

# Improving Your Skills in Writing About the Use of Language Effects in a Text

To get a high grade in the reading paper in English, you need to be able to:

- 1 – understand the text
- 2 – comment on presentational effects
- 3 – spot some of the language effects used by the writer and describe HOW and WHY they work

This activity will build skill 3.

You are already good at spotting effects like these:

Technique	Possible effect: say what and then explain WHY or HOW
1. Repetition in threes / lists of points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adds detail to the text</li> <li>• Makes the text more persuasive by using a technique often used in speeches and advertising</li> <li>• Makes the subject seem more complex or interesting</li> </ul>
2. Alliteration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catches the reader’s interest visually and aurally</li> <li>• Makes the text more like poetry or advertising</li> <li>• Makes the text more memorable</li> </ul>
3. Emotive vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes the subject more emotional</li> <li>• Provokes a response in the reader (makes us agree / disagree / happy / unhappy)</li> </ul>
4. Formal or informal vocabulary – eg “did not” v “didn’t”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal: Makes the text feel more authoritative / powerful / convincing</li> <li>• Informal: makes the text appeal to us because it’s speaking to us, on our level, conversational</li> </ul>
5. Hyperbole (overstatement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes the point more powerful</li> <li>• Helps us to visualise and remember the idea</li> </ul>
6. Metaphor/simile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes the subject more vivid</li> <li>• Helps us to visualise the idea</li> <li>• Uses a technique often used in advertising and storytelling</li> </ul>
7. Pun (wordplay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes the text memorable / amusing / quirky / noticeable</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appeals to the reader by making us think we are clever for noticing the pun</li> </ul>
8. Addressing the reader directly (“you”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes the reader feel involved</li> <li>Gets the reader to empathise with the writer or someone in the text</li> <li>Encourages our emotional reaction</li> <li>Makes the text more memorable</li> </ul>
9. Adjectives and adverbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds detail to the text which helps us to visualise what is being described</li> <li>Uses the senses to make the text more vivid</li> <li>Paints a picture in our minds which will help us to remember the text</li> </ul>
10. Short/long sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates rhythm in the text which makes it more interesting to read</li> <li>Short sentences give clarity and authority</li> <li>Long sentences may make it more formal or more conversational</li> <li>Overall effect will be to hold our interest better</li> </ul>
11. Use of statements / commands / questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds interest to the text by not using one tone of voice</li> <li>This will keep us reading and help us to remember the text</li> <li>Commands may provoke a response from us (“Stop talking and listen”) and establish a link between writer and reader</li> <li>Questions (“Why should you visit Ibiza?”) draw us into the text</li> </ul>
12. Use of dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps bring the text to life by adding human voices</li> <li>Grabs our interest by personalising the subject</li> <li>Adds visual interest on the page by being different from ordinary paragraphs</li> </ul>

Example of how to use these:

“The writer uses repetition of ideas in threes in the text: [quotation here] This makes the text more persuasive by using a technique that is often used in speech-writing and in advertising. The rhythm of the language when ideas are in threes builds up and makes the ideas feel more authoritative. It creates a powerful effect that the writer is right because the ideas have been grouped in this way. It is also like to make the text more memorable for the reader.

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