

Professional Development Programme

Exploring the Academic Use of English in the Senior Secondary English Language Classroom

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Workshop Objectives

- To introduce teachers to language features and purposes of academic texts
- To discuss effective strategies for developing students' awareness and understanding of the role of academic use of English in achieving the purposes of different academic texts
- To engage teachers in hands-on activities on designing learning activities that guide students to explore the language features of academic texts and apply them in reading and writing academic texts

13 Jan 2025 (Event AA): for more advanced English learners

15 Feb 2025 (Event AB): for less advanced English learners

Workshop Agenda

- Typical features of the academic use of English
- Linguistics features in academic/formal texts
- Academic use of English in reading and writing

Ice-breaking

- How do you incorporate the academic use of English in your English lessons? Where are the learning and teaching materials from?
- What is one strategy or activity you have used to help students understand/improve the academic use of English?

English Language Education

Key Learning Area

English Language

Curriculum and Assessment Guide

(Secondary 4 - 6)

Jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and
the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Published for use in schools by the Education Bureau
HKSARG
2021
Effective from Secondary 4 in the 2021/22 school year

4.2.3 Promoting the Academic Use of English

English is one of the major mediums of instruction in different senior secondary subjects and university courses. It is therefore crucial to promote the academic use of English to heighten students' awareness of English commonly used in academic texts they read and/or write in other subjects, facilitating their current and/or further studies. English teachers can take the lead to raise students' awareness of the style and features of academic texts by selecting appropriate texts and designing relevant learning activities.

Academic Use of English

- LAC
- EMI

☑ **textbooks, assignments,
projects, etc.**

**(e.g., to explain concepts, present
arguments and describe processes)**

Academic-style texts

- informative, expository or argumentative texts
- formal letters
- proposals
- problem-solution essays
- feature articles
- editorials

***Structured arguments or explanations, logical
organisation, cohesive devices, formal tone, etc.***

Understanding Language Features

- Study Texts 1-3
- Determine the formality of the texts
- Examine the **informal** text: What makes it informal?
- Examine the **formal** text: What makes it formal?

Understanding Language Features

- Can you think of other language features associated with formal texts and informal texts respectively?

Formal texts	Essays, job application letters, letters to the editor, lab reports, project proposals, personal statements, scholarship essays
Informal texts	Text messages, social media posts, personal emails, informal letters, diary entries

Everyday English	Academic Use of English
Casual, conversational and subjective tone	Objective and formal tone
Use contractions , informal expressions , and incomplete sentences for the sake of brevity or familiarity	Avoid contractions, slang or informal expressions
Personal pronouns (I, you, we) to convey a sense of subjectivity or personal opinion	Third-person pronouns (he, she, they) to convey a sense of objectivity
Common, everyday informal words and phrases	More formal, specialised vocabulary, discipline-specific jargon
Use the active voice more frequently	Use the passive voice to convey objectivity and focus on the action rather than the subject
Avoid excessive acronyms in order to be accessible to a wider audience	Occasional use of acronyms
No formal citations or sources	Citations and references to support claims and provide evidence
Simpler sentence structures , usually basic subject-verb-object patterns	More complex sentence structures with more subordination and coordination
More flexibility and tolerance for colloquialisms, slang , and informal grammar	Greater emphasis on correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence mechanics
More general or colloquial terms, and may not be as concerned with precision (e.g., <i>OK</i>)	Precise and accurate terminology to convey specific meanings (e.g., <i>acceptable, appropriate</i>)

Everyday English	Academic Use of English
Use figurative language , such as idioms and metaphors , to convey meaning in a more creative and expressive way	Figurative language used less frequently
Emotive words (e.g., <i>wonderful</i> , <i>awesome</i>)	A lack of emotion, a focus on facts and evidence
More direct and assertive in expressing opinions or making statements	Hedging and cautious language to express uncertainty or to qualify statements
Fewer qualifiers and modifiers, leading to a more straightforward and direct communication style	Qualifiers and modifiers to provide nuance and precision in describing concepts or ideas
More on personal opinions , anecdotes , and less formal methods of persuasion	A stronger emphasis on presenting evidence , logical reasoning , and constructing well-supported arguments
More concise and may rely on context or assumptions	Longer and more detailed explanations , with a focus on precision and clarity
Personal opinions, biases, and subjective viewpoints without the need for extensive analysis or objectivity	An objective and analytical approach to information and ideas
Structure and organisation may be less important ; may not adhere to strict organisational patterns and may be more conversational and spontaneous	A structured and organised approach (Introduction → Body → Conclusion); ideas presented in a logical and coherent way, with clear transitions between sections

Features and Description of Academic Language

Vocabulary

Sentence structures

Tone and stance

Decontextualisation

Something not
in the
immediate
physical
environment

Genre

Specific form or type of
discourse that has
distinguishing lexical and
grammatical features

The degree of
familiarity of
topic or
audience based
on the context

Language in Academic Settings

1. **Intertextuality:** Explicit reference to scholarly work
2. **Content (often abstract):** Complex ideas, typically goes beyond everyday issues relevant to the general public – one that is specific to a scholarly topic and possibly to a particular discipline
3. **Context:** Audience and purpose
4. **Genre variety** (e.g., lab reports, literature reviews, dissertations)
5. **Language:** Specific, objective and formal

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Common Features of Academic Texts

Academic texts refer to texts that students read and/or produce when studying subjects of other KLAs (e.g. Science Education, Mathematics Education, Personal, Social and Humanities Education). The purpose of an academic text is usually to explain an idea or concept with data/statistics, to discuss an issue with evidence or to argue and justify a point. Academic texts are generally formal, objective, precise and technical (with subject-specific terms).

Formal

Objective

Precise

Technical



Everyday English

Everyday English

Skinny guys should eat more protein and **carbs** to **put on weight**.

We **did a study** and **found** that lack of regular exercise **causes** a range of chronic health conditions.

The software helps firms **keep and find old emails**.

One of the effects of **cutting down too many trees** is that some animals and plants will lose their **homes**.



VS

Academic English



Academic English

Formal
e.g. Use **nouns** & avoid colloquial language

Objective & Impersonal
e.g. Use **the passive voice** & **hedging words**

Precise
e.g. Use **exact words** & provide specific details

Technical
e.g. Use **subject-specific words**

A higher intake of protein and **carbohydrates** helps **underweight** people to **gain weight**.

A study was **conducted** and it was **found that** physical inactivity **could be a cause** of a range of chronic health conditions.

The software helps firms **archive and retrieve emails in the past 12 months**.

One of the effects of **deforestation** is the loss of **habitats** for some animals and plants.

Teaching strategies!

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- highlight salient features (e.g. text structures, rhetorical functions and language items) common in academic texts to draw students' attention to how they are used and the effects/purposes achieved. Below are some examples.
 - To make academic texts more formal, contractions, informal and colloquial expressions are avoided while formal vocabulary (e.g. "injection/vaccination" instead of "jab") is used to present information.
 - To create a more objective tone, judgements are supported by reasons and findings in academic texts and opinions are presented with the use of the passive voice.
 - Specific and concrete words are used (e.g. "teenagers" instead of "young people", "in 2018" instead of "a few years ago") to avoid ambiguity.
 - Subject-specific terminologies are used to describe a process, classify an object or living thing, etc. (e.g. "deforestation", "mammal"). Some common words have a special meaning in academic contexts (e.g. "class" and "family" in Biology, "mean" in Mathematics). The ability to understand and use subject-specific terminologies is essential for comprehending and producing academic texts.
- explicitly teach reading skills and strategies to help students comprehend and unpack the texts they would read in other subjects/KLAs; and
- design meaningful tasks to connect reading and writing to provide opportunities for students to apply language (e.g. text structures, rhetorical functions and language items in academic texts) and content knowledge (e.g. concepts and ideas related to non-language subjects) learnt.



Home > Curriculum Development and Support > Key Learning Areas > English Language Education > References
Resources > Academic Use of English

Academic Use of English



English is one of the major mediums of instruction in different senior secondary subjects and university courses. The academic use of English is promoted to heighten students' awareness of English commonly used in academic texts they read and write in other subjects, so as to facilitate their current and further studies.

A variety of learning and teaching resources are developed to support schools in incorporating elements of the academic use of English into the English Language curriculum and facilitate students' self-directed learning. These resource materials can be used in combination flexibly to help students acquire the skills in the academic use of English more effectively.



<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/references-resources/Academic-Eng/home.html>

https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/references-resources/Academic-Eng/resource_pack.html



RESOURCE PACK

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PREFACE



CHAPTER 1

What is Academic English?



CHAPTER 2

Academic Vocabulary



CHAPTER 3

Useful Sentence Structures and
Language for Academic Writing



CHAPTER 4

Paraphrasing, Summarising and Quoting



CHAPTER 5

Paragraph Structure



CHAPTER 6

Common Academic Text Structures

Please note the following for optimal operation of the e-platform:

1. Access the platform with a device of minimum resolution of 1080 X 810.
2. Disable the auto-capitalisation or auto-spacing function of your device, which may affect the reliability of the answer-checking function.



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<https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/Academic-Eng/e-platform/index.html>



RESOURCE PACK

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Chapter 1: What is Academic English?

- a) Academic English vs Everyday English
- b) General Features of Academic English

Chapter 2: Academic Vocabulary

- a) Academic Vocabulary vs General Vocabulary
- b) Subject-specific Words and Technical Terms
- c) Word Formation

Chapter 3: Useful Sentence Structures and Language for Academic Writing

- a) Passive Construction
- b) Hedging Language
- c) Noun Phrases and Clauses
- d) Adjective Phrases and Clauses

Chapter 4: Paraphrasing, Summarising and Quoting

- a) Paraphrasing
- b) Summarising
- c) Quoting

Chapter 5: Paragraph Structure

- a) A Five-paragraph Essay
- b) Paragraph Purposes
- c) Topic Sentences
- d) Supporting Details
- e) Concluding Sentences
- f) Paragraph Cohesion

Chapter 6: Common Academic Text Structures

- a) Cause and Effect
- b) Comparison and Contrast
- c) Procedure/Sequence
- d) Problem and Solution



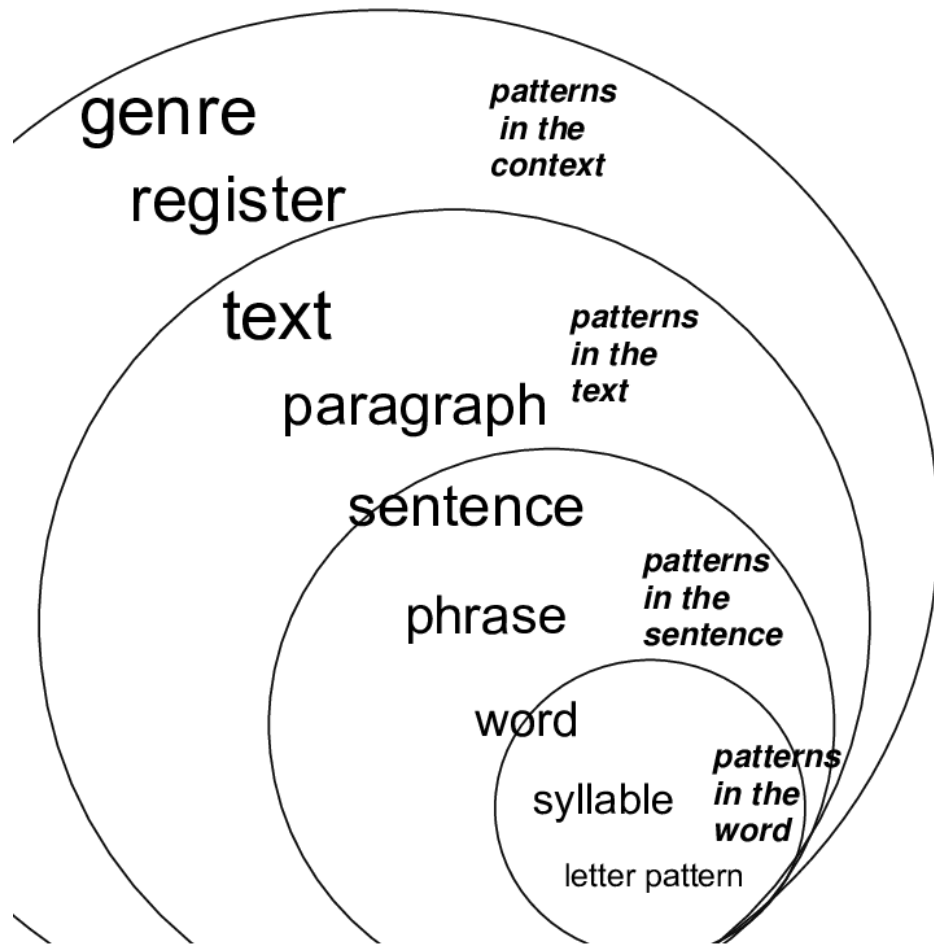
Why do we need to use
formal/academic language?

Importance of Academic Language

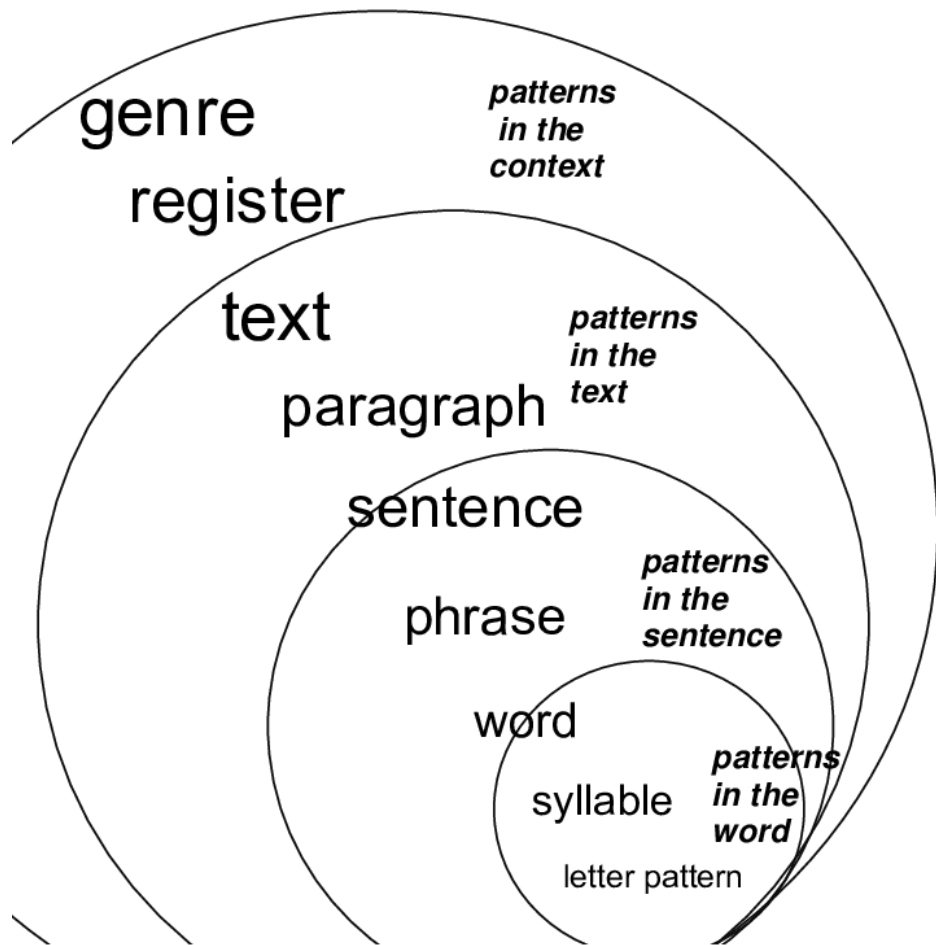
"Academic language is the language needed by students to **understand and communicate in the academic disciplines**. Academic language includes such things as **specialized vocabulary, conventional text structures within a field** (e.g., essays, lab reports) and other **language related activities typical of classrooms**, (e.g., expressing disagreement, discussing an issues, asking for clarification). Academic language includes both productive and receptive modalities. **One of your goals for the learning segment should be to further develop your students' academic language abilities.** This means that your learning objectives should focus on language as well as on content. You can and should **communicate content** through means other than language, e.g., physical models, visuals, demonstrations. However, you should also develop your students' abilities **to produce and understand oral and written texts typical in your subject area as well as to engage in language-based tasks.**"

Definition of Academic Language

- "the **specialized language**, both oral and written, of **academic settings** that **facilitates communication and thinking** about **disciplinary content**" (Nagy & Townsend, 2012, p. 92)
- "**the language used in school** to **acquire new or deeper understanding** of the content and to **communicate that understanding** to others" (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2013, p. 2)
- "**the language used in school** to help students **acquire and use knowledge**" (Anstrom et al., 2010, p. iv)
- "**the formalized language of school** ... builds a foundation that helps our students **define terms, form concepts, and construct knowledge**" (Johnson, 2009, p. 1)



Layers of Language in Context (Rose, 2006)

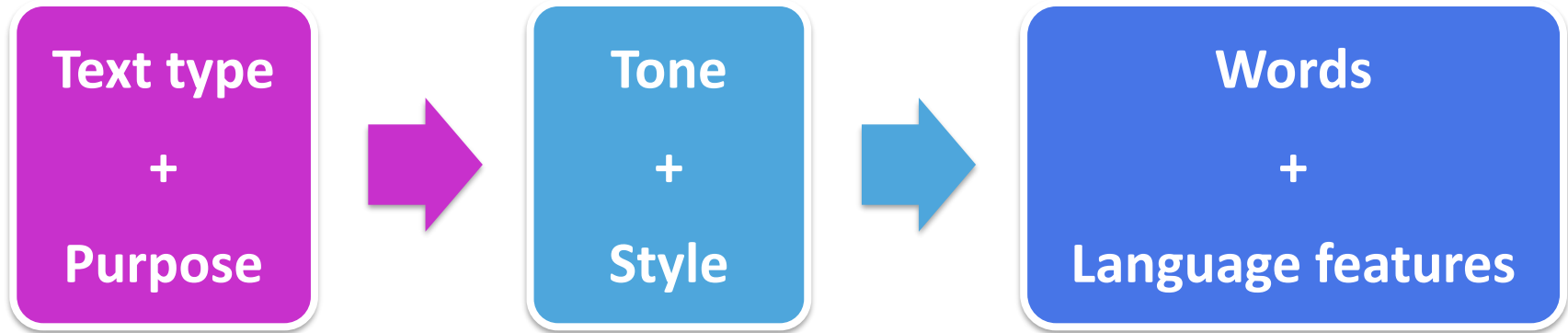


Degree of decontextualisation
Cultural influences and topics

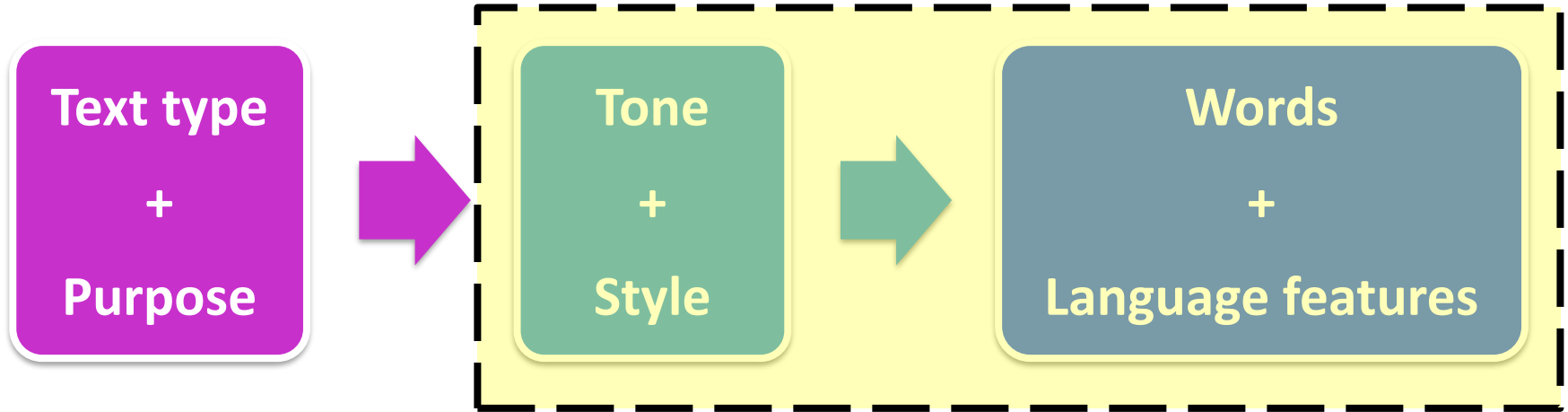
Complex sentence structures
Grammatical features

Academic vocabulary
Discipline-specific vocabulary

In Simple Terms...



When analysing writing questions, ...



Text Type: Letters to the Editor (2024 2B Q4)

Purpose	To allow readers to express their opinions, concerns or perspectives on issues of public interest, often in response to articles or topics covered by a publication
Tone & style	1. Respectful, polite and professional 2. Persuasive: Convincing readers or decision-makers to adopt a particular viewpoint or take action 3. Clear and logical: Arguments are presented in a logical order, often with supporting evidence or examples
Language	1. Concise and to the point, avoiding unnecessary details 2. Contrastive conjunctions to present counter-arguments or alternative perspectives 3. Modal verbs (e.g., <i>should, must, could</i>) to express obligation, possibility or necessity 4. Passive voice to shift focus or depersonalise criticism 5. Conditional sentences to outline potential consequences or solutions

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Assessment as learning (AaL): Checklist for self-assessment or peer assessment?

Text Type: Meeting Minutes (2021 3B1 DF & 2024 3B2 DF)

Purpose	To provide an accurate and official record of the discussions, decisions and actions that occur during the meeting
Tone & style	1. Objective and neutral tone – impartial and free from personal opinions or bias 2. Formal and professional style 3. Concise and clear, easy to read and understand, and focus only on the key points of the meeting 4. Impersonal – focus on the meeting's content, not the individuals involved, to maintain professionalism and objectivity
Language	1. Use factual language without adding subjective commentary or emotional language 2. Use formal vocabulary and avoid slang, colloquialisms or overly casual expressions 3. Avoid unnecessary details, long-winded explanations or overly complex sentences 4. Use third-person pronouns and passive voice

Possible Teaching Focus 1

Introduce the purpose and structure of meeting minutes

- Explain the purpose of meeting minutes (i.e., To provide a formal record of discussions, decisions and actions agreed upon during a meeting)
- Highlight the key components of the sample:
 1. Header information: Date, venue and attendees
 2. Agenda items: Clearly numbered and organised
 3. Action points: Specific updates, decisions and responsibilities

Possible Teaching Focus 2

Teach organisational skills

- Emphasise the importance of organising minutes logically:
 1. Agenda items are numbered and addressed in order
 2. Updates and decisions are grouped under relevant headings
- Example task: Provide students with a jumbled version of the minutes and ask them to reorganise it into the correct format

Possible Teaching Focus 3

Analyse the formal style

- Use the sample to teach students about formal writing conventions:
 1. Professional/Formal vocabulary (e.g., "confirmed", "arranged" and "adopt")
 2. Objective tone: Sentences that avoid personal opinions or emotional language (e.g., "Changes will be made based on the feedback interview conducted after last year's Activity Day.")
 3. Conciseness: Short, clear sentences that focus on facts and actions
- Example task: Have students underline formal words and phrases in the sample and rewrite informal alternatives (e.g., "SJ confirmed" vs. "SJ said")

Possible Teaching Focus 4

Write action points

- Highlight how the sample document specific actions and responsibilities, such as:
 - "SJ confirmed that the kitchen surfaces will be disinfected every two hours."
 - "LY has arranged four sets of security checkpoints."
- Analyse what these action points include:
 - Who is responsible
 - What action will be taken
 - When it will be done (if applicable)

Possible Teaching Focus 5

Compare formal and informal minutes

- Provide an informal version of the same minutes (e.g., written in a conversational tone with casual language) and compare it to the formal sample
- Discuss why formal language is more appropriate for professional settings
- Example task: Ask students to rewrite a section of the sample minutes in an informal style, then discuss the differences in tone and appropriateness

Possible Teaching Focus 6

Editing and feedback

- Provide students with a draft of poorly written minutes (e.g., missing key details, disorganised or overly informal) and ask them to edit and improve it using the sample as a guide
- Example task: Use peer review to let students critique and improve each other's minutes

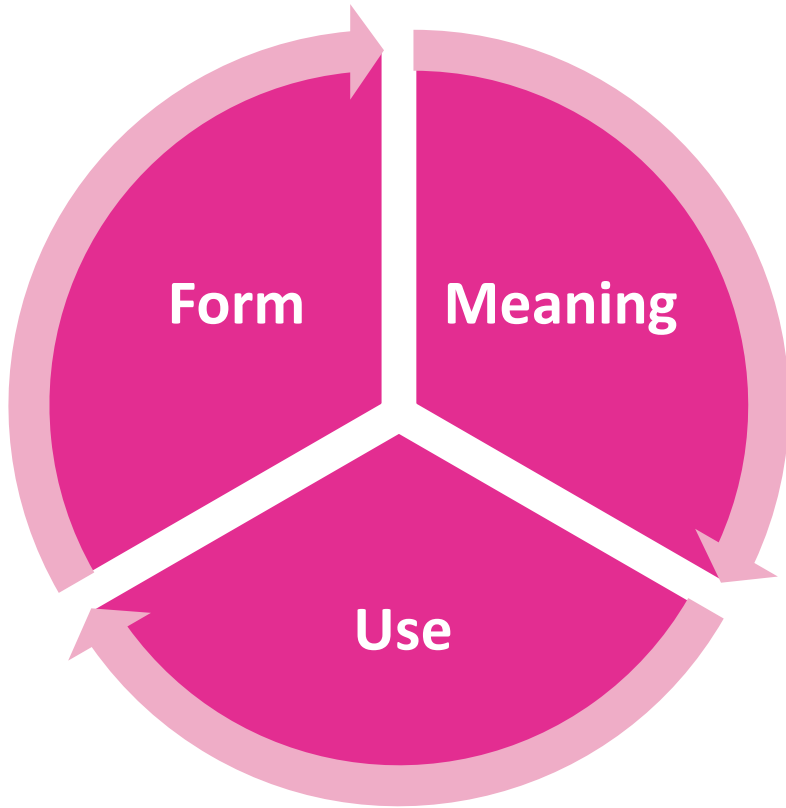
Meeting Minutes (2021 3B1 DF)

- Compare Version A with Version B
- Which one looks more like the meeting minutes? Why?
- Base your reasoning on the purpose, tone, style and language features of the minutes.
- **How can this task be adapted to cater for learner diversity?**

Do you teach ...?

❖ Passive voice

- How do you teach these two grammar items?



Isolated mechanical drills

vs.

Contextualised language use

Passive Voice

Form	• <i>be</i> + past participle
Meaning and Use	The passive voice shifts the focus of a sentence from the subject (the doer of the action) to the object (the receiver of the action). The passive voice is commonly used in the following contexts: • When the doer is unknown, unimportant or implied • To emphasise the action or the receiver of the action • To avoid assigning blame or responsibility • In formal or academic writing (to maintain an objective tone)

Meeting Minutes (2021 3B1 DF)

- Study Version A again
- Can you identify any instances of the passive voice?
- What do you notice?

The passive voice is used to emphasise **actions and decisions** (e.g., kitchen surfaces will be disinfected, baggage scanners have been arranged), which is typical in formal meeting minutes where the focus is on **what will be done** rather than who will do it.

Passive Voice

- What is focused on in each of the following sentences?

1. The kitchen surfaces will be disinfected every two hours.

2. Baggage scanners have been arranged.

3. Further measures would be put in place.

The focus is on the action of disinfecting, not who is doing it.

The focus is on the measures, not who is implementing them.

The focus is on the arrangement, not who arranged them.

Passive Voice

The kitchen surfaces will be disinfected every two hours.

- Is this a past, present or future action?
- What will happen to the kitchen surfaces?
- Do we know who will disinfect the surfaces?
- What is the focus of the sentence: the action or the person doing it?

Details have been posted on the Events Horizon blog page.

- Is this a past, present or future action?
- Who posted the details?
- Is it important to know who posted the details?
- What is the focus of the sentence: the details or the person posting them?
- Would the meaning change if the sentence were active?

Kitchen surfaces	will	be	disinfected	every two hours.
Changes	will	be	made	based on the feedback interview conducted after last year's Activity Day.
Thing	<i>will</i>	<i>be</i>	V-ed	

Thirty-five Green Ambassadors	would	be	hired.	
Further measures	would	be	put	in place.
Thing	<i>would</i>	<i>be</i>	V-ed	

Details	have	been	posted	on the Events Horizon blog page.
Baggage scanners	have	been	arranged.	
Thing	<i>have</i>	<i>been</i>	V-ed	

Reporting Verbs

- Are the following sentences the same?

- Convey the speaker's intention, tone or attitude
- Indicate how the information is being presented

TC	confirmed	that	thirty-five Green Ambassadors would be hired.
TC	announced	that	thirty-five Green Ambassadors would be hired.
TC	believed	that	thirty-five Green Ambassadors would be hired.
TC	claimed	that	thirty-five Green Ambassadors would be hired.
TC	agreed	that	thirty-five Green Ambassadors would be hired.
TC	disputed	that	thirty-five Green Ambassadors would be hired.

Reporting Verbs

Verb	Meaning	Tone	Implication
announced	Neutral declaration of fact	Objective	Presents the statement as fact
believed	Personal opinion	Subjective, less certain	Reflects TC's belief
claimed	Statement that might be disputed or unreliable	Skeptical	Suggests the statement could be questioned
agreed	Consensus or alignment with someone else's opinion	Collaborative, supportive	Indicates TC is supporting an idea proposed by someone else
disputed	Rejection or disagreement with the statement	Critical, oppositional	TC is challenging the idea

Meeting Minutes (2021 3B1 DF)

- What other linguistic features (e.g., grammar and word choice) would you focus on if you want to enhance students' awareness of the use of (academic) language in the text?

Formal tone and vocabulary (e.g., confirmed, arranged, adopt, further measures)	• How does the choice of formal vocabulary contribute to the professional tone of the minutes? • How would the tone change if informal language were used?
Passive voice to focus on actions and outcomes rather than the people performing them	• Why is the passive voice commonly used in formal documents like meeting minutes? • How does it shift the focus of the sentence?
Reported speech (e.g., confirmed, informed, added, expressed) to summarise what was said during the meeting	• How does reported speech help maintain objectivity and professionalism in meeting minutes? • How does it differ from direct speech?
Modal verbs (e.g., will, would, should) to express certainty, obligation or suggestions	• What is the function of modal verbs in these sentences? • How do they convey different levels of certainty or obligation?
Present perfect tense (e.g., have been arranged, have been posted) to describe actions that have been completed but are still relevant	• Why is the present perfect tense used here instead of the past tense? • How does it emphasise the relevance of completed actions?
Third-person perspective (e.g., AA, TC) to maintain objectivity and professionalism	• Why is the third-person perspective preferred in meeting minutes? • How does it affect the tone and style?

Academic Language Feature: Nominalisation

- The process of turning verbs, adjectives or other parts of speech into nouns
- A common feature in academic writing
- It allows for a more formal and concise tone, focusing on concepts and ideas rather than actions or agents.

Nominalisation

- Why is nominalisation used? What effect(s) can it achieve?

Original	Rewritten
Venice started to impose a tax of €10 on each visitor to pay for the <u>maintenance</u> of the city and the <u>repair works</u> made necessary by the large number of tourists.	Venice started to impose a tax of €10 on each visitor to <u>maintain</u> the city and <u>repair</u> the damage caused by the large number of tourists.
<u>Developments</u> of new hotels and tourist attractions have all been stopped.	The government has stopped <u>developing</u> new hotels and tourist attractions.
Tourists are also constantly reminded of the <u>importance</u> of respecting the locals through city-wide campaigns, advertisements and signs.	City-wide campaigns, advertisements, and signs constantly remind tourists that it is <u>important</u> to respect the locals.
<u>Booking</u> of tickets sometimes has to be made months in advance.	Tourists sometimes have to <u>book</u> tickets months in advance.

Examples	Effects
... to pay for the maintenance of the city and the repair works ...	“Maintenance” emphasises the ongoing process or state of keeping the city in good condition, rather than the act of maintaining.
... the repair works made necessary by the large number of tourists.	This nominalisation focuses on the outcome (the repairs) rather than the action of repairing.
Developments of new hotels and tourist attractions have all been stopped.	The use of “developments” shifts the focus from the action of developing to the concept of development itself, making the statement more formal and abstract.
... the environmental and spiritual significance of the site.	“Significance” abstracts the idea of importance, making the statement more formal and concept-focused.
Booking of tickets sometimes has to be made months in advance.	“Booking” shifts the focus from the action of booking to the process or requirement of securing tickets.

Abstract focus

- Allow writers to focus on abstract ideas or concepts rather than specific actions or agents
- “Development of new hotels” focuses on the concept of development rather than the act of building.

Formality

- Sound more formal and professional
- “Maintenance of the city” is more formal than “maintaining the city”.

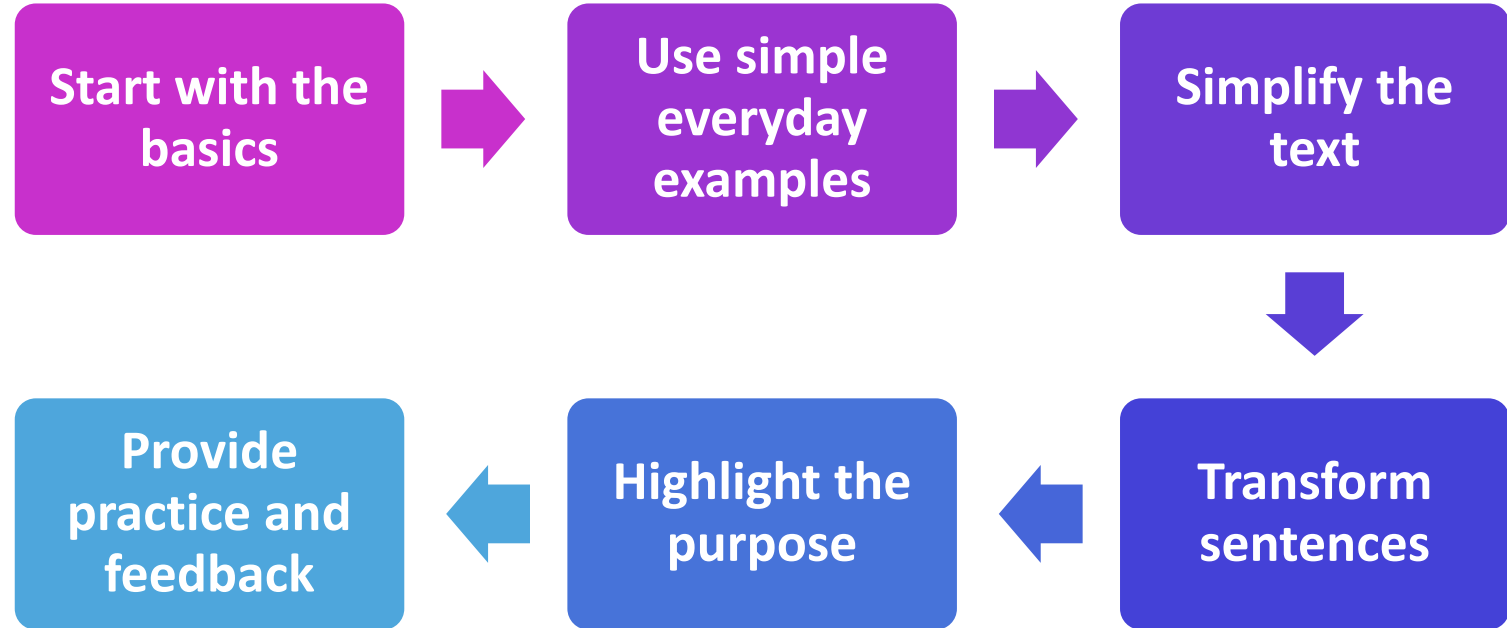
Conciseness

- Condense information into fewer words to make the text more compact
- “Booking of tickets” is shorter and more formal than “People need to book tickets”.

Impersonal tone

- Create an impersonal and objective tone by removing the agent (who is performing the action)
- “Developments have been stopped” avoids mentioning who stopped the developments – keep the tone neutral

Nominalisation: Possible Teaching Steps



Start with basics	• Tell students that nominalisation is when we turn a verb (action) or adjective (description) into a noun (thing or idea) • Use a table to show students the different parts of speech of a word (e.g., develop vs. development; important vs. importance)
Use simple everyday examples	• Take examples from daily lives or familiar contexts (e.g., happy → happiness; important → importance)
Simplify the text	• Use examples from the text but simplify them for weaker students (e.g., The maintenance of the city is important. → Maintaining the city is important.)
Transform sentences	• Give students sentences/phrases with verbs or adjectives and ask them to rewrite them using nominalisation (e.g., to develop new hotels → the development of new hotels)
Highlight the purpose	• Explain why nominalisation is used (e.g., to focus on ideas rather than actions; to make writing more formal and academic)
Provide practice with feedback	• Give students exercises where they practise turning verbs and adjectives into nouns • Provide immediate feedback to reinforce learning

Types of vocabulary

```
graph TD; A[Types of vocabulary] --> B[General / everyday / core vocabulary]; A --> C[Academic vocabulary]; A --> D[Technical vocabulary]; B --- E([Basic words used often in everyday conversation]); C --- F([More complex, frequently occurring words in academic settings across a variety of disciplines]); D --- G([Highly specialised/technical low-frequency words that are related to a specific discipline]);
```

**General /
everyday / core
vocabulary**

Basic words used
often in everyday
conversation

**Academic
vocabulary**

More complex,
frequently occurring
words in academic
settings across a
variety of disciplines

**Technical
vocabulary**

Highly
specialised/technical
low-frequency words
that are related to a
specific discipline

Tourism Management (2024 4 Set 2.1)

- Study the text again
- Can you identify any examples of academic / tier 2 vocabulary?

Polysemantic Words

safe	brief	instrumental
relief	break	live



**Context-
dependent!**

Polysemantic Words: Contextual Examples

1. The medicine gave her relief from the headache.
2. The government provided relief to flood victims.
3. It was a relief to hear the good news.
 - a) The alleviation of pain, stress or discomfort
 - b) Financial or material aid
 - c) A feeling of reassurance or relaxation after anxiety

Polysemantic Words: Story Creation

The Safe Adventure

Emma always felt safe in her small, cozy house at the edge of the forest. It was her sanctuary, a place where she could relax and forget about the outside world. But one stormy night, as the wind howled and the rain lashed against the windows, she heard a loud crash from the basement.

Her heart raced, but she reminded herself that she was still in her safe home. Grabbing a flashlight, she cautiously made her way downstairs. To her surprise, she found that the old safe her grandfather had left her had fallen over. The heavy metal box lay on its side, its door slightly ajar.

Emma had never been able to open the safe before—her grandfather had passed away without sharing the combination. But now, with the door cracked open, she couldn't resist taking a peek inside. She pushed the door open and gasped. Inside was a stack of old letters, a few gold coins, and a small, leather-bound journal.

As she flipped through the journal, she realized it contained stories from her grandfather's life—adventures he had never shared with anyone. One entry described how he had hidden the journal in the safe to keep it protected from thieves during a time when the town wasn't as safe as it was now.

Emma smiled, feeling a deep connection to her grandfather. She carefully placed the journal back in the safe, knowing it was the perfect place to keep it safe for future generations.

Polysemantic Words: Story Creation

The Safe Adventure

Emma always felt safe in her small, cozy house at the edge of the forest. It was her sanctuary, a place where she could relax and forget about the outside world. But one stormy night, as the wind howled and the rain lashed against the windows, she heard a loud crash from the basement.

Her heart raced, but she reminded herself to stay calm. She cautiously made her way downstairs. To her surprise, she found that the safe door was slightly ajar. The heavy metal box lay on its side, its

(adj.) free from harm or danger

Emma had never been able to open the safe before. She was sharing the combination. But now, with the door cracked open, she couldn't resist taking a peek inside. Inside was a stack of old letters, a few gold coins, and a small, leather-bound journal.

(adj.) protected or secure

(n.) a secure container for valuables

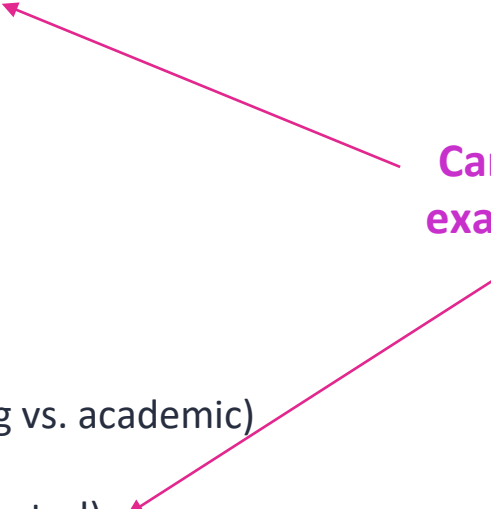
As she flipped through the journal, she realized it contained stories from her grandfather's life—adventures he had never shared with anyone. One entry described how he had hidden the journal in the safe to keep it protected from thieves during a time when the town wasn't as safe as it was now.

Emma smiled, feeling a deep connection to her grandfather. She carefully placed the journal back in the safe, knowing it was the perfect place to keep it safe for future generations.

Vocabulary Learning and Teaching

- Parts of speech
- Word formation (e.g., prefixes, roots)
- Synonyms and antonyms
- Collocations
- Polysemantic words
- Register (e.g., formal vs. informal; slang vs. academic)
- Connotation (i.e., positive, negative, neutral)

Can you identify some examples of these from 2024 1A RP?



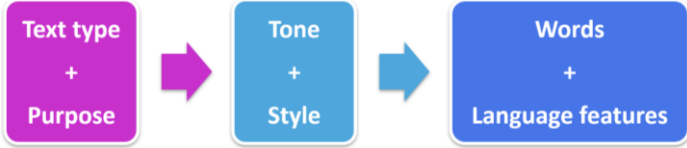
Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefixes	Suffixes
• unforeseen (not) • undocumented (not) • unnecessary (not) • surreptitious (under / secretly) • deforested (removal)	• safety (state / condition) • management (action / process) • maintenance (state / quality) • recognition (action / process) • prominent (having the quality of) • contentious (full of / characterized by)

Connotation

Positive	• Their imposing presence defines the cityscape. • Banyan trees are considered to have excellent feng shui, symbolising longevity, fecundity and perseverance. • ... you can count on banyans to find a way to survive even in the most difficult conditions.
Negative	• ... experts expressed anger over the Highways Department's controversial felling of four century-old banyan trees ... • The government's reception was frosty. • ... the Highways Department to surreptitiously chop down four healthy banyans nearby.
Neutral	• Banyan trees are immediately recognisable for their spindly aerial roots, which cast outwards in search of water and nutrition. • Seeds carried by the wind or dropped by birds find their way into the cracks.

TV Guide

- What is the degree of formality of this text?

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graph LR; A[Text type + Purpose] --> B[Tone + Style]; B --> C[Words + Language features]
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- What are the formal aspects of this text? What are some linguistic features (e.g., word choice and grammar) that contribute to its formal aspect?
- How would you draw your students' attention to these linguistic aspects? How would you use this text to introduce / reinforce them?

TV Guide: Guided Text Analysis

1. Determine the formality of the text
2. Highlight word choice (e.g., *judging panel*)
 - ☐ *Why do you think these words are formal?*
 - ☐ *What would be a more informal way to say this? (e.g., judges)*
3. Focus on sentence structure
 - ☐ Compare a few sentences with their simplified, informal counterparts
4. Explore nominalisation
 - ☐ *What is the verb form of this word?*
 - ☐ *Why do you think the writer used the noun form instead of the verb?*
5. Identify passive voice
 - ☐ *Who is doing the action here?*
 - ☐ *Why do you think the writer chose to focus on the action rather than the subject?*

TV Guide: Formal vs. Informal Versions

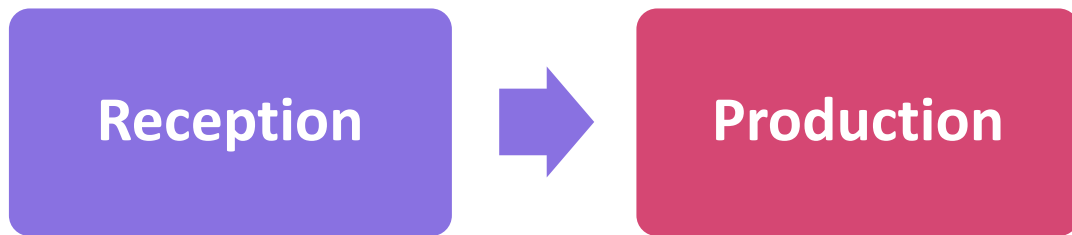
1. Provide students with an informal version of the same text and ask them to compare it with the original
2. Ask students to identify specific changes in word choice, sentence structure and tone

Formal	The final episode was broadcast in several local shopping malls, and audience voting helped to determine the Grand Champion 'Legendary Rising Star'.
Informal	The last episode was shown in malls, and people voted for their favourite singers.

TV Guide: Writing in Formal Style

1. Give students an informal text and ask them to rewrite it in a formal tone, applying the linguistic features they have learned (e.g., using precise vocabulary, complex sentences, nominalisation and passive voice)

Informal	The judges picked the best cook, and they won the prize.
Formal	The judging panel selected the most skilled cook, who was awarded the Grand Champion title.



TV Guide

- What is the purpose of this text?

To inform the reader about different talent-based reality TV shows (e.g., formats, features and unique aspects)

- What language functions (e.g., explaining, comparing) are performed in this text – in relation to its purpose?

TV Guide: Language Functions

Explaining (format and features)	• In the latest season, 15 young performers went through several rounds of performance competitions, with the lowest rated singers being sent home. • In the Skills Test, contestants must create a unique dish using only the special ingredients in the Mystery Box.
Describing (key elements)	• Stars Academy is a reality show and singing competition held in Hong Kong with a judging panel of 25 professional musicians. • America's Got Talent is a talent show competition that attracts a variety of participants from across the United States and abroad with various types of talent.
Highlighting (unique aspects)	• Weeks had different themes, such as 'Cantonese golden songs' and duets with famous pop stars. • In the Team Challenge, the cooks operate a pop-up restaurant, and real diners vote for their favourite meal.

Cognitive discourse function

Dalton-Puffer (2013)

- How language is used to express and develop cognitive processes
- Relate to how individuals articulate, organise and communicate their understanding of concepts, ideas and reasoning

Essay

- What **language functions** are needed to write this essay?

Explaining	To explain the reasons behind the shift in family size and why having fewer children is more desirable today
Describing	To describe the differences between the past and present in terms of family size, societal norms and living conditions
Comparing	To compare the past and present to highlight why having fewer children is more desirable now
Analysing	To analyse the factors contributing to the change in family size and their implications
Arguing	To argue why having fewer children is more desirable today by presenting logical reasons and evidence
Exemplifying	To include specific examples to support its points
Concluding	To conclude by summarising the main points and reinforcing why having fewer children is more desirable today

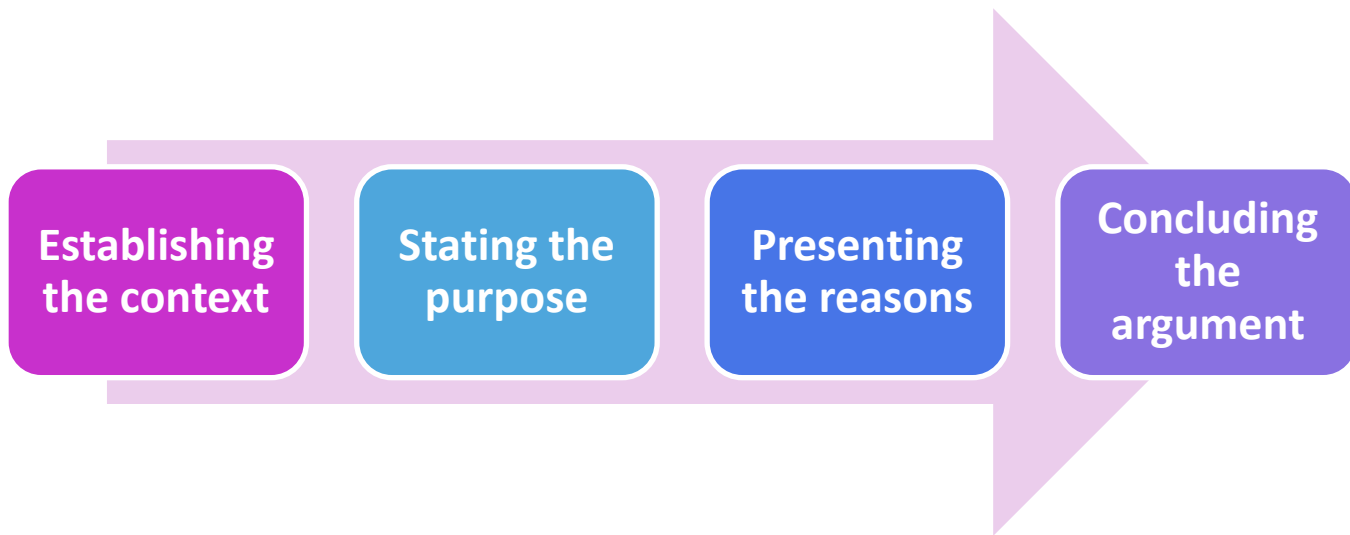
Essay

- What **language features** are needed to realise those language functions?

Explaining	Increased access to education and career opportunities for women has shifted priorities away from large families.
Describing	Today, urbanisation and smaller living spaces make large families less practical.
Comparing	In the past, children were seen as an economic asset, while today they are often viewed as a financial responsibility.
Analysing	The shift from agrarian to industrial and service-based economies has reduced the need for large families.
Arguing	With fewer children, women have more freedom to pursue careers and personal goals, contributing to gender equality.
Exemplifying	Over the past decades, there has been a significant increase in the cost of raising a child, including education and extracurricular activities.
Concluding	In conclusion, economic pressures, societal changes and shifting priorities have made smaller families the norm in modern Hong Kong, reflecting a broader global trend.

Essay: Moves Analysis

- **Moves analysis:** To study the structure of texts by identifying the "moves" or rhetorical steps writers take to achieve their communicative goals



Essay: Moves Analysis

Establishing the context	• Help students write an introduction that sets the context and provides background information
Stating the purpose	• Teach students to write a clear thesis statement and preview the main points
Presenting the reasons	• Teach students how to develop each reason in a separate paragraph, using examples and explanations
Concluding the argument	• Teach students to write a conclusion that summarises the main points and reinforces the thesis.

Letter of Complaint

- Study Text A and Text B
- Which one is better? Why?
- What advice would you give to the respective writer of Text A and Text B?
- How would you teach your students to write this text?

Letter of Complaint: Sample 1

- Identify the language features in the sample which contributes to
 1. the polite, respectful and professional **tone**
 2. the moderate level of **formality**

Letter of Complaint: Sample 1

Dear Manager,

I hope this message finds you well. I recently stayed at the Seaside Hotel for one night on 1 December 2024, and I wanted to share my feedback regarding my experience.

Unfortunately, I was quite disappointed with my stay as the room I was provided was significantly different from what was advertised on your website. The photos and descriptions on the website gave the impression of a spacious, modern, and well-maintained room, but the actual room I stayed in was much smaller, outdated, and lacked some of the amenities I had expected. This discrepancy left me feeling let down, as I had chosen your hotel based on the appealing presentation online.

I understand that occasional discrepancies can occur, but I believe it is important for the advertised information to accurately reflect the experience guests can expect. I would appreciate it if you could look into this matter and ensure that future guests do not face similar issues. Additionally, I kindly request that you consider offering compensation for the inconvenience caused during my stay, such as a partial refund or a discount on a future booking.

Thank you for taking the time to address my concerns. I look forward to hearing from you and hope that this feedback will help improve the experience for future guests.

Best regards,
Chris Wong

Letter of Complaint: Tone

Dear Manager,

I hope this message finds you well. I recently stayed at the Seaside Hotel for one night on 1 December 2024, and I wanted to share my feedback regarding my €

Polite phrasing

vs. I was very unhappy

Unfortunately, I was quite disappointed with my stay as the room I was provided was significantly different from what was advertised on your website. The photos and descriptions on the website gave the impression of a spacious, modern, and well-maintained room, but the actual room I stayed in was much smaller, outdated, and lacked some of the amenities I had expected. This discrepancy left me feeling let down, as I had chosen your hotel based on the appealing presentation online.

Acknowledgement of understanding

Constructive feedback

I understand that occasional discrepancies can occur, but I believe it is important for the advertised information to accurately reflect the experience guests can expect. I would appreciate it if you could look into this matter and ensure that future guests do not face similar issues. Additionally, I kindly request that you consider offering compensation for the inconvenience caused during my stay, such as a partial refund or a discount on a future booking.

Thank you for taking the time to address my concerns. I look forward to hearing from you and hope that this feedback will help improve the experience for future guests.

Positive closing

Best regards,
Chris Wong

Letter of Complaint: Formality

Dear Manager,

I hope this message finds you well. I recently stayed at the Seaside Hotel for one night on 1 December 2024, and I wanted to share my feedback regarding my experience.

vs. I was super upset

Unfortunately, I was quite **disappointed** with my stay as the room I was provided was significantly different from what was advertised on your website. The photos and descriptions on the website gave the impression of a spacious, modern, and well-maintained room, but the actual room I stayed in was **much smaller, outdated, and lacked some of the amenities I had expected**. This **discrepancy** left me feeling let down, as I had chosen your hotel based on the appealing presentation online.

vs. the room was awful

Topic-specific vocabulary

I understand that occasional discrepancies can occur, but **vs. You need to fix this** for the advertised information to accurately reflect the experience guests can expect. **I would appreciate it if you could look into this matter** and ensure that future guests do not face similar issues. Additionally, I kindly request that you consider offering **compensation** for the inconvenience caused during my stay, such as a partial refund or a discount on a future booking.

Topic-specific vocabulary

Thank you for taking the time to address my concerns. I look forward to hearing from you and hope that this feedback will help improve the experience for future guests.

Best regards,
Chris Wong

Letter of Complaint: Samples 1-3

- Study Samples 1-3
- Which one sounds the most formal? Why?

Letter of Complaint: Sample 2

Dear Manager,

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with my recent stay at the Seaside Hotel on 1 December 2024. While I had high expectations based on the information and images presented on your website, I regret to inform you that the room I was provided did not meet these expectations.

The room differed significantly from the description and photographs displayed online. Specifically, it was much smaller, lacked the modern amenities advertised, and appeared outdated. This discrepancy was both disappointing and inconvenient, as I had selected your hotel based on the assumption that the accommodations would align with the representations made on your website.

I understand that occasional inconsistencies may arise; however, I believe it is imperative that the information provided to prospective guests accurately reflects the accommodations they will receive. I kindly request that you investigate this matter to ensure that future guests do not encounter similar issues.

Furthermore, I would appreciate it if you could consider offering appropriate compensation for the inconvenience I experienced, such as a partial refund or a discount on a future stay.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response and trust that you will take the necessary steps to address my concerns.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong

Letter of Complaint: Sample 3

Dear Manager,

I am writing to lodge a formal complaint regarding my recent stay at the Seaside Hotel on 1 December 2024. I regret to inform you that the accommodations provided were in stark contrast to the descriptions and images presented on your official website.

The room I was assigned failed to meet the advertised standards in several respects. It was significantly smaller than depicted, lacked the modern amenities described, and appeared outdated. This misalignment between the promotional materials and the actual accommodations was both disappointing and inconvenient, as my decision to book with your establishment was based on the representations made online.

I fully appreciate that occasional discrepancies may occur; however, I must underscore the critical importance of ensuring that all promotional materials accurately reflect the reality of the accommodations and services offered. Such misrepresentations not only diminish the guest experience but also risk undermining the reputation of your establishment.

In light of the inconvenience caused, I respectfully request that you provide appropriate redress for this matter. A partial refund or a discount on a future booking would be a suitable gesture of goodwill. Furthermore, I strongly urge your management team to conduct a thorough review of your promotional materials to ensure their accuracy and alignment with the actual guest experience.

I trust that you will treat this matter with the utmost seriousness and take the necessary steps to address my concerns. I look forward to receiving your response at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong

Letter of Complaint: Samples 1 vs. 2 vs. 3

Language and tone	Text 3 uses more formal and sophisticated language, such as " <i>lodge a formal complaint</i> ", " <i>in stark contrast</i> ", " <i>misalignment</i> ", " <i>underscore the critical importance</i> ", and " <i>redress</i> ". These phrases convey a higher level of formality compared to the other texts.
Structure and clarity	Text 3 is structured in a way that emphasises professionalism. It clearly outlines the issue, the impact and the requested resolution in a formal and methodical manner.
Politeness and professionalism	While all three texts are polite, Text 3 uses more formal expressions like " <i>I respectfully request</i> " and " <i>I trust that you will treat this matter with the utmost seriousness</i> ", which elevate its tone.
Focus on reputation	Text 3 goes beyond personal inconvenience and highlights the potential impact on the hotel's reputation, which adds a professional and formal touch.

Text 1	Text 1 is polite but conversational, with phrases like " <i>I hope this message finds you well</i> " and " <i>I wanted to share my feedback</i> ", which make it less formal.
Text 2	Text 2 is more formal than Text 1 but still less formal than Text 3, as it lacks the elevated vocabulary and tone of Text 3.

Summary

- Typical features of the academic use of English (e.g., formal, objective)
- Linguistics features in academic/formal texts (e.g., nominalisation, reported speech)
- Academic use of English in reading and writing (e.g., moves analysis, language functions)

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