



CAES

Centre for
Applied English Studies
The University of Hong Kong

The Professional Development Programme on Enriching Knowledge Series:

Effective Writing Skills and Strategies for English Teachers

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(May-June 2025)

Centre for Applied English Studies, CAES

The University of Hong Kong, HKU

Topics to be covered:

Note: The writing techniques and knowledge covered in this workshop will be generic enough and conducive to most teachers of English

1. Meaning & importance of “Effective” writing
2. Skills and strategies for effective writing:
 - ❖ Key structural elements
3. Skills and strategies for effective writing:
 - ❖ Key language features
4. How to construct a profound and catchy opening?
5. How to evoke special effects in English writing through creative use of literary devices?
6. Disseminating reference materials + Q&A

**Academic
writing**

**Creative
texts**

Section 1 Meaning of “Effective” writing

- ✓ Be clear, concise, and engaging
- ✓ Achieves its intended purpose and communicates its message clearly
- ✓ Appears in many forms, such as academic writing, technical writing, creative writing, or business writing
- ✓ Good grammar and proper use of vocabulary
- ✓ Logical and organized structure, with clear headings/subheadings, and transitions between ideas
- ✓ Appropriate tone and style for the intended audience and purpose

The question here is HOW?

Section 1 Importance of “Effective” writing

► Professionalism

- An important professional skill
- Essential in workplace communication, technical reports, and other professional documents

► Persuasion

- Convince your audience to take a specific action or to believe a certain point of view.

► Creativity

- Allow writers to express their artistic vision and imagination
- An essential component of literature, poetry, and other forms of creative writing

Discussions

- ▶ When it comes to effective writing in English (e.g., writing proposals, reports, articles for school publications and webpages, speeches for school events, etc.), what challenges do you face?
- ▶ How can effective writing be achieved?

Section 2

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

Key structural elements

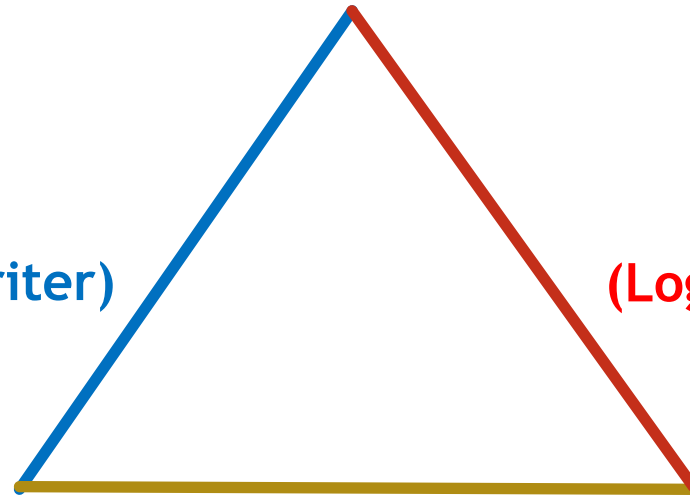
Three Rhetorical Appeals

- ▶ Aristotle advocated that effective argumentation (or effective writing, in general) are based on how well the speakers or writers appeal to their audiences or readers in three different areas: (???)
- ▶ They are **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**

ETHOS
(Credibility of the Writer)

LOGOS
(Logic of the Message)

PATHOS
(Emotional Appeal to the Audience)



Three Rhetorical Appeals: ETHOS

- ▶ It refers to the writer's "**ethics**", which focuses on the writer's authority, character, and credibility to deal with a topic.
- ▶ As a good writer, you should:
 - Use only data from *credible* sources
 - Keep your tone *fair, balanced, and unambiguous*
 - Share your *personal insights*
 - Establish *common ground* with your audience
 - Accurately state the *opposing arguments* and then respectfully answer them

Three Rhetorical Appeals: **PATHOS**

- ▶ It has the same root as the word “sympathy”.
- ▶ It refers to the emotional appeal of an argument and the text’s ability to establish a relationship with an audience.
- ▶ As a good writer, you can appeal to people’s emotions, beliefs, and values in many ways:
 - ▶ You can make them *feel excited and hopeful*
 - ▶ You can *make jokes or use anecdotes*
 - ▶ You can show your *frustration, worries, and sadness*

Three Rhetorical Appeals: LOGOS

- ▶ It has the same root as the word “**logic**”.
- ▶ It appeals to reason. Effective arguments will include facts and other supporting details to back up the author's claims/positions.
- ▶ As a good writer, you should:
 - Present a **clear** claim
 - Present a **strong** reason to support the claim
 - Present **solid and convincing** evidence
 - Evaluate and analyse the evidence to show its **strengths and weaknesses**

Illustration of **ETHOS**, **PATHOS**, and **LOGOS**

1. You will be given a sample proposal (note: persuasive writing) concerning renovating a multi-media language lab
2. The instructor will show you instances of the three rhetorical appeals (focus on Section 1)
3. Work in pairs and identify the rest (or some) of the remaining examples of the three appeals

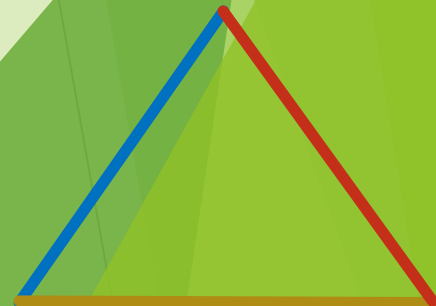


Illustration of **ETHOS**, **PATHOS**, and **LOGOS**

Ensuring Excellence in Education:

A Proposal for Renovating a Multi-Media Language Lab

1. Introduction

Education is an indispensable part of a self-sustaining and vigorous society. It has been well researched that the academic performance of our children shares a very strong correlation with their direct access to safe, modern, and well-equipped learning facilities (Klette, 2022; Ren, 2023; Sibanda, 1991; Su & Li, 2023). Unfortunately, our current multi-media language lab has already been very much dilapidated and most equipment is either obsolete or seriously defective. It is extremely difficult for students to learn effectively and for teachers to provide adequate and quality support to them. This is why we are proposing to launch a thorough renovation project to enhance the **functionality**, **usability**, and **aesthetics** of our multi-media language lab. The proposed renovation covers four different aspects: (1) redesigning the layout, (2) installing new fixtures and fittings, (3) upgrading hardware and software components, and (4) improving audio and visual systems.

2. Urgent Need for Renovations

The existing multi-media language lab was built in 1993. After an intensive use for 20 years, its condition is indeed in dire need of repair and upgrading. The interior of the lab has already

Illustration of ETHOS

A Sample Proposal¹

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Supported by research

Supported by academic sources

The use of academic tone and lexis

Clarity of structure

Illustration of PATHOS

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2. Urgent Need for Renovations

The existing multi-media language lab was built in 1993. After an intensive use for 20 years, its condition is indeed in dire need of repair and upgrading. The interior of the lab has already been ramshackle with many structural parts in pressing need for replacement. Below are the four key reasons for immediate renovations:

Indicating the importance and necessity
(Beliefs and values)

Indicating the difficulties and concerns
(Beliefs and values)

Indicating the urgency
(Beliefs and values)

Illustration of LOGOS

A Sample Proposal¹

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Reasons for renovation

Combination of ETHOS, PATHOS, and LOGOS

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Illustration of **ETHOS**, **PATHOS**, and **LOGOS**

- Now, your show time!
- Work in pairs and identify the rest (or some) of the remaining examples of the three rhetorical appeals
- Let's focus on **Section 2**.

[If time allows, you may cover Section 3 as well.]

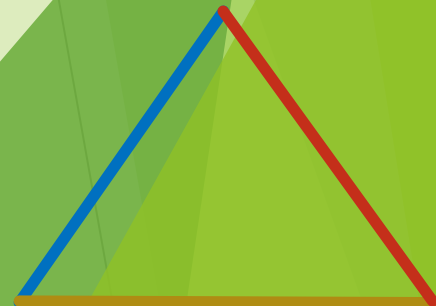


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2.1 *Inefficient Layout*

In the current layout, individual work areas are located too close to group work areas. This causes serious disruption and reduces productivity. This also leads to difficulty for students in completing their language learning tasks efficiently. In addition, the current layout does not provide enough space for group work activities, which results in perpetual, severe overcrowding and a lack of adequate workspace for collaboration among students. The absence of a clear separation between individual and group work areas makes it highly challenging for instructors to monitor and assist students effectively (Febrianto et al, 2020; Samani et al, 2019). This certainly brings about a much less delightful, if not demotivating, learning experience to students.

2.2 *Ragged and Worn-out Furniture*

The fixtures and fittings in the multi-media language lab include chairs, desks, shelves, and cabinets which are all scruffy, heavily damaged, or no longer functional. These items have been in use for at least 10 years, and the wear and tear causes constant discomfort and inconvenience for both students and teachers. The old chairs and desks are uncomfortable and violate the ergonomic principles in design. This causes fatigue, discomfort, and pain among students (and some teachers as well) who spend long hours in the lab. At times, it was even reported that some students were gashed by the sharp, broken edges of the worn-out furniture, and some parents, hence, lodged several bitter complaints about the safety issues.

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[Other sub-sections removed]

3. Project Scope

To ensure that the renovation project will achieve the highest quality and the most desirable outcomes, professionals and experts from a number of language learning / technology / interior design consultancies will be inquired. The following components will be included:

3.1 *Redesigning the Layout of the Lab*

The proposed renovation aims to redesign the layout of the lab to create a more user-friendly and efficient environment for student learning. The brand new layout will feature separate areas for individual and group work, a teacher's desk, and a multimedia station. This will enable students to work more efficiently. It is anticipated that distractions will be reduced while productivity increased.

The individual work areas will provide students with a quiet and focused environment to complete their language learning tasks. The group work areas will provide ample space for students to collaborate on language learning activities and practise their language skills in a more authentic setting. Additionally, the new layout will allow easy movement and interaction flexibly between the different work areas. It is expected that collaboration and engagement among students and teachers will be very much strengthened and facilitated.

Combination of ETHOS, PATHOS, and LOGOS

3.2 *Installing Modern and Durable Furniture*

The proposed renovation aims to replace the ragged and worn-out items with modern and durable fixtures and fittings to provide students with a more comfortable and functional space to work in. It is anticipated that their productivity and learning motivation/outcomes will be enhanced significantly. The proposed renovation will provide students with comfortable chairs and adjustable desks which allow them to adjust to their preferred working positions and reduce the risk of musculoskeletal pain or injuries such as Mechanical Back Syndrome and Herniated Disc (Campbell, 2021; Fari et al, 2021; Molly et al, 2020).

The new furniture will also be durable, ensuring that it can withstand the wear and tear of daily use in a busy language lab. The renovation will also include some new storage units to help students stay organized and focused on their language learning tasks. These units will provide ample space for students to store their personal belongings and learning materials. This is to reduce clutter and cultivate a more neat and tidy learning environment.

[Other sub-sections removed]

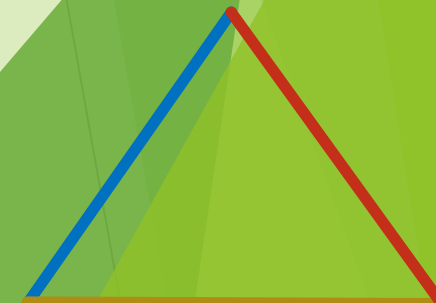
Utilizing **ETHOS**, **PATHOS**, and **LOGOS**

The following suggested/guiding questions can be used in two ways:

1. to think about how you are using the three rhetorical appeals in your own writing,
2. to assess how other writers use them in their writing

ETHOS:

- How has the writer connected him/herself to the topic being discussed?
- Does the writer demonstrate respect for multiple viewpoints by using sources in the text?
- Are sources credible? Are sources cited appropriately?
- Does the writer use a tone that is suitable for the audience / purpose? Is the diction (word choice) used appropriate for the audience / purpose?
- Is the document presented in a polished and professional manner?



Utilizing **ETHOS**, **PATHOS**, and **LOGOS**

PATHOS:

- Are vivid examples, details, and images used to engage the reader's emotions and imagination?
- Does the writer appeal to the values and beliefs of the reader by using examples readers can relate to or care about?

LOGOS:

- Is the central idea clear and specific?
- Is the central idea supported by strong reasons and credible evidence?
- Is the argument logical and arranged in a well-reasoned order?

Section 3

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

Key language features

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Key language features

- ▶ As an effective writer of English language, you should constantly bear 4Cs in mind, which are... ???

Clarity

Conciseness

Correctness

Be Compelling

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

→ Be Clear

- ▶ Minimize the use of jargon and acronyms

=> **Gobbledygook / Doublespeak**

(NO X) The use of L1 in L2 classrooms is a controversial issue in ELT, with proponents of translanguaging arguing that it can promote L2 development and facilitate meaning-making, while opponents argue that it can impede L2 acquisition and lead to fossilization.

(YES ✓) Some people think it is alright to use a student's first language in English language classes to help them learn better. Others disagree and think it could make it harder for students to learn English well.

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

→ Be Clear

- ▶ Avoid the use of ambiguous terms or flowery expressions

=> **Grandiloquence / high-flown language**

(NO X) Through a myriad of intricate pedagogical methods intertwined with the art of language instruction, the delicate yet profound nuances of English language can be imparted to the eager and receptive minds of the enlightened learners.

(YES ✓) English language can be taught to students by using various methods and techniques that help to convey the language effectively.

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

→ Be Clear

- Illustrate problems/issues/concepts with clear exemplification

Discussing solutions: Bullying at school

Exemplification (clear examples):

1. **Implementing a school-wide program** that promotes kindness and empathy, such as a "buddy system" where older students are paired with younger ones to offer support and friendship,
2. **Creating opportunities for students** to learn conflict resolution skills and build positive relationships through group activities and discussions,
3. **Establishing a reporting system** where students can safely and anonymously report incidents of bullying to trusted adults who can intervene and provide support to the victim.

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

→ Be Concise

- ▶ Offer a right amount of information
- ▶ Remove redundancy and verbosity

Can you see all the problems of “conciseness” below?

(NO X) In my personal opinion and based on my first-hand experience, I truly believe that, in essence, at the end of the day, it is critically important to ensure that we have proper and effective communication with our colleagues and peers, as it is through such communication that we are able to achieve our shared goals and objectives as a team.

Can you see all the problems of “conciseness” below?

(NO X) In my personal opinion and based on my first-hand experience, I truly believe that, in essence, at the end of the day, it is critically important to ensure that we have proper and effective communication with our colleagues and peers, as it is through such communication that we are able to achieve our shared goals and objectives as a team.

1. "In my personal opinion" and "based on my first-hand experience" are both unnecessary phrases (Why?) that convey the same idea.
2. "Truly believe" and "in essence" both express the same idea of sincerity.
3. "At the end of the day" does not add any real meaning to the sentence.
4. "Proper and effective" convey the same idea.
5. "Colleagues and peers" are synonymous and do not need to be used together.
6. "Shared goals and objectives as a team" is redundant.

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

➔ Be Correct

- ▶ Ensure the accuracy of all information: Facts, data, arguments, numbers, figures, etc.
- ▶ Eliminate all punctuation, spelling, and lexico-grammatical errors (such as dangling modifiers, comma splices, sentence fragments, wrong tenses, etc.)

**Dangling
modifiers**

**Comma
splices**

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

➔ Be Correct vs Dangling Modifiers

Dangling modifiers: a phrase or clause NOT clearly and logically related to the word or words it modifies

(No X) Walking through the hallways, the sound of chatter and laughter filled the air from the students.

(Yes ✓) **While walking through the hallways, I** heard the sound of chatter and laughter filling the air from the students.

(No X) Hoping to impress their parents, straight A's were the goal of the students.

(Yes ✓) Hoping to impress their parents, the students aimed for straight A's.

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

➔ Be Correct vs Dangling Modifiers

Dangling modifiers: Try to fix the following

(No X) While rushing to catch the bus, the school bag was left behind by the student.

(Yes ✓) While rushing to catch the bus, the student left the school bag behind.

(No X) After marking all the assignments, the teacher returned the papers to the students filled with comments.

(Yes ✓) After marking all the assignments, the teacher returned the papers filled with comments to the students.

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

→ Be Correct vs Comma Splices

Comma splices: Sentences or independent clauses are improperly connected by a comma alone

(No X) The school is closed for the day, students can't enter the building until tomorrow.

(Yes ✓) The school is closed for the day. Students can't enter the building until tomorrow.

(Yes ✓) The school is closed for the day, so students can't enter the building until tomorrow.

(Yes ✓) The school is closed for the day; therefore, students can't enter the building until tomorrow.

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

➔ Be Compelling / Convincing

Do Vs Don't

- ▶ Predict readers' questions and provide all necessary answers in advance
- ▶ Do not state the obvious! Any examples???
- ▶ Avoid the use of clichés or platitudes Any examples???

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

➔ Be Compelling / Convincing

Do not state the obvious

1. The fire is hot and can cause burns if touched.
2. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.
3. Birds have feathers and can fly.
4. The computer needs electricity to function properly.

Avoid the use of clichés

1. This broadened my horizon.
2. Every coin has two sides.
3. Nobody is perfect.
4. We all die someday.

Skills and strategies for effective writing:

Key language features

- Before we move on, can you tell me once again what the 4Cs are?

Clarity

Conciseness

Correctness

Be Compelling

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

- ▶ You are going to read a sample graduation speech (target genre: practical/motivational/ceremonial writing) about *Dream Big, Shine Bright*.
- ▶ While you are reading the text, you have to judge if the text fulfils the criteria of the 4Cs (focus on the highlighted questions):

Be clear

- ☐ Any jargon, acronyms, or "mysterious" terms?
- ☐ Any ambiguous or flowery expressions?
- ☐ Clear exemplification of central ideas?

Be concise

- ☐ Offer a right amount of information?
- ☐ Any redundancy or verbosity?

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

Be correct

- ❑ Accurate information: Facts, data, arguments, numbers, figures, etc.?
- ❑ Any punctuation, spelling, and lexicogrammatical errors (such as dangling modifiers, comma splices, sentence fragments, wrong tenses, etc.)?

Be compelling / convincing

- ❑ Predict readers' questions and provide all necessary answers in advance?
- ❑ Any stating the obvious?
- ❑ Any use of clichés or platitudes?

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

Sample: A Graduation Speech

Context:

Imagine you were a headmaster of a primary school and you were going to deliver a practical and motivational speech in a graduation ceremony to all its graduates (i.e., the primary six students) and attendees.

The theme of your speech is about: *Dream Big, Shine Bright.*

Good morning, graduates, parents, teachers, and distinguished guests,

Today is a day of celebration. It's a day to look back on all the hard work, challenges, and successes that brought us here, and a day to look forward to the bright future ahead of our Primary Six graduates. To our graduates, this is your moment, a milestone in your journey. You've reached the end of one chapter, and now you're ready to begin another, filled with opportunities to grow, learn, and achieve your dreams.

The theme of my speech today is “**Dream Big, Shine Bright.**” These simple but powerful words hold an important lesson for all of you. Let me explain what they mean and how they can guide you as you move forward.

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The theme of my speech today is “**Dream Big, Shine Bright.**” These simple but powerful words hold an important lesson for all of you. Let me explain what they mean and how they can guide you as you move forward.

Be compelling: The theme, “Dream Big, Shine Bright,” is **motivational** and **well-integrated** throughout the speech. It provides a **clear framework** for the ideas presented.

Be clear: This opening is **clear** and **sets the tone** for the speech. It **avoids jargon or complex language** and states the **purpose** of the occasion directly.

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

Dream Big

What does it mean to dream big? It means imagining a future where you aim high and achieve wonderful things. Dreaming big is about believing in yourself and your potential, no matter where you come from or what challenges you face.

Let me give you an example. Think of Cristiano Ronaldo, one of the greatest football players in the world. He grew up in a small home, shared a tiny room with his siblings, and faced many difficulties as a child. But he had a dream: to play football and become the best. Through hard work, practice, and dedication, he made his dream come true. Today, he is not just a football star but also an inspiration to millions.

Another example is Elon Musk. As a boy, he loved reading books and imagining a better future. He dreamed of inventing electric cars and even exploring space. Many people laughed at his ideas and told him they were impossible. But Elon worked hard, never gave up, and turned his dreams into reality. His company, Tesla, is changing the way we think about cars, and SpaceX has launched rockets into space. His story shows us that no dream is too big if you believe in yourself and put in the effort to achieve it.

So, graduates, don't be afraid to dream big. Whether you want to be a scientist, an artist, a teacher, or a doctor, let your imagination fly. Your dreams are your starting point, and they can take you far if you believe in them.

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

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Be clear: These definitions are **straightforward and easy** for the audience to understand. The speaker explains abstract ideas like "dream big" and "shine bright" in a **relatable way to children**.

Be clear: The speech uses **simple, age-appropriate language** and **avoids ambiguous terms** or unnecessary complexity. Examples like Cristiano Ronaldo and Elon Musk are used to illustrate the concepts, making them more **tangible and relatable**.

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So, graduates, don't be afraid to dream big. Whether you want to be a scientist, an artist, a teacher, or a doctor, let your imagination fly. Your dreams are your starting point, and they can take you far if you believe in them.

Be concise: The story of Cristiano Ronaldo is kept concise, focusing only on the key details that highlight his journey from hardship to success.

Be compelling: The example of Elon Musk is compelling because it highlights **perseverance and innovation**, inspiring students to **believe in their potential**.

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

Shine Bright

Now, dreaming big is just the beginning. To truly shine bright, you need to take action. Imagine a lamp. It may be beautiful, but it cannot shine until it's turned on. In the same way, you need to be determined, work hard, and keep learning to make your dreams come true.

Shining bright also means being kind and using your talents to make the world a better place. For example, think of Greta Thunberg. She started as one young girl who cared deeply about the environment. By speaking up and taking action, she inspired millions of people around the world to care for our planet. She didn't just dream of a better world—she worked to make it happen.

You can shine bright in your own way, too. It doesn't matter if your actions seem small at first. Every small step counts. Doing your best in school, helping a friend, or simply being kind to others are all ways to shine. The more you practise, the brighter your light will grow.

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

Shine Bright

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Be clear: These definitions are **straightforward and easy** for the audience to understand. The speaker explains abstract ideas like "dream big" and "shine bright" in a **relatable way to children**.

Be concise: This metaphor is **short and impactful**, avoiding unnecessary elaboration.

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

Moving Forward

As you leave this school and step into the next stage of your journey, remember these two things:

Dream Big. Don't let fear or doubt stop you from imagining all that you can achieve.

Shine Bright. Work hard, stay determined, and share your gifts with the world.

Some of you might feel nervous about what's ahead. That's okay. It's normal to feel that way. Just remember, you're not alone. Your teachers, parents, and friends are here to support you. When you face challenges, don't be afraid to ask for help. Together, we can overcome anything.

Graduates, today is not the end. It's the beginning of a new adventure. You are filled with potential, and the world is waiting for your light. So go forward with confidence. Dream big, shine bright, and make us proud.

Congratulations, Primary Six graduates! The future is yours to create.

Thank you.

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

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Thank you.

Be compelling: The structure of the speech (The beginning, "Dream Big," "Shine Bright," moving forward, the end) is **logical** and **keeps the audience engaged**.

Be concise: The reassurance is **brief but effective**, avoiding lengthy explanations or redundant statements.

Be concise: The speech **avoids over-explaining ideas** or including unnecessary details. Each section delivers just the **right amount of information** to convey the message without overwhelming the audience.

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

Moving Forward

As you leave this school and step into the next stage of your journey, remember these two things:

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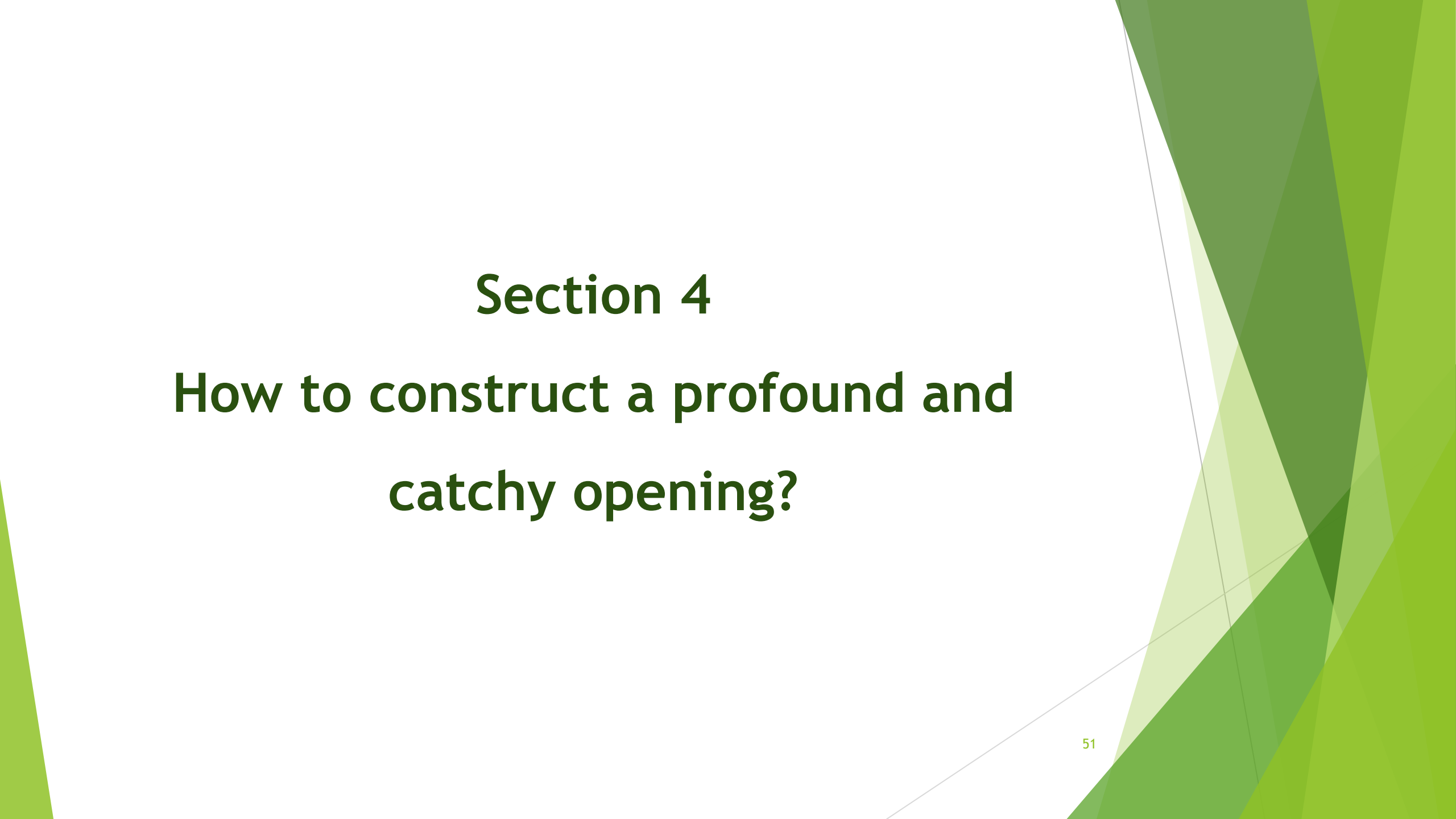
Be compelling: This is **a call to action**. This conclusion is **inspiring** and leaves the audience with **a sense of purpose and motivation**.

Be correct: The speech ensures **accuracy in language and factual details**, which helps build **credibility** and avoids distracting the audience with errors.

Be compelling: The speech **appeals to the emotions and imaginations** of the audience. It uses **relatable and inspiring examples, vivid imagery** (e.g., the lamp metaphor), and an **empowering tone** to captivate listeners.

Analysing the 4Cs in a sample graduation speech

- For more information, refer to your supplementary notes for another graduation speech sample.
 - The theme is about *the key to success in life*.
 - The structure, organization, language, and information delivery of the speech are all **more complex**.
 - Annotations have been given.

The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

Section 4

How to construct a profound and catchy opening?

Constructing a profound & catchy opening

- ▶ Imagine that you have to (1) write a short story or (2) give a speech to a group of students, how can you possibly create a good opening to capture your readers' / audiences' attention?
- ▶ Brainstorm and discuss with your group mates whatever successful framing elements and strategies you can use in the creation process (5 mins).

Constructing a profound & catchy opening

(1) Writing a short story

(2) Giving a speech

Crafting strong opening lines: A short story

- ▶ When a storyteller crafts the beginning of a story, they have a set of framing elements or strategies at their disposal.
- ▶ Here is an “AIDED” framework:
 1. **A**ction: Details about what characters are doing
 2. **I**nternal narrative: The characters’ internal thoughts
 3. **D**ialogue: The characters’ external speech with others
 4. **E**xternal narrative: Providing contexts for the readers
 5. **D**escription: The five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) to immerse readers into the fictional world of the character.

A short story: Action

Action: Details about what characters are doing

→ Propel the plot + Reveal aspects of the characters

He charged through the door, slamming it shut behind him. Breathing heavily, he quickly scanned the room for any sign of danger. Satisfied that he was alone, he collapsed onto the bed, his heart still racing from the adrenaline of the chase. He was safe, for now.

How would you interpret the emotional and physical status of “he”?

A short story: Internal narrative

Internal narrative (monologue): The characters' internal thoughts

→ Illuminate the thoughts and personality of the characters

Emma stared out the window, lost in thought. "I wish I could go back in time," she mused. "Fix my mistakes, change my choices. But I can't. All I can do is move forward, learn from my past, and make better decisions. I won't let my regrets hold me back."

What kind of person is Emma?

A short story: Dialogue

Dialogue: The characters' external speech with others

→ Move the plot forward, develop the characters, or explore the world of the story

Sarah noticed Mike looked upset and asked, "Hey, is everything alright?"

Mike shook his head. "No, I just lost my job," he said, fighting back tears.

"I'm so sorry," Sarah said, taking his hand. "You're going to be okay. We'll figure it out together."

Mike felt a lump in his throat. "Thank you for believing in me," he whispered.

"Always," Sarah replied, giving him a warm embrace.

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Describe the two characters and their relationship?

A short story: External narrative

External narrative: Providing contexts for the readers

→ Tell important details about the story or the characters

The sun was setting over the mountains as Sarah packed her bags. She was leaving behind everything she knew, embarking on a journey to a new country. Her heart was heavy with uncertainty, but she knew she had to take this leap of faith. The adventure was just beginning.

What kind of person is Sarah?

A short story: **Description**

Description: The five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) to immerse readers into the fictional world of the character. → Set the scenes

The sizzling sound of bacon filled the air, and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee wafted through the room. The morning light poured through the kitchen window, illuminating the countertop covered in homemade jam and butter. As she took a sip of her coffee, Mary couldn't help but smile, feeling grateful for the simple joys in life.

How do you feel about the opening scene?

GUESS: What is it?

Action / Internal narrative / Dialogue / External narrative / Description

The dusty old attic had always been off-limits to Lila, but today she couldn't resist exploring. As she sifted through the boxes and trunks, she stumbled upon an old photo album. Flipping through the pages, she discovered a family secret that had been buried for years.

External Narrative

GUESS: What is it?

Action / Internal narrative / Dialogue / External narrative / Description

The city at night was a symphony of sounds and colours. The neon lights of the skyscrapers reflected off the wet pavement, while the honking of horns and the chatter of people created an interesting mix of noise. Mary walked through the streets, taking in the energy of the city, feeling alive.

Description

GUESS: What is it?

Action / Internal narrative / Dialogue / External narrative / Description

As he walked down the street, James couldn't help but feel anxious. "What if I mess this up?" he thought to himself. "What if I'm not good enough?" He took a deep breath and reminded himself of all the times he had succeeded. "I can do this," he told himself. "Just keep moving forward."

Internal Narrative

GUESS: What is it?

Action / Internal narrative / Dialogue / External narrative / Description

Julia sliced, diced, and minced the vegetables, sizzling them in a pan with oil. She whisked eggs, poured them in, and scrambled them to perfection. She sprinkled salt and pepper, grated cheese, and served with toast. She savoured the delicious breakfast, feeling proud of her culinary skills.

Action

GUESS: What is it?

Action / Internal narrative / Dialogue / External narrative / Description

"I don't think I can do it, Dad," said Billy, staring at the ground.

"Hey, now," said his father, kneeling down to look him in the eye. "You can do anything you set your mind to. Remember when you learned how to ride your bike? You fell down a few times, but you kept trying until you got it. You're just as capable now."

Billy smiled weakly. "I guess you're right."

"I know I am," said his father, wrapping an arm around him. "You're my son, and I'll always believe in you. You're going to do great things."

Dialogue

Group writing practice

- ▶ Form a group of 4 or 5
- ▶ Write an opening of a creative story (be brief but imaginative!)
- ▶ Try to integrate some (if not all) of the elements of the “AIDED” framework into your opening
- ▶ You can start with:

*Once upon a time, there was a superman / witch / princess / villain / hardworking student / an orphan...
(or anything you like.)*

Crafting strong opening lines: A speech

- ▶ When a speaker crafts the beginning of a speech, they can employ a range of common strategies e.g.:
 - ❖ Posing intriguing questions
 - ❖ Utilizing unexpectedness (or weirdness)
 - ❖ Creating a sense of tension or suspense
- ▶ Let's look at some examples

A Sample Opening of a Speech about Ethics (Part 1)

Speaker: A school principal

Audience: Secondary school students

Contexts: A seminar about ethics is about to begin, and the school principal is giving an introductory speech to all students in a school theatre

Techniques employed in the speech opening:

- ▶ *Posing intriguing questions*
- ▶ *Utilizing unexpectedness (or weirdness)*

A Sample Opening of a Speech about Ethics (Part 1)

Identify the techniques employed in the speech opening:

- ▶ *Posing intriguing questions*
- ▶ *Utilizing unexpectedness (or weirdness)*

Good morning, students! Today, we are going to focus on a topic that affects every single one of us. That is ethics. What would immediately pop up in your mind when you hear the word "ethics"? Do you think of any rules that govern our behaviour? Do you think of any moral principles that guide our decision-making? Or do you think of something else entirely?

Let me ask you this: have you ever been in a situation where you did not know what the right thing to do was? Maybe you witnessed someone cheating in an exam, or you found a lost wallet with a large sum of money inside. What did you do? Did you make the ethical choice, or did you give in to temptation?

Ethics is all about making the right choices, even though it may be very difficult at times. It is about being honest, fair, and compassionate. But sometimes, what is ethical or not isn't always clear-cut. That is why we need to have discussions like this. This is to explore different perspectives and come to a better understanding of what it means to be ethical.

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Identify the techniques employed in the speech opening:

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Let me ask you this: have you ever been in a situation where you did not know what the right thing to do was? Maybe you witnessed someone cheating in an exam, or you found a lost wallet with a large sum of money inside. What did you do? Did you make the ethical choice, or did you give in to temptation?

The speaker provides a concise and clear definition of ethics that emphasizes its importance in guiding behaviour.

Ethics is all about making the right choices, even though it may be very difficult at times. It is about being honest, fair, and compassionate. But sometimes, what is ethical or not isn't always clear-cut. That is why we need to have discussions like this. This is to explore different perspectives and come to a better understanding of what it means to be ethical.

The speaker introduces the topic of the speech and establishes its relevance to the audience.

The speaker poses a thought-provoking question to engage the audience and encourage them to think about their own understanding of ethics.

The speaker prompts the audience to have further deep thinking in relation to ethics in different aspects of their life.

The speaker asks the audience some specific, moral dilemma questions to pave the way for the subsequent explanation of ethics.

The speaker acknowledges the complexity of ethical decision-making and sets the stage for a discussion of different perspectives.

A Sample Opening of a Speech about Ethics (Part 2)

Speaker: A school principal

Audience: Secondary school students

Contexts: A seminar about ethics is about to begin, and the school principal is giving an introductory speech to all students in a school theatre

Techniques employed in the speech opening:

- ▶ *Creating a sense of tension or suspense*
- ▶ *Posing intriguing questions*

A Sample Opening of a Speech about Ethics (Part 2)

Identify techniques employed in the speech opening:

- ▶ *Creating a sense of tension or suspense*
- ▶ *Posing intriguing questions*

Good morning, students. Today, I would like to talk to you about a topic which has the tremendous power to make or break our future, a topic which can influence the trajectory of our lives, a topic that can determine whether we are remembered as heroes or as devils. Any ideas what I am going to talk about? [pause: three seconds] That's right. It concerns ethics.

As we stand here today, I can't help but wonder, what will the future hold for us? Will we be the ones who make a positive impact on the world? Or will we be the ones who bring complete destruction to its demise? The answer to these questions all lies in the choices that we make, and the choices that we make are shaped by our ethics. Interesting! Right?

So, as we explore the importance and values of ethics, I sincerely hope that you can approach it with an open mind, put aside your preconceptions or even prejudice, and embrace whatever paradoxes or enigmas you are about to encounter. For the next 10 minutes, let's journey into the unknown, into a world where nothing is certain except that our choices will determine our fate...

A Sample Opening of a Speech about Ethics (Part 2)

Identify techniques employed in the speech opening:

- ▶ *Creating a sense of tension or suspense*
- ▶ *Posing intriguing questions*

Good morning, students. Today, I would like to talk to you about a topic which has the tremendous power to make or break our future, a topic which can influence the trajectory of our lives, a topic that can determine whether we are remembered as heroes or as devils. Any ideas what I am going to talk about? [pause: three seconds] That's right. It concerns ethics.

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Parallel structure; a strong sense of tension or suspense was created here.

Drawing audiences' attention through some intriguing / contrastive questions.

The gist of this paragraph.

Group writing practice

- ▶ Form a group of 4 or 5
- ▶ Write an opening of a speech (be brief but imaginative!)
- ▶ Try to integrate some skills we have just discussed
- ▶ **Same Contexts:**
 - ❖ A seminar about ethics (in technology / environment / business / medicine?) is about to begin, and you (an experienced teacher of English) is giving an introductory speech to all students in a school theatre

Section 5

**How to evoke special effects in
English writing through creative use
of literary devices?**

Literary devices

- ▶ Work in pairs and brainstorm some literary devices commonly used in creative writing
- ▶ Discuss the reasons for using literary devices in creative texts

Literary devices

► Reasons for using literary devices in creative texts:

1. Enhancing the meaning of a piece of writing by creating vivid and memorable images
2. Adding depth and complexity to a piece of writing by creating layers of meaning
3. Creating a specific tone or mood in a piece of writing
4. Grabbing readers' attention and keeping them engaged in the story
5. Demonstrating writers' skills and mastery of language

Literary devices

► Some common literary devices:

- ✓ Simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, foreshadowing, and many others

► The three literary devices for illustration here:

Allegory

Cliffhanger / Suspense

Oxymoron

Literary devices: Allegory

- ▶ Using characters, events, or other elements of a narrative to represent abstract ideas or concepts.
- ▶ The surface meaning of the story is just a vehicle for conveying a deeper, symbolic meaning.
- ▶ The characters in an allegory are often personifications of abstract concepts such as love, faith, or death.
- ▶ The events of the story are designed to illustrate the workings of these concepts in the world.
- ▶ Allegories can take many forms, from simple fables to complex, multi-layered works of literature.
- ▶ They are often used to convey moral or political messages, and can be used to critique or satirize social institutions, beliefs, or practices.

Literary devices: Allegory

In a small village, there lived a proud peacock named Vanity. He was always preening and showing off his beautiful feathers, seeking the admiration of all who saw him. But one day, a hunter came to the village, seeking to capture the peacock for his own selfish purposes.

Vanity, blinded by his own pride, refused to listen to the warnings of the other animals and stayed in the open, showing off his feathers. The hunter easily caught him and took him away.

It was only then, locked in a cage and stripped of his beautiful feathers, that Vanity realized the true cost of his vanity.

Vanity and his journey is an allegory for:

- ▶ The dangers of both vanity and self-obsession.

The hunter represents:

- ▶ The negative consequences that can result from vanity.

Literary devices: Cliffhanger / Suspense

- ▶ To create **suspense** and keep the reader or audience engaged by ending a chapter, scene, or section of a story **at a critical moment of high tension or uncertainty**, leaving the **outcome unresolved**.
- ▶ It can take many forms, such as a **sudden revelation**, an **unexpected twist**, or a **character in peril**.
- ▶ It is designed to leave the audience wanting more and to create **a sense of anticipation** for what comes next.

Literary devices: Cliffhanger / Suspense

It was a dark and stormy night, and Sabrina was driving home from a late shift at work. She was tired and just wanted to get home, but as she drove down the deserted road, she suddenly heard a strange noise coming from her car. She pulled over to the side of the road and got out to investigate.

As she looked under the hood, she saw two glowing eyes staring back at her. She screamed and ran back to the safety of her car, but the creature was now right behind her. She quickly got into the car and locked the doors, but the creature was relentless. It pounded on the windows and tried to break into the car.

Sabrina was trapped and had no escape. She tried calling for help, but there was no signal. She was alone and at the mercy of the mysterious creature outside.

This short story creates a strong sense of suspense through...?

The use of eerie atmospheric elements, a dangerous situation, and a helpless protagonist.

The reader is left wondering what will happen next, adding to the suspenseful tension.

Literary devices: Oxymoron

- ▶ A literary device that involves the use of two contradictory words or ideas to create a single phrase or image. The combination of these words/ideas creates a paradoxical, humorous, or ironic effect e.g., bittersweet, jumbo shrimp, act naturally, etc.
- ▶ Oxymorons are often used for rhetorical effect, to emphasize a point, or to create a memorable phrase.
- ▶ They can also be used to highlight a conflict or tension between two ideas.

Literary devices: Oxymoron

The city was both alive and dead. The streets were bustling with people, yet the buildings seemed empty and soulless. The bright lights illuminated the darkness, yet cast deep shadows that hid secrets and lies.

Love was a cruel comfort, a sweet pain that filled the heart with joy and sorrow at the same time. Life was a never-ending cycle of birth and death, a journey of hope and despair.

As she walked through the city, she couldn't help but feel that everything was orderly distorted. The world was full of contradictions, and she was just another part of the paradox.

This short story uses oxymorons to create...

- ▶ a sense of duality and complexity in the setting and emotions described.
- ▶ The use of contradictory terms adds depth and nuance to:
 - ▶ Examples: “cruel comfort”, “sweet pain”, “orderly distorted”
 - ▶ the description of the city and
 - ▶ the emotions experienced by the protagonist.

Literary devices

- ▶ Before we have our final exercise, still remember what the three literary devices we have gone through?

Allegory

Cliffhanger
/ Suspense

Oxymoron

Literary devices

- ▶ Work in pairs and read the story below.
- ▶ Identify the instances of all the three literary devices in the story.

Allegory

Cliffhanger

Oxymoron

Once upon a time, in a land far away, a great king ruled over his people with an iron fist. He had the power to control all aspects of people's life, and everyone feared him greatly.

One day, a small bird appeared, bringing a message from a distant land. The king ignored the message, but the bird persisted, warning of a great storm that was coming.

As the days passed, the sky grew darker, and the winds began to howl. The people pleaded with the king to listen to the bird, but he refused. All their pleas were met with deafening silence.

As the storm raged on, the people realized that they were powerless against the nature. In the end, it was the small bird that saved them all with its magic wings, leaving the king to ponder the contradiction of his own weakness and the bird's strength.

Allegory

Allegory: (i) The dangers of ignoring warnings and (ii) the power of nature over human beings.

Far away, a great king ruled over his people with an iron fist. He had control over all aspects of people's life, and everyone feared him greatly.

One day, a bird arrived, bringing a message from a distant land. The king ignored the bird's warning, warning of a great storm that was coming.

As the days passed, the sky grew darker, and the winds began to howl. The people pleaded with the king to listen to the bird, but he refused. All their pleas were met with deafening silence.

As the storm raged on, the people realized that they were powerless against the nature. In the end, it was the small bird that saved them all with its magic wings, leaving the king to ponder the contradiction of his own weakness and the bird's strength.

Cliffhanger

The story ends on a cliffhanger, leaving the readers wondering what the king will do next, and whether he will learn from his mistake.

silence.

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Oxymoron

The oxymoron in this story is reflected (i) explicitly through the phrase, **deafening silence**, and (ii) implicitly through the description of two characters in the plot:

- **a powerful king with no real power when facing the nature** and
- **a little bird with tremendous might**

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What have we learned in this workshop?

1. Meaning & Importance of “Effective” writing
2. Key structural elements for effective writing
 - ❖ 3 Rhetorical Appeals (Ethos, Pathos, and Logos)
3. Key language features for effective writing
 - ❖ The 4Cs (Be clear, concise, correct, and compelling)
4. How to construct a profound and catchy opening?
 - ❖ Writing: The “AIDED” framework (+practice)
 - ❖ Speech: 3 strategies (+practice)
5. How to evoke special effects in English writing through creative use of 3 literary devices

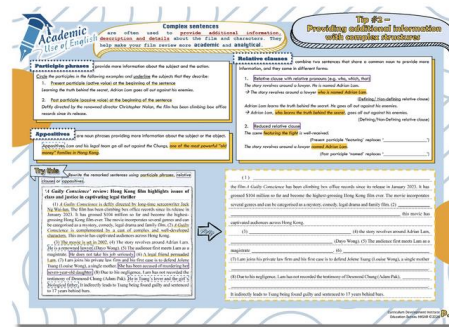
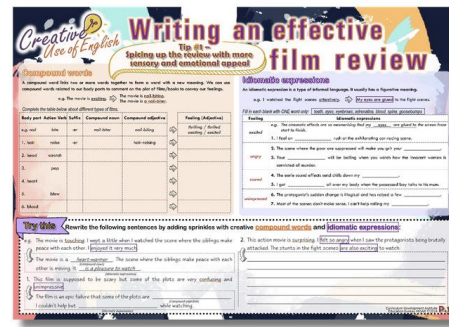
Remember! The writing techniques and knowledge covered in this workshop are generic enough and conducive to most teachers of English

6. Reference materials (Activity sheets)

EDB Resources

Education Bureau. (2023). *Creative Use of English*. <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/references-resources/Creative-Eng/home.html>

Writing an Effective Film Review



Teacher Version

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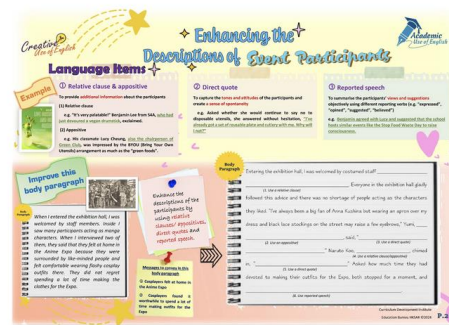
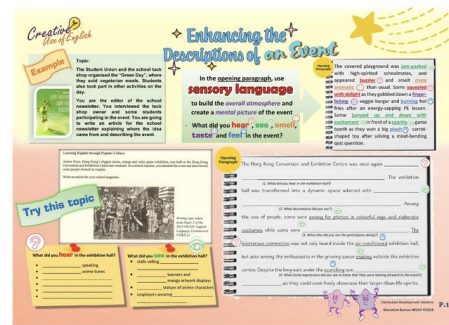
[PDF](#)

Student Version

[DOCX](#)

[PDF](#)

Enhancing the Descriptions of an Event in an Article



Teacher Version

[DOCX](#)

[PDF](#)

Student Version

[DOCX](#)

[PDF](#)

6. Reference materials (Animated videos)

EDB Resources

Education Bureau. (2023). *Creative Use of English*. <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/references-resources/Creative-Eng/home.html>

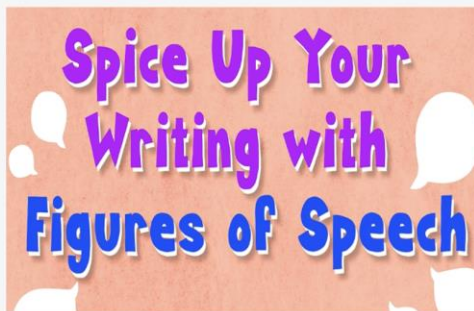
Episode 1: Diction and Detail Matter



Episode 2: Write with All Senses



Episode 3: Spice up Your Writing with Figures of Speech



Episode 4: Give Your Story an Engaging Opening and Ending



6. Reference materials

Additional References

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