

KNOW YOUR
LANGUAGE 2

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Mrs. Murphy has a cuddly figure.

Ms. Jones is plump.

Mr. Patel is fat.

Tom is slim. Dick

is skinny. Harry is

anorexic.

If we measure them, we may find that that the people in each group are very similar in size.

The difference may simply lie in our attitude.

During a row (*or argument, discussion or frank exchange of views*) you may call someone a liar, when in a more diplomatic mood you may see them as over-imaginative, given to flights of fancy, or economical with the truth.

* List the pros and cons of 'calling a spade a spade'.

* Use your dictionary and thesaurus to find more palatable ways of describing someone as

two-faced, sneaky, bossy and spineless.

(Add to this list as you wish!)

* Role-play two contrasting scenes, without changing the essential facts:

1. Persuade your parents that one of your possessions is so old and useless it **MUST** be replaced.

2. Persuade a friend to buy from you the same item.

PROPER WORDS IN PROPER PLACES.

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NAFF OFF!
PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB.
SCRAM!

* List as many ways as you can to ask someone:

to be quiet
to go away
to stop doing something

* Number your words in order of formality. When and where might they be appropriate? Written or spoken? What different effects might they produce?

* Put this sentence in a less formal way:

Should this product or any part of it become defective within 12 months of the date of purchase, the defect will be rectified and any defective component parts repaired or replaced.

* Which version is better? Why?

* When might very formal language be necessary?

Complete the following table, using words with different levels of formality. (N.B. slang and obscenity are NOT the same!)

	FORMAL	STANDARD	CASUAL	SLANG
grotty	inebriated			
			fed-up	
			kid	
		rich		

* When might these different expressions be appropriate?

Good writing needs a VARIETY of sentences.

A SIMPLE sentence has only ONE clause (one statement; one subject, one verb):

I went outside.

Max and Ahmed played tennis.

At ten o'clock in the morning it started to rain very heavily.

A COMPOUND sentence has TWO or more EQUAL clauses, joined by AND or BUT:

I went outside AND brushed the yard.

Max and Ahmed played tennis AND lost the ball.

At ten o'clock in the morning it started to rain very heavily BUT luckily it didn't last long.

A COMPLEX sentence has TWO or more UNEQUAL clauses, joined by conjunctions like THEN, SO, AS, BECAUSE, FOR, ALTHOUGH, WHERE, WHILE, BEFORE, etc. or by relative pronouns like WHO, WHICH, WHOSE:

WHEN I went outside, I brushed the yard.

Max and Ahmed played tennis UNTIL they lost the ball.

Luckily the heavy rain, WHICH started at ten o'clock in the morning, didn't last long.

* Say which kinds of sentences these are:

The firework exploded in a shower of coloured sparks.

All the people in the supermarket queue were growing impatient.

When the orchestra stopped playing, everyone applauded.

The turnip grew and grew and grew.

Sam came home and had his tea and watched television.

The girl who came in late had obviously been crying.

I bought a new pen but it didn't work.

Short simple sentences can be used to suggest tension:

Zoe looked at the clock. Five minutes had passed. She went to the window. The street was empty. Had she missed him?

But too many short sentences make for monotony. Learn to vary the length and structure of your sentences.

* Add clauses of your own to these simple sentences to make

a) COMPOUND and b) COMPLEX sentences:

The bus stopped.

This is a waste of time.

Simon laughed.

I'm tired.

My new shoes are too tight.

The bell rang.

* Write a brief simple sentence then see how many clauses you can add to extend it.

e.g. *The child cried.*

When the clown, who was pretending to be angry, hit the policeman with a stick, *the child*, who had never been to the circus before, *cried* because he was frightened.

* See how long a sentence you can make WITHOUT using AND or BUT.

* Find at least 3 DIFFERENT ways to write this passage:

Jean waited but there was no sign of her friends. They said they would be there before eight, and it was now nearly nine. The room was very crowded and noisy and very smoky and she couldn't see anyone she knew. She was getting angry and tired and she had a headache.

* What different effects can you get?

* Which version do you prefer? Why?

You should *write in ONE tense*, unless you refer to things earlier or later than the main event. **DON'T CHANGE FROM PRESENT TO PAST** without a good reason.

- * WRITE OUT THE VERBS from the following paragraph.
- * Say what tense each is. (There are 12 verbs - ignore infinitives).

When I was younger I often went to my gran's house. I helped her to weed the flowerbeds. One day I made her angry when I pulled up all her dahlias, so she didn't let me help any more, until I was old enough to do it properly. Now Gran lives in a flat, so she hasn't got a garden. She grows flowers on her balcony. I think I'll take her some geraniums next week.

- * WRITE A PARAGRAPH about something that is happening now, (It can be amusing or fantastic.) UNDERLINE the verbs.

- * NOW WRITE THE SAME PARAGRAPH again, this time as though it happened IN THE PAST. Underline the verbs.

Although some words stay the same when they change their function:

Switch on the TABLE lamp. (adjective)

Put it on the TABLE. (noun)

I want to TABLE an item for the agenda.(verb)

Often the form of a word changes according to the job it does::

Some things we use DESTROY the world we live in. (verb)

Some chemicals have a DESTRUCTIVE effect. (adjective)

We need to avoid the DESTRUCTION of our environment. (noun)

VERB	ADJECTIVE	NOUN	ADVERB
sympathise	sympathetic	sympathy	sympathetically
recognise	recognisable	recognition	recognisably
simplify	simple	simplicity	simply
enlarge	large	largeness	largely

If we recognise words from the same word families this can help us understand related meanings. It can also help with spelling: e.g. **know, knowledge, unknown.**

* How many words can you find related to the following:

right

count

health

* Fill in the missing words in the table below

	right	count	health
	VERB	ADJECTIVE	NOUN
	save		safety
	widen	wide	
			thought
		soft high	thoughtfully softly

decisively

MORE RELATIVES

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* Now use in a sentence each word you have filled in above. Compile your own lists of related words. Use your dictionary.

Relatives of a different kind are RELATIVE PRONOUNS:

who, which, that, whose, whom.

These show the relationships between words. They can be used to link different parts of a sentence:

This is the maiden all forlorn THAT milked the cow with the crumpled horn THAT tossed the dog THAT frightened the cat THAT chased the rat THAT lived in the house THAT Jack built.

THAT, as you can see, can be used for both things and people; but WHO is used only for people, and WHICH for things and animals.

WHOSE, showing ownership, should not be muddled with WHO'S, meaning who is.

Harry, WHO'S always hungry, often eats food meant for Harriet WHOSE appetite is far smaller than his.

WHOM is now used mostly in formal English; it is used when referring to the *OBJECT* of a sentence and after a preposition:

Is the man WHOM I saw talking to you the person to WHOM I lent my pen ?

More often, of course, we speak less formally:

Is the man I saw talking to you the one I lent my pen to?

* Using relative pronouns join these short sentences into ONE sentence:

Clive thought he was very trendy.

He wore a long earring.

The earring dangled and shimmered.

**It sometimes became
tangled in his ponytail.**

The meaning of a sentence can depend on the order of words:

Bill kicked Fred.

Here Fred is the victim. Bill is the **SUBJECT**, Fred the **OBJECT**. The subject normally comes before the verb. By changing the word order, we change the meaning:

Fred kicked Bill.

Now Bill is the victim not the aggressor.

Sometimes we can reverse the order without reversing the meaning:

The cat sat under the hedge. Under the hedge sat a cat.

We have changed the focus of our attention, but the meaning is the same. If we alter some of the words, we can achieve a different effect:

Beneath the hedgerow lurked a feline shape.

The innocent pussy cat now has quite sinister overtones. A passage like the following is clearly repetitive in structure: **The friends had walked a long way. They had a lot of things to carry. They all felt very tired. They were still a long way from the youth hostel. The heavy rain made them feel even worse.**

* How many different ways can you find of rewriting it? Change the words vocabulary, word order and sentence structure but not the meaning. Avoid using AND or BUT - use other conjunctions:

although, because, since, while, until, as, when, etc.

or relative pronouns:

who, which, that..

POINTING THE DIFFERENCE

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Start in some of the following ways:

Having..... / After they had..... / When they had....

Despite having... / Carrying... / The long journey which.. etc.

* Punctuate these sentences in two ways for two meanings:

I looked in the mirror and was horrified at what I saw.

(looking glass or newspaper?)

The teacher said the student was unco-operative.

(which one spoke, and which one was uncooperative?)

I went to four weddings and a funeral last week.

(real events or the film?)

They paid Ben £5 more than he expected.

(a total of £5 or an excess over what he had anticipated?)

Students who qualify for reduced seats should queue here.

(only those who qualify, or all students?)

Punctuation can indicate subtle differences of meaning:

Jane brought two friends home for tea. Jack went out.

Jack brought two friends home for tea: Jane went out.

The first two events may not be connected. In the second example, the colon(:)shows that the second action is a direct result of the first.

* Make up some similar examples.

The colon also introduces examples, quotations, or lists: **Make sure you bring the following equipment for the practical: flour, sugar, margarine or butter, eggs, salt, milk; aprons, teatowels; bowls, spoons, knives.**

Here the commas separate similar items in the list; the semicolon (;) separates categories of items.

* Insert in this passage: 6 capital letters, 4 full stops, 4 apostrophes, 2 commas, one colon and one question mark: **you look tired did you have a bad day oh by the way brian rang hes not coming tonight after all his sons cars out of action hell see you tomorrow instead.**

What's an autobiography? A car's life story.

Sometimes you can work out the meaning of a prefix by looking at related words:

a **television** brings pictures from far away

a **telephoto** lens enables us to photograph distant objects

a **telephone** lets us talk to someone far away

So the Greek prefix **TELE** means far off, at a distance. In the same way work out the meanings of these Greek prefixes:

microscope microcomputer microcosm microchip
automatic automobile autograph autobiography
ANTIdote antipodes antiseptic antisocial

Now work out the meanings of the Latin prefixes in:

minimal minimise miniskirt minibus
subway submarine subhuman substandard
return revise rework renew
postpone postdate postscript postwar
ANTEroom antedate antenatal antecedent

* What do you notice about the difference between **ante** and **anti**?

* Answer these questions by giving the meaning of the prefix:

Would you rather be *subhuman* or *superhuman*?

Which comes first, *repayment* or *prepayment*?

Is using a *pseudonym* better than being *anonymous*?

PART EXCHANGE

Do you prefer a friend to be *suspect* or *circumspect*?

Are you making *progress* or *regressing*?

By changing parts of words, we change their meaning and use:

* CHANGE the prefix to give the opposite:

INhale POSTnatal ANTIpathy UNIlateral BENEvolent

* ADD a prefix to give the opposite:

legal agree fold moral sense

* ADD a prefix to change nouns into verbs:

friend slave power witch circle

* Use your dictionary to find the meanings of the following word roots, then compile a list of words related to them:

tract, scope, terra, term, dict.

The words in each group below share a Greek root.

* Work out the meaning of each root and of each word:

sympathy apathy telepathy pathetic

autograph biography telegraph graphic

dialogue epilogue eloquent

prologue quadrophonic phonetic microphone symphony

* Uncover the words with prefixes in this **word search**:

T A N T I D O T E A
O A M B I G U O U S
L A D M I T T B P C
P O D E R I D E R P
B E N E F A C T O R
U E N E N E U R L E
S I R E A T R I O D
R E V I S E I P G I

ambiguous prologue
admit redo
antidote refit
benefactor revise
defer subplot
detract trio
homonym tripod
inert

H O M O N Y M O U C
N T C A R T E D E T

novena
predict

Sharon pushed Tracy.

Sharon is the aggressor. Tracy is passive, on the receiving end. But we can shift blame from Sharon:

Tracy was pushed or Tracy's been hurt.

Now it's no-one's fault! Objects, too, can have strange self-destructive tendencies:

the cup got broken the car has been dented.

No-one ever seems to be responsible! If we do not know the facts, or don't want to blame anyone, we can make what was the *object* of the sentence into the *subject*.

This is called the PASSIVE voice of a verb.

The passive is useful if we want to vary the structure of our sentences, to avoid starting several sentences in the same way.

* Look at some of your own writing and see what difference it makes if you change some sentences from active to passive. Passive structures can also stress an important word by putting it at the start of a sentence:

Naked flames should be avoided.

The batteries must be checked.

Such IMPERSONAL structures are often used for formal reports. They can be over-used and lead to wordiness and vagueness. Sometimes, though, vagueness is precisely what is intended - to cover assertions for which we have no real evidence:

it has been said that.... it is claimed that.... etc.

* Look for such devices in advertising or in any writing that tries to persuade you to adopt a particular point of view.

* Compare these ways of writing what people say:

* When might you use each one?

* List all the differences you notice in layout, punctuation, tenses, vocabulary, details given.

A.

Sally: Why did you let him go and not me?

Mum: He's older than you.

Sally: I'm more sensible. Don't you trust me?

Mum: I'm sorry, but I don't feel happy about you going.

Sally: It's not fair.

Mum: That's enough. Don't keep on about it.

B.

"Why did you let him go and not me?" demanded Sally as soon as her mother came in.

Mrs. Smith put down her bag and took off her coat. She looked tired. "He's older than you," she said.

"I'm more sensible," protested Sally. "Don't you trust me?"

"I'm sorry," replied her mother, putting the kettle on, "but I don't feel happy about you going."

"It's not fair! You never let me do anything."

"That's enough. Don't keep on about it."

C.

As soon as Mrs. Smith came in, Sally asked why her brother had been allowed out but she had not. She protested that she was more sensible, even though he was older, and said she felt her mother didn't trust her.

Mrs. Smith was tired. She started to prepare their meal as she explained that she was worried about her daughter's safety. When Sally continued to protest, Mrs. Smith said that

she had no wish to discuss the matter further.

* Write three versions of a conversation of your own.

a) a play script b) dialogue from a story c) reported speech

Words are like clothes. Would you turn up at a job interview in a dressing gown or at a funeral in a swim suit? Or wear gloves and scarves during a heatwave? Would you write like this:

Hi, Bert! A quick note to say your old man's kicked the bucket. I was on my way to the boozier when I saw this bloke clobber him and nick his wallet. Phoned the cops and ambulance, but too late. Seeing as how you're bumming your way round Oz, I thought I'd better write and let you know. Hope you're having a great time! Cheers, Dave.

Dear Sir,

I regret to inform you that, owing to a previous engagement, I shall be unable to participate in the gathering to celebrate your sixteenth birthday next Saturday.

Assuring you always of my sincerest regards,

Yours faithfully,

D. B. Green (Mr).

Letters follow special conventions of layout and language:

	FORMAL	INFORMAL
ADDRESS	Your full address top right hand recipient's name and address top left hand	Your own address top right hand
ENDINGS	Yours sincerely (if you start with name) Yours faithfully (if you start Dear Sir / Madam)	may be causal or more formal, depending on relationship

- * Remember to include the date, and to write in paragraphs.
- * Rewrite the letters at the top of this page in styles and formats more suited to their purpose.

Most paragraphs have a topic sentence, often at the beginning, saying what the paragraph is about. If writing is well structured it should be easy to summarise by picking out the key sentences in each paragraph. This makes your message clearer.

- * Examine an article in a magazine or non-fiction book. Pick out the key (topic) sentence in each paragraph. Put these sentences together and see if they do in fact give an accurate summary of the piece as a whole. If not, why not?

The opening paragraph of a letter may say that you wish to complain about some goods you ordered, giving order number, date, etc.

Paragraph two explains your grievance. The topic sentence states the problem; the rest of the paragraph gives the details:

The leggings I received are not fit to wear. One leg is ten centimetres shorter than the other. The pattern on one leg is horizontal, and on the other it is diagonal. There is also a large hole in one knee.

- * Write your own (real or imaginary) letter on similar lines; your final paragraph should say what you want done.
- * Photocopy a paragraph from a book and cut it up into sentences. Jumble these, then try to put them in order. Compare your results with the original.
- * With several copies of the paragraph, this can become a game.

When we write for a different purpose or for a different audience, our writing changes accordingly.

Changes may include:

choice of words,
levels of formality,
layout,
whether we write in sentences,
length and structure of sentences,
paragraphs,
use of headings and sub-headings,
use of capitals, punctuation,
and so on.

NOTES, for example, should be as brief as possible, organised under headings, with key words underlined or highlighted.

A FORMAL ESSAY needs a formal organisation and style.

* List all the different kinds of writing you have used in the past week. Then note the ways your writing changes (or should do) in each case.

* Rewrite a nursery rhyme in the style of one of the items in this list.

shopping lists, holiday postcards, invitations
school reports, recipes, posters, diaries,
advertisements, C.Vs.,
physics notes, poetry, formal reports,
playscripts, magazine articles, essays, etc.

* Write about a meal in different ways for different purposes:

diary entry
shopping list
recipe
report of health and safety inspector after food poisoning

extract from a thriller or detective story
party invitation
fast food advertisement, etc.

The report of an event is often far from neutral.

* Compare language, attitudes and order and selection of facts in the following sports reports:

A. BYRNE TRIUMPHS AGAIN!

In a virtuoso display of tactics, agile Alex Byrne streaked past the Hilltop defence to shoot home yet another glorious goal for Barwell in the closing seconds of the semi-final clash on Thursday. That made it a hat trick for the feisty forward - the third this season. However, aggressive physical play from Hilltop and some questionable decisions, left them ahead by just one goal at the final whistle.

B. HILLTOP ON A HIGH.

Yet again Hilltop High swept all opposition aside in an exciting clash with Barwell this week. Vigorous attack in the opening stages, good team work, and stamina that sustained them through a strenuous second half all contributed to a well-deserved place in the finals.

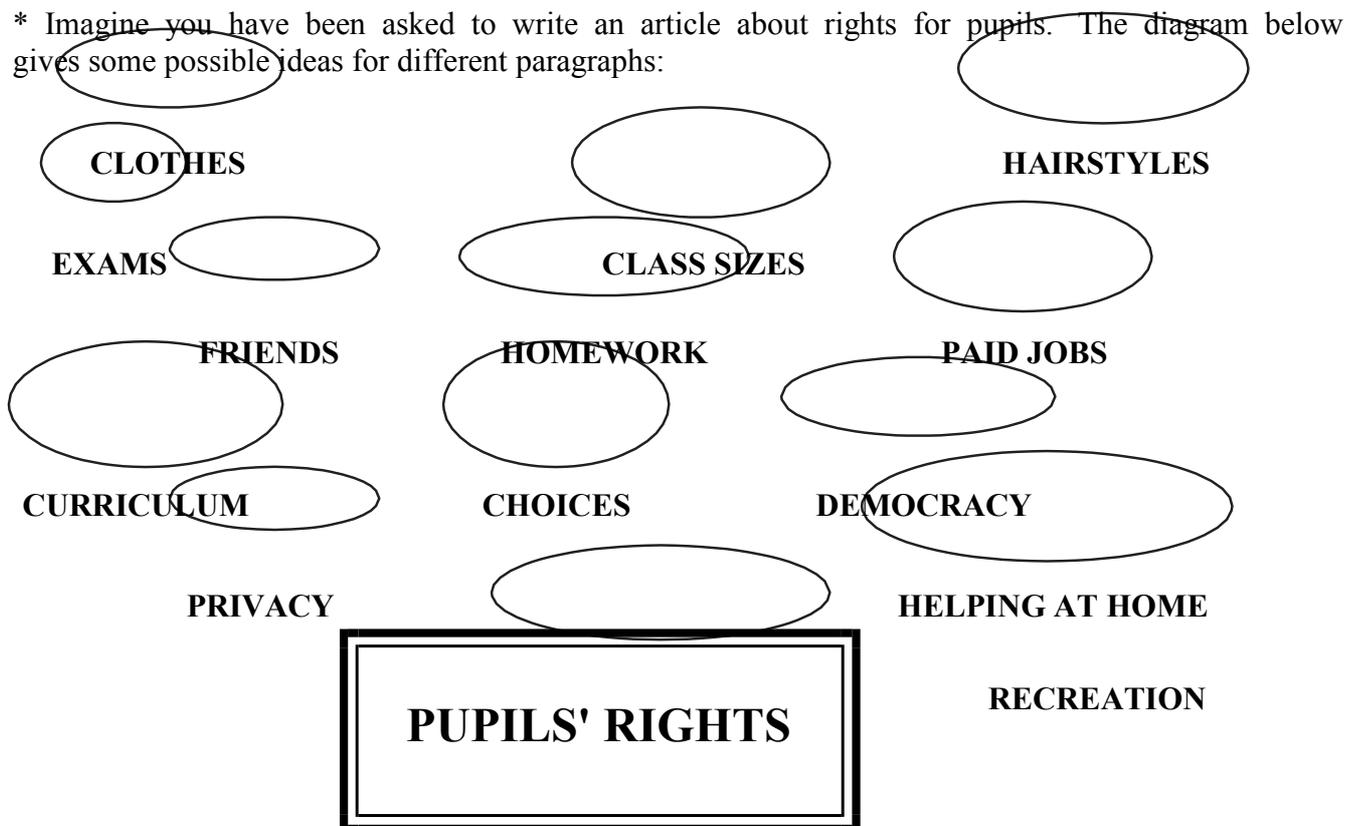
C.

Hilltop High beat Barwell Girls 4 - 3 in the semi-final of the area hockey championships on Thursday.

- * Write your own partisan and neutral versions of a similar match.
- * Report on an animal rights' protest from the viewpoints of protestors, farmers or research scientists, and the police.

Get your writing into good shape. Just as paragraphs need structure, so does a longer unit of writing. It needs a clear beginning and end. Middle paragraphs must have a logical order.

* Imagine you have been asked to write an article about rights for pupils. The diagram below gives some possible ideas for different paragraphs:



- * How would you begin and end such an article?
- * Put in some logical order the paragraph ideas given.

* Add more ideas of your own.

* Construct similar diagrams to help plan your writing on other topics.

A piece of writing should be a unit. One paragraph should lead smoothly to the next. There should be no sudden jumps from one topic to another. Linking words and phrases can be used to make a smooth transition:

**therefore, however, despite, besides,
because, whenever, while, eventually,
since, conversely, alternatively, consequently,
although, nevertheless, similarly, finally,
another aspect of, as a result, on the whole,
for these reasons, another problem, on balance,
it follows that, to sum up, in conclusion,
on the one hand, examples like these, on account of,
one consideration, in the first place, contrary to.**

* Put the examples in 3 groups:

**beginnings
middles
ends.**

The words given are suitable for *formal* writing.

* Compile your own list of linking words you could use in an *informal* speech or magazine article.

* Look at some articles in newspapers and magazines, or at some chapters in information books.
Highlight words that act as signposts - those that indicate stages in an argument or link one paragraph with another.

* Rate the article on a scale of 1 - 10 according to how well you think it is structured.

* Do the same for a piece of your own writing, and that of a friend!

Every week newspapers carry advertisements aimed at people who feel disadvantaged by their lack of language skills.

Here are just some of the advantages of knowing your language:

Practical - coping with everyday life from operating a VCR to taking a driving test. (Written tests as well as practical ones).

Social - greater self-confidence and effectiveness in any situation where you need words (that covers most of your waking life).

Educational - reading with understanding and writing with accuracy are basic skills needed for any level of study or examination.

Career - applications and interviews for jobs or college, more important than ever in an increasingly competitive market. For any higher education, and for many careers, good English is essential.

As a citizen - it can save you from being a sucker for adverts and persuasive propaganda.

Leisure and entertainment - reading for enjoyment and relaxation; hobbies; radio and TV programmes; jokes, crossword and other puzzles...