
toolbox

The **Toolbox** is meant to be used as a resource in learning English, and an aid in working with the texts in this book. Use it as you would use the Yellow Pages in a telephone directory, and look up what you need when you need it.

A

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations often occur in English texts:

- e.g. exempli gratia (for example)
- i.e. id est (that is)
- etc. et cetera (and other things)
- a.m. ante meridiem (before noon)
- p.m. post meridiem (after noon)
- BC Before Christ
- AD Anno Domini – the year of our Lord (after Christ)

B

Book Review

When you have finished a novel, skim through it again and note the following points:

- Main characters
- Setting
- Summary of the plot and the theme
- Parts you liked
- Parts you found disappointing

Ask yourself some questions:

- Did the characters come alive to you?
- Was the action well planned?
- Could you picture the setting?
- Did the plot drag on?
- Were there any confusing parts?
- Was the ending believable and satisfying?
- Did you enjoy the book?

How much additional information about the author do you want to include? Have you read other books by the same author? If so, how does this novel compare to others that you have read before? When was the novel written? Why did you choose to read it?

Now put your notes in order and write the review. Give good reasons for your comments and be fair with criticism. Give a *brief* outline of the plot without giving away the end. Would you recommend the novel? Why or why not? Give your review a catching title.

E

Essay

An expository essay explores or “exposes” your ideas on an issue. In general it needs:

- good planning and research
- clear expression of ideas
- sound arguments
- accurate details

Before beginning:

- write down all the ideas that come to mind about your topic. Put them in *for* and *against* columns. Decide what your viewpoint will be.
- arrange your ideas in order of importance. Your first paragraph should contain your main topic or argument. Decide what ideas ought to go in your middle paragraphs. Write an outline.

Introduction:

The first paragraph explains how you intend to deal with the issue. It should be clearly written and capture the reader’s interest. Do not begin with your arguments either *for* or *against* the issue in this first paragraph. These should be presented in the “body” of your essay.

Body: (Development)

This is the longest section of your essay and may consist of several paragraphs. Each paragraph should deal with only one idea or argument. This is stated in the topic sentence of the paragraph. Additional sentences should add information to the topic of the paragraph. Vary the length of your sentences to avoid becoming boring. Link paragraphs with connective phrases such as:

In addition, On the one hand ... On the other, Equally important is/are ... etc.

You may wish to present both sides of an issue in order to prove to the reader that your viewpoint is, nevertheless, the correct one for you.

Conclusion:

In your final paragraph you should remind your reader briefly about your initial viewpoint and convince him/her that your reasoning is sound. Sum up strongly, perhaps beginning:

Therefore, Consequently, As a result, It would appear then, etc.

L

Letter to the Editor

A letter to the editor is a useful way of making your views known about an issue that concerns you.

- Begin your letter with the following salutation: Dear Editor.
- Introduce your topic and your viewpoint in your first paragraph.
- You may wish to comment on a previously published letter or article that you either agree or disagree with.
- In your next paragraph(s) present your viewpoints or arguments in as convincing a manner as possible.
- In your final paragraph, sum up your viewpoint in one last appeal.
- Close your letter with “Yours faithfully”.
- Sign your letter with your full name.
- You must also include your address and perhaps your profession.
- Try to be short and to the point. Your letter will have a better chance of being published if it is brief.

Letters: Salutation and Complimentary Close in Formal Letters

You should be very careful how you open and close formal letters. The salutation and complimentary close vary depending on who you write to.

1 When the letter is addressed to a company:

Example: Wanstead Motors	Salutation: Dear Sirs	Complimentary close: Yours faithfully
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2 Redbridge Lane West London E11 2JU UK	Gentlemen (Am)	Yours truly (Am) Sincerely (Am)
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2 When the letter is addressed to a representative of a company, but you do not know his or her name:

	<i>Salutation:</i>	<i>Complimentary close:</i>
Sales Manager	Dear Sir	Yours faithfully
Wanstead Motors	Dear Madam	Yours truly (Am)
2 Redbridge Lane West	Dear Sir or Madam	Sincerely (Am)
London E11 2JU		
UK		

3 When the letter is addressed to a person you know the name of:

	<i>Salutation:</i>	<i>Complimentary close:</i>
Mrs/Ms/Mr Kemp	Dear Mrs Kemp	Yours sincerely
Sales Manager	Dear Ms Kemp	Yours truly (Am)
Wanstead Motors	Dear Mr Kemp	
2 Redbridge Lane West		
London E11 2JU		
UK		

4 If you know the addressee personally, you may close the letter: Sincerely, Best wishes, Best regards, or Yours.

Literary Terms: Poetry

- Alliteration: The same initial consonant used in two or more words that occur close together. For example: The *little lady loved to listen to his laughter*.
- Imagery: The use of pictures, figures of speech and descriptions to evoke ideas, feelings, states of mind etc.
- Metaphor: A figure of speech in which two things are identified with each other: an implied comparison, without the use of *like* or *as*. For example:

Death is an Elephant, torch-eyed and horrible.”
Vachel Lindsay

- Mood: The state of feeling created by a poem, story, or play, such as a sentimental or a bitter mood.
- Paraphrase: A restatement of e.g. a poem in simple language so that the ideas in the poem are clear. A paraphrase can help you clarify the meaning of a poem.
- Rhyme: Words whose final sounds are in agreement.
- Rhythm: The regular rise and fall of sounds.
- Symbol: An object that stands for, or represents, an idea. For example: a dove usually represents peace.
- Stanza: A group of lines of verse, usually four or more, arranged according to a fixed pattern.
- Theme: The central thought or idea in a story, poem or play.

Literary Terms: Prose

- Character: A person in a work of literature; sometimes an animal or object.
- Characterization: The portrayal in a story of an imaginary person by what he says and does, by what others say about him or how they react to him, and by what the author reveals directly or through a narrator.
- Climax: The point of highest interest or dramatic intensity. Usually it marks a turning point in the action, since the reader is no longer in doubt about the outcome.
- Irony: To say one thing and mean the opposite.
- Metaphor: (see poetry)
- Moral: The lesson taught by a literary work.
- Narrator: The person who tells the story.
- Plot: The series of events or episodes that make up the action in a work of fiction.
- Point of view: The method used by the writer to tell his or her story.
 - first person point of view: the narration of a story by the “I” person in the story.
 - third person point of view: the narration of a story by someone outside the story and usually limited to what one of the characters (often the main character) can see, know, hear, or experience.
 - omniscient point of view: the narration of a story as though by an all-knowing observer, who can be in several places at the same time and can see into the hearts and minds of all characters.

- Setting: The time and place in which the events in a work of literature occur.
- Theme: The idea, general truth, or commentary on life or people brought out through a story.

M

Minutes

A report of what happened in a meeting is called the minutes. Meetings usually have a secretary who writes the minutes. Generally, a meeting will proceed along the following lines, and minutes should be written in the same order:

- a) Who is present and who is not?
- b) Business on the agenda:
 - What is the topic of discussion?
 - Who proposes what? If the debate is very long, you could write: The proposal was debated at some length. What is decided upon?
- c) If there are several topics on the agenda, use each topic as a heading for your minutes.

N

Newspaper Article

Study the following guidelines carefully when writing a newspaper article.

I keep six honest serving men,
(They taught me all I know)
Their names are *What* and *Why* and *When*
And *How* and *Where* and *Who*.
(Rudyard Kipling)

Structure:

Begin with basic information and try to answer the questions.

- Who or what are you writing about?
- What happened?
- Why did this happen?
- When did it happen?
- How and where did the events take place?

Angle:

Try to catch your reader's curiosity with your lead sentence, e.g. "Dinosaurs roam the Earth again".

Follow your lead with explanations, e.g. "Dinosaurs roam the Earth again. The newest museum exhibition to hit town has arrived and crowds are flocking to see the huge beasts."

Write objectively:

Write from an observer's point of view without the personal pronouns "I" or "me".

Fact vs. opinion:

It will be fact when an apartment building burns down but only *opinion* as to how the fire started. Eyewitness reports may be used to add weight to theories. If a statement cannot be checked as fact it may be reported in the following manner:

"According to a witness at the scene, the driver appeared to lose control of the car."

Transition:

Every phrase, sentence or paragraph should flow from the preceding one and carry the reader smoothly from one thought or event to the next. Some useful words to aid transition are:

also, thus, since, likewise, however, another, meanwhile, accordingly, subsequently, furthermore, etc.

And finally – remember The Kiss Principle: **Keep It Short and Simple**

O

Oral Presentation (talks)

Preparation

Who is your audience? The level of difficulty must fit your audience.

A talk could be likened to a conversation with the audience. Keep that in mind when preparing your manuscript.

Concentrate on the main points. Write down key words on the blackboard or an overhead projector to help your audience follow your thoughts.

Avoid reading a full manuscript. Make cards with key words instead to help you remember what you want to say.

Find visual aids to help illustrate your subject. They could be anything connected to the subject – flag, costumes, pictures, maps, etc.

Check all teaching aids before you give your speech to make sure they are working.

Delivery

Your appearance is important. Do not keep your hands in your pocket! Do not chew gum!

Address your audience. Talk to all of them, not just the teacher.

Keep your head up and your voice will carry better. Imagine that you are talking to a person at the back of the room. Don't speak too fast. Pause after an important point to give it more effect.

Look at people. Eye contact gives you authority.

Conclusion

Remember to round off your presentation with some concluding remarks such as "And that concludes my presentation for today. Thank you!" It's not enough to just stop talking.

P

Phonetic Alphabet

Vowels

[i:] as in *see*

[ɪ] as in *sit*

[e] as in *hen*

[æ] as in *hat*

[ɑ:] as in *barn*

[ɒ] as in *pot*

[ɔ:] as in *saw*

[ʊ] as in *put*

[u:] as in *you*

[ʌ] as in *cup*

[ɜ:] as in *fur*

[ə] as in *letter*

Diphthongs

[eɪ] as in *page*

[əʊ] as in *home*

[aɪ] as in *alive*

[aʊ] as in *cow*

[ɔɪ] as in *coin*

[ɪə] as in *near*

[eə] as in *hair*

[ʊə] as in *sure*

Consonants

[p] as in *pen*

[b] as in *bed*

[t] as in *tea*

[d] as in *did*

[k] as in *can*

[g] as in *got*

[tʃ] as in *church*

[dʒ] as in *June*

[f] as in *fall*

[v] as in *voice*

[θ] as in *think*

[ð] as in *that*

[s] as in *saw*

[z] as in *zoo*

[ʃ] as in *she*

[ʒ] as in *vision*

[h] as in *how*

[m] as in *man*

[n] as in *now*

[ŋ] as in *sing*

[l] as in *leg*

[r] as in *rose*

[j] as in *yes*

[w] as in *wet*

Project Work

One way of making your project successful is to follow this three-step recipe:

Preparation

Decide whether you want to work alone or in a group.

Make a time schedule. How much time do you have at your disposal? Although it is important to gather material, it is equally important to have enough time for the actual writing.

If you work in a group, divide the work between you and allow time for frequent discussions. Remember that you are supposed to solve the task as a group.

Decide on your approach to the problem. Try to limit your focus. "Football" is a possible project task, but it is a theme more than an approach. To find your approach, it is useful to ask direct questions that you want to answer in your project. "How was football invented?" or "What is it like to be a professional football player?" are both approaches to the subject football. Avoid questions that could be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

The actual work

Research: Gather all information you can find on your subject. Use the approach to the problem as a guideline to limit the search. You do not need a 400-page book on Kevin Keegan if your approach is "What were the main events during the 1999 Women's World Cup?" Check all available sources in the library: books, the Internet, newsclip files, magazines. Before you contact people outside your school (e.g. travel agencies, embassies), make sure the material you want to ask for is not already at your school.

The writing process: Make the material your own! Use the information you have gathered as background for your own text about the matter.

End product

Adapt your material to fit the end product.

A wall poster:

- big headlines
- short but informative articles
- illustrations
- clear writing that can be read from a distance

Writing:

- front page
- table of contents
- introduction presenting your approach to the problem
- smaller headings to introduce each new part of the text
- illustrations, both pictures and diagrams
- use a computer or your very best handwriting

Sources

Make sure you faithfully report all of your sources whether these are newspaper articles / reference books / Internet articles etc.

Punctuation

Good punctuation helps the reader to understand what the writer wants to say. Here are some guidelines to the use of common punctuation. Remember, however, that there are often exceptions to the rules!

Comma (,)

A comma is used:

- to separate words and phrases to make clear the meaning of a sentence. When reading aloud, pause at a comma.
- to separate more than two adjectives: On the ground lay a bright, shiny, new penny.
- to separate words in a list: The recipe calls for apples, bananas, pears, strawberries and grapes.
- to separate description and name: The principal, Mrs

Smith, announced the winners of the contest.

- to separate numbers: In 1980, 250 students were given scholarships.
- before and after direct speech: Jim said, “Hello.” “Hello,” Joe answered.
- to prevent misunderstanding:
The students who are wearing blue jeans will be punished.
The students, who are wearing blue jeans, will be punished.

The first sentence means that *only* those students wearing blue jeans will be punished. The second sentence means that all the students are going to be punished but adds extra information that they are wearing blue jeans.

Full Stop or Period (.)

A full stop is used at the end of a sentence, except where an exclamation mark or question mark is used instead. It is also often used to indicate that a word has been abbreviated:
max. (maximum) Aust. (Australia) e.g. (exempli gratia – for example)

The general “rule of thumb” is that abbreviations which end with the last letter of the word do not require full stops:

Mr (Mister) Dr (Doctor) hr (hour)

Other abbreviations which do not require full stops are those denoting measurement or quantity:
kg (kilogram) km (kilometre) cm (centimetre)

Exclamation Mark (!)

An exclamation mark is used:

- to stress a word or sentence: Help! Of course not!
- to show surprise: Hey! Oh my gosh!
- to give an order: Stop! Follow that car!

Question Mark (?)

Do you need to have the question mark explained?

Apostrophe (')

This is a form of punctuation which a lot of people have trouble with. It generally shows possession or “belonging to”.

- For the belongings of one person, put the apostrophe before the s:
Tom’s football, a child’s toy, an artist’s paints
- Impersonal pronouns also use an apostrophe before the s to show possession.
anybody’s pen, someone’s Discman

NB!

- Personal pronouns *do not* have an apostrophe when they end in s:
yours, hers, theirs, its
- For the belongings of more than person, put the apostrophe after the s:
a writers’ group
- Where the word itself is already plural, put the apostrophe before the s:
a children’s store, old people’s club
- If a word ends in s, add apostrophe s:
Charles’s parents, The Jones’s dog
- An apostrophe is also used for contractions, where figures or letters are left out:
'68 (1968) o'er (over) I'll (I will) you're (you are) it's (it is)

NB! Only use an apostrophe in “it’s” when it means “it is”, not when showing possession, e.g. *It’s* chasing *its* own tail.

Quotation Marks (“ ” or ‘ ’)

Quotation marks are used:

- to enclose direct speech: Sue said, “I’ll be right there”.

- For direct quotations from speech or written work: The Bible states: “Thou shalt not kill”.
- Around words or phrases that may be debatable: Many “experts” disagree.
- Around words that have been made up for a particular purpose and which are not proper words: It is important to observe good “netiquette” when using a chat program.
- If a quotation is made within direct speech, use single quotation marks inside double quotation marks: Mary said, “I don’t know what ‘Necessity is the mother of invention’ means”.

R

Report Writing

A report is an objective account of what happened, e.g. a police report. It could also be a piece of writing based on given information, e.g. a survey of smoking habits among the students at your school.

- Give accurate descriptions (white male, 40 years old, 5 ft 8 in.)
- Avoid emotional words (stupid answers, ugly face)
- Keep your report short and concise
- A report often consists of three or four parts: an introduction, information obtained by the writer (called the findings), conclusion and/or recommendations
- A report does not have a formal salutation or complimentary close
- Reports from a meeting: see *Minutes*.

S

Summary

The purpose of a summary is to condense a passage of writing into the main points.

- Read through the complete piece and think about its meaning. Re-read at least once more and decide what the central subject of the article is.
- List the important ideas, leaving out examples and other information. Use only essential ideas. (Look for topic sentences in paragraphs to help you find the main ideas.)
- Be careful not to alter the original meaning.
- Think about the key points and rewrite them into a few paragraphs using your own words.
- Read your paragraphs carefully. Do they make sense? Do your sentences flow logically from one point to another?
- Revise your paragraphs.. Cut unnecessary words or repetitions. Write the final version.