

Mr B's A* Writing Masterclass

What genre is the text? What are its conventions and layout features?

Who is it aimed at?

How should it be structured and expressed?

What top grade writers do:

Structure:

- They understand the use of tense, chronological v non-chronological structure and appropriate paragraph length
- They employ fluent rather than clunky use of connectives

Sentences:

- They use a range of sentence functions (statements, questions, commands)
- They vary sentence length including, judiciously, minor sentences
- They use punctuation to clarify; semi-colons to contrast and link ideas; colons to hint; parenthetical commas for elegance

Words:

- They have lexical variety: some words are formal, some colloquial (eg weighing up the effect of phrasal verbs rather Latinate equivalents: 'thought about' v 'considered')
- They reject the first word they think of and choose instead vocabulary which is sensuous and metaphorical: their words, in other words, create pictures in our minds

Style:

- They write with fluency and elegance
- They often surprise us

Who to read to see what muscular writing looks like:

Andrew Rawnsley (Observer); Nigel Slater (Observer); Polly Toynbee (Guardian); Allison Pearson (Telegraph); Melanie Phillips (Daily Mail); Oliver Burkeman (Guardian)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Writing to inform and explain:

1. Write a brief article for a website of your choice telling your readers about an interesting or unusual journey or travel experience you have had. Explain why it was memorable.
(16 marks)
2. Write a letter which you hope will be published in your local newspaper. Inform readers what leisure facilities are available for young people and families in your area and explain how you think they could be improved.
(16 marks)
3. Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made. Describe a decision that you, or someone you know, had to make and explain the consequences. Your piece will appear in the Real Lives section of your local newspaper.
(16 marks)
4. Write a letter to the producers of a new TV series 'Dream Jobs' explaining what your dream job would be and why you would love to try it.
(16 marks)

Writing to persuade or advise:

5. Your school or college is inviting entries for a writing competition. The topic is "Dangerous sports activities and pastimes are selfish, often put others at risk and should be discouraged."
Write your entry arguing **for or against** this view.
(24 marks)
6. 'Life is too easy for young people today. They lack challenges and don't have to fight for anything.'
Write an article for a magazine of your choice which persuades your readers that this statement is **either right or wrong**.
(24 marks)
7. Write an article for an environmental website which argues for or against investing in greener forms of energy.
(24 marks)
8. 'Sports stars are good role models for young people.' Write an article for a magazine of your choice arguing for or against this view.
(24 marks)