

Bildung für Berlin



Materialien
zum selbstständigen standardorientierten Lernen
in der gymnasialen Oberstufe
Englisch
Text production



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Text production**

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1. Fassung

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

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

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

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

Ähnlich wie das Portfolio der Grund- und Aufbaustufe bietet das Material zum selbstständigen Lernen Schülerinnen und Schülern die Möglichkeit, Selbsteinschätzung zu trainieren, Kriterien für die Ergebnisse eigener Arbeit zu entwickeln und somit im Sinne der zu erreichenden Standards ihre Kompetenzen zu erweitern.

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1. Teacher's note

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

This material is meant to help pupils develop their skills in working with texts and to improve their ability for self-evaluation and self-correction. In contrast to most of the current materials used in the classroom it does not only consist of **criteria for various text types** required in the curriculum, such as analysis, comment or letter to the editor, it also offers **supplementary pages** that provide general advice on writing and phraseology. In addition, **self-assessment sheets** will help students to revise their own texts. If students wish to add illustrations, e.g. concerning the analysis of films, cartoons, pictures, they may include additional materials like photos, drawings or cartoons, wherever it is appropriate.

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

- a) criteria (e.g. for writing a summary)
- b) self-assessment grids
- c) supplementary pages providing helpful information (e.g. general advice on writing, linking words, or quoting & referencing)
- d) a documentation section in which students collect samples of their own work (usually at least two per text type) to document learning progress

Of course teachers are invited to deal with additional text types in class and to hand out corresponding worksheets to their students.

2. Student's note

"Learning by doing" is an important way to develop and improve individual skills. Therefore, this material is based on self-evaluation and self-correction. Thus, you are required to examine your own work critically.

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

- **criteria for writing different text types** such as summaries, comments and letters,
- **self-assessment sheets,**
- **supplementary pages for further information,** such as general advice on writing, linking words, or quoting and referencing.

To document your progress, you should collect successful samples of your work in **the documentation section** of this material and add supplementary materials like photos, drawings or cartoons to render the collection more appealing and vivid.

3. Criteria for summary writing and outlining information

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

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

Students may have to

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

a) Summary Writing

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

PREPARATION

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

WRITING A SUMMARY

INCLUDE:

- in the introductory sentence(s):
 - the central idea/aspect of the text,
 - the text type, the title of the text, the author's name, the year of publication (if given).

*e.g. In the short story ... published in ... (author's name) deals with...:
The article ... by ... published in ... is about.../deals with ...*

This kind of introduction is always required if the task is: *Sum up the excerpt ...*
- in the main part:
 - the essential aspects of the text, e.g. *Moreover, the text shows*

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- "I" and/or any personal opinion or comments
- quotations and direct speech
- minor points, examples, statistics or explanations

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use your own words.
- Do not interpret; focus on information from the text.
- Do not offer any personal opinion on the text.
- Use simple present tense.
- Transfer direct speech into indirect speech: *Greene (author's name) says, claims, believes, suggests ...*
- If necessary, use linking words to show how the main ideas and supporting points are related (see Supplementary page: Linking words).
- Shorten your sentences e.g. by using participle constructions. Instead of: *After they have purchased the house, they realize ...* write: *Having purchased the house, they realize ...*
- Count your words if there is a limit (e.g. *Sum up in no more than 200 words*).

b) Writing an Outline

If you have to outline or describe a certain aspect/certain aspects of a text (action, conversation, discussion or response, ideas, thoughts or feelings etc.) merely sum up the corresponding features to be found in that particular text.

PREPARATION

- 1) Look at the title, subtitle, source, any illustrations and captions in order to determine the text type you are going to work on, then anticipate what kind of information you expect from that particular text.
- 2) Study/read the task carefully. Focus on the required aspect.
- 3) Read the text carefully.
- 4) Highlight key words and/or key sentences relevant to the task.
- 5) Collect information on the required aspect and take notes.
- 6) In your own words, express the main aspects referring to the required aspect(s).
- 7) Write down supporting points for the required aspect(s); do not include details.

OUTLINING CERTAIN ASPECTS OF A TEXT

INCLUDE:

- an introductory sentence stating the main issue , text type, title etc. may be mentioned if given
- all the essential information referring to the task

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- a mere restatement of the task
- "I" and/or any personal opinion or comments
- quotations and direct speech
- minor points, examples and unnecessary explanations

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use your own words.
- Do not interpret or offer your personal opinion; focus on information from the text.
- Use simple present tense.
- Transform direct into indirect speech: *Greene (author's name) says, claims, believes, suggests ...*
- If necessary, use linking words to show how the main ideas and supporting points are related (see Supplementary page: "Linking words").
- Shorten your sentences e.g. by using participle constructions. Instead of *After they have purchased the house, they realize ...* write: *Having purchased the house, they realize ...*
- Avoid enumerations, mere paraphrase.
Instead of *dishwasher, fridge and microwave oven* write: *household gadgets.*
- Count your words if a limitation is required (e.g. *in no more than 150 words*)

3.1 Self-assessment grid: Summary writing

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done 😐 - OK, needs some improvement ☹ - No, needs improvement

Criteria	Date:			Date:			Date:		
	☹	😐	☺	☹	😐	☺	☹	😐	☺
In the introduction I have stated the central idea(s)/ aspect(s) of the text.									
I have mentioned the text type.									
I have mentioned the title.									
I have stated the author's name.									
I have included the date of publication.									
In the main part I have included all the essential points underlining the central idea/aspect of the text.									
I have transferred direct into indirect speech using verbs like say, claim, believe, suggest.									
I have outlined the content of the text in my own words and in neutral language.									
I have not used any quotations.									
I have neither used "I" nor expressed my personal opinion or comments.									
I have respected the word limit.									
I have used complete sentences.									
I have structured my text by writing paragraphs.									
I have used linking words to connect ideas and sentences.									
I have avoided contractions.									
I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.									

3.2 Self-assessment grid: Outlining information

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - OK, needs some improvement

☹ - No, needs improvement

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
In the introduction I have included a general statement referring to the task.									
If possible, I have mentioned the text type, the title, the author's name, the date of publication.									
In the main part I have included all the essential aspects of the task.									
I have transferred direct speech into indirect speech if necessary, using verbs like say, claim, believe, suggest.									
I have not used any quotations.									
I have neither used "I" nor expressed my personal opinion or comments.									
I have outlined the content of the text in my own words and in neutral language.									
I have respected the word limit.									
I have written complete sentences.									
I have structured my text writing paragraphs.									
I have used linking words to connect ideas and sentences.									
I have avoided contractions.									
I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.									

4. Criteria for producing a mediation

The main goal of mediation (Sprachmittlung) is 'getting the message across' in another language. **Do not translate literally!** Merely render the information asked for in neutral language and mind the purpose and addressee as outlined in the task.

The person you are producing the mediation for might have asked you to outline the most important information from a complete text, an excerpt from a text or to outline certain aspects of a text (cf. above: "outlining information"). In the latter case only the required aspects of the original text ought to be included.

PREPARATION

- 1) Read the task well. Find out which ideas contained in the original you have to mention.
e.g. For a project on native peoples sum up what the German text says about the living conditions of the Lakota.
- 2) Identify and highlight key words and/or key sentences you need to complete the mediation task. In the target language, express the main information in one sentence.
 - a. If you need to mediate the entire text divide it up into sections, find sub-headings, and take notes in the target language.
 - b. If you are only required to mediate certain aspects of the text collect the necessary information and take notes in the target language.
- 3) Using the target language, (para)phrase the required aspects properly.

MEDIATING INFORMATION

- See: "Outlining information"

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Do not translate. Paraphrase the idea/issue/message you would like to get across.
- Do not interpret or comment; focus on the contents of the text.
- Consider what the person you are writing the text for exactly wants you to do (mind if a particular addressee's interest must be taken into account).
- Transfer direct speech into indirect speech.
- Use appropriate linking words (see Supplementary page: "Linking words").

4.1 Self-assessment grid: Producing a mediation

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - OK, needs some improvement

⊗ - No, needs improvement

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
I have taken into consideration the purpose and addressee of the mediation.									
In the introduction I have included a general statement clearly focussing on the main aspect required in the task.									
In the main part I have included all the essential aspects underlining the main topic.									
I have explained facts and terms the addressee might not be familiar with.									
I have not translated word for word.									
I have transferred direct speech into indirect speech if necessary, using verbs like say, claim, believe, suggest.									
I have neither used "I" nor expressed my personal opinion or comments.									
I have used neutral vocabulary and style.									
I have used complete sentences.									
I have structured my text writing paragraphs.									
I have used linking words to connect ideas and sentences.									
I have avoided contractions.									
I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.									

5. Criteria for an analysis of written texts

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

Your task might be to convey the central idea(s) of a text, the author's attitude towards a certain problem or character, the prevailing atmosphere etc. In order to perform successfully, examine the following aspects:

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

With regard to literary texts also consider

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

With regard to non-literary texts also consider the

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

For your analysis it is important to distinguish between fictional and non-fictional texts and to decide which aspects are **relevant** for the text you have to cope with (see Supplementary page: "Analysis of written texts").

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

PREPARATION

- 1) Study the task well.
- 2) Skim the text to get a general impression of the aspect(s) required in the task, e.g. the general approach to the topic, the general tone, style, atmosphere and/or organisational structure of the text and consider your findings.
- 3) Scan the text, identifying the stylistic/ linguistic means and highlighting the examples relevant to the task (e.g. extraordinary use of language, organisational structure) evaluating possible effects on the reader.

WRITING AN ANALYSIS

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

- Begin with a central claim:
The author/text takes a critical viewpoint towards ...; He/she employs ...;

In this excerpt character X seems completely distraught ...; The reader gets this impression because

- Explain the use of relevant linguistic devices, give examples and analyse their effect on the reader.
- Combine similar devices and examples meaningfully. Several stylistic devices might be used, for example, to show that a fictional character is not trustworthy, that a speaker does not agree with a certain opinion, or to create a certain effect on the reader, e.g. to amuse the reader.
- **Always focus on how formal/stylistic means help to convey the meaning of a text and what effect(s) they might have on the reader.**

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Make use of a dictionary to discover the various meanings of words.
- Use appropriate linking words to show how your arguments and supporting points are related. (see Supplementary page: "Linking words")
- Use quotation marks when quoting from a text.

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

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

5.1 Self-assessment grid: Analysis of written texts

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - OK, needs some improvement

☹ - No, needs improvement

Criteria	Date:			Date:			Date:		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
My analysis is clearly structured.									
In the beginning I have stated a central claim.									
I have arranged the devices and examples in a logical order.									
I have always named the linguistic and/or stylistic and/or structural device(s) and explained how they convey the meaning of the text.									
I have provided examples from the text stating the lines they are taken from.									
I have explained the author's use of the device(s) and its/their effect on the reader.									
My conclusion is a logical result of my analysis.									
I have paid attention to correct punctuation when quoting from the text.									
I have used present tense.									
I have written complete sentences.									
I have structured my text writing paragraphs.									
I have used linking words to combine ideas and sentences.									
I have avoided contractions.									
I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.									

6. Criteria for an analysis of visual texts - cartoon

Like written texts visual texts, i.e. pictures (photographs, paintings, drawings, cartoons), tables, graphs and charts use certain elements to convey information. In your analysis of visual texts you are expected to identify those visual elements, describe them systematically and explain their use and function. Furthermore, with regard to pictures, you need to evaluate their effect on the reader; with regard to tables, graphs and charts, you need to evaluate the quality of the information provided.

A cartoon is often used to illustrate a text or to underline an author's argument. Sometimes a cartoon has so much "explanatory power" that it makes the reading of the related text much easier.

PREPARATION

- 1) Study the task carefully.
- 2) Examine the cartoon in detail, keeping the task in mind. Find out where and when the cartoon was published; study the visual elements of the cartoon (people, objects, setting, speech bubbles etc.) and, if provided, the caption; consider symbolism and (metaphorical) meaning with regard to your task and/or a specific (topical) context.
- 3) Take notes.
- 4) Structure your notes/key words.

WRITING ABOUT A CARTOON

INCLUDE:

- the following elements in the introductory sentence(s):
 - the central idea/aspect of the cartoon, i.e. say what the cartoon is about
 - the cartoonist's name, where and when the cartoon was published
- a detailed description of the cartoon:
 - Name the different parts the cartoon consists of (visual elements, captions, speech or thought bubbles).
 - Describe the depicted objects or people (striking/physical features, clothing, positioning and size of objects/figures, facial expressions, body language, colour, what people say or think), the action and the setting (i.e. where and when the action takes place).
- an explanation of what the cartoonist wants to say or show and what techniques he/she uses:
 - Analyse the different elements (the visual elements, captions, speech or thought bubbles) of the cartoon.
 - Analyse the techniques used to convey the message (symbols, exaggeration, caricature, irony, all of them often with a critical intention).

- Say which elements are striking and why (exaggerated, distorted ...).
 - Say which of the objects and characters carry a meaning that goes beyond the obvious. Explain what they represent.
 - Say how the different elements interact.
 - Say what effect the elements have on the reader.
 - Explain what message the cartoonist wants to convey.
- an evaluation of the cartoon giving your personal opinion:
 - Explain why you dis/agree with the message.
 - Say why/why not you find the cartoon convincing.
 - a comparison of the messages of cartoon and text:
 - Say how the text and the cartoon support, complement or contradict each other.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- On the basis of your notes/key words structure your text.
- Use appropriate linking words.
- Use present tense/present continuous for actions.

6.1 Self-assessment grid: Analysis of visual texts - cartoon

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - Ok, needs some improvement

☹ - No, needs improvement

Criteria	Date:			Date:			Date:		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
I have structured my text carefully.									
I have written what the cartoon is about and I have mentioned the source.									
I have written what the cartoon consists of.									
I have described the visual elements (objects/characters) the action and the setting.									
I have paraphrased captions, speech or thought bubbles.									
I have explained the cartoonist's message.									
I have explained the cartoonist's use of artistic devices, how they interact with each other and their effect(s).									
I have evaluated the cartoon.									
I have written why I dis/agree with the message of the cartoon.									
If there is a combination of a text and a cartoon: I have written how their messages support, complement or contradict each other.									
I have used the present simple/continuous tense.									
I have written complete sentences.									
I have used paragraphs in my text.									
I have used linking words to combine ideas and sentences.									
I have avoided contractions.									
I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.									

7. Criteria for an analysis of visual texts - charts and tables

Usually, data and statistics are presented in the form of charts (graphs, diagrams) or tables. Writing about charts and tables requires not only a thorough understanding of the given material but also involves specific vocabulary.

Moreover, writing about charts and tables is often necessary so that you can underline an argument, for example, in a comment or in a letter to the editor. Sometimes this includes critical assessment of the material provided. In an analytical task to do with statistics you might have to compare the contents of a text and a graph.

PREPARATION

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

OR

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

WRITING ABOUT CHARTS AND TABLES

- In the introduction briefly say what the table or chart shows, state the topic and the source. (See supplementary page: "Collecting Information from Charts & Tables").
- In the main part, first describe, then compare, explain and finally interpret the information provided.
- In the conclusion summarize and evaluate your findings.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Refer merely to the aspects of the material relevant to the task.
- Use linking words to connect your sentences (see supplementary page: "Linking words").

7.1 Self-assessment grid: Analysis of visual texts - charts and tables

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - OK, needs some improvement

☹ - No, needs improvement

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
I have structured my text carefully.									
In the introduction, I have mentioned what the graph/chart/table is about and referred to the source.									
In the main part, I have described/explained/compared and interpreted the information contained in the graph(s)/chart(s)/table(s).									
In the conclusion I have summarized and evaluated the information.									
If there is a combination of a text and statistical material, I have explained the connection/relationship between the written and the visual texts.									
I have written complete sentences.									
I have used paragraphs in my text.									
I have used linking words to connect ideas and sentences.									
I have avoided contractions.									
I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.									

8. Criteria for writing a comment

In a comment you usually express your personal opinion on a certain topic or issue. However, you might also be asked to write a comment adopting the perspective of someone else (e.g. a literary character, a person of defined social standing).

There are various types of comments. The most common form is the “**pros and cons**” comment, in which you look at a problem from two sides (tasks: *Comment on / Discuss...; Evaluate...; Assess...; Look at the pros and cons...*).

You might have to comment on a complete text, an excerpt or a single statement. A comment always has a clear structure consisting of an introduction, a main part and a conclusion.

PREPARATION

If you have to comment on a **text**,

- 1) skim the text to understand the author's general attitude.
- 2) scan the text highlighting the author's arguments.
- 3) make a list of the author's arguments and write your opinion next to every single one of them.

If you deal with a **statement**, collect your ideas on the given task. Group them as pro and con arguments and add examples.

You should follow the “three-step-rule” of argumentation:

argument - explanation - example

WRITING A “PRO AND CON” COMMENT

- In the introduction:

Refer to the topic or question (often given in the task), clearly stating the problem/issue at stake.

I would like to discuss ...

- In the main part:

Discuss (the author's) arguments in a more detailed way.

The author claims that .../states .../maintains .../predicts ...

Present your own opinion.

It is my belief/opinion that .../In my opinion .../As far as I can see ...

(Personally,) I do not find such a claim/argument/statement convincing.

There is no doubt/question that ...

Include supporting material from other sources such as books, articles or statistics.

Arrange your arguments in a logical order. You can either take the argumentative approach with all the “pro” arguments first and then the “con” arguments or vice versa.

OR

Discuss the "pro" and "con" arguments of one aspect at a time.

- In the conclusion:

Refer to the topic or question again and say what conclusion you have come to, summing up your arguments.

All in all, I think .../I would like to conclude by saying that .../To sum up...

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Work on the structure of your text before writing.
- When referring to material, concentrate on the necessary aspects to support your arguments.
- Avoid unnecessary summaries of information given in the text.
- Connect your sentences using linking words to show how your arguments and supporting points are related (see Supplementary page: "Linking words").

8.1 Self-assessment grid: Writing a comment

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - OK, needs some improvement

☹ - No, needs improvement

Criteria	Date:			Date:			Date:		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
I have carefully structured my comment using an introduction, a main part and a conclusion.									
In the introduction I have referred to the given topic or question.									
I have clearly stated the problem/issue at stake.									
In the main part I have referred to the author's (pro and con) arguments, explanations and examples .									
I have referred to the text as far as necessary to deal with the task.									
I have presented my own arguments, explanations and examples and clearly stated my opinion.									
I have arranged the arguments in a logical order.									
I have included supporting arguments, explanations and examples from other sources.									
I have presented my conclusion in a final statement.									
In the conclusion I have summed up my arguments/opinion.									
I have written complete sentences.									
I have used paragraphs in my text.									
I have used linking words to connect ideas and sentences.									
I have avoided contractions.									
I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.									

9. Criteria for writing a letter to the editor

In general, people write letters to an editor because they

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

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

PREPARATION:

- 1) Skim the text to understand the author's general attitude.
- 2) Scan the text highlighting the author's arguments.
- 3) Make a list of the author's arguments and write your opinion next to every single one of them.
- 4) Decide on the purpose of your letter, i.e. if you want to criticise, support or add information.
- 5) Choose one or two arguments according to the purpose of your letter.
- 6) Structure your letter carefully following the instructions in the next part.

WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

- Follow the rules of a formal letter including addressee and return address, date, salutation (use "Sir" or "Madam" without "Dear"), use of neutral language (see supplementary page: "Sample formal letter").
Do not address the editor, however, and omit the closing remark. The letter ends with your name and place of residence.
- In your opening paragraph/introduction state which article, editorial, column, public statement or recent news event you are referring to.
- The body of the letter should have a clear structure with an introductory sentence, main part and concluding sentence.
- Begin the body of the letter by clearly stating the purpose of your letter.
- Make one point (or two at the most) in your letter, for example by pointing out omissions or incorrect aspects of the story you are referring to. Be factual and do not attack the journalist(s) personally. State your point clearly, e.g.

The author fails to mention ...

May I draw your attention to ...

I am concerned about ...

- Put forward a different argument or supply additional information.
- Base your arguments on material you know about the issue.
- If appropriate, you may include a personal perspective or experience.
- Finish your letter with a convincing concluding sentence.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Keep in mind that you would like to convey a message to the editor.
- Be careful to focus your arguments and references on the message you wish to convey.
- Keep to a neutral (or sometimes even formal) style, avoiding colloquial language, slang and/or taboo words.
- Use linking words to connect your sentences and your ideas (see supplementary page: "Linking words").

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

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - OK, needs some improvement

☹ - No, needs improvement

Criteria	Date:			Date:			Date:		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
I have followed the rules for a formal letter, giving - addressee and return address, - date, - salutation, omitting "Dear", - using "Sir or Madam".									
In the introduction, I have referred to the article or topic in question.									
I have given my letter a body with a clear structure (i.e. introduction, main part and conclusion).									
I have clearly stated the purpose of my letter and conveyed the message I would like the editor to accept.									
I have presented different arguments and expressed my opinion.									
I have referred to suitable material to make my point.									
I have used a neutral (even formal) style.									
I have produced complete sentences.									
I have structured my letter by writing paragraphs.									
I have used linking words to connect ideas and sentences.									
I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.									

10. General advice on writing

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

Preparation

Plan your written work thoroughly by

- 1) brainstorming: collecting ideas and materials and/or noting down keywords,
- 2) narrowing the scope: selecting the points you would like to use in your writing and abandoning those which are inappropriate or not sufficiently significant,
- 3) structuring: arranging your main points/ideas/arguments in a clear and logical order. Use e.g. a mind map (with numbers) or an outline. Make sure all your aspects are laid out very clearly (i. e. in a few words, using a clear structure).

Writing stage

- Write a **first draft** following your plan.
 - Do not spend too much time on finding the right wording/choice of words yet.
 - Leave plenty of space for your own additions and corrections.
 - Read your finished first draft and make first improvements.
 - Use a dictionary to help you with wording/choice of words you were not sure or happy about earlier.
- Thoroughly **revise** your text with regard to
 - content
 - structure/logical order
 - style
 - grammar/sentence structure
 - vocabulary/idiomatic expressions
 - spelling and punctuation(see details in Self-assessment grid: "Revising written texts")
- **Rewrite** your text: Make a fair copy of your work.
- Always allow enough time to **re-read and proofread** your text.

10.1 Self-assessment grid: Revising written texts

Use this self-assessment grid to evaluate your own work. While checking your work, answer the questions below and tick:

☺ - Yes, well done

☹ - OK, needs some improvement

☹ - No, needs improvement

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>			<i>Date:</i>		
	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺
I have thoroughly revised my text with regard to content									
I have stuck to the task/dealt with all the aspects of the task.									
I have said what I intended to say.									
I have avoided repetition.									
I have avoided unnecessary aspects.									
structure, logical order, style									
My text has an introduction, a main part and a conclusion.									
My ideas, arguments, examples are in the right order.									
My text has a visible structure, i.e. clear paragraphs.									
Every paragraph contains a topic sentence which states what aspect I am dealing with.									
My ideas develop from paragraph to paragraph.									
I have used linking words which connect my ideas and sentences and make my text coherent.									
I have put facts into a logical and/or chronological order using appropriate linking words.									

I have concluded my argument using linking words like *in conclusion, to sum up, finally, all in all ...* (see supplementary page: "Linking words").

I have avoided contractions (~~isn't~~ → is not, ~~doesn't~~ → does not, ~~won't~~ → will not, ~~there's~~ → there is) as they are not appropriate in formal writing.

I have eliminated any wordiness, i.e. excluded all unnecessary words.

grammar, sentence structure

I have written grammatically correct sentences by using

- the right relative pronouns,
- the correct prepositions after verbs and nouns,
- the correct grammatical constructions which go with certain verbs,
- the correct tense(s),
- clear references, e.g. made sure it is clear who or what the pronouns in my text refer to.

(See supplementary page: "How to improve my writing")

I have used correctly and clearly structured sentences, which are

- complete,
- not long and complicated,
- of varied length and structure.

vocabulary, idiomatic expressions

I have

- varied my vocabulary by using synonyms (with the help of a monolingual dictionary),
- taken into consideration that English speakers often prefer verbs rather than nouns to express an idea, e.g. *The point of view allows the reader to identify with the protagonist* rather than: *The point of view allows the reader an identification with the protagonist.*

spelling

I have checked my spelling/proofread my text with the help of a dictionary.

I Supplementary page: Quoting and referencing

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

The following rules are **basic rules**:

1. For quotations use quotation marks. In English: "...." (**not**: „ ...“).
2. You always need to state where the information/quotation comes from. Even if you only refer to someone else's ideas without quoting them directly, you still need to indicate the source.

If you quote from or refer to words, phrases and/or sentences from a given text in a "Klausur" indicate the lines they are taken from. Use (l. 1) if you refer to one line, (ll. 1 - 4) if you refer to several lines .

In term papers you are expected to indicate the source (see below 3.) and the page number(s) of the source you are quoting from or referring to (p. 1, pp. 1 - 4).

3. There are various systems you can follow to indicate the source. The most important three are presented in the *Chicago manual of Style*, the *MLA (Modern Languages Association) Style Manual* and the *APA (American Psychological Association) Style Manual (see References)*. You are free to choose the system you would like to follow, but you should avoid mixing the different systems.

One of the systems the *Chicago Manual of Style* presents, is the humanities style. It is used in the following way:

In order to indicate the source/page number(s) you can either use footnotes at the bottom of each page¹ or endnotes at the end of your work and refer to them by numerals that recommence with every page or run through your whole term paper and refer to endnotes at the end of your work.

In your footnotes or endnotes state the source of the information/quotation. When first mentioned cite the entire source (e.g.: Patricia Henley .

The Hummingbird House. Denver: MacMurray, 1999, 5).

If you quote the same source again, it suffices to give the author's name, possibly

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

the year and the page number (e.g.: Henley 1999, 70).

4. In your "List of references"² specify books, articles or internet sites you have used.

In English academic writing you may use the following conventions (*Chicago Manual of Style*, humanities style):

- books

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

Example:

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

- newspapers or magazines

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical*. Day- Month- Year, pages.

Example:

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." *The Times* 20 Nov. 2000, 70-71

- electronic sources

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

Example:

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. 26 Aug. 2005. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>. [23 April 2006]

5. You should format quotations differently depending on their length. You should enclose short quotations (less than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text within quotation marks ("..."). Quotations longer than four typed lines should be placed in a free-standing block of text without quotation marks. The entire quote should be indented.

² Peters, 70

II Supplementary page: Linking words

Linking words and phrases join clauses, sentences and paragraphs. They will help you link your ideas, point out similarities, highlight differences, justify statements or provide examples and conclusions.

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

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

nevertheless, *and the hotels had very high standards. Nevertheless, some tourists complained about ...*

in conclusion, *In conclusion, if there is a moral obligation to protect life, gene technology should be a questionable choice for scientific researchers.*

If you are not sure about the usage, consult a good monolingual learner's dictionary.

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

If you want to add to your argument:

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

If you want to emphasise a statement:

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

If you want to make comparisons:

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

If you want to highlight contrast/show differences:

<i>although ...</i>	obwohl	<i>in contrast (to) ...</i>	im Gegensatz zu
<i>yet, ...</i>	aber dennoch, doch	<i>neither ... nor ...</i>	weder ... noch
<i>despite ...</i>	ungeachtet dessen	<i>nevertheless, ...</i>	nichtsdestotrotz
<i>in spite of</i>	trotz	<i>whereas, ...</i>	während, wohingegen
<i>however, ...</i>	jedoch, dennoch	<i>on the one hand ...</i>	einerseits ... ander-
		<i>on the other (hand)</i>	erseits

When providing reasons:

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

When explaining results:

<i>accordingly, ...</i>	demgemäß, entspre-	<i>in consequence</i>	folglich
<i>as a consequence</i>	chend	<i>owing to this, ...</i>	infolge, wegen
	folglich		
<i>as a result, ...</i>	folglich	<i>therefore, ...</i>	deshalb
<i>consequently</i>	folglich		
<i>hence, ...</i>	folglich, daher	<i>thus, ...</i>	somit, folglich

When providing examples:

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

When showing a sequence (of events):

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

When drawing conclusions and summing up:

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

III Supplementary page: Analysis of written texts

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

The following lists are meant to give you some survey and help. So do not just enumerate devices or list which are missing without drawing any conclusions.

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

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

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

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

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

You can take into consideration:

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

IV Supplementary page: Writing about a cartoon

Here are some useful expressions that will help you write about a cartoon.

What kind of picture is it ? Where is it from? What is it about?

The cartoon by...published in...	is about shows/presents depicts	the attitude towards
In his/her cartoon, published in..., X/Y	deals with addresses alludes to	the problem of the current discussion on the policy
The scene depicted in the cartoon by ... published in...	refers to criticises is directed at/targets comments on exposes the fact that	the trend the use of people who

What is depicted?

The cartoon	consists of is made up of has is divided into	several visual elements speech or thought bubbles different frames a caption x parts
In the foreground/background		
In the middle/centre	there is/you can see ... (a ... /several ..)	
At the top/bottom	(a/a number of)... can be seen	
On the left/right	a ... is shown/depicted	
In the top right-hand corner	several ... are depicted	
In the bottom left-hand corner		

- The man/woman is characterised/depicted as someone who ...
- She/he looks as if ...
- She/he appears to be/doing...
- It seems as if ...
- She/he seems to be/be doing ...
- Mr Y looks bigger than... as he is positioned in the foreground.

The caption	states that... explains ... is a comment/statement by ...
-------------	---

plainly shows that ...
reinforces the impression ...
forms a contrast to the picture
is unexpected/short/ very funny

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

- The cartoon expresses/points out/aims to show ...
- The cartoon conveys the message that ...
- The key point the cartoon is trying to make is to expose the fact that...
- The message of the cartoon is obvious/plain
- The scene epitomises ... (= verkörpert/ist der Inbegriff von ...)
- The cartoonist's message is clear/unclear
- The cartoonist emphasises/criticises/wants to express the idea that...
- The cartoonist seems to criticise/ridicule/call into question ...
- It is obvious/plain to see that ...
- What we learn from the cartoon is ...
- X (an element in the drawing/he/she/it) stands for/represents/symbolises /shows ...
- X is exaggerated/stressed ...
- X is a caricature of .../X is the stereotypical ...
- X is caricatured/ridiculed as ...
- This indicates that ...
- It is obvious from the way X is depicted that ...
- This assumption is supported by the fact that ...
- The humour lies in the difference/misunderstanding/discrepancy/contrast/parallels between ... and ...

What is your personal opinion?

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

How do caption/text and cartoon fit together?

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

V Supplementary page: Collecting information from charts and tables

Language note:

Tenses

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

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

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

Plural

The statistics show ... (usually used in the plural).

The media have to be considered (plural word).

Only a small percentage of people are ... (use plural verb if the noun that follows a *percentage of* is plural).

In British English in particular many collective nouns such as "majority", "minority", "rest" are used preferably with plural verbs ("the majority are..."). Also note: *The number of inhabitants has decreased since 1999. A number of inhabitants have left the city.*

The form "data" can be used with a singular or plural verb (*The data is ... /are ...*).

"Police" is always used in the plural: *The police have been looking for likely suspects.*

Amount and number

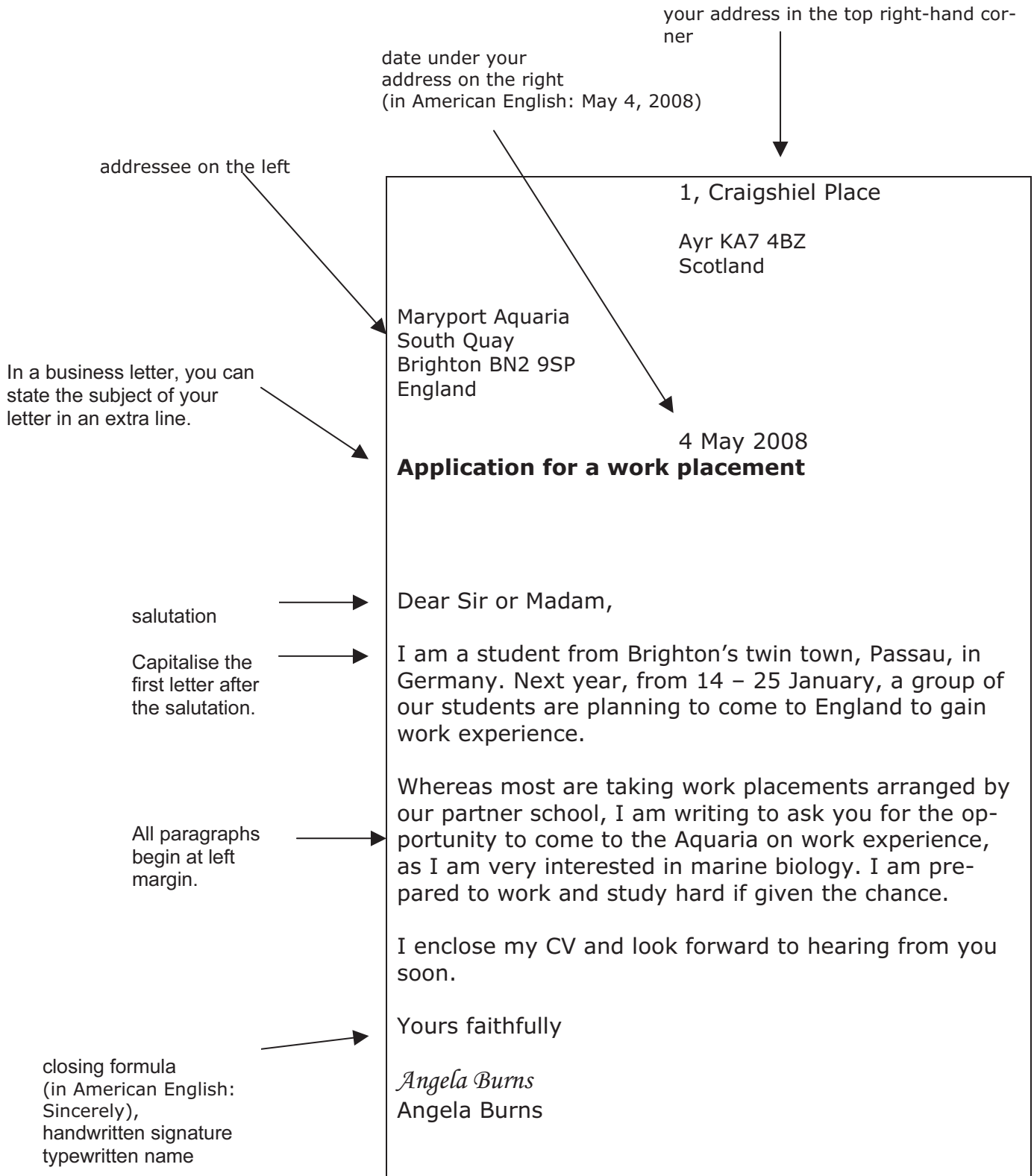
Use "amount" with uncountable nouns and "number" with countable nouns.

A massive amount of paper, a large amount of money ..., but: *the number of children /of miles...*

Introduction	
<p>What is the graph/chart about? What is the source of the material? What does the graph/chart/table refer to? What is the content? (weights, measures, currency...) What is the time span covered?</p> <p>In what way is the information presented?</p>	<p><i>The graph/chart is about ... /deals with ...</i> <i>It is taken from ...</i> <i>The graph/chart/table shows the relationship between ... and ...</i> <i>The table compares the population in terms of/with respect to/with regard to marital status and annual income (in dollars).</i> <i>It covers a period of ... months/years ...</i> <i>It depicts a development of three months/years from 2002 to 2005.</i></p> <p><i>This is a bar chart/pie chart/line graph/table.</i> <i>The vertical/horizontal line shows/represents ...</i> <i>The figures are expressed as a percentage of the total population/total number of ...</i> <i>The data are presented in absolute numbers.</i></p>
Description (Describe Figure 1 /Table 2 /Document 3)	
<p>Is there a general development?</p> <p>What is the highest/lowest point? Is there anything striking? Are there any irregularities?</p>	<p><i>The line/size/weight ... rises/increases/decreases ... slowly/gradually /more steeply/almost vertically/there is no change...</i> <i>There has been a noticeable/distinct increase in the number of/dramatic reduction in volume/dramatic fall in the proportion of...</i> <i>The upward development/downward trend continues.</i> <i>The number/proportion/frequency/amount of ... has changed slightly/steadily/sharply/markedly/dramatically /significantly.</i> <i>The unemployment figures stagnate/remain stable.</i> <i>The rates fluctuate widely/considerably/from year to year.</i> <i>From 1985 to 1990 the population declined from 40,000 to 30,000 inhabitants.</i> <i>The average of ... is ...</i> <i>African-Americans account for 12% of the US population.</i> <i>This amounts to a total of ...</i> <i>... production reached a low/peak/peaked in 2005</i> <i>The minimum/maximum weight/size/depth is ...</i> <i>Only a small percentage of people are ...</i> <i>This amounts to a total of ...</i></p>

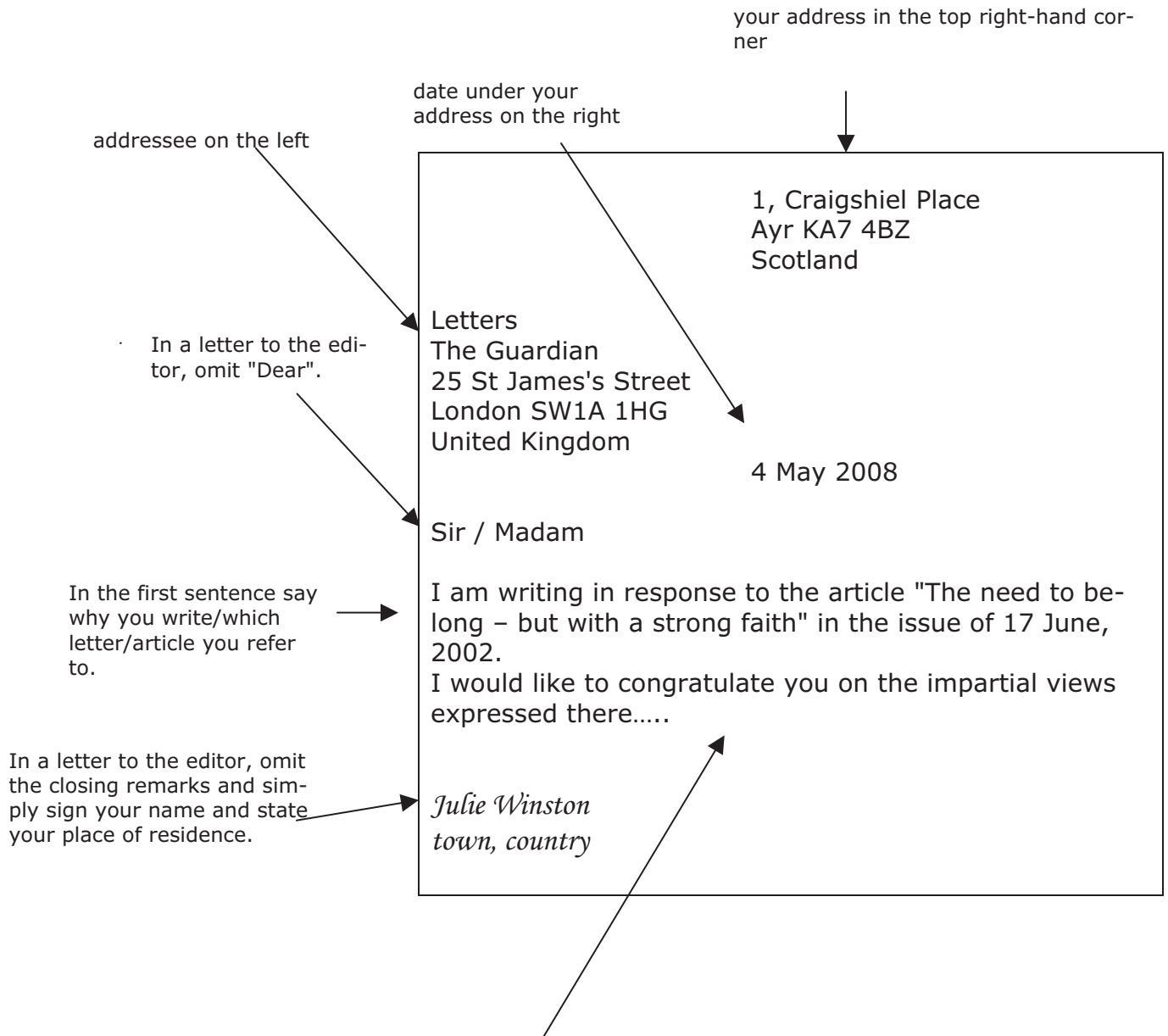
Comparison (Compare the developments depicted in Figure 1 with each other. Do the data presented in the table back up the information provided in the text? Say why/why not.)	
Are there any similarities and/or differences with respect to the different data/pieces of information/developments ... given?	Comparing the different data with each other we can say that ... <i>The country with the highest/lowest population density/biggest/smallest area is ...</i> <i>The amount in ... is higher/lower in ... than ...</i> <i>The number is about three times higher than ...</i> <i>They employ twice as many as ... It is twice the size of ...</i> <i>While figure 1 reflects ... figure 2 shows ...</i>
Generalisation (Sum up the main information supplied in Document 1.)	
What are the most important data/observations/developments?	<i>Generally speaking, /By and large, /All in all, /Summing up, ...</i>
Explanation/interpretation/prediction/evaluation (Explain/assess the development depicted in Analyse the data presented in Comment on the development shown in)	
What are the reasons for the developments shown? Can the different data/various developments be related to each other? What predictions can be made?	<i>We can account for this development by looking at...</i> <i>The statistics for London/for 2005 ... show/reveal that...</i> <i>Due to/... because of ...</i> <i>The number/rate of ... is expected/predicted/likely to drop/fall after 2010.</i> <i>In my opinion this trend will continue.</i> <i>Judging by/from ...</i>
Do the data and/or developments depicted in the chart, graphs and/or table confirm what you know about the topic?	<i>The data confirm/support the thesis/information ...</i> <i>The data are not consistent with other figures.</i> <i>The information does not seem to be trustworthy.</i> <i>The chart conveys a false impression.</i>

VI Supplementary page: Sample formal letter



VII Supplementary page: Sample letter to the editor

A letter to the editor follows most of the conventions of a formal letter (see p. 38). Note, however, that nowadays letters to editors are often sent via email. Most newspapers and magazines offer contact information on their internet sites.



As to the content of your letter: clearly state your purpose: Make clear right away if you want to criticise, support or add information.

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

VIII Supplementary page: How to improve my writing

Recognizing your strengths and weaknesses helps you to overcome your problems and guarantees a lasting improvement on your work. Here are some suggestions:

Do not forget: Making mistakes is part of learning. You should not try to write without making any mistakes. Instead, try to find out what you -personally- must focus on to improve your writing. By **finding your personal focus points** you will realize what to work on.

To **find your focus points** you could

- find out which of your wordings make it difficult to understand you
- ask fellow students if they can understand what you want to say
- compare the results of your self-assessment grids and determine points you should focus on
- modify the provided self-assessment grids according to your needs
- devise your own self-assessment grids

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

- look at texts you have written and find out which of your wordings are really suitable to express your thoughts - maybe you should use them more often
- look at your fellow students' work and copy good ideas/wordings
- correct wordings that make it hard to understand you with the help of
 - a dictionary
 - a grammar book
 - the internet
 - class mates
 - the teacher
- maintain a card index of your corrections
- devise a poster with useful phrases/corrections and put it up at home/in class
- devise a self-assessment grid to check grammar/sentence structure/style that meets your needs
- for particular focus points
 - rewrite/correct all your wordings containing a particular focus point
 - revise relevant chapters in a grammar book
 - modify completed exercises for your personal needs
 - analyse completed exercises (Have they been useful to you? Why? Why not?)
 - do new exercises
 - design new exercises (e.g. by modifying exercises you have already done)
 - revise vocabulary on certain subjects, e.g. using lists or mind-maps
 - extend your vocabulary by e.g.
 - finding synonyms and antonyms of words that caused difficulties
 - looking up and learning expressions that contain the word that caused problems
 - devise new vocabulary lists or mind-maps

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X Documentation section

<i>Project / Text type / Title</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Page</i>
<i>Writing a summary</i>		
<i>Sample summary 1: ...</i>		
<i>Sample summary 2: ...</i>		
<i>Self-assessment grid: Writing a summary</i>		
<i>Writing a comment</i>		
<i>Sample comment 1: ...</i>		
<i>Sample comment 2: ...</i>		
<i>Self-assessment grid : Writing a comment</i>		
<i>...</i>		
<i>Supplementary page: General advice on writing</i>		
<i>Supplementary page: Linking words</i>		