumeration, personification, repetition, rhetorical question, wordplay)
- formal aspects (e.g. stanza, refrain, rhyme (scheme), metre/rhythm; act, scene; chapter, part).

With regard to **non-literary (non-fictional) texts** you can check:

- the genre (e.g. newspaper article, editorial, letter to the editor, advertisement, speech)
- the purpose/intention (e.g. information, argumentation, persuasion, exaggeration, praise, criticism, entertainment)
- the structure/layout (e.g. headline/title, subheadings, topic sentences; introduction, main part, conclusion; sequence of facts, paragraphs, columns; print, visual additions).

In most texts it also makes sense to have a look at the **use of language**.

You can take into consideration:

- register (e.g. neutral/formal/informal/colloquial language, slang, taboo words)
- wording (e.g. choice of words, connotations, ambiguity, wordplay)
- syntax (e.g. simple/complex/incomplete sentences, active/passive constructions)
- tone (e.g. serious, objective, ironic, humorous, witty, emotional, sentimental, solemn)
- rhetorical devices (e.g. direct address of the reader, rhetorical questions, repetition, emphasis, enumeration, examples, quotations, use of pronouns).

3.1.3 Sample analysis

Text: Edward Bellamy. "Looking Backward - Waking up in the Future." 1887 (excerpt)

Task: Analyze the devices the author uses to convey Julian West's feelings and attitude towards the new world he wakes up in.

In the extract "Waking up from the Future" from the novel "Looking Backward" by Edward Bellamy, published in 1887, the narrator makes the reader identify with the protagonist, Julian West, and share his feelings of amazement when confronted with his hometown Boston 100 years in the future. In the year 2000, when West wakes up from a century of deep sleep, he is utterly stunned by all the changes that have happened.

The first-person narration allows the reader to grasp and accept the highly improbable situation and to follow West's thoughts (e.g. ll. 20-36). Scenic presentation (e.g. dialogue in ll. 8-16) draws the audience into the action. In this way, the reader gets a first-hand view of this "new world" and is just as astonished by it as West is.

In an interior monologue, West directly addresses the reader by asking a range of questions (e.g. ll. 26-27 "What [...] would be his own experience?"). This is not only done in order to build suspense, but also to get the reader to understand West's initial confusion and shock.









The use of stylistic devices, such as alliteration (e.g. l. 24 "so suddenly"), contrast (e.g. ll. 29/30 "forget [...] remember") and the choice of words that express fascination (e.g. l. 31 "excited", l. 33 "amazement"), illustrates that West feels enthusiastic and does not worry too much about having been torn from his own time.

In order to allow the reader to grasp the full scale of change that has happened during West's sleep, personification (e.g. ll. 8/9 "millennium [...] seen changes") and metaphors (e.g. l. 20 "revolution in men's attire") are used. Other examples of imagery underline the sudden changes (e.g. l. 25 "dropped [...] into a new world", ll. 26/27 "transported [...] in the twinkling of an eye").

In the final paragraphs, negatively connoted words are used to describe the world West came from (e.g. l. 56 "shabby", l. 59 "excessive individualism"). This builds a strong contrast to the world of the year 2000, which is described with positively connoted words (e.g. l. 60 "public spirit", l. 62 "surplus wealth").

To sum up, a range of diverse stylistic devices is used to emphasize the key idea of the extract, the positive changes Bellamy envisions for his world in the upcoming 100 years. The reader is able to follow the events through the eyes of the protagonist, identify with him, and share his optimism about the future.

3.1.4 Self-assessment grid: Analyzing written texts

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| At the beginning I have made a central statement referring to the task. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have arranged the points relevant to the task in a logical order. | | | | | | | | |
| I have always named the linguistic/stylistic/structural devices, using terms such as <i>repetition</i> , <i>enumeration</i> or <i>contrast</i> and explained how they convey the message/main ideas/etc. of the text. | | | | | | | | |
| I have provided examples from the text in quotation marks and stated the lines they are taken from. | | | | | | | | |
| I have paid attention to correct punctuation when quoting from the text, e.g. “...” (ll. 2-4). | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained the effect of the devices on the reader. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| My conclusion is a logical result of my analysis. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| As a rule, I have used present tense. I have used other tenses only to make clear that something happened before other events / will happen later. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

3.2 Analyzing pictures (cartoons, photographs, paintings, drawings)

3.2.1 Criteria for analyzing pictures (cartoons, photographs, paintings, drawings)

Like written texts, pictures, such as photographs, paintings and drawings or cartoons, use certain elements to convey information. In your analysis of visual material/texts you are expected to identify those elements, describe them systematically and explain their use and function. Furthermore, you need to evaluate their effect on the reader.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully.
- 2) Examine the picture in detail. Find out who the cartoonist/photographer/artist is, where/when the picture was published. Study the visual elements e.g. people, objects, setting, speech bubbles, etc. and, if provided, the caption. Consider symbolism and (metaphorical) meaning with regard to your task and/or a specific (topical) context.
- 3) Make notes and structure them in a logical order.

WRITING ABOUT A CARTOON/PHOTOGRAPH/PAINTING/DRAWING

INCLUDE

- the following elements in the **introductory sentence(s)**:
 - State the central idea/aspect of the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing, i.e. say what the picture is about.
 - Give the cartoonist's/photographer's/artist's name.
 - Mention where and when the picture was published.
- a **detailed description** of the picture in the **main part**:
 - Name the different parts the picture consists of (e.g. visual elements, foreground, background, captions, speech or thought bubbles).
 - Describe the depicted objects or people (e.g. striking features, clothing, positioning and size of objects/figures, colours, facial expressions, body language, what people say or think), the action and the setting (i.e. where and when the action takes place).
- an **explanation** of what the cartoonist/photographer/artist wants to say/show and what techniques he/she uses:
 - Analyze the different elements (e.g. the visual elements, captions, speech or thought bubbles) of the picture.
 - Analyze the techniques used to convey the message (e.g. symbols, exaggeration, caricature, irony, all of them often with a critical intention).
 - Say which elements are striking and why (e.g. exaggerated, distorted, etc.).
 - Say which of the objects and characters carry a meaning that goes beyond the obvious. Explain what they represent.
 - Say how the elements interact and what effect the elements have on the reader.
 - Explain the message of the picture using your knowledge about the issue.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Based on your notes/key words, structure your text.
- Use appropriate linking words.
- Use present tense but present progressive for actions.

3.2.2 Useful expressions for writing about a picture (cartoon, photograph, painting, drawing)

Here are some useful expressions that will help you write about a picture (e.g. cartoon, photograph, painting, drawing):

| What kind of picture is it? Where is it from? What is it about? | | |
|---|--|--|
| The cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing by ... published in ... | is about is directed at/targets shows/presents depicts | the attitude towards ... the problem of ... |
| In his/her cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing, published in ..., X/Y | deals with addresses alludes to refers to criticizes comments on exposes | the current discussion on ... the policy ... the trend ... the use of ... people who ... |
| The scene depicted in the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing by ... published in ... | | |

| What is depicted? | | |
|--|---|---|
| The cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing | consists of is made up of is divided into | several visual elements. different frames. x parts. |
| | has | a caption. speech or thought bubbles. |
| In the foreground/background In the middle/center At the top/bottom On the left/right In the top right-hand corner In the bottom left-hand corner | there is / you can see ... (a ... /several ...) (a/a number of) ... can be seen. a ... is shown/depicted. several ... are depicted. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The man/woman is characterized/depicted as someone who ... - She/he looks as if ... - She/he appears to be/doing ... - It seems as if ... - She/he seems to be/be doing ... - Mr Y looks bigger than ... as he is positioned in the foreground. | | |
| The caption | states that... explains ... is a comment/statement by ... plainly shows that ... reinforces the impression ... forms a contrast to the picture. is unexpected/short/very funny. | |

What is the message and which techniques are used to convey it?

- The cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing expresses/points out/aims to show ...
- The cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing conveys the message that ...
- The key point the cartoonist/photographer/artist is trying to make is to expose (the fact that) ...
- The message of the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing is obvious/plain.
- The scene epitomizes ... (= verkörpert/ist der Inbegriff von ...)
- The cartoonist's/photographer's/artist's message is clear/unclear.
- The cartoonist/photographer/artist emphasizes/criticizes/wants to express the idea that ...
- The cartoonist/photographer/artist seems to / uses irony/exaggeration/symbols/caricature to criticize/ridicule/call into question ...
- It is obvious/plain to see that ...
- What we learn from the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing is ...
- X (element in the picture) stands for/represents/symbolizes/shows ...
- X is exaggerated/stressed ...
- X is a caricature of ... / X is the stereotypical image of ...
- X is caricatured/ridiculed as ...
- This indicates that ...
- It is obvious from the way X is depicted that ...
- This assumption is supported by the fact that ...
- The humour lies in the difference/misunderstanding/discrepancy/contrast/parallels between ... and ...









What is your personal opinion?

- The cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing appeals/does not appeal to me. In my opinion ...
- The cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing is complex/well done/very clever/effective/of high quality/convincing/entertaining/simplistic/confusing/unfair/exaggerated/hurtful to ...
- The cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing achieves its aim of ...-ing. It skillfully/effectively illustrates/shows ...
- The point the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing is trying to make appeals/does not appeal to me because ...
- The message of the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing is lost on me / fails to work for me because ...
- I entirely/partly agree with ...
- I have my doubts as to ...
- The message needs further explanation.

How do caption/text and cartoon fit together?

- The text supports the message of the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing because ...
- Nevertheless, some detail provided in ... does not appear in ...
- Whereas the text says ... the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing seems to imply ...
- In contrast to the cartoon/photograph/painting/drawing, the text ...

3.2.3 Self-assessment grid: Analyzing pictures (cartoons, photographs, paintings, drawings)

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Preparation | | | | | | | | |
| I have made notes on my first impression, the relevant details and the message of the picture. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have written what the picture is about. | | | | | | | | |
| I have mentioned the source / the name of the cartoonist/ photographer/artist / the date of publication. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have written what the picture consists of (e.g. different frames, speech/thought bubbles). | | | | | | | | |
| I have described - the visual elements (objects/characters) - the action - the setting. | | | | | | | | |
| I have paraphrased captions, speech/thought bubbles. | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained how the visual elements relate to each other. | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained the effect the means used by the cartoonist/photographer/artist have on the reader. | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained the cartoonist's/photographer's/artist's message. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used the present tense and present progressive for actions shown in the picture. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

3.3 Analyzing graphs, charts and tables

3.3.1 Criteria for analyzing graphs, charts and tables

Data and statistics are usually presented in the form of graphs, charts or tables. Writing about graphs, charts and tables does not only require a thorough analysis and understanding of the material at hand, but also involves specific vocabulary.

In an analytical task having to do with statistics, you might have to compare the contents of a written text and a graph. Moreover, writing about statistics is often necessary so that you can underline an argument, for example, in a comment or an article you are working on. Sometimes this includes a critical assessment of the material provided and the information it conveys.

PREPARATION

- 1) Study the material carefully. Find out what it is about by looking at the heading or legend/key. Consider how figures are presented (chart, table, absolute numbers, percentages) and whether the source and the information appear to be reliable.
- 2) Take notes and structure these notes before you start writing your text.
- 3) If you intend to do a comprehensive analysis and interpretation, first describe and then explain what the graph/chart/table shows.

OR

- 4) If you intend to concentrate on particular aspects of the material, introduce them briefly, sum up and explain the main information, then concentrate on the task.

WRITING ABOUT GRAPHS, CHARTS AND TABLES

- In the introduction, state the topic and briefly say what the graph, chart or table shows. Give the source and, if relevant, the year of publication.
- In the main part, first describe, then compare, explain and finally interpret the information provided.
- In the conclusion, summarize and evaluate your findings.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Refer merely to the aspects of the material relevant to the task.
- Use linking words to connect your sentences (see 7.5 “Linking ideas and sentences”).

3.3.2 Useful expressions for writing about graphs, charts and tables

Language note

Tenses

Use past tense when focusing on one point in time in the past.

Use present perfect tense when referring to a period from the past to now.

Use simple present tense for accepted facts. You may also use it when discussing your results and conclusions.

Singular or plural

The word *statistics* is usually used in the plural, e.g.

- *The statistics show ...*

Use plural verb if the noun that follows *a percentage of* is plural, e.g.

- *Only a small percentage of people are ...*

In British English in particular many collective nouns, such as *majority*, *minority*, *rest*, are used preferably with plural verbs, e.g.

- *The majority are ...*

- *The rest are ...*

Also note:

- *The number of inhabitants has increased since 2015.*

- *A number of inhabitants have left the city.*

The form *data* can be used with a singular or plural verb, e.g.

- *The data is ...*

- *The data are ...*

Amount and number

Use the word *amount* with uncountable nouns and *number* with countable nouns, e.g.

- *a massive amount of paper*

- *a large amount of money*









- *the number of children*

- *the number of miles.*

| Introduction | |
|---|---|
| <p>What is the graph/chart/table about?</p> <p>What is the source?</p> <p>What does the graph/chart/ table refer to? What is the content? (weights, measures, currency...)</p> <p>What is the time span covered?</p> <p>In what way is the information presented?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The graph/chart/table is about ... / deals with ...</i> - <i>It is taken from ...</i> - <i>The graph/chart/table shows the relationship between ... and ...</i> - <i>The graph/chart/table compares the population in terms of / with respect to / with regard to marital status and annual income (in dollars).</i> - <i>It covers a period of ... months/years ...</i> - <i>It depicts a development of three months/years / from 2015 to 2018.</i> - <i>This is a bar chart / pie chart / line graph / table.</i> - <i>The vertical/horizontal line shows/represents ...</i> - <i>The figures are expressed as a percentage of the total population / total number of ...</i> - <i>The data are presented in absolute numbers.</i> |
| Description (Describe Figure 1 / Table 2 / Document 3.) | |
| <p>Is there a general development?</p> <p>What is the highest/lowest point?</p> <p>Is there anything striking?</p> <p>Are there any irregularities?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The line/size/weight ... rises/increases/decreases ... slowly/ gradually / more steeply / almost vertically / there is no change ...</i> - <i>There has been a noticeable/distinct increase in the number of / drastic reduction in volume / dramatic fall in the proportion of ...</i> - <i>The upward development / downward trend continues.</i> - <i>The number/proportion/frequency/amount of ... has changed slightly/steadily/sharply/markedly/dramatically/significantly.</i> - <i>The unemployment figures stagnate / remain stable.</i> - <i>The rates fluctuate widely/considerably / from year to year.</i> - <i>From 2010 to 2015 the population declined from 40,000 to 30,000 inhabitants.</i> - <i>The average of ... is ...</i> - <i>African-Americans account for 12.7% of the US population.</i> - <i>This amounts to a total of ...</i> - <i>The production reached a low/peak / peaked in 2017.</i> - <i>The minimum/maximum weight/size/depth is ...</i> - <i>Only a small percentage of people are ...</i> - <i>This amounts to a total of ...</i> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Comparison (Compare the developments depicted in Figure 1 with those depicted in Figure 2. / To what extent do the data presented in the graph/chart/table back up the information provided in the text?) | |
| Are there any similarities and/or differences with respect to the different data / pieces of information/ developments/ ... given? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparing the different data with each other we can say that ... - The country with the highest/lowest population density / biggest/smallest area is ... - The amount of ... is higher/lower in ... than in... - The number is about three times higher than ... - The graph shows twice as many as ... - It is twice the size of ... - While Figure 1 reflects ..., Figure 2 shows ... |
| Generalisation (Sum up the main information supplied in Document 1.) | |
| What are the most important data/observations/ developments? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally speaking, ... - By and large, ... - All in all, ... - Summing up, ... |
| Explanation/interpretation/prediction/evaluation (Comment on the development shown in ... / Explain/assess the development depicted in ... / Analyze the data presented in ...) | |
| <p>What are the reasons for the developments shown?</p> <p>Can the different data/various developments be related to each other?</p> <p>What predictions can be made?</p> <p>Do the data and/or developments depicted in the chart, graphs and/or table confirm what you know about the topic?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We can account for this development by looking at ... - The statistics for London/2017 ... show/reveal that ... - Due to... / because of ... - The number/rate of ... is expected/predicted/likely to drop/fall after 2025 - In my opinion this trend will continue because ... - Judging by/from ... - The data confirm/support the thesis/information ... - The data are not consistent with other figures. - The information does not seem to be trustworthy. - The chart conveys a false impression. |

3.3.3 Self-assessment grid: Analyzing graphs, charts and tables

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have written what the graph/chart/table is about. | | | | | | | | |
| I have given the source and the date of publication. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have described the graph/chart/table in detail. | | | | | | | | |
| I have given necessary explanations. | | | | | | | | |
| I have drawn comparisons between the information given in the graph/chart/table. | | | | | | | | |
| I have interpreted the information contained in the graph/chart/table. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have summarized the most important information. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the aspects relevant to the task. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

4 Comparing and contrasting texts

4.1 Relating visual material to written texts

4.1.1 Criteria for relating visual material to written texts

Texts are often published with visual material such as statistics, cartoons, photos, etc.

Possible tasks are, e.g.

- *Analyze the means used in the article and the illustration/photo/cartoon to convey ... Give evidence from the text and the illustration/photo/cartoon published with it.*

In this case, you have to analyze both the text and the picture in detail. Do not simply describe, but point out similarities and differences between relevant aspects of the text and the visual material.

- *Analyze how the visual material relates to ideas expressed in the article. Give evidence from both texts.*

OR

- *Examine to what extent the visual material supports or contradicts / is suitable to illustrate ideas expressed in the article. Give evidence from both texts.*

Here you have to analyze and compare the text and the visual material in order to find out where and how they complement each other.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully.
 - Which texts/material are you expected to relate to each other (e.g. articles/blogs/short stories to statistics/cartoons/photos)?
 - Which aspects are you supposed to focus on in your analysis (e.g. means used to convey a message concerning a certain aspect / the overall message)?
 - Are you expected to examine whether the visual material supports or contradicts / is suitable to illustrate the written text (e.g. Should the photo be published together with the short story? Should the graph/cartoon be published together with the article?)?
- 2) Consider the intention/purpose of the material (e.g. to inform, entertain, criticize) and the means used to convey its message, certain attitudes, etc.
- 3) In the written text find and underline the information that is relevant to the task.
- 4) In your analysis of the visual material focus on the most important means used to convey the message, certain attitudes, etc.
- 5) Collect ideas and make notes on the text, the visual material and their relationship:
 - Note down relevant aspects from the text/material.
 - Make notes on the devices used to convey the ideas relevant to the task. Note down evidence from both texts.
 - Make a list of similarities and differences. You can draw a table or two overlapping circles and write the similarities in the overlapping middle and the differences in the areas which do not overlap.
 - Note down facts, examples, structural, stylistic or visual means, etc., illustrating the relevant ideas/similarities/differences.

- 6) Decide on how to structure your text (see below), then put your notes in a convincing/logical order.
- 7) Make sure the content of your notes is relevant to the task.

WRITING THE COMPARISON

INTRODUCTION

Begin by explaining what is relevant in the text and the visual material. Show how the text and the visual material relate to each other.

MAIN PART

Consider and write about:

- the focus / main aspects of the text and the visual material
- similarities and differences
- aspects only the text or only the visual material focuses on
- means used to convey the message, certain attitudes, etc.
- intended effects on the readers
- whether both text and visual material should be published together if the task asks you to do so.

Draw convincing conclusions which clearly focus on the task.









CONCLUSION









Sum up your main points and conclusions.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Stick to a clear structure and do not forget to use paragraphs with topic sentences.
 - When asked to analyze how a written text and visual material published together with it convey a certain message, start by analyzing the text. Then analyze the visual material, relating it to ideas expressed in the written text.
 - When asked to deal with the message of the text and the visual material, start by explaining their overall idea. Then continue with the similarities and differences between the text and the visual material.
 - When asked to examine to what extent the visual material is suitable to illustrate the written text, you can state the suitability of the material at the beginning or at the end of your text.
- Focus on the analysis and comparison throughout your text.
- Make clear whether the similarities or the differences are more important.
- Give reasons for your opinion by referring to relevant aspects in the text as well as in the visual material.
- Give the lines if you refer to ideas in the written text.

4.1.2 Self-assessment grid: Relating visual material to written texts

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained which text | | | | | | | | |
| - genre | | | | | | | | |
| - headline/title | | | | | | | | |
| - author, source | | | | | | | | |
| and visual material | | | | | | | | |
| - photo/cartoon/graph/chart/table | | | | | | | | |
| - title/topic | | | | | | | | |
| - photographer/cartoonist/researchers | | | | | | | | |
| - source | | | | | | | | |
| I want to focus on. | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the most important similarities and differences. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated the intention / overall message / the most important points concerning the task. | | | | | | | | |
| I have focused in detail on similarities and differences relevant to the task. | | | | | | | | |
| I have described relevant elements of the text (e.g. content/language/structure/devices). | | | | | | | | |
| I have described relevant elements of the visual material. | | | | | | | | |
| I have focused on the most important means used to convey the overall message/attitude. | | | | | | | | |
| In all my statements I have given evidence from the text/material. | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained the intended effect on the readers. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated my most important point(s), made a final statement / drawn convincing conclusions / etc. | | | | | | | | |

| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have fulfilled my task by analyzing and comparing the texts / assessing the suitability of the visual material as an illustration of the written text. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

4.2 Comparing literary texts / films / real-life experiences

4.2.1 Criteria for comparing literary texts / films / real-life experiences

If you compare literary texts / films / real-life experiences, you show the connection between the most important content points according to the task at hand. In your writing you go beyond mere descriptions by pointing out similarities and differences between the text you have to deal with and the literary text / film / real-life experience you want to compare it with.

Additionally, you may be asked to discuss, comment on or assess certain aspects relating to the works and/or experiences.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully.
 - What are you expected to compare and contrast (e.g. characters from literature/film / real people/objects/developments/organizations/events)?
 - Which aspects are you supposed to focus on (e.g. problems/conflicts/achievements/lifestyles/relationships)?
 - Are you expected to give an evaluation (e.g. of the problems / how a character/person copes)?
- 2) Study the text carefully. Find and underline the information that is relevant to the task.
- 3) Highlight key ideas referring to the point of comparison.
- 4) If you are asked to choose a literary text, film or real person/organization/event for your comparison, make sure that it lends itself to a convincing comparison.
- 5) Collect ideas and make notes for your comparison:
 - Note down relevant aspects from the text/material and about the work / real person/organization/event you want to compare it with.
 - Make a list of similarities and differences. You can draw a Venn diagram with two overlapping circles and write the similarities in the overlapping middle and the differences in the areas which do not overlap (see 7.3 “General advice on writing – Using graphic organizers to get started”). Or you can draw a table.
 - Note down evidence, facts, examples, experiences, etc. illustrating the similarities/differences.
- 6) Decide on how to structure your text (see below) and then put your notes in a convincing/logical order.
- 7) Make sure the content of your notes is relevant to the task.

WRITING THE COMPARISON

INTRODUCTION

Begin by explaining the point of comparison. If you have been asked to choose a work from literature/film or a real person/event/organization for your comparison, give good reasons for your choice.

MAIN PART

Present your main points of comparison and give relevant information on, e.g.

- source of information/text/material
- general information (e.g. title, author/director, name/age/location of character or real person/organization)
- ethnic/cultural/socio-economic/personal background / experiences / social surroundings / situation/conflicts/support / lack of support from other characters/people/organizations
- attitudes/beliefs/behaviour
- way of coping / making the best of a situation/development/outcome.

In your comparison refer to information/facts/examples from the text and to aspects from literature/film / real life which are relevant to the task.

If you are asked to do so, assess how the characters/chosen person/organization cope(s)/develop(s).

CONCLUSION

Do not end by simply saying that there are many similarities and differences, but sum up why you think so.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Focus on the comparison.
- Make clear whether the similarities or the differences are more important.
- Give well-founded arguments / convincing reasons / examples / important facts for your points.
- Structure your text by using paragraphs and linking words:

Connectives for **comparison**:

in the same way, similarly, likewise, like, also, equally, as with

Connectives for **contrast**:

however, but, yet, otherwise, on the one hand ... on the other hand, even though, unlike, but, instead of, alternatively, in contrast, whereas, unlike, otherwise

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use your notes (based on ideas from the material/text available, other material you are familiar with and your knowledge about the issue).
- Link your ideas convincingly and do not repeat yourself.
- Only refer to passages/scenes that are relevant to the comparison.

4.2.2 Self-assessment grid: Comparing literary texts / films / real-life experiences

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|---|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained my points of comparison and given good reasons for choosing these aspects. | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the work from literature/film / the real person/organization I want to focus on. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have given relevant information on my source of comparison (e.g. the title/name/director/author/actors / my source of information about the real person). | | | | | | | | |
| I have given general information about the character / real person/organization (e.g. name/age/location / ethnic/cultural/socio-economic backgrounds). | | | | | | | | |
| I have considered social surroundings/situations/ experiences/attitudes/beliefs / ways of coping. | | | | | | | | |
| I have put a clear focus on the most important similarities/differences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have given examples from the text and referred to experiences/facts to support my argument. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated my most important point(s), made a final statement / drawn convincing conclusions / etc. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have fulfilled my task by comparing/contrasting and, if necessary, assessing the problem. | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| In all parts I have focused on my point(s) of comparison. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

5 Discussing and commenting on an issue

5.1 Discussing and commenting on an issue, a quote or a cartoon

5.1.1 Criteria for discussing and commenting on an issue

The most common form for **discussing** an issue is to look at it from different perspectives (tasks: *Discuss the benefits/pros and drawbacks/cons ...*). If you **comment** on an issue, you do not necessarily need to consider the pros and cons, but you express your personal opinion (tasks: *Comment on the statement/quote / the protagonist's conflict / the cartoon*). In both cases you need to have a clear structure.

PREPARATION

If you have to base your discussion or comment on a written or visual text:

- 1) Look at the text to understand the author's/cartoonist's/artist's message.
- 2) Highlight/list aspects relevant to the task.
- 3) In a logical order, note down ideas, arguments, explanations, examples, evidence, etc. you want to use. Refer to the text at hand, other material and your knowledge about the issue.

If you are asked to discuss/comment on a quote/statement/cartoon/photo, be sure to explain its message, before you discuss/comment on the issue at hand.

DISCUSSING AN ISSUE / WRITING A COMMENT

INTRODUCTION

Refer to the topic, stating the issue, e. g. *I would like to discuss/comment on ...*

MAIN PART

- Refer to the author's/cartoonist's/artist's position in a more detailed way, e. g. *The author claims/maintains ... / The cartoonist/photographer/artist shows/illustrates that ...*
- In a discussion you present and weigh the pros and cons of the issue, e. g. *On the one hand ..., on the other hand ... / While ..., whereas ... / In contrast ...*
- In a comment you focus on the arguments you want to support and/or refute. Present your own opinion, e. g. *It is my belief/opinion that ... / In my opinion ... / As far as I can see ... / (Personally,) I do not find such a claim/argument/ statement convincing. There is no doubt/question that ...*
- Include supporting material from other sources, e.g. books, articles or statistics.
- Arrange your arguments in a logical order.









CONCLUSION

- Say what conclusion you have come to, e. g. *All in all, I think ... / I would like to conclude by saying that ... / To sum up ...*

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- When referring to material, concentrate on aspects which support your arguments. Do not include passages/ideas that are not relevant to your point.
- Develop your own ideas and use the text / other material and your knowledge about the issue to prove them.
- Connect your ideas and sentences in a convincing way (see 7.5 "Linking ideas and sentences").

5.1.2 Self-assessment grid: Discussing and commenting on an issue

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to the topic and problem my discussion/comment focuses on. | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated my opinion and explained my position. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to the author's opinion and his/her main arguments, explanations and examples OR the cartoonist's/photographer's/artist's message. | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to and explained ideas expressed in the text as far as necessary to deal with the task. | | | | | | | | |
| I have presented my own arguments with supporting arguments, explanations and examples from other sources and my knowledge about the issue. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have made clear that I am coming to my conclusion. | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up my arguments, made a general statement / given an outlook for the future. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have focused on the task and included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetitions by using paraphrases, synonyms or antonyms. | | | | | | | | |
| My longer sentences are also clear and correct. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used active verbs wherever possible. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

5.2 Writing an article

5.2.1 Criteria for writing an article

When writing an article discussing or commenting on an issue, you want to inform your readers about the issue and express your opinion about it. You might also want to give advice or suggest any further actions to your readers. Your language and its degree of formality should be appropriate for your readers. If you use ideas from other material, restate in your own words the author's views, arguments, or examples and anything that might be relevant to your point. Always add your own ideas referring to your knowledge about the issue.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully. Look for information on
 - the target group you address
 - the kind of magazine/brochure you are writing for (e.g. political/educational/business/entertainment)
 - aspect(s) you are supposed to be dealing with in your article
 - the purpose of your article, e.g. discussing or commenting on a problem, suggesting solutions to a problem.
- 2) If you are asked to base your article on information from another text, study the text carefully. Find and underline the information that is relevant to the task, e.g. ideas you are expected to discuss or comment on.
- 3) Note down the main ideas about the aspect(s) you want to focus on.
- 4) Add your own ideas based on your knowledge about the issue.
- 5) Put your notes in a convincing/logical order:
 - Select a beginning suitable for your target group.
 - Note down arguments the main part should contain or refute.
 - Note down facts, examples, etc. illustrating your (counter-)arguments.
 - Find aspects which show that your ideas are relevant to the readers.
- 6) Make sure the content of your notes is relevant to the task, your target group and the message you want to convey.
- 7) Find an appropriate, eye-catching headline/title. Make it as catchy as possible, keeping in mind the target group and the type of magazine/brochure you are writing for.

WRITING THE ARTICLE DISCUSSING / COMMENTING ON A PROBLEM

HEADLINE/TITLE

- Write a headline/title that captures your readers' interest.

INTRODUCTION

- Try to maintain the readers' interest with an intriguing opening sentence.
- You can include anecdotes, amusing stories, interesting events, provoking questions, etc. to highlight your point.
- Clearly define your topic, focusing on the purpose your article should serve.
- Make clear why your issue is important.

MAIN PART

- Write in a way that suits the purpose of your article.
- If you base your article on available texts, refer to general ideas of the material. You are not expected to give evidence from the text.
- Explain your position in detail.
- Give well-founded arguments and convincing reasons.
- Give examples and evidence referring to important facts, statistical information or personal experiences to back up your arguments.
- Refer to counterarguments and show that you can refute them.
- Make clear which points are the most important ones.

CONCLUSION

- Indicate that you are coming to a conclusion using phrases such as *in conclusion, on the whole, finally, as a result*, etc.
- Sum up your position and your main arguments. Do not, however, use the same phrasing as you used to introduce your arguments.
- You can also give an outlook for the future or call your readers to action.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Write clear sentences. Use linking words, but be careful with lengthy sentences. Unlike German, English tends to use shorter sentences and active verbs.
- Follow a clear and logical structure and use paragraphs.
- Write in a way which appeals to your target group.
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate for your target group and purpose.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Make sure what you write helps convey your message.
- Make sure you refer to the text at hand / material from other sources and to your knowledge about the issue.
- Make sure you convey your opinion in a convincing way.

5.2.2 Sample article

Text: Erwin Wagenhofer. “We Feed the World.” 2005 (documentary)

Task: The school paper of your British exchange school has asked you to contribute an article about an issue you feel passionate about. You have decided to write about food production. Write this article, including information from Erwin Wagenhofer’s documentary “We Feed the World” and other sources.

Your responsibility – and nobody else’s!

Sustainable agriculture and world hunger are not topics you might like to read about when relaxing after a long school day. But these are issues that affect too many people to be ignored. So let’s face some inconvenient truths about how our food is produced.

What made me think about food production is the 2005 documentary “We Feed the World” by Austrian film maker Erwin Wagenhofer. I had never before considered the harm European agriculture does to people in Africa and in Europe.

One example he gives is tomato farming in Spain: In Almeria, an area in southern Spain, vegetable production on a large scale started in the 1980s due to a decision made by the central government in Madrid. The local farmers there had no choice but to give up their small businesses to find work with the larger companies which could produce vegetable more cheaply. Nor will their children have a choice. Decisions were made for people, not by people.

Almeria is a hot place, many hours of sun, no precipitation. How do you cultivate tomatoes in such a dry area? Artificial soil, irrigation systems, greenhouses covering the ground for miles and miles are the solution. It’s not organic or healthy food that is produced there, if something that has seen more chemicals than a chemist can even be called food. In addition, tomato mass production causes the need for transport to the markets where the product can be sold, contributing to increased traffic, air pollution and global warming.









This is not the end of the story. We sell our vegetables in Africa, a continent where the economy is based on farming and agriculture. We destroy local businesses there, trying to make even more profit. That is the reason why African farmers cannot survive in their home countries, no matter how hard they try. Many of them risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean in nutshells and enter Spain illegally. Not all of them survive. They often find work for ridiculously low wages in agriculture, producing what kills jobs in their home countries. In Almeria, many of them not only work, but also live in greenhouses without electricity, running water, or sanitation. Their status as illegals makes them perfect victims for exploitation. They have no union and must do whatever their employer expects them to do because they are easily replaced if they refuse.

It is not them, it is us who have started this vicious circle and keep it running. We do not feed the world, we are destroying it while feeding Europe. We as students are not CEOs making big decisions, but we have a choice. We can decide to buy locally or to support initiatives helping farmers in Africa.

Hopefully, you are no longer lying on your couch expecting an entertaining read. If this has made you more alert about your responsibilities as a consumer, try to remember this the next time you go shopping – or have a little money to spare.

5.2.3 Self-assessment grid: Writing an article

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Headline/Title | | | | | | | | |
| I have found a catchy headline/title which refers to the topic and appeals to my target group. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have written a beginning with an anecdote / a thought-provoking question / an explanation of the purpose of my article which makes my readers want to go on reading. | | | | | | | | |
| I have clearly defined my topic and the points I want to cover. | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated my opinion and explained my position. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have directly addressed / focused on my readers. | | | | | | | | |
| I have put a clear focus on the most important ideas/arguments for my purpose. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have put forward well-founded, convincing arguments and refuted counterarguments where possible. | | | | | | | | |
| I have given necessary explanations. | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to supporting evidence/examples/facts/personal experiences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used ideas from the text at hand / from other material and my knowledge about the issue. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have made clear that I am coming to my conclusion, e.g. by using <i>in conclusion</i> , <i>as a result</i> , <i>to sum up</i> . | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up my position, my most important point(s), made a convincing final statement / a call to action / given an outlook for the future / etc. | | | | | | | | |

| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have fulfilled the general purpose of my article: discussed / commented on / offered solutions to the problem / etc. | | | | | | | | |
| In all parts I have focused on my aim. | | | | | | | | |
| I have based all my arguments on evidence/facts/ examples. | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have written in a style which is adequate for the target group. | | | | | | | | |
| My longer sentences are clear and correct. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used active verbs wherever possible. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetitions by using synonyms/ paraphrases. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

5.3 Writing a blog entry

5.3.1 Criteria for writing a blog entry

The term “blog” was coined in the 1990s. It is an abbreviation of the word “weblog”. The first part of the word refers to the World Wide Web. The second part originally refers to a log book used to record observations during ship voyages.

A blog is an informative or discussion-based website typically run by an individual or a small group of people who want to communicate their daily experiences or thoughts on certain issues. Bloggers regularly update their websites by posting blog entries. They usually invite their readers to comment on their posts. Thus a blog is an interactive website. Blog entries are often texts which are combined with images, audio files or videos. Some blogs have the character of an online diary; accordingly, the style of the texts posted tends to be slightly informal.

In general, your writing style should fit your subject and target group.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully. Look for information on:
 - your target group
 - aspect(s) you should be dealing with in your blog entry
 - the purpose of your blog entry, e.g. discussing or commenting on a problem.
- 2) If you are asked to base your blog entry on information from a text, study the text carefully. Find and underline the information that is relevant to the task, e.g. ideas you are expected to discuss or comment on.
- 3) Note down the main ideas about the aspect(s) you want to focus on.
- 4) Put your notes in a convincing/logical order.
- 5) Make sure the content of your notes is relevant to the task, your target group and the purpose of your blog entry.
- 6) Find an appropriate, eye-catching headline/title. Make it as catchy as possible, keeping in mind the target group you are writing for.

WRITING THE BLOG ENTRY

HEADLINE/TITLE

- Find a headline/title that captures your readers’ interest.

INTRODUCTION

- Try to maintain the readers’ interest with an intriguing opening sentence.
- You can include anecdotes, amusing stories, interesting events, provoking questions, etc. to highlight your point.
- Clearly define your topic, focusing on the purpose your blog entry should serve.
- Make clear why your issue is important.

MAIN PART

- Write in a way that suits the purpose of your blog entry.
- Explain your position in detail.
- Give well-founded arguments and convincing reasons.
- Give examples and refer to important facts to back up your arguments.
- Refer to counterarguments and show that you can refute them.
- Make clear which points are the most important ones.

CONCLUSION

- Indicate that you are coming to a conclusion using phrases such as *in conclusion, on the whole, finally, as a result, etc.*
- Sum up your position and your main arguments. Do not, however, use the same phrasing as you used to introduce your arguments.
- You can also give an outlook for the future, call your readers to action, or invite them to comment on your ideas.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Write clear sentences. Use linking words, but be careful with lengthy sentences. Unlike German, English tends to use shorter sentences.
- Follow a clear and logical structure and use paragraphs.
- Write in a way which appeals to your target group.
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate for your target group and purpose.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Make sure what you write serves the purpose of your blog entry.
- Make sure you refer to material at hand / other material as well as to your knowledge about the issue.
- Make sure you convey your opinion in a convincing way.

5.3.2 Sample blog entry

Task: You run a blog trying to get young Europeans interested in current political issues. In this week's entry, you discuss what helps young, later-generation immigrants integrate and what makes them feel excluded. Write this blog entry, basing your argument on information from the 2008 mini-series "Britz".

Helping ourselves by helping others

Desperate people trying to cross our borders. This is the image in Europeans' minds when we think of immigration. The majority of immigrants, however, have lived in our countries for quite a long time. They have left their imprint on Europe and will continue to do so. Most of them make positive contributions and are good citizens.

A small minority, though, make the headlines: those who refuse to or cannot integrate. So why do these people find it so difficult to appreciate what European countries can offer them? Each of you must find their own answer to this question, but I'd like to share my thoughts about this with you in today's blog entry.

Immigrants are often expected to assimilate and fulfill their new country's expectations: concerning education, demands of the job market and interaction with others. At home they face contrasting expectations: their families sometimes want them to make friends and marry within their own ethnic group, practice their religion and follow traditions. Thus, they are torn between two cultures and it is difficult for them to find their own way in life. In addition, many immigrants experience racism. They feel excluded and are attacked because of their ethnic background.

Two very different reactions to typical immigrant experiences are shown in the film "Britz". In this mini-series from 2008, two siblings with a Pakistani background, born and bred in Britain, experience hostility and discrimination in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Sohail ignores these incidents. Having assimilated to British society, he becomes a successful law student and joins MI5 in its fight against terrorism. He experiences a loyalty conflict when he has to spy on Muslim friends involved in a radical group, but never wavers in his belief that democracy needs to be protected. What makes him become a loyal citizen is his acknowledgement of the fact that Britain provided shelter for his parents when they had to escape from war in Pakistan. Most of all, his experience of acceptance by mainstream society helps him adopt Britain as his mother country.

His sister Nasima experiences severe racism. She is ostracized when she wears a headscarf in public. She feels that her political actions trying to change new anti-Muslim measures have no impact whatsoever. When her best friend commits suicide after having been harassed by racist policemen and isolated in house arrest without legal representation under the anti-terrorism legislation, Nasima joins a radical student group. She loses her footing completely and strikes back at British society when her traditionalist father deports her to Pakistan to force her into marriage there.

What the film tells us is that it is vital for integration that immigrants and their descendants have a chance to succeed. In addition, immigrants should feel represented in politics. In conclusion, to help others integrate and to make Europe a better place, we should show respect to different lifestyles. We must, however, make sure that basic human rights and European laws, which, e.g., prohibit forced marriages, are adhered to.

When you go out to party tonight, ride a bus to school or your workplace tomorrow, when you vote in the next elections, try to keep in mind that we need to help others to help ourselves.

I'd be quite interested in your thoughts on the issue, so post your comments!

5.3.3 Self-assessment grid: Writing a blog entry

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Headline/Title | | | | | | | | |
| I have found a catchy headline/title which refers to the topic and appeals to my target group. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have written an interesting beginning which makes my readers want to go on reading. | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the topic and purpose of my blog entry. | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated my opinion and explained my position. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have directly addressed / focused on my readers. | | | | | | | | |
| I have given convincing arguments with explanations and examples based on texts at hand, other sources and my knowledge about the issue. | | | | | | | | |
| I have put forward the most important arguments / refuted counterarguments where possible. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up my position and main arguments. | | | | | | | | |
| I have made a general final statement / given an outlook for the future. | | | | | | | | |
| I have invited my readers to comment on my ideas. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure I have completed the task, in terms of the | | | | | | | | |
| - topic and purpose of my blog entry | | | | | | | | |
| - aspect(s) I have been asked to focus on | | | | | | | | |
| - target group of the blog I am writing for. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have linked my ideas in a logical way. | | | | | | | | |
| I have chosen a style which is adequate for my target group. | | | | | | | | |
| I have written clear sentences which are not too complex. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetitions by using synonyms/ paraphrases. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

5.4 Writing an email

5.4.1 Criteria for writing an email

The term “email” is a shortened form of “electronic mail”, which refers to the exchange of computer-stored messages via telecommunication. This form of communication was invented shortly after the Internet and is still widely used in public and private communication. Users prefer sending emails to writing letters because the communication is almost instantaneous. Besides, you can attach any word documents, images or sound files you wish to exchange.

An email has a message header with the recipient’s address and the subject line. This is followed by the message body.

As when writing a letter, your writing style should fit your subject and the person you are addressing. If your addressee is a peer or friend, you may use slightly informal language.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully. Look for information on:
 - your addressee
 - aspect(s) you should be dealing with in your email
 - the purpose of your email, e.g. informing someone about an issue, expressing your own opinion on a problem.
- 2) If you are asked to base your email on information from a text, study the text carefully. Find and underline the information that is relevant to the task, e.g. ideas you are expected to present or comment on.
- 3) Note down the main ideas about the aspect(s) you want to focus on.
- 4) Put your notes in a convincing/logical order.
- 5) Make sure the content of your notes is relevant to the task, your addressee and the purpose of your email.
- 6) Note down a subject line that fits the content of your email.
- 7) Make sure you understand whether you are expected to write a formal email or an informal email. Address your recipient accordingly:

| | Style | Addressee | Phrases |
|-----------------|----------|---|---|
| Greeting | formal | person of authority / adult you do not know well; name known | <i>Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms ... (addressee’s surname),</i> |
| | | representative of a company / an organization; name not known | <i>Dear Sir or Madam, / To whom it may concern,</i> |
| | informal | peer/friend/family | <i>Hi/Hey/Hello ... , (addressee’s first name),</i> |
| Goodbye | formal | person of authority / adult you do not know well; name known | <i>Yours sincerely (BE) / Sincerely (yours) (AE) (Signature = your full name)</i> |
| | | representative of a company / an organization; name not known | <i>Yours faithfully / Sincerely (Signature = your full name)</i> |
| | informal | peer/friend/family | <i>Take care / Best wishes / All the best / Bye / See you soon, ... (Signature = your first name)</i> |

WRITING THE EMAIL

SUBJECT LINE

- Write a subject line that fits the content of your email/attracts your addressee's attention.

GREETING

- Choose a greeting that fits your addressee.

INTRODUCTION

- Start with a capital letter, even though you have used a comma after the greeting.
- Briefly introduce yourself if your addressee does not know who you are.
- State your purpose for writing, e.g. commenting on ideas expressed by your addressee.
- Clearly define your topic and name the aspect(s) you are focusing on.

MAIN PART

- Write in a way that suits the purpose of your email.
- Explain your position in detail.
- Give well-founded arguments and convincing reasons.
- Give examples and refer to important facts to back up your arguments.
- Refer to counterarguments and show that you can refute them.
- Make clear which points are the most important ones.

CONCLUSION

- Indicate that you are coming to a conclusion using phrases such as *in conclusion, on the whole, finally, as a result, etc.*
- Sum up your position and your main arguments. Do not, however, use the same phrasing as you used to introduce your arguments.
- Choose a goodbye that suits the person you are addressing.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Write clear sentences.
- Use linking words, but be careful with lengthy sentences. Unlike German, English tends to use shorter sentences.
- Follow a clear and logical structure and use paragraphs.
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate for your addressee and purpose.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Make sure what you write serves the purpose of your email.
- Make sure you refer to material at hand as well as to your knowledge about the issue.
- Make sure you convey your opinion in a convincing way.

5.4.2 Sample email

Text: DBC Pierre. "Vernon God Little." 2007 (excerpt from the novel)

Task: Write an email to Eulalio Ledesma commenting on his plan for a reality show.

Subject: Prison reality show – death sells

Dear Mr. Ledesma,

I am a student who has just read about your proposed prison reality TV show. As there is a range of issues concerning your idea that I would like to point out, I have decided to contact you directly. There is a series of ethical problems that need to be considered. I am wondering if you have ever read "1984". In this dystopian novel, George Orwell describes a sinister world state of total surveillance as well as the effects this monitoring has on the protagonists. As you might know, the story ends with the destruction of all chances of love as there is no longer any privacy in which to develop individuality or intimacy. To my mind, displaying capital punishment to the public in a TV show is a similarly brutal invasion of individuals' privacy.

I do appreciate the idea of allowing the convicts an execution in dignity by including music or counseling in the process, as well as by giving them the opportunity for a final, far-reaching statement. Besides, I also approve of your plan of contributing to the penal system funds. However, I think you and your team are overlooking too many of the negative consequences on both the convicts and the audience such a project may bear.

First of all, I am convinced that constant observation and public humiliation will lead to significant psychological damage. You are right in claiming that criminals have forfeited their rights. However, this only applies to their rights as citizens, not to their universal human rights. Your project would undeniably breach the right to dignity, the protection from degrading punishment, and the equal protection of the law. Therefore, you would violate international law by making prisoners part of experiments they have never given their consent to.

Apart from that, I strongly oppose the idea of letting the audience vote for the convict executed next. Viewers will not be qualified to make such a decision. While you are proclaiming this voting system a progressive achievement, I call it a fatal step back in history, back into jurisdictional patterns common in the Middle Ages. A development like this would lead to mob rule. The media comment on reality shows with relish, thus shaping the viewers' attitudes towards the contestants. Therefore, in the case of your show, there would be a serious danger of the media influencing the decisions on who to kill next. This would not be just.

Lastly, I would like to draw attention to the potential effects on the audience. Obviously, there is no way of controlling who views the program. Therefore, children or mentally instable people may be able to get a glimpse of the executions. The consequences of this cannot be foreseen. It might well lead to the brutalization of society. We have seen similar trends in young viewers of existing reality shows which have made formerly unacceptable behaviour seem commonplace, thereby promoting bullying, self-exposure and a tendency to dramatize events in one's life.

As you can see, the danger that lies within your proposed program is a serious one indeed. To my mind, the show you are planning poses a significant threat to human rights, ethical standards and the psychological well-being of all parties involved. Thus, I strongly hope that you will revise your concept.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Meyer

5.4.3 Self-assessment grid: Writing an email

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|---|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Beginning | | | | | | | | |
| I have written a subject line which - refers to my topic / attracts my addressee's attention - is written in keywords / no more than 8 words. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used a formal or an informal greeting that fits the addressee. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| My first sentence begins with a capital letter. | | | | | | | | |
| I have briefly introduced myself if my addressee does not know me. | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the topic and purpose of my email. | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated my opinion and explained my position. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have given convincing arguments with explanations and examples. | | | | | | | | |
| I have refuted counterarguments where possible. | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to the text(s) at hand, other sources and my knowledge about the issue. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up my position and main arguments. | | | | | | | | |
| I have made a general final statement / given an outlook for the future. | | | | | | | | |
| I have finished with a formal or friendly goodbye. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have completed the task, in terms of the - topic and purpose of my email - aspect(s) I have been asked to focus on - addressee I am writing for. | | | | | | | | |
| I have chosen a style which is adequate for my addressee. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used paragraphs with topic sentences and linked my ideas in a logical way. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetitions by using synonyms/paraphrases. | | | | | | | | |
| I have proofread my text checking vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

5.5 Writing a letter

5.5.1 Criteria for writing a letter

When writing a letter, your writing style should fit your subject and the person you are addressing. If your addressee is a peer or friend, you may use slightly informal language.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully. Look for information on:
 - your addressee
 - aspect(s) you should be dealing with in your letter
 - the purpose of your letter, e.g. informing someone about an issue, expressing your own opinion on a problem.
- 2) If you are asked to base your letter on information from a text, study the text carefully. Find and underline the information that is relevant to the task, e.g. ideas you are expected to present or comment on.
- 3) Note down the main ideas about the aspect(s) you want to focus on.
- 4) Put your notes in a convincing/logical order.
- 5) Make sure the content of your notes is relevant to the task, your addressee and the purpose of your letter.
- 7) Make sure you understand whether you are expected to write a formal letter or an informal letter. Address your recipient accordingly:

| | Style | Addressee | Phrases |
|-----------------|----------|---|---|
| Greeting | formal | person of authority / adult you do not know well; name known | <i>Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms ... (addressee's surname),</i> |
| | | representative of a company / an organization; name not known | <i>Dear Sir or Madam, / To whom it may concern,</i> |
| | informal | peer/friend/family | <i>Hi/Hey/Hello ... , (addressee's first name),</i> |
| Goodbye | formal | person of authority / adult you do not know well; name known | <i>Yours sincerely (BE) / Sincerely (yours) (AE) (Signature = your full name)</i> |
| | | representative of a company / an organization; name not known | <i>Yours faithfully / Sincerely (Signature = your full name)</i> |
| | informal | peer/friend/family | <i>Take care / Best wishes / All the best / Bye / See you soon, ... (Signature = your first name)</i> |

WRITING THE LETTER

GREETING

- Choose a greeting that fits your addressee.

INTRODUCTION

- Start with a capital letter, even though you have used a comma after the greeting.
- Briefly introduce yourself if your addressee does not know who you are.
- State your purpose for writing, e.g. commenting on ideas expressed by your addressee.
- Clearly define your topic and name the aspect(s) you are focusing on.

MAIN PART

- Write in a way that suits the purpose of your letter.
- Explain your position in detail.
- Give well-founded arguments and convincing reasons.
- Give examples and refer to important facts to back up your arguments.
- Refer to counterarguments and show that you can refute them.
- Make clear which points are the most important ones.

CONCLUSION

- Indicate that you are coming to a conclusion using phrases such as *in conclusion*, *on the whole*, *finally*, *as a result*, etc.
- Sum up your position and your main arguments. Do not, however, use the same phrasing as you used to introduce your arguments.
- Choose a goodbye that suits the person you are addressing.

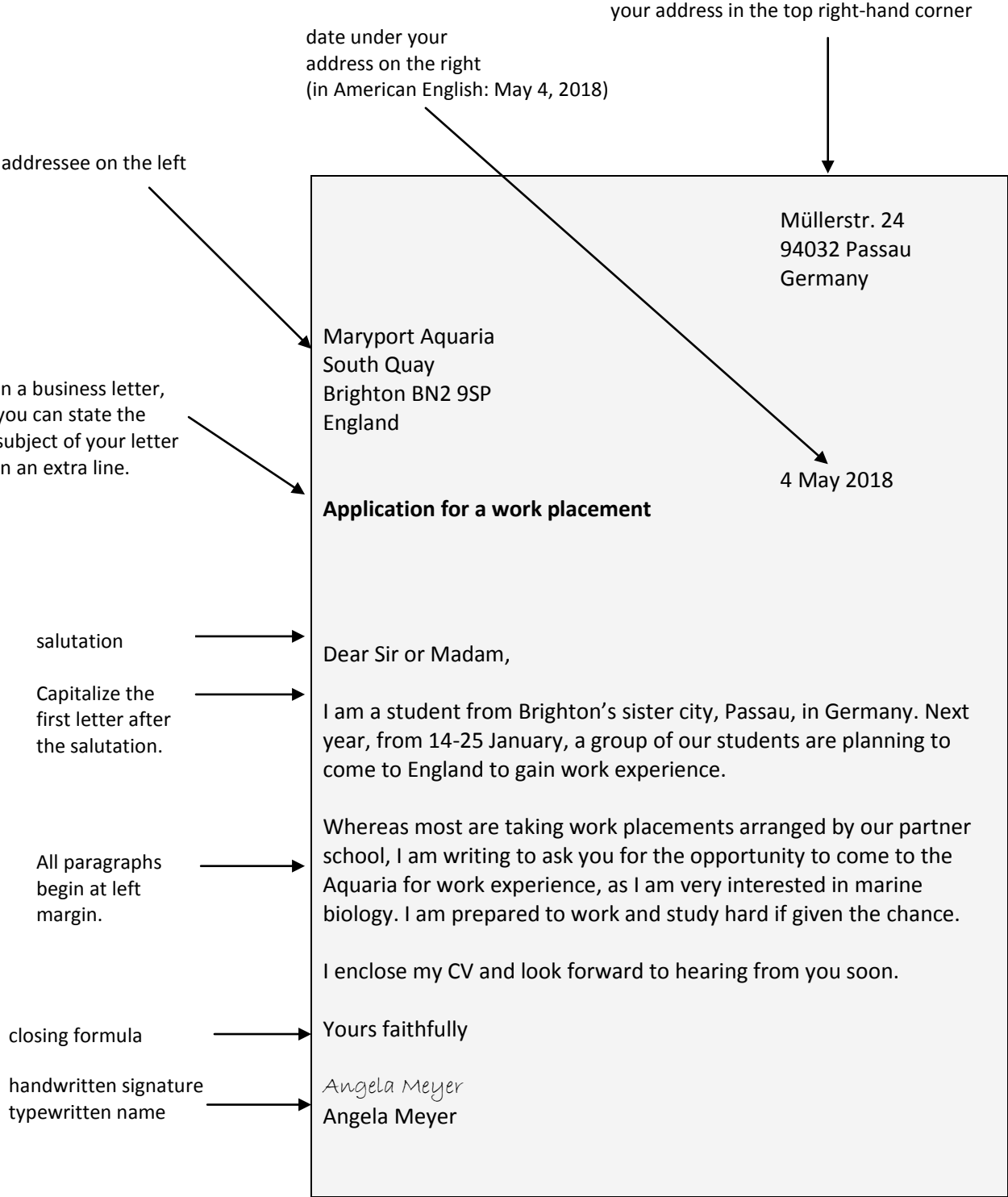
THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Write clear sentences.
- Use linking words, but be careful with lengthy sentences. Unlike German, English tends to use shorter sentences.
- Follow a clear and logical structure and use paragraphs.
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate for your addressee and purpose.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Make sure what you write serves the purpose of your letter.
- Make sure you refer to material at hand as well as to your knowledge about the issue.
- Make sure you convey your opinion in a convincing way.

5.5.2 Sample formal letter



5.5.3 Self-assessment grid: Writing a letter

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Beginning | | | | | | | | |
| I have followed the rules for letter writing, giving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - addressee - return address - date. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used a formal or an informal greeting that fits the addressee. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| My first sentence begins with a capital letter. | | | | | | | | |
| I have briefly introduced myself if my addressee does not know me. | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the topic and purpose of my letter. | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated my opinion and explained my position. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have given convincing arguments with explanations and examples. | | | | | | | | |
| I have refuted counterarguments where possible. | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to the text(s) at hand, other sources and my knowledge about the issue. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up my position and main arguments. | | | | | | | | |
| I have made a general final statement / given an outlook for the future. | | | | | | | | |
| I have finished with a formal or friendly goodbye. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have completed the task, in terms of the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - topic and purpose of my email - aspect(s) I have been asked to focus on - addressee I am writing for. | | | | | | | | |
| I have chosen a style which is adequate for my addressee. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used paragraphs with topic sentences and linked my ideas in a logical way. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetitions by using synonyms/paraphrases. | | | | | | | | |
| I have proofread my text checking vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

5.6 Writing a letter to the editor

5.6.1 Criteria for writing a letter to the editor

In general, people write letters to an editor because:

- They have been offended by something published in the paper.
- They agree or disagree with something that was published.
- They are able to offer an interesting and/or expert opinion and/or additional information on something published or a current news event.

In an examination, you may be asked to write a letter to an editor to prove that you have understood the article in question and to offer a comment on it. In any case, the reason(s) for writing a letter to the editor should be pointed out clearly in your text. You might also have to include additional information in your letter to the editor, e.g. from texts you have read or films you have seen dealing with the particular topic.

PREPARATION

- 1) Skim the text to understand the author's general attitude.
- 2) Highlight the author's arguments.
- 3) Make a list of the author's arguments you want to focus on and write your opinion next to them.
- 4) Decide on the purpose of your letter, e.g. criticism/support of the author's opinion.
- 5) Focus on ideas/arguments relevant to the task.
- 6) Refer to additional information.
- 7) Structure your notes in a logical order.

WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

- Follow the **rules of a formal letter** including addressee and return address, date, salutation (use "Sir/Madam" without "Dear"), use neutral language. Do not address the editor, however, and omit the closing. The letter ends with your name and place of residence.
- In your opening paragraph/introduction, write which article, editorial, column, public statement or recent news event you are referring to and clearly state the purpose of your letter.
- In the main part, clearly state your opinion.
- The body of the letter should have a clear structure with paragraphs that begin with topic sentences.
- Make one point (or two at the most) in your letter, for example by pointing out omissions or incorrect aspects of the story you are referring to. Be factual and do not attack the journalist(s) personally. State your point clearly, e.g.
 - *The author fails to mention ...*
 - *May I draw your attention to ...*
 - *I am concerned about ...*
- Put forward a different argument or supply additional information.
- Base your arguments on material about the issue that you are familiar with.
- If appropriate, you may include a personal perspective or experience.

- End your letter with a convincing concluding sentence.

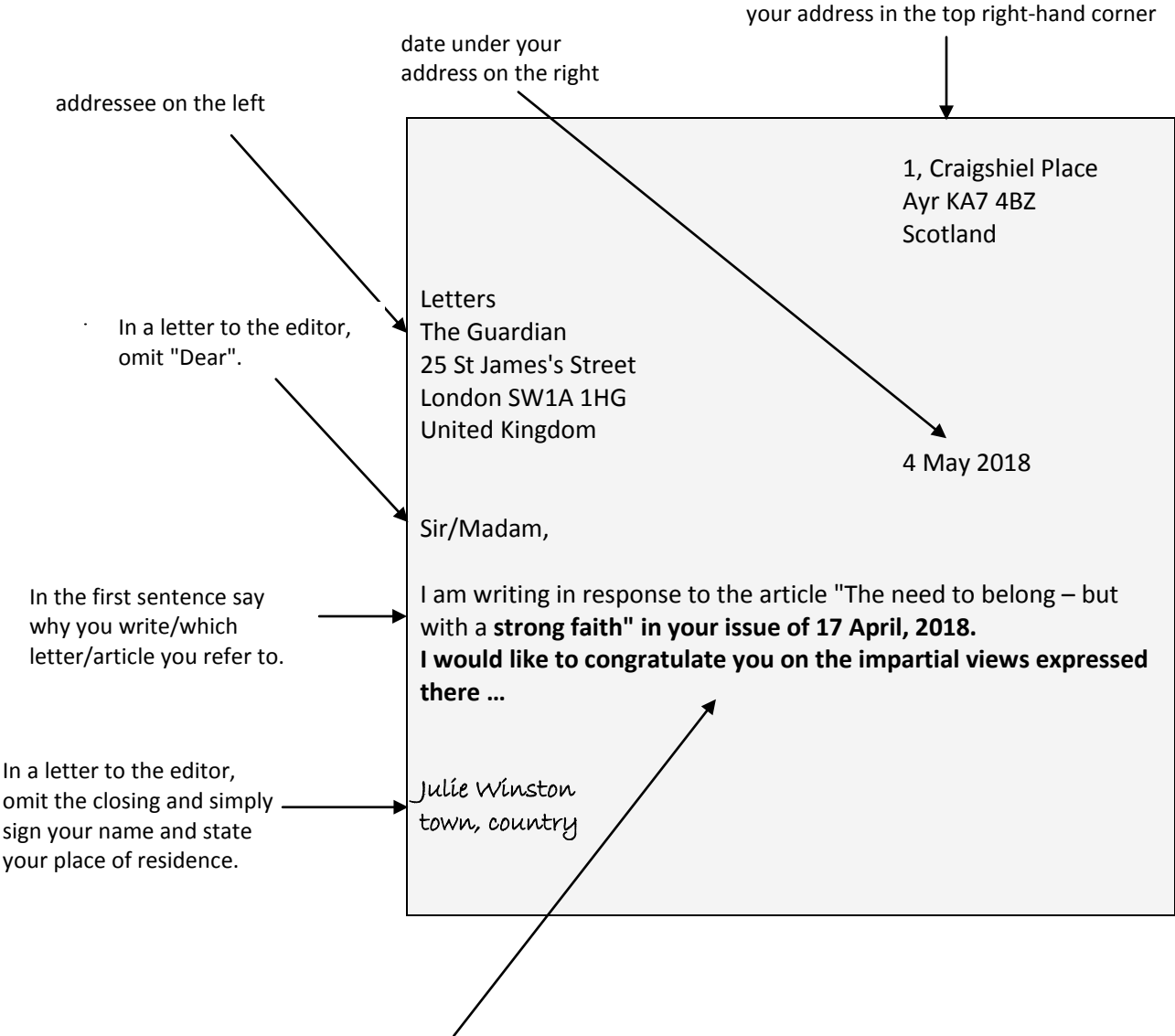
POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Keep in mind that you would like to convey a message to the editor / the readers of the newspaper/magazine.
- Be careful to focus your arguments on the message you wish to convey.
- Keep to a neutral (or sometimes even formal) style, avoiding colloquial language, slang or taboo words.
- Use linking words to connect your sentences and your ideas (see 7.5 “Linking ideas and sentences”).
- Use paragraphs with topic sentences to structure your text.

5.6.2 Sample letter to the editor

A letter to the editor follows most of the conventions of a formal letter.

Note, however, that nowadays letters to editors are often sent via email. Most newspapers and magazines offer contact information on their internet sites.



As to the content of your letter:

Clearly state your purpose. Make clear right away if you want to criticize, support or add information.

You might have to repeat a certain argument presented in the newspaper article in question to show what you are referring to, but do not tell the journalists what they have written themselves.

5.6.3 Self-assessment grid: Writing a letter to the editor

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|---|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Beginning | | | | | | | | |
| I have followed the rules for a formal letter, giving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - addressee - return address - date - salutation "Sir/Madam", omitting "Dear". | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to the article and topic in question. | | | | | | | | |
| I have clearly stated the purpose of my letter. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have stated my opinion. | | | | | | | | |
| I have presented arguments, explanations and examples to support my opinion. | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to suitable material and my knowledge about the issue to make my point. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion and ending | | | | | | | | |
| I have written a final statement, summed up my position, given an outlook for the future / made an appeal. | | | | | | | | |
| I have not written a closing. | | | | | | | | |
| I have ended the letter with my name and my place of residence. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used a neutral/formal style. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my letter logically by using paragraphs. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

5.7 Writing a speech

5.7.1 Criteria for writing a speech

A speech aims at informing, influencing and also entertaining an audience. The writer of the speech has to decide which of these aspects to emphasize, considering the purpose and the personality of the speaker, the occasion, the topic and the audience.

A speech aims to raise people's awareness about an issue. Its success not only depends on convincing arguments, but also on how it tries to attract the listeners' attention and to win them over by appealing to their values and feelings. A good speech always has a clear structure consisting of an introduction, a main part and a conclusion.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task and text(s)/material carefully. Does the task tell you
 - to speak as yourself or to take over someone's role?
 - which audience to address?
 - on what occasion to speak?
 - the topic you should be dealing with?
 - the purpose the speech should fulfil, e.g. to comment on an opinion / evaluate/offer solutions to a problem / ask for support / etc.?
- 2) In your material underline the information that is relevant to these questions.
- 3) Highlight key ideas/arguments referring to the topic of your speech. Consider which aspects you want to use for your purpose.
- 4) Consider how to make your audience understand and remember the message.
- 5) Collect ideas and make notes for your introduction, main part and conclusion:
 - Select one or more experience/s, saying/s, anecdote/s suitable to arouse the audience's interest at the beginning of the speech.
 - Note down arguments the main part should present or refute.
 - Note down facts, examples, etc. illustrating your arguments and counterarguments.
 - Find experiences, values, problems, etc. typical of the listeners' background, which show that the message of the speech is relevant to them.
- 6) Put your notes in a convincing/logical order.
- 7) Make sure the content of your notes is relevant to the task, your target group and the message you want to convey.

WRITING THE SPEECH

INTRODUCTION

- Begin with a thank you to the organizers/hosts for having invited you.
- Then thank your audience for being there.
- Address your listeners in a way that is appealing to them. Depending on the situation, you could tell a joke/an anecdote / use a proverb / raise a question / etc. to arouse their interest.
- Then introduce the topic and the points you want to cover.

MAIN PART

- Present your main arguments/points in detail.
- Focus clearly on ideas that are relevant to your target group and message.
- Support your arguments/points/ideas with information/facts/examples from the text(s) at hand / other sources you are familiar with as well as your general knowledge about the issue.

CONCLUSION

- Indicate that you are coming to your conclusion.
- Sum up your most important point(s).
- Make sure your audience gets your message through a final memorable statement / an outlook for the future / a call to action / etc.
- Thank your audience for listening.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Address your target group in an appealing way.
- Use clear structures. Avoid long, intricate sentences.
- Make sure that your vocabulary is appropriate for your target group and purpose.
- Give well-founded arguments / convincing reasons / examples / important facts for your points.
- Refer to experiences/wishes/worries shared by / relevant to your target group.
- If they help to convey the message of your speech, use rhetorical devices (e.g. contrast, repetition, enumeration, rhetorical question, figurative language).
- Structure your text visibly by using paragraphs.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Speeches are spoken. Although most speeches are read from a script and not given spontaneously, their language must be immediately comprehensible to listeners because they hear it only once.
- For your arguments, use your notes (based on ideas from the material/text(s) at hand, other material you are familiar with and your knowledge about the issue).
- Make sure you link your ideas in a convincing way.
- Make sure what you say helps to convey your message.

5.7.2 Using rhetorical devices

When writing a speech, an article or a story, use rhetorical devices to make your ideas clearer and to convince your readers of what you want to say. The table lists some devices you might want to use. At the bottom you can add your own examples.

| Device | Example | Intended effect on reader |
|---------------------|--|--|
| use of "we" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>We usually feel upset when ...</i> - <i>We must act to change this situation.</i> | feels included, directly addressed |
| facts and figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>85 % of our students own a smartphone.</i> - <i>Almost half of all German teenagers ...</i> | sees you have expert knowledge |
| quote / reference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I have read an interesting interview in "The New York Times Magazine" ...</i> - <i>The President made very clear that ...</i> | sees you have expert knowledge |
| rhetorical question | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Have you ever heard of ...?</i> - <i>Wouldn't you also say that this is unfair?</i> | thinks about question and possible answer |
| enumeration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>girls, boys, their parents and teachers</i> - <i>water, wind and solar energy</i> | can imagine situation |
| contrast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>On the one hand many people believe ..., on the other hand they ...</i> - <i>Some people believe ..., but I feel ...</i> | sees differences clearer, understands problem |
| repetition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>You know that ... You also know that ...</i> - <i>I've heard that ... I've also heard that ...</i> | understands importance of idea expressed |
| alliteration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>beautiful book</i> - <i>windy weather</i> | pays attention to phrase |
| imagery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>as bright as gold / like the sun</i> - <i>all the world's a stage</i> | sees a vivid picture |
| anaphora | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Who is to blame, who is to look to ...</i> | pays attention to phrases / focuses on important aspects |
| allusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Don't act like a Romeo.</i> - <i>It sank like the Titanic.</i> - <i>Having lost his job, he acted like a Scrooge.</i> | thinks of parallels / feels included / flattered because he/she understands allusion |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

5.7.3 Sample speech

Text: Nicholas Carr. "Is Google Making Us Stupid?". *The Atlantic Magazine*, July/Aug. 2008. Accessed Sept. 21, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/>.

Task: For the youth conference "Digital Natives", write a speech commenting on how information technology has shaped our lives. Use ideas from Carr's article as a starting point.

Fellow millennials and treasured digital natives!

Thank you for inviting me to present my ideas on the influence of the internet. Now, hands up, please! Who of you has sent a Google query today? Or checked their Facebook feed? Or their twitter profile? Social media and other online services, which are constantly providing us with information, have shaped our daily lives. Who can remember the days when we did not look up the way home on the net? No doubt, the times are changing. And with them, we are, too. We are changing in the ways we interact, the ways we read, the ways we think.









However, always relying on the internet may bear certain risks. What about our independence? Our ability to think about and remember things? Is Google making us stupid? In his article which uses this question as its title, journalist Nicholas Carr discusses the impact of search engines on our intellectual capacity and mental processes. He has found out that using webpages the way we do may dramatically reduce our capability of concentration and our willingness to stop and reflect. With the world at our fingertips, the way we read and process information has become increasingly superficial. We are losing our ability to "deep-read" and think on our own. We are not willing to interpret texts and to contemplate the authors' ideas. We are merely looking for quick facts. However, if we find information without any effort at all, where is our food for thought?









Let us have a closer look at the digital services we use: We browse the internet to shop, to date, to stay tuned. We rely on health trackers to tell us when we should be feeling sick. We text our friends who are sitting right next to us. This omnipresent use of the internet results in us depending on its availability. Who could actually find their way home without Google maps tonight? Apart from that, we are starting to replace real-life activities with online substitutes. We look up music groups, places and restaurants on the internet instead of throwing ourselves out there and seeing for ourselves. We are conditioned to depend on our smartphones.

However, what happens if the information provided is false? With Fake News on the rise, it has become harder to differentiate between fact and fiction. This is partly rooted in our trust in search engines. We have stopped questioning the reliability of their results. Besides, it is no secret that Google and companies like Facebook use customer-specific filters. That means we are not presented with all the available information, but only with a fragment. And this, millennials, is where the danger lies. We are losing our ability to grasp an issue in its entirety. This filtering of experience paired with a new way of superficial processing of information and our dependency on the Internet may be toxic.

We, the first generation of digital natives, have to stop and think for a minute. How can we reduce our dependency on online services? How can we stop skim-reading and start grasping the full import of the messages of the texts we are reading? How can we detect wrong information? How can we stop Google from making us dumb? Our future lies in our own hands. If we all just do a little, we will be able to move a lot together. So, my fellow millennials, I urge you to look up from your phones and try to find your way home on your own tonight. Thank you for listening!

5.7.4 Self-assessment grid: Writing a speech

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have greeted and addressed my audience in an appealing/ appropriate way. | | | | | | | | |
| I have thanked my hosts for inviting me and my audience for being there. | | | | | | | | |
| I have told a joke/an anecdote / used a proverb / raised a question / etc. to arouse my audience's interest. | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the topic and the points I want to cover. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have put a clear focus on the most important ideas/ arguments for my purpose. | | | | | | | | |
| I have put forward well-founded, convincing arguments and refuted counterarguments where possible. | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to supporting examples/facts. | | | | | | | | |
| I have referred to experiences/values/problems/etc. typical of the listeners' background. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used ideas from the available material/text. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used ideas from other material and my knowledge about the issue. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have indicated that I am concluding. | | | | | | | | |
| I have repeated my most important point(s), made a final memorable statement / a call to action / etc. | | | | | | | | |
| I have thanked my audience for listening. | | | | | | | | |

| Final Check |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have made sure that I have included all the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have fulfilled the general purpose of my speech: discussed / commented on / offered solutions to the problem / etc. | | | | | | | | |
| In all parts I have focused on my audience and my intention. | | | | | | | | |
| I have clearly stated my ideas using straightforward sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my speech logically by using paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have linked my ideas in a convincing way. | | | | | | | | |
| My vocabulary is appropriate for my target group. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used rhetorical devices to convey my message. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

6 Mediation

6.1 Summing up information from a German text

6.1.1 General criteria for summing up information from a German text

The main goal of mediation (Sprachmittlung) is ‘getting the message across’ in another language. Do not translate literally. Merely render the information asked for in factual language and pay attention to the purpose and addressee as stated in the task.

The person you are producing the mediation for might have asked you to outline certain aspects of a text (see 2.2.1 “Criteria for outlining information”). Thus, include only what is necessary for giving information about these aspects. Usually you will have to sum up information from German texts.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task carefully. Find out which ideas contained in the original text you have to mention and which genre you are expected to produce (e.g. article, blog entry, email), e.g. *For a project on ..., write a blog entry summing up what the author of the article says about ...*
- 2) Identify and highlight key words and sentences in the German text you need to focus on to complete the mediation task. Then take notes on all the information you need to complete your task in English.
- 3) Think of ways to paraphrase words which you do not know.
- 4) Consider ideas/names/technical terms which you need to explain to a reader who might not be familiar with them due to e.g. a different cultural background.

SUMMING UP INFORMATION FROM A GERMAN TEXT

- When you outline information from a German text you sum up the information relevant to your reader(s) in English.
- You also give explanations that are necessary for someone who is not familiar with Germany or the German culture. For example, when writing about recycling in Germany, you need to explain the concept of “gelbe Tonne” in English.
- Do not forget to give the source of the information you are outlining.
- Structure your text clearly: Link your ideas in a convincing way and use paragraphs with topic sentences.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Consider what exactly the information is that is needed from you.
- Do not translate. Paraphrase the issue/message/main ideas relevant to your task.
- Focus on the contents of the German text and do not interpret or comment on the author’s ideas.
- Leave out smaller/irrelevant details.
- Make sure what you write fits the genre you are expected to produce.

6.1.2 Self-assessment grid: Summing up information from a German text

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Preparation | | | | | | | | |
| I have highlighted all the information in the text that is relevant to the task. | | | | | | | | |
| In English I have taken notes on the information that is relevant to the addressee and to the task. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have related the task to the text. | | | | | | | | |
| I have mentioned my source. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have included all the essential aspects. | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained facts and terms the addressee might not be familiar with. | | | | | | | | |
| I have not translated word for word. | | | | | | | | |
| I have changed direct speech into indirect speech if necessary, using verbs like <i>say</i> , <i>claim</i> , <i>believe</i> , <i>suggest</i> . | | | | | | | | |
| I have neither used "I" nor expressed my personal opinion or made any comments. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure that I have included the relevant aspects from my notes. | | | | | | | | |
| I have structured my text by writing paragraphs that begin with topic sentences. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

6.2 Writing an email summing up information from a German text

6.2.1 Criteria for writing an email summing up information from a German text

PREPARATION (see 6.1.1 “General criteria for summing up information from a German text”)

WRITING THE EMAIL

SUBJECT LINE

- Write a subject line that fits the content of your email.
- Do not use a translation of the headline/title of the German text at hand.

GREETING

- Choose a greeting that fits your addressee.

INTRODUCTION

- Start with a capital letter, even though you have used a comma after the greeting.
- State your purpose for writing and explain why you are outlining the information from the German text. Refer to your addressee and what you expect him/her to be interested in.
- Clearly define your topic and name the aspect(s) you are focusing on.
- Give the source of the information you are summing up.
- Paraphrase the headline/title of the German text.

MAIN PART

- Focus on summing up the aspect(s) you are expected to present/deal with.
- Leave out smaller/irrelevant details.
- Do not translate passages from the text at hand.
- Present the ideas in a logical order. You do not need to follow the structure of the German text.
- Give necessary explanations (e.g. typical German terms, concepts, public figures, etc.).
- Do not express your own opinion on the ideas you are outlining.

CONCLUSION

- Indicate that you are coming to a conclusion by using phrases such as *in short, as you can see, as presented above, overall, etc.*
- When outlining information, it is enough if you write one final sentence summing up the overall idea. But do not repeat what you have said above word for word.
- Choose a goodbye that fits the person you are addressing.









THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Write clear sentences.
- Use linking words, but be careful with lengthy sentences. Unlike German, English tends to use shorter sentences.
- Follow a clear and logical structure and use paragraphs.
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate for your addressee and purpose.

POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN DEALING WITH A MEDIATION TASK

- You are expected to inform your reader about ideas which you have found in a German text. You are not expected to express your thoughts on these ideas.
- Consider what your addressee is interested in and focus on this/these aspect(s).

6.2.2 Self-assessment grid: Writing an email summing up information from a German text

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Beginning | | | | | | | | |
| I have written a subject line which - refers to my topic / attracts my addressee's attention - is written in keywords / no more than 8 words. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used a formal or an informal greeting that fits my addressee. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| My first sentence begins with a capital letter. | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the topic and purpose of my email. | | | | | | | | |
| I have given my source, paraphrasing the German headline/title of the text at hand. | | | | | | | | |
| I have made an overall statement on the aspect(s) my email focuses on. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have outlined the most important points. | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained names/concepts typical of Germany. | | | | | | | | |
| I have not given my personal opinion. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up the overall idea. | | | | | | | | |
| I have finished with a formal or friendly goodbye. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure I have completed the task in terms of the - topic and purpose of my email - aspect(s) I have been asked to focus on - addressee I am writing for. | | | | | | | | |
| I have chosen a style which is suitable for my addressee. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used paragraphs and linked my ideas in a logical way. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetitions by using synonyms/paraphrases. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

6.3 Writing an article summing up information from a German text

6.3.1 Criteria for writing an article summing up information from a German text

PREPARATION (see 6.1.1 “General criteria for summing up information from a German text”)

WRITING THE ARTICLE

HEADLINE/TITLE

- Find a headline/title that captures your readers’ interest / focuses on the aspect(s) you are expected to cover.
- Do not use a translation of the headline/title of the German text at hand.

INTRODUCTION

- Keep your introduction as short as possible.
- Explain why you are outlining the information from the German text. Refer to your target group and explain why you think that the information might be relevant to them.
- Clearly define your topic and name the aspect(s) you are focusing on.
- Give the source of the information you are summing up.
- Paraphrase the headline/title of the German text.

MAIN PART

- Focus on summing up the aspect(s) you are expected to present.
- Leave out smaller/irrelevant details.
- Do not translate passages from the text at hand.
- Present the ideas in a logical order. You do not need to follow the structure of the German text.
- Give necessary explanations (e.g. typical German terms, concepts, public figures, etc.).
- Do not express your own opinion on the ideas you are outlining.

CONCLUSION

- Indicate that you are coming to a conclusion using phrases such as *in short, as you can see, as presented above, overall, etc.*
- When you are outlining information, it is enough if you write one final sentence with a brief summary of the overall idea.
- Make sure you do not repeat what you have said above word for word.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Write clear sentences.
- Use linking words, but be careful with lengthy sentences.
- Follow a clear and logical structure and use paragraphs.
- Write in a way which appeals to your target group.
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate for your target group and purpose.

POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN DEALING WITH A MEDIATION TASK

- You are expected to inform your readers about ideas which you have found in the German text. You are not expected to express your thoughts on these ideas.
- Consider the interests of the readers of the newspaper/magazine you are writing for and focus on aspect(s) relevant to them.

9.3.2 How to begin and end an article (mediation)

Article for a website for a youth project on new technical developments

Text: Koch, Moritz: „Computer am Steuer ist noch ungeheuer“. *Die Süddeutsche*, 12. Juni 2012. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/auto/fahren-ohne-fahrer-computer-am-steuer-ist-noch-ungeheuer-1.1380556> [09.12.13]

Task: For the website of an international youth project on science and technology, write an article summing up the information on autonomous cars as presented by Moritz Koch.

Example 1

Cars without drivers – Fantasy or reality?

Although we associate self-driving vehicles, autonomous cars, and autopilot systems with sci-fi novels, these inventions already exist in real life. But they raise many questions:

How far have these technical developments progressed? Will we all be using them in the near future? Which problems can they solve? And can we really depend on them?

In his article on computer-controlled cars, “Computer am Steuer ist noch ungeheuer“, published in a leading German newspaper, “Die Süddeutsche“, on December 9, 2013, Moritz Koch discusses the latest scientific developments in this field. For our project, I’d like to sum up his main ideas.

[...]

To conclude, one can find positive as well as negative aspects when looking at the issue of self-driving cars. Eventually, people will just have to decide for themselves whether they want to use them or not.

Example 2

Thank you, Google, for another technical development that makes our lives easier!!!

No more traffic jams, no more accidents and no longer having to drive, wouldn’t we all just love these developments in the field of transport? Well, Google is making these dreams come true. I’ve just read the article “Computer am Steuer ist noch ungeheuer“ by Moritz Koch in the December 9, 2013 edition of the “Süddeutsche“, a leading German paper, which deals with the issue of self-driving cars. Let me outline the main ideas for you.

[...]

Don’t you agree that, in spite of the minor drawbacks, in the long run we’ll all profit from the development of driverless vehicles because they will make our lives easier?

6.3.3 Self-assessment grid: Writing an article summing up information from a German text

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Headline/Title | | | | | | | | |
| I have found a catchy headline/title which refers to the topic and appeals to my target group. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the topic and purpose of my article. | | | | | | | | |
| I have given my source, paraphrasing the German headline/title of the text at hand. | | | | | | | | |
| I have made an overall statement on the aspect(s) my article focuses on. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have directly addressed / focused on my readers. | | | | | | | | |
| I have outlined the most important points. | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained names/concepts typical of Germany. | | | | | | | | |
| I have not given my personal opinion. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up the overall idea. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure I have completed the task in terms of the | | | | | | | | |
| - topic and purpose of my article | | | | | | | | |
| - aspect(s) I have been asked to focus on | | | | | | | | |
| - target group of the magazine I am writing for. | | | | | | | | |
| I have chosen a style which is adequate for my target group. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used paragraphs and linked my ideas in a logical way. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetitions by using synonyms/paraphrases. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

6.4 Writing a blog entry summing up information from a German text

6.4.1 Criteria for writing a blog entry summing up information from a German text

PREPARATION (see 6.1.1 “General criteria for summing up information from a German text”)

WRITING THE BLOG ENTRY

HEADLINE/TITLE

- Find a headline/title that captures your readers’ interest / focuses on the aspect(s) you are covering.
- Do not use a translation of the headline/title of the German text at hand.

INTRODUCTION

- Keep your introduction as short as possible.
- Explain why you are outlining the information from the German text. Refer to your target group and explain why you think that the information might be of relevance to them.
- Clearly define your topic and name the aspect(s) you are focusing on.
- Give the source of the information you are summing up.
- Paraphrase the headline/title of the German text.

MAIN PART

- Focus on summing up the aspect(s) you are expected to present/deal with.
- Leave out smaller/irrelevant details.
- Do not translate passages from the text at hand.
- Present the ideas in a logical order. You do not need to follow the structure of the German text.
- Give necessary explanations (e.g. typical German terms, concepts, public figures, etc.).
- Do not express your own opinion on the ideas you are outlining.

CONCLUSION

- Indicate that you are coming to a conclusion using phrases such as *in short*, *as you can see*, *as presented above*, *overall*, etc.
- When you are outlining information from a German text, it is enough if you write one final sentence with a brief summary of the overall idea.
- Make sure you do not repeat what you have said above word for word.
- Additionally, you may call your readers to action or ask them to comment on your blog entry.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TEXT

- Write clear sentences.
- Use linking words, but be careful with lengthy sentences.
- Follow a clear and logical structure and use paragraphs.
- Write in a way which appeals to your target group.
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate for your target group and purpose.

POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN DEALING WITH A MEDIATION TASK

- You are expected to inform your readers about ideas which you have found in German texts. You are not expected to express your thoughts on these ideas.
- Consider the interests of the readers of the blog you are writing for and focus on aspect(s) relevant to them.

6.4.2 How to begin and end a blog entry (mediation)

1 Blog entry for the website of an international youth project on robotics

Text: Ladurner, Ulrich. „Wenn Roboter töten“. *Die Zeit*, 3. März 2013.
<http://www.zeit.de/2013/03/Roboter-Maschinenkrieg-Drohnen>. [03.03.14]

Task: For the website of an international youth project on “Robotics”, write a blog entry outlining what Ulrich Ladurner writes about the use of robots and drones in war.

Example 1

Automatic killing machines

We’re terribly afraid of wars. Nevertheless, we can’t always avoid having to fight them, which leads to far too many deaths on the battle fields. So wouldn’t it be great if we could let machines fight for us?

In his article “When robots kill”, published in the German weekly paper “Die Zeit” on March 3, 2013, Ulrich Ladurner assumes that in the near future, robots will be used in warfare. In the following, I’d like to sum up his ideas on the issue for you.

[...]

So we should all keep in mind: if machines fight our wars, we might have to face dangers that are even more threatening than those we have to face in traditional wars. What do you guys think about this issue? I’m looking forward to your comments.

Example 2

Robots - The soldiers of the future?

As most of the blog entries you can read on this site show, we seem to believe that robots are our future. We expect that soon we’ll all be using them as household help or drivers. But can you imagine using robots as soldiers? I couldn’t, until I read about this idea in an article by Ulrich Ladurner, published in the online edition of the German weekly paper “Die Zeit” from March 3, 2013. There, the author informs us about recent developments in the fields of robotics and the risks he sees in them. The headline of his article could be translated as “When robots murder”. Let me sum up his main ideas for you.

[...]

So when we’re coming up with ideas for new technologies we could develop in our project, let’s focus on improving our lives. We are responsible for our inventions and have to make sure they cannot be used for purposes that might be harmful to humankind.

Example 3

We need to be aware of the risks of robotic developments

On this website on “robotics” I’ve found many interesting articles on great robots that will make our lives easier. However, I haven’t found a single one that warns of the risks recent developments in robotics might bring with them. This really worries me and, thus, I’ll focus in my article on the use of robots in wars. Since I’m not an expert in this field, I’ll outline Ulrich Ladurner’s ideas on the issue. He published them in “Die Zeit”, a German weekly newspaper, on March 3, 2013, in an article entitled “When robots kill”.

[...]

I hope that I have given you some food for thought and that I’ll soon be able to read other blog entries that focus on similar problems. Only if we’re aware of the dangers of modern technologies will we be able to think of ways of how to fight them.

6.4.3 Self-assessment grid: Writing a blog entry summing up information from a German text

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|--|-------|--|--|--|-------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Headline/Title | | | | | | | | |
| I have found a catchy headline/title which refers to the topic and appeals to my target group. | | | | | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | | | | | |
| I have introduced the topic and purpose of my blog entry. | | | | | | | | |
| I have given my source, paraphrasing the German headline/title of the text at hand. | | | | | | | | |
| I have made an overall statement on the aspect(s) my blog entry focuses on. | | | | | | | | |
| Main part | | | | | | | | |
| I have directly addressed / focused on my readers. | | | | | | | | |
| I have outlined the most important points. | | | | | | | | |
| I have explained names/concepts typical of Germany. | | | | | | | | |
| I have not given my personal opinion. | | | | | | | | |
| Conclusion | | | | | | | | |
| I have summed up the overall idea. | | | | | | | | |
| Final check | | | | | | | | |
| I have made sure I have completed the task, in terms of the | | | | | | | | |
| - topic and purpose of my blog entry | | | | | | | | |
| - aspect(s) I have been asked to focus on | | | | | | | | |
| - target group of the blog I am writing for. | | | | | | | | |
| I have chosen a style which is adequate for my target group. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used paragraphs and linked my ideas in a logical way. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetitions by using synonyms/paraphrases. | | | | | | | | |
| I have checked my vocabulary/grammar/spelling using a dictionary. | | | | | | | | |

7 General advice on writing

In order to produce a text of good quality, you have to go through various stages of writing. Here are the most important points you should keep in mind:

7.1 Preparation

Plan your written work thoroughly by

- **brainstorming:** collecting ideas and material and noting down keywords
- **narrowing the scope:** selecting the points you would like to make in your writing and abandoning those which are inappropriate or not important
- **structuring:** arranging your main points/ideas/arguments in a clear and logical order. Use e.g. a mind map, a flow chart or a table. Make sure all your aspects are laid out very clearly (i.e. in a few words, using a clear structure). Instead of graphic organizers, you might also use a list indicating relating ideas by using colours and logical sequence of ideas with numbers.

7.2 Writing stages

- 1) **Write a first draft** following your plan.
 - Do not spend too much time on finding the right wording/choice of words yet.
 - Leave plenty of space for your own additions and corrections.
 - Read your finished first draft and make first improvements.
 - Use a dictionary to help you with wording/choice of words you were not sure of or happy about earlier.
 - Ask a fellow student to read your draft for you and to give feedback.

- 2) Always allow enough time to **re-read** and **proofread your text**.
Thoroughly **revise** your text with regard to
 - content
 - structure/logical order
 - style
 - grammar/sentence structure
 - vocabulary/idiomatic expressions
 - spelling and punctuation(see 7.7 “Self-assessment grid – Revising written texts”).

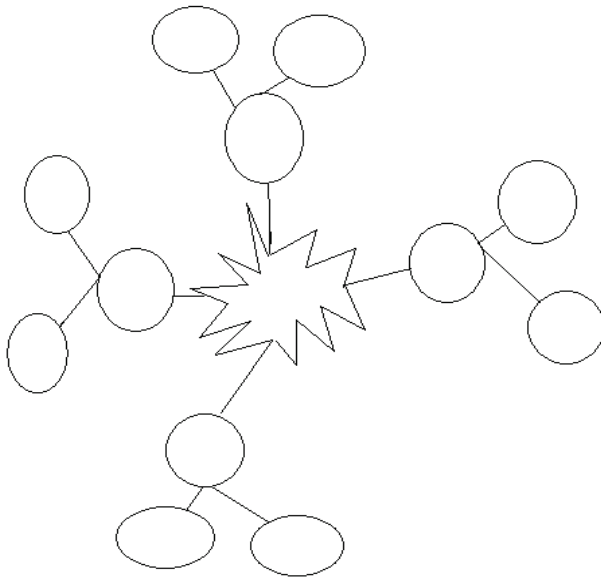
- 3) **Rewrite your text:** Make a fair copy of your work if you have enough time to do so.

7.3 Using graphic organizers to get started

You can prepare a task by means of graphic organizers. Graphic organizers help you to visually organize information and to show relationships between the different aspects of a text/problem. Your choice of graphic organizer depends on the kind of task you have to do.

Examples

Mind map

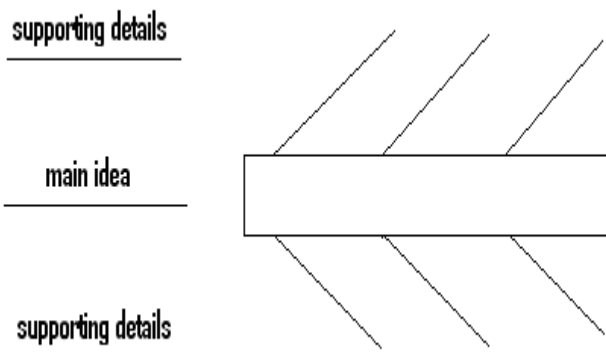


Brainstorming, getting a general or detailed view of a topic

A mind map is a good way to get started as it helps you to structure your very first ideas and to explore the relationships between aspects that are important for your task.

Write a keyword or phrase in the middle of your sheet of paper. Connect ideas with this central word or phrase by means of lines. Make sure that your ideas are logically connected to each other. You can write words and phrases along the lines, use colours to highlight certain aspects and add symbols, pictures or icons to stress the important points.

Herringbone/Fishbone



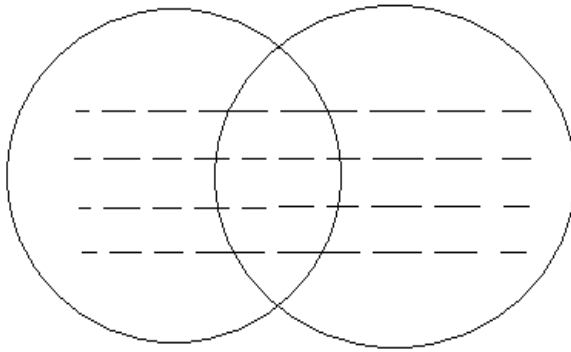
Identifying the main idea and supporting details

The herringbone or fishbone can show your understanding of a text. Establish the main idea of the text and write it on the backbone of the fish. On each of the six lines you deal with a question that can be related to the main idea of the text. Focus on e.g.

- *Who?*
- *Where?*
- *How?*
- *What?*
- *Why?*
- *When?*

Write the answers on the lines. You may also note down arguments.

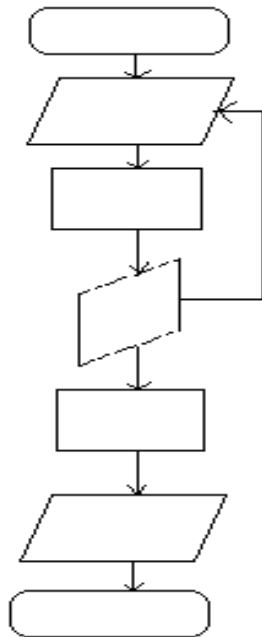
Venn diagram



Comparing and contrasting

When you compare literary texts / films / real-life experiences, the Venn diagram can be very helpful. Draw two overlapping circles and write the similarities in the overlapping middle and the differences in the areas which do not overlap.

Flowchart



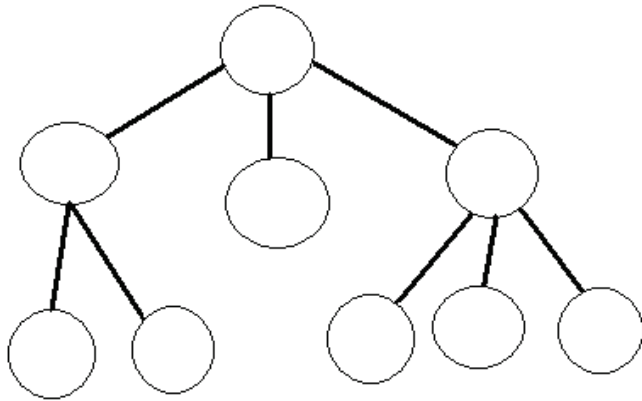
Visualizing a process, establishing the sequence of events, actions, etc.

Flowcharts are used to depict the various steps of a process, sequence of events, actions, etc., in a logical order.

Arrows indicate the direction of the process.

Flowcharts can also be useful tools in decision-making as they can help explore alternative paths and show the ensuing events and results.

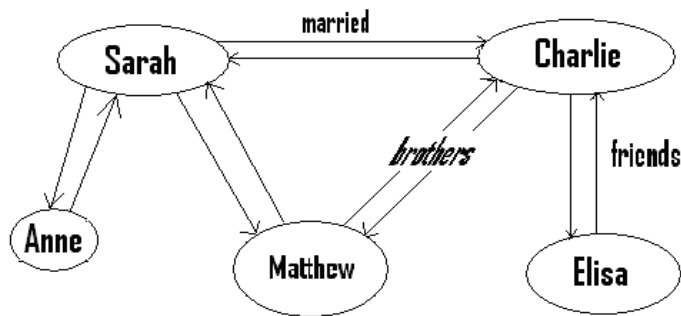
Tree diagram



Finding the root-cause of a problem, analyzing possible outcomes of an event

The tree diagram provides an even better way to explore ensuing events and results than the flowchart. Furthermore, its hierarchical structure makes a step-by-step understanding of complex issues possible. By breaking down broader categories into smaller ones, you move from the general to the specific. Write the main topic on top of the diagram. Below the main topic you write the subtopics. Break the latter ones again into smaller categories until you have gained a detailed view of the whole issue.

Concept map



Establishing relationships among concepts and/or ideas

By means of concept maps, you can depict complex relationships, e.g. between characters as well as their developments. Write the concepts that you want to relate to each other in bubbles or boxes. Connect them with arrows. Define the relationship between the concepts by writing words or brief phrases along the arrows. You may also use symbols.

7.4 Dealing with vocabulary problems – Using dictionaries

When searching for words to express your ideas, (online) dictionaries can be very helpful, especially, if you cannot come up with a word with a similar or more general meaning or a way to paraphrase what you want to say.

Here are some tips on how to deal with vocabulary problems when writing:

1. Try to solve your problem without using a dictionary.

- Use **synonyms** you are familiar with:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|---------------|
| e.g. indigenous | → | native |
| occupation | → | job |
| bias | → | one-sidedness |

- Use words or phrases with a more general meaning (**generic terms**):

| | | |
|------------|---|----------------------|
| e.g. Maori | → | native people |
| flu | → | illness |
| Fox | → | broadcasting company |

- Explain** what you want to say:

| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| e.g. burkini | → | swimsuit which covers almost the whole body |
| robotics | → | technology dealing with the development and operation of robots |
| menial work | → | usually not well-paid work that does not require special skills |

2. Use bilingual dictionaries to find translations.

- If you cannot come up with a word you need, look up the German word in a bilingual dictionary to find a translation.

Berlin students sitting their A-level exams in 2021 will be the first to be allowed to use a print edition of a bilingual as well as a monolingual dictionary. To **practice how to use bilingual dictionaries effectively**, use special editions which are recommended for senior classes and the A-level exams.

Of course, outside the classroom or in your lessons, if your teacher allows you to do so, you may also use online dictionaries. Here are a few examples of bilingual dictionaries which you can find online:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| e.g. Cambridge: | https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/ |
| Collins: | https://www.collinsdictionary.com/translator |
| Dict.cc: | http://www.dict.cc/ |
| Leo: | http://dict.leo.org/ |
| Pons: | http://de.pons.com/ |

- Many words have several translations. To find the best word for your purpose, **read all the meanings listed in the entry**.
- Make sure you have found the correct form for your sentence by looking at the **additional information**, e.g. (forms of an irregular) verb (v), (countable or uncountable) noun (n), (comparative of an) adjective (adj.), adverb (adv.).

3. Use monolingual dictionaries to check the usage of a word.

- Use **monolingual dictionaries to double check** whether the word you have found in a bilingual dictionary fits your purpose.

Until further notice, you will only be allowed to use print editions in your exams. But when practising you may also use online editions:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| e.g. Cambridge: | https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ |
| Collins: | http://www.collinsdictionary.com/ |
| Longman: | https://www.ldoceonline.com/ |
| Merriam-Webster: | https://www.merriam-webster.com/ , https://www.m-w.com/ |
| Oxford: | https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/ |

- Check whether the English explanation expresses what you want to say.
- Look at the complete entry to make sure you do not miss anything you need to be aware of. This can also help you **avoid using false friends**:

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| e.g. <i>German</i> : aktuell | → | <i>English</i> : topical, current, up-to-date |
| <i>English</i> : actual | → | <i>German</i> : wirklich, tatsächlich |
| <i>German</i> : bekommen | → | <i>English</i> : to get |
| <i>English</i> : to become | → | <i>German</i> : werden |

- Check how the **words** are **used in context**.
To see how a word is used in context, it can be very helpful to have a look at the **example sentences** which illustrate common usage and collocations. These are often marked with a symbol such as ◇. Dictionaries also list idioms (IDM). Idioms are groups of words in a fixed order that have a meaning different from the meanings of each word on its own. You need to check very carefully whether a certain idiom fits your purpose.
- Check which **prepositions** go with the words you want to use.
Dictionaries usually list the prepositions together with the words. They also make clear which verbs are **phrasal verbs** (PHR V) that need to be combined with certain prepositions or adverbs (e.g. *break in*, *break down*, *break off*, *break out*, or *break up*). This information is often given at the end of the dictionary entry.
- Make sure the word you want to use fits the **register** of the text you are writing.
Dictionaries always make clear whether a word is used in a formal, an informal or an offensive way or if it is so vulgar that it is considered to be a taboo word.

4. Try to find synonyms or antonyms.

- Use **words with the same/similar meaning** (synonyms) to make sure you use a wide range of vocabulary and avoid repetitions:

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|---|-----------------|
| e.g. global | → | worldwide | → | universal |
| pollution | → | contamination | → | dirtiness |
| tolerance | → | understanding | → | open-mindedness |

- Try to replace words with a very general meaning with words with a **more precise meaning**:

| | | | | | | |
|---------|---|-----------|---|-------------|---|------------|
| e.g. do | → | perform | → | work on | → | study |
| get | → | receive | → | achieve | → | reach |
| great | → | prominent | → | magnificent | → | remarkable |

- You may also use **words with the opposite meaning** (antonyms) and put them into a negative form:

| | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| e.g. ignorant | → | <u>un</u> educated |
| open | → | <u>un</u> biased |
| freethinking | → | <u>non</u> conformist |

- If you cannot come up with a synonym, use a dictionary which lists synonyms (SYN) or a **thesaurus**. You can also find a thesaurus online:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| e.g. Collins: | http://www.collinsdictionary.com/english-thesaurus |
| Merriam-Webster: | http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/thesaurus |
| Oxford: | https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/english-thesaurus |
| Synonym: | http://www.synonym.com/ |
| Thesaurus: | http://www.thesaurus.com/ |
| Wordslike: | http://www.wordslike.org/ |

- Use a dictionary of antonyms to **find words with opposite meaning**. Often you can also find opposites (OPP) in a dictionary or thesaurus.
Here are examples of online dictionaries which focus on antonyms:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| e.g. Antonyms: | http://www.antonymswords.com/ |
| Antonym finder: | http://www.synonym-antonym.com/ |

5. Check the usage of a word by looking at sentences you find online.

- Type the phrase** you want to use **into a search machine** by putting the words **in quotation marks**. The higher the number of hits, the more authentic/idiomatic the phrase is.
- When doing so, make sure you only use reliable sources where the authors of the texts are native speakers.
- Use **dictionaries with words in context** to see how a word is used in an authentic way:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| e.g. Linguee: | http://www.linguee.de/ |
| Word Reference: | http://www.wordreference.com |

7.5 Linking ideas and sentences

There are various ways to connect thoughts and arguments. Some structures help you to avoid unnecessary words and make a text more coherent and readable.

Examples

| main clauses | subordinate clause |
|--|---|
| She left the house. Soon afterwards she got on her bike. | Soon after she had left the house, she got on her bike. |
| main clauses | present participle |
| She left the house. She was waving goodbye to her children. | She left the house waving goodbye to her children. |
| main clauses | past participle used as an adjective |
| He got lost in the crowd. He asked for help. | Lost in the crowd, he asked for help. |
| main clauses | past participle clause |
| He left the house. Soon afterwards he drove away. | Having left the house, he soon drove away. |
| main clauses | infinitive |
| He went to the supermarket. He did so as he wanted to buy some milk. | He went to the supermarket in order to buy some milk. |
| relative clause | contact clause |
| This is the problem which we need to be aware of. | This is the problem we need to be aware of. |

Another way of joining clauses, sentences and paragraphs is through linking words and phrases. They will help you link your ideas, point out similarities, highlight differences, justify statements or provide examples and conclusions.

Frequently used linking words are: *for example, and, because, moreover, as a result, however*. Note that they are used in very different contexts.

Most linking words can either connect clauses or start a sentence to form a link between sentences. Generally you should avoid starting a sentence with *or, and, but, or also*. If linking words start a sentence, they are usually followed by a comma.

Nevertheless *The hotels had very high standards. Nevertheless, some tourists complained about ...*
In conclusion *In conclusion, if there is a moral obligation to protect life, gene technology should be a questionable choice for scientific researchers.*

If you are not sure about the usage, consult a monolingual dictionary.

Linking words and phrases

This is not a comprehensive list. You might want to add your own linking words/phrases.

If you want to add to your argument:

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>additionally</i> | zusätzlich | <i>too</i> | auch |
| <i>in addition</i> | noch dazu, außerdem | <i>moreover</i> | außerdem, weiter |
| <i>apart from</i> | abgesehen davon | <i>and</i> | und |
| <i>besides</i> | ferner, überdies | <i>also</i> | außerdem |
| <i>furthermore</i> | außerdem, ferner | <i>as well as</i> | so wie auch |

If you want to emphasize a statement:

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>apparently</i> | offenbar, scheinbar | <i>evidently</i> | offensichtlich, zweifellos |
| <i>naturally</i> | natürlich, selbstverständlich | <i>obviously</i> | offensichtlich, klar |
| <i>hardly likely</i> | kaum wahrscheinlich | <i>undoubtedly</i> | zweifellos |
| <i>actually</i> | tatsächlich | <i>in fact</i> | genau genommen |

If you want to draw parallels:

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| <i>similarly</i> | ähnlich | <i>in the same way</i> | ähnlich |
| <i>similarly annoying</i> | ebenso ärgerlich | | |
| <i>likewise</i> | ebenso, gleichfalls | <i>equally</i> | gleichermaßen |
| | | <i>equally slow(ly)</i> | gleich langsam |
| <i>not only ...</i> | nicht nur ... | <i>just like</i> | wie auch |
| <i>but also</i> | sondern auch | | |

If you want to highlight contrast / show differences:

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>compared to/with</i> | im Vergleich zu | <i>in contrast (to)</i> | im Gegensatz zu |
| <i>although</i> | obwohl | <i>neither ... nor</i> | weder ... noch |
| <i>yet</i> | aber dennoch, doch | <i>nevertheless</i> | nichtsdestotrotz |
| <i>despite</i> | ungeachtet | <i>whereas</i> | während, wohingegen |
| <i>in spite of</i> | trotz | <i>on the one hand ...</i> | einerseits ... |
| <i>however</i> | jedoch, dennoch | <i>on the other hand</i> | andererseits |
| <i>unlike</i> | nicht wie | | |

When providing reasons:

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| <i>because (of)</i> | infolge dessen / von | <i>for this reason</i> | aus diesem Grund |
| <i>due to</i> | wegen | <i>on the basis of</i> | auf Grund von |
| <i>in this way</i> | auf diese Art und Weise | <i>so that</i> | sodass |
| <i>for this purpose</i> | deswegen | <i>so</i> | deshalb, daher |

When explaining results:

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <i>accordingly</i> | demgemäß, entsprechend | <i>in consequence</i> | folglich |
| <i>as a consequence</i> | folglich | <i>owing to</i> | aufgrund |
| <i>as a result</i> | folglich | <i>therefore</i> | deshalb |
| <i>consequently</i> | folglich | | |
| <i>hence</i> | folglich, daher | <i>thus</i> | somit, folglich |

When providing examples:

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| <i>for example</i> | zum Beispiel | <i>such as</i> | wie (z.B.) |
| <i>for instance</i> | z.B. | <i>including</i> | einschließlich |
| <i>e.g.</i> | z.B. | <i>namely</i> | nämlich |
| <i>i.e..</i> | d.h. | | |

When showing a sequence (of events):

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>first / firstly</i> | erstens | <i>another (point)</i> | ein weiterer (Punkt) |
| | | <i>last but not least</i> | nicht zuletzt |
| <i>second / secondly</i> | zweitens | <i>finally / last / eventually</i> | schließlich, zuletzt |
| <i>next</i> | als nächstes | | |

When drawing conclusions and summing up:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| <i>all in all</i> | alles in allem | <i>in brief</i> | kurz gesagt |
| <i>as a result</i> | als Ergebnis | <i>in conclusion</i> | abschließend |
| <i>on balance</i> | alles in allem | <i>therefore</i> | daher |
| <i>finally</i> | abschließend | <i>to conclude</i> | abschließend |
| <i>in other words</i> | mit anderen Worten | <i>to sum up</i> | zusammenfassend |

7.6 Quoting and referencing

Quoting and referencing are necessary to show that you have done some decent research on your topic and that you know what you are writing about. When using someone else's words or ideas, you are expected to state that clearly. If you do not do that, it is plagiarism.

The following rules are **basic rules**:

1. For quotations use quotation marks. In English: "...." (not: „...“).
2. You always need to state where the information/quotation comes from. Even if you only refer to someone else's ideas without quoting them directly, you still need to indicate the source.
If you quote from or refer to words, phrases or sentences from a text, indicate the lines they are taken from.
Use e.g. *l. 1* if you refer to one line and *ll. 1 - 4* if you refer to several lines.
In term papers you are also expected to indicate the source and the page number(s) of the source you are quoting from or referring to e.g. *p. 1* or *pp. 1 - 4*.
3. There are various systems you can follow to indicate the source. The three most important are presented in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, the *MLA (Modern Languages Association) Style Manual* and the *APA (American Psychological Association) Style Manual* (see 11 "References"). You are free to choose the system you would like to follow, but you should avoid mixing the different systems.
One of the systems the *Chicago Manual of Style* presents is the humanities style. It is used in the following way:
In order to indicate the source/page number(s) you can either use footnotes at the bottom of each page¹ or endnotes at the end of your work and refer to them by numerals that recommence with every page or run through your whole term paper and refer to endnotes at the end of your work.
In your footnotes or endnotes state the source of the information/quotation. When first mentioned cite the entire source (e.g. Patricia Henley. *The Hummingbird House*. Denver: MacMurray, 1999, 5).
If you quote the same source again, it suffices to give the author's name, possibly the year and the page number (e.g. Henley 1999, 70).
4. In your "List of references"² specify books, articles or internet sites you have used. In English academic writing you may use the following conventions (*Chicago Manual of Style*, humanities style):

¹ Pam Peters. *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 70-71; 464-465.

² Peters, 70.

Books

Author(s) (last name, first name). *Title of book*. Place of publication: Publisher, year of publication.

Example:

Henley, Patricia. *The Hummingbird House*. Denver: MacMurray, 1999.

Newspapers or magazines

Author(s). "Headline of article." *Title of periodical*. day-month-year, page(s).

Example:

Kirkpatrick, David. "'Fake News' Investigators Rebuke Facebook." *The New York Times*. 29 July, 2018, A4.

Electronic sources

Name of site. Date of posting/revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sometimes found in copyright statements). Accessed [Date you accessed the site]. Electronic address.

Example:

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. 26 Aug., 2016. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. Accessed 23 April, 2018. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.

5. You should format quotations differently depending on their length. Enclose short quotations (less than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text within quotation marks ("...").









Quotations longer than four typed lines of prose or two lines of verse should be placed in a free-standing block of text without quotation marks. The entire quote should be indented.









Example:

Sometimes it's hard
To get a taxi
When you're Black.³

³ Zephaniah, Benjamin. "Walking Black Home." *Funky Chickens*. New York: Viking, 1996, 72.

7.7 Self-assessment grid: Revising written texts

| Criteria | Date: | | | | Date: | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Content | | | | | | | | |
| I have thoroughly revised the content of my text. | | | | | | | | |
| I have stuck to the task and dealt with all aspects of the task. | | | | | | | | |
| I have said what I intended to say. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided repetition. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided unnecessary aspects. | | | | | | | | |
| Structure, logical order, style | | | | | | | | |
| My text has an introduction, a main part and a conclusion. | | | | | | | | |
| My ideas, arguments, examples are in the right order. | | | | | | | | |
| My text has a visible structure, i.e. clear paragraphs. | | | | | | | | |
| Every paragraph contains a topic sentence which states what aspect I am dealing with. | | | | | | | | |
| My ideas develop from paragraph to paragraph. | | | | | | | | |
| I have used linking words which connect my ideas and sentences and make my text coherent. | | | | | | | | |
| I have put facts in a logical and/or chronological order using appropriate linking words. | | | | | | | | |
| I have connected my ideas and sentences logically. | | | | | | | | |
| I have avoided contractions (isn't → is not, doesn't → does not, won't → will not, there's → there is) when writing in a formal style. | | | | | | | | |
| I have eliminated any wordiness and redundancies, i.e. excluded all unnecessary words and repetitive ideas. | | | | | | | | |

| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grammar, sentence structure | | | | | | | | |
| <p>I have written complete, grammatically correct sentences by using</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the right relative pronouns - the correct prepositions after verbs and nouns - the correct grammatical constructions which go with certain verbs - the correct tense(s) - clear references, e.g. made sure it is clear who or what the pronouns in my text refer to (see 7.8 “How to improve your writing”). | | | | | | | | |
| <p>I have used correct and clearly structured sentences, which are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complete - not too long and complicated - of varied length and structure. | | | | | | | | |
| Vocabulary, idiomatic expressions | | | | | | | | |
| <p>I have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - varied my vocabulary by using synonyms (which I looked up in a monolingual dictionary) - taken into consideration that English speakers often prefer verbs rather than nouns to express an idea, e.g. <i>The point of view allows the reader to identify with the protagonist</i> rather than: <i>The point of view allows the reader an identification with the protagonist.</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Spelling | | | | | | | | |
| <p>I have checked my spelling/proofread my text using a dictionary.</p> | | | | | | | | |

7.8 How to improve your writing

Recognizing your strengths and weaknesses helps you to overcome your problems and guarantees a lasting improvement of your work.

Do not forget: **Making mistakes is part of learning.** You do not need to try to write without making any mistakes. Instead, try to **find out what you – personally – must focus on** to improve your writing. These **personal focus points** are the aspects you need to work on.

To **find your focus points** you could:

- Find out which of your expressions make it difficult to understand you.
- Ask fellow students if they can understand what you want to say.
- Make a list of your most common mistakes with corrections.
- Compare the results of your self-assessment grids and determine points you should focus on.
- Modify the provided self-assessment grids according to your needs.
- Devise your own self-assessment grids.

To **work on your focus points** you could:

- Look at texts you have written and find out which of your expressions are really suitable for expressing your thoughts – maybe you should use them more often.
- Look at your fellow students' texts and copy good ideas/expressions.
- Correct hard-to-understand expressions with the help of:
 - a dictionary
 - a grammar book
 - the internet
 - classmates
 - your teacher.
- Look at your list of most common mistakes and corrections before writing a text.
- Devise a poster with useful phrases/corrections and put it up at home.
- Devise a self-assessment grid to check grammar/sentence structure/style that meets your needs.
- For specific focus points:
 - Rewrite/correct all your expressions containing a particular focus point.
 - Revise relevant chapters in a grammar book.
 - Analyze completed exercises. (Have they been useful to you? Why (not)?)
 - Design/do new exercises (e.g. by modifying exercises you have already done).
- Revise and extend your vocabulary on certain subjects:
 - Use lists of word fields in dictionaries.
 - Find synonyms and antonyms of words that caused difficulties.
 - Look up and learn expressions that contain the word that caused problems.
 - Devise new vocabulary lists or mind-maps.

8 Operatoren der gymnasialen Oberstufe

Die Formulierung von Aufgaben erfolgt mit Hilfe von Operatoren, die durch Arbeitshinweise ergänzt werden können. Sie dienen der Eindeutigkeit der Anforderungen an die zu erbringende Leistung und deren Darstellungsform.

Die Operatoren werden hier dem Anforderungsbereich (AFB) zugeordnet, dessen Anforderungen sie überwiegend repräsentieren. Die Anforderungsbereiche lassen sich jedoch nicht immer scharf voneinander trennen. Die Zuordnung einer Aufgabe zu einem Anforderungsbereich kann auch vom Kontext der Aufgabe abhängen.

Der Begriff „Text“ bezieht sich auf den erweiterten Textbegriff, also auch auf diskontinuierliche Texte, wie z.B. Statistiken und Bilder.

Die folgende Übersicht

- systematisiert Operatoren, mit denen die Arbeitsaufträge formuliert werden.
- führt mögliche Textsorten im Bereich Gestalten auf.
- erläutert die jeweiligen Anforderungen.
- illustriert Möglichkeiten ihrer Verwendung anhand von Beispielen.

8.1 Reproduktion und Textverstehen (überwiegend AFB I)

| Operatoren | Erläuterungen | Beispiele |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Gelenkte Zusammenfassung | | |
| outline | Give the main features / structure / general principles / a concise account of the main points/ideas of the text. Focus on the aspects requested in the task. Omit irrelevant details. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline the arguments for and against ... in Text A. ▪ Outline the information given by the author on ... ▪ Outline the situation of ... ▪ Outline what ... says about ... |
| summarize/ sum up | Use your own words. Do not include your own opinion or interpretation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summarize the main ideas on ... as presented in the excerpt. ▪ Sum up the pros and cons of ... as presented in the article. |
| describe | Give an accurate account of sth in your own words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe ... as depicted in ... |
| state | Present the main aspects of sth briefly and clearly using your own words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State the information the author gives on ... |
| point out | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Point out the author's ideas on ... |
| Traditionelle Zusammenfassung | | |
| summarize/ sum up | Give a concise account of the main points/ideas of the text as a whole. Write an introductory sentence naming your source. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summarize the article. ▪ Sum up the excerpt. |

8.2 Reorganisation und Analyse (überwiegend AFB II)

| Operatoren | Erläuterungen | Beispiele |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Textanalyse | | |
| analyze | Describe and explain the meaning of specific aspects/features of the text and their effect on the reader/audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze how the author tries to make his/her message credible to the reader. ▪ Analyze/Show how the author tries to convince the reader of his/her point of view on the issue. ▪ Analyze how the use of imagery serves to convey the author's message to the reader. ▪ Analyze how the relationship between the characters is reflected in their language. ▪ Analyze how the author's use of humor helps to convey his message. ▪ Analyze how the reader's interest in the text is aroused by its content and structure. ▪ Analyze to what extent the picture/cartoon/ cover/graph relates to the text. ▪ Analyze how the picture, the layout and the use of ... convey the author's message to the reader. ▪ Analyze the atmosphere created in the excerpt. |
| examine | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine the problems the protagonist faces ... |
| give/write a characterization | Provide a thorough analysis of a character. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give a characterization of the protagonist in the excerpt. |
| explain | Make something clear. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain the protagonist's behaviour in the conflict ... ▪ Explain what is meant by the following statement from the text: "... (l. ...) |
| describe | Give an accurate/a detailed account of what somebody/ something is like. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the conflict between the characters. |
| compare | Show similarities and differences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compare the information the picture/the graph conveys with the information given in the article. ▪ Compare the opinions on education held by the experts presented in the text with others you are familiar with. ▪ Compare the protagonist's situation to that of a character in literature or film who also refuses to conform to the mainstream. |
| illustrate | Use examples to explain or make something clear. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Illustrate the way in which ... differs from ... |

8.3 Diskussion und Kommentar (überwiegend AFB III)

| Operatoren | Erläuterungen | Beispiele |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Diskussion/Kommentar | | |
| discuss | Give reasons/arguments based on supporting evidence for and against an opinion/position and come to a well-founded conclusion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss whether the difficulties and chances illustrated in Text A are typical phenomena of globalization. Discuss whether the protagonist has coped with the problem in an adequate way. |
| comment on | Based on evidence/reasons, express your personal view on a problem / certain behaviour / attitudes/opinions clearly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment on the impact of globalisation on families. Comment on the writer's view on ... |
| assess/ evaluate | Express a well-founded opinion on the nature or quality of somebody/something. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referring to the quotation, assess the impact of ... Evaluate the success of the steps to reduce pollution described by the author. |
| interpret | Make the meaning/purpose of something clear by giving a convincing explanation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret the quotation. Interpret the message of the cartoon. |

8.4 Sprachmittlung (überwiegend AFB II)

| Operatoren | Erläuterungen | Beispiele |
|--|--|---|
| outline/ present/ summarize/ sum up | Give a concise account of the main points/ideas of the text clarifying culture-related aspects if necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write an article for the website of a European school project about how new media influence young people's use of language. In your article, outline recent developments, worries and scientific findings as presented in the text. You are taking part in an international project on the integration of refugees into countries of the European Union. Write an email to your project partners summing up the information about the initiative described in the article. |
| explain | Make something clear taking into account culture-related differences if necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the text on environmental policy, explain the principle of waste separation in Germany. |

8.5 Gestalten⁴ (überwiegend AFB II/III)

| Textsorte | Erläuterung | Beispiele (Operatoren sind fett gedruckt) |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| article | Write an article with a headline/title, an introduction, a clearly structured main part and conclusion which is adequate for the target group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine that you are an exchange student. Write an article for your school magazine on Discuss ... Write an article for the website of an international youth project assessing the state of ... |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a youth project on migration, participants are asked to show how modern media are being used to help refugees cope in European countries. Write an article for the project website, outlining the information about the initiative “ ...” |
| letter/ letter to the editor | Write a letter which is adequate for the purpose / target group. Use the form of a formal letter with addresses and a date as well as an adequate opening (and closing) remarks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a letter to her former colleagues, the protagonist comments on her experiences in Kenya. Write her letter and address it to ... Write a letter to the editor, discussing the problem of Address the letter to ... |
| blog entry | Write a blog entry with a headline/title, an introduction, a main part and conclusion which is adequate for the target group. Invite others to comment on the issue. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a teen travel blog, write a blog entry discussing the advantages and disadvantages of voluntourism. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As an intern at “German-way.com”, a website for English-speaking expats, write a blog entry outlining the findings of the “...” survey about core values in Germany. |
| email | Write an email which is adequate for the purpose / target group. Use a subject line, opening and closing . You may use slightly informal language when writing to a friend. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The social science course of your American friend has been dealing with the American Dream. He has asked you whether there is a similar idea in Germany. Write him an email in which you assess to what extent one can talk about a ‘German Dream’. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a school project, an English-speaking friend is looking for new ideas in social media. Write her an email in which you explain the concept of “...” as described in the article. |
| speech | In a speech you express your personal opinion in front of an audience. Write an introduction, a clearly structured main part and a conclusion which is adequate for the target group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a delegate of the UN youth conference you are invited to contribute a speech discussing the problems of ... As an exchange student in the U.S., you have been asked by the debating club at your high school to give a speech reflecting on the importance of young people’s participation in general elections. |
| diary entry | A diary entry is a personal text in which s.o. reflects on s.th. she/he has experienced. Slip into the shoes of the character mentioned in the task and write a diary entry considering his/her feelings, emotions, thoughts, language. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the last page of her five-year diary, the woman assesses the talk she gave on her 18th birthday, the dreams she had then and what has become of her since. After being turned down for the Master’s programme, Stephen writes a diary entry commenting on his shattered dreams, his ambitions, plans and feelings. |

⁴ In der Übersicht werden Beispiele aufgeführt. Es wird dabei kein Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit erhoben.

9 References

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