



**MURRUMBA  
STATE SECONDARY  
COLLEGE**

# Assessment Genres Guide

## Forward

This *Assessment Genres Guide* has been designed to assist Murrumba State Secondary College students in improving their written communication skills across the curriculum. As such, it contains guidelines and annotated examples of writing required across many subjects. It is recommended that students use this *Assessment Genres Guide* in addition to guidance given by teachers and assignment task sheets.

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# **Table of Contents**

<b>Reading a Text – Understanding the Text.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1 – Writing a Paragraph .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 2 – Extended Written Response.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Essay .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Expository Essay.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Persuasive Essay .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Narrative.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Feature Article .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Recount / Memoir .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Biography.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<b>Section 3 – Reports .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Generic Report Structure.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Humanities Reports.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Science and Maths Reports .....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Junior Science Practical Report .....</i>	<i>24</i>
<b>Section 4 – Exams and Question Types.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<i>Exams and Question Types – Multiple Choice .....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Exams and Question Types – Short Response.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Exams and Question Types – Response to Stimulus.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Exams and Question Types – Compare and Contrast .....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Exams and Question Types – Matching Questions .....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Exams and Question Types – Essay or extended response exam question.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<b>Section 5 – Other Assessment Instruments .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Portfolio .....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Design Folio .....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Oral Presentations.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Multimodal Presentation.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Practical .....</i>	<i>39</i>

# Reading a Text – Understanding the Text

For any assessment task you will likely have to:

- Read a text
- Comprehend the text
- Answer questions about the text
- Respond to the text in your own words

There are some strategies we use at Murrumba that will always help :

1. Attack the Text AND Don't Panic
2. Question Answer Relationship

## In the book

### **Right there:**

The answer is 'right there' in the text. Often the question and answer are from the same sentence.

## In the book

### **Think and search:**

The answer is in the text but readers have to 'think and search' to find the answer, sometimes across paragraphs or even chapters.

## In my head

### **On my own:**

The answer comes from my own ideas and background knowledge. I don't need to have read the book to answer this question.

## In my head

### **Author and me:**

The answer comes from understanding the text and my own background knowledge.

Murrumba's  
Reading



### **DON'T PANIC**

What type of text is this?

Focus on the  
**heading** and the **first  
sentence.**

Identify the  
**keywords**

Predict the **main idea**

Predict 5-10  
more keywords

**Scan and Skim**

Check off  
keywords

# **Section 1 – Writing a Paragraph**

## **P.E.E.L. - A useful tool to help you construct paragraphs**

P - Point

E – Expand/Explain

E – Evidence/Example

L - Link

---

### **P – POINT (TOPIC SENTENCE)**

Use a topic sentence at the start of each paragraph, clearly stating the main point of the paragraph.

- Answers the question/prompt
- Sets up the paragraph
- Makes a point linked to the question

### **E – EXPAND/EXPLAIN**

Give more details.

- Specifies/narrows the topic sentences (May be about a specific character, event, etc.)

### **E – EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES**

Support with material from references - Find information from the text to support your topic sentence (main point), including quotations.

- Information from sources such as books, lectures, readings, etc. that support your main idea
- Evidence can be quotes, events, facts

### **L – LINK**

Link back to main point/forward to next point. Link your evidence back to the essay question and try to link to the next paragraph so that your essay flows well.

- Links the evidence you used to the key idea in your topic sentence
- The link is what you think or how you relate the evidence to the topic
- Your link is unique --- it shows your thought process and why you chose the evidence (It may analyse, interpret or clarify the evidence)

## How to write a paragraph.

A well constructed paragraph has three or four sentences of varying lengths.

### **Topic Sentence (STATE)**

It is the opening sentence that sets the topic of the paragraph.

### **Developing Sentences (EXPLAIN)**

Build on from the topic sentence by expanding and clarifying ideas expressed in the topic sentence.

### **Supporting Sentences (PROVE)**

Support your ideas by providing examples, facts and figures.

### **Concluding or linking sentence**

Sum up your ideas and what you have said in this paragraph. It can be used to link this paragraph to the next.

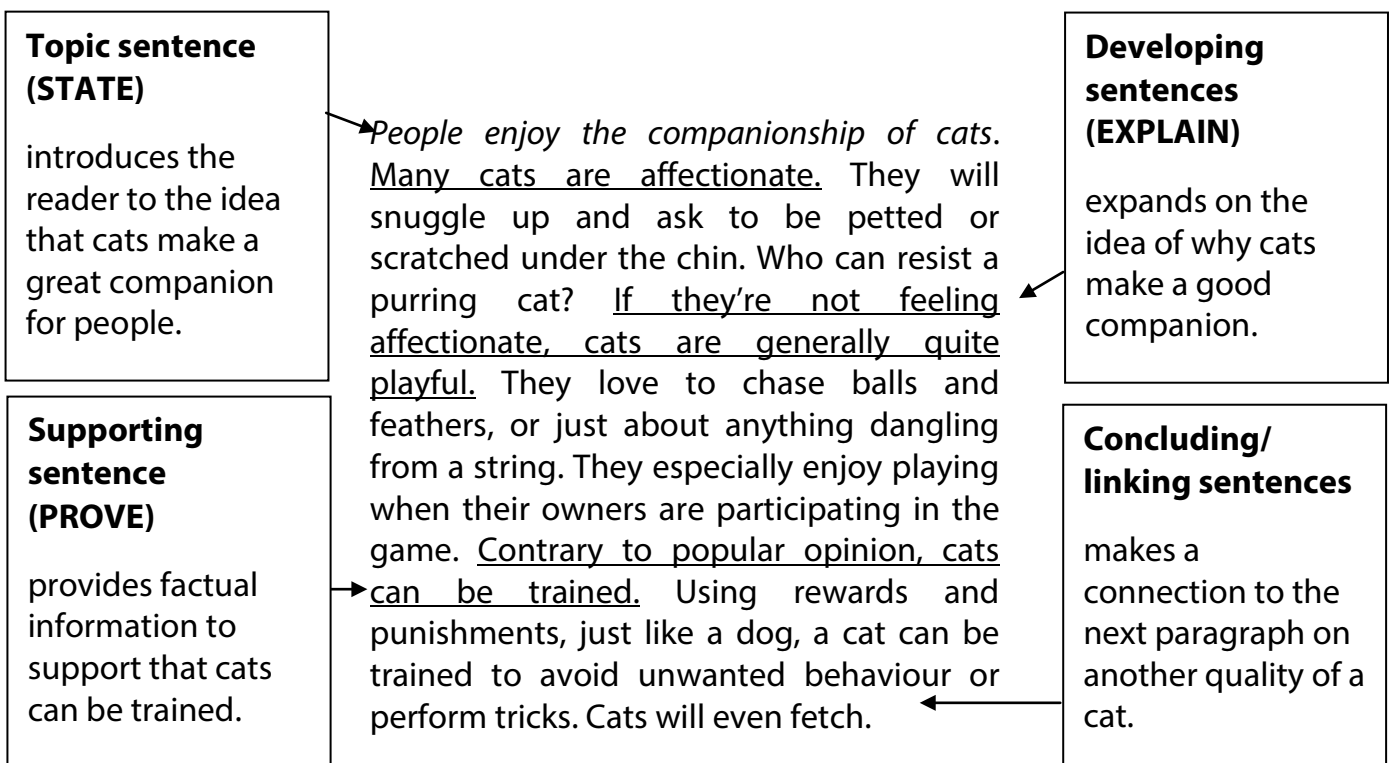
## How to PLAN a paragraph

STATE	EXPLAIN	PROVE
The topic sentence	Describe	Add details or examples
.....	.....	.....
	.....	.....
	.....	.....
	.....	.....
		.....
		.....

## Example of a paragraph plan

STATE	EXPLAIN	PROVE
The topic sentence	Describe	Add details or examples
Companionship	affectionate  playful  can be trained	snuggle up scratch under chin  chase balls, etc love owners to play too  behaviour tricks

## Example of paragraph writing



# **Section 2 – Extended Written Response**

## **Essay**

Before you bring pen to paper and begin to write your essay it is important that you prepare properly and develop an essay plan, by following these steps.

### **Understand the question**

If you are unsure what is being asked of you then clarify the question with your teacher so you do understand. It's important to have a clear understanding before you start planning and preparing your essay.

### **Brainstorm the topic**

- How much do you already know about the topic?
- Get all your thoughts and ideas down on paper. (At this stage they don't have to be in logical order.)

### **Research the topic**

- What do you need to find out?
- What research do I need to do to develop my knowledge of the topic?
- Look up the definitions of key words or words that are unfamiliar to you to help you understand the topic.
- A graphic organiser is a great way to record your research.

### **Plan your Essay**

- This book consists of a range of templates that can be used to plan your essay.
- Organise your information, thoughts and ideas into a logical order that can be easily understood. It should be clear, simple and easy to follow.
- Make sure you do not leave any key factors out, go over your notes.
- Check your plan to make sure you are on task. Refer to the question have you included information that answers the question or have you gone off topic?

# Expository Essay

## When do I use it?

Expositions are commonly used to examine issues from a range of perspectives (giving **for** and **against** or the positive or negative) on a topic and then form an opinion based on the evaluation of the arguments presented.

Some examples of exposition are: Some essays, editorials for the newspaper, debates, and current affairs.

## Generic Features:

### Introduction

It involves the statement of the issue concerned and then the inclusion of alternative and opposing points of view.

### Arguments

A series of arguments with supporting evidence, which can argue for and against the issue or concern for each point of view that is put forward.

- Use a new paragraph for each new argument.
- Each new paragraph begins with a topic sentence that states the argument for that paragraph.
- Back up each argument with evidence. Examples and quotations can be used.

### Conclusion

A summing up of the arguments and a statement of the position of the author is included in a concluding statement.

## Language Features:

- Emotive words and phrases should be used.
- Usually in present tense.
- Use of repetition.
- Analysing opposing points of view and thought provoking questions and phrases.
- Three connectives to indicate sequence of points, (e.g. firstly, secondly, thirdly).
- Conjunctions used to link reasons and actions, opinions or to link cause/action and effect, (e.g. another point or on the other hand).
- A variety of verbs used e.g. action verbs (run, ruin and drive).
- A variety of mental verbs used e.g. (hope, believe).
- Occasional use of passive voice should be used e.g. instead of saying "the people are concerned about the intersection", the author may restate this as, "Concern has been raised about the intersection".



## EXPOSITORY ESSAY PLANNER

1	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> Tell the reader what to expect, introduce the argument	
2	<b>ARGUMENT</b> Topic sentence	<b>EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES</b> To support your ideas
3	<b>ARGUMENT</b> Topic sentence	<b>EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES</b> To support your ideas
4	<b>ARGUMENT</b> Topic sentence	<b>EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES</b> To support your ideas
5	<b>ARGUMENT</b> Topic sentence	<b>EVIDENCE/EXAMPLES</b> To support your ideas
6	<b>CONCLUSION</b> restate your argument, make links back to topic	

# Persuasive Essay

## When do I use it?

They are used to persuade others to either accept a particular point of view; adopt a certain behaviour or action; or change attitudes and existing practices in favour of those put forward by the author.

There are three different types of persuasive text structure and features may vary according to purpose and audience. For example: arguments, discussions and advertisements.

## Generic Features:

### Introduction

Opening statement on the issue or concern that is to be argued (this may be called the thesis). This can be used to attract the audience's attention.

### Arguments

- These are points put forward to support the opinion or proposal of the author.
- Each of which should be supported by evidence or examples that help to elaborate or argue a point of view. The arguments are sequentially ordered from the most persuasive to the least persuasive.
- The number of arguments presented can vary, based on the set task or author.

### Conclusion

This is a concluding statement that sums up the argument and relates to the point of view and suggests a solution or possible action. There can also be carefully selected facts to support the point of view.

## Language Features:

- Emotive words and phrases should be used.
- Usually in present tense.
- Three connectives to indicate sequence of points, (e.g. firstly, secondly, thirdly).
- Conjunctions used to link reasons and actions, opinions or to link cause/action and effect.
- A variety of verbs used e.g. action verbs (run, ruin and drive).
- A variety of mental verbs used e.g. (hope, believe).
- Occasional use of passive voice should be used e.g. instead of saying "the people are concerned about the intersection", the author may restate this as, "Concern has been raised about the intersection".

# Narrative

## When do I use it?

To tell a story, to provide entertainment, or make an audience think about an issue, teach the reader a lesson or excite their emotions.

Novels, short stories, diaries, biographies, some songs, dramatic monologues, plays, narrative films, poems can all use this format.

## Generic Features:

### 1. Orientation

Tell the audience who is in the story, when is it happening, where it is happening and what is going on.

### 2. Complication

This is the part of the story where something happens, usually a problem for the main character, which triggers a chain of events.

### 3. Series of events

This tells how the characters react to the complication; rising tension occurs, leading to a climax (high point/major drama). It includes their feelings and what they do. The events can be told in chronological order (the order in which they happen) or with flashbacks

### 4. Resolution

The complication is sorted out or the problem is solved.

### 5. Coda

The narrator includes a coda (an additional section) if there is a moral or message to be learned from the story.

# Feature Article

## **Purpose:**

To inform, entertain and persuade readers. They are concerned with providing more detail about topical events, people or issues in order to extend or summarise public debate.

## **Audience:**

This depends to a large extent on the publication itself. For example, an article written for *The Courier Mail* should be formal and distant in tone whereas an article written for *Dolly* or *Rolling Stone* magazine may be informal and familiar in tone. It is appropriate for the writer's personal opinion to be expressed in a feature article.

## **Generic Features: Structure and Organisation**

### Headline

- often somewhat cryptic, encouraging the reader to read on.
- short and witty statement, play on words or pun.
- provide an interesting link to the topic of the article, which captures the reader's interest.

### Teaser or Kicker

- captures the reader's interest and links to the article's subject matter and central idea.
- may use ideas or words from the title.
- includes your name.

### Introductory or Lead paragraph

- often thought provoking.
- may link to a contemporary event or issue.
- should provide the context of the article.
- introduces article's central idea in greater depth.

### Development / Body

- Most articles usually build toward their main point gradually.
- Paragraphs need to provide arguments and evidence to support your central idea.

### Conclusions

- Often re-iterate directly, or through example, the main point.
- May employ rhetorical or real questions.
- May leave food for thought.

### Text Boxes

- The main idea or key phrases may be repeated in boxed quotes or as sub-headings throughout the article.

### Picture

- Attracts the reader's attention.
- Provides an indication of the article's subject matter.
- May deliberately arouse an emotional or intellectual response from the reader.

### **Generic Features: Language**

- Depending on the context, language may be formal and technical or informal, making use of jargon and slang
- First, second or third person may be appropriate depending on your purpose and audience
- Present tense is used
- Paragraphs should be short and succinct, a maximum of three sentences

# Recount / Memoir

## Types of recounts:

A **personal recount** is where the author is recounting an experience that they were involved in directly

A **factual recount** can be used to retell a particular incident or event, such as an accident or newspaper report.

An **imaginative recount** is the retell of an imaginary event through the eyes of a fiction character, such as, the day in the life of Shrek.

## Setting

- Who?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?

## Events in the Time order (first to last)

- 1.
- 2.
- etc

## Concluding statement or ending

### EXAMPLE OF A RECOUNT

#### **A Trip to the National Zoo and Aquarium**

Yesterday, my family and I went to the National Zoo and Aquarium to visit the new Snow Cubs and the other animals.

In the morning, when we got to the Zoo and Aquarium there was a great big line, so we had to wait awhile to get in.

After we entered the zoo, we went straight to the enclosure for the Snow Cubs. My brother and I were so excited to see them. They were so cute and playful.

At lunchtime Dad decided to cook a bbq. He cooked sausages so we could have sausage sandwiches. Mum forgot the tomato sauce so we had to eat them plain.

In the afternoon, we visited the aquarium. My brother was excited to see the sharks and the tropical fish.

At the end of the day when we left we were going to go and get ice cream but we decided we were too tired so we drove straight home.

# Biography

A biography is simply the story of a person's life. Biographies can be just a few sentences long, or they can fill an entire book.

- Very short biographies tell the basic facts of someone's life and importance.
- Longer biographies include that basic information in a lot more detail, but they also tell a good story.

Biographies analyse and interpret the events in a person's life. They try to find connections, explain the meaning of unexpected actions or mysteries, and make arguments about the significance of the person's accomplishments or life activities. Biographies are usually about famous, or infamous people, but a biography of an ordinary person can tell us a lot about a particular time and place. They are often about historical figures, but they can also be about people still living.

Many biographies are written in chronological order. Some group time periods around a major theme (such as "early adversity" or "ambition and achievement"). Still others focus on specific topics or accomplishments.

Biographers use primary and secondary sources:

- Primary sources are things like letters, diaries, or newspaper accounts.
- Secondary sources include other biographies, reference books, or histories that provide information about the subject of the biography.

To write a biography you should:

1. Select a person you are interested in or required to write about.
2. Find out the basic facts of the person's life.
3. Think about what else you would like to know about the person, and what parts of the life you want to write most about. Some questions you might want to think about include:
  - What makes this person special or interesting?
  - What kind of effect did he or she have on the world or other people?
  - What are the adjectives you would most use to describe the person?
  - What examples from their life illustrate those qualities?
  - What events shaped or changed this person's life?
  - Did he or she overcome obstacles? Take risks? Get lucky?
  - Would the world be better or worse if this person hadn't lived? How and why?
4. Do additional research to find information that helps you answer these questions and tell an interesting story.
5. Write your biography. See the Tips on Writing Essays.

## BIOGRAPHY TEMPLATE

Title: their name	
Orientation: Full name, where they were born/lived and what they were famous for.	
Paragraph 1 Series of events: paragraphs that describe important events, their impact, others involved, years and places.	
Paragraph 2	
Paragraph 3	
Re-orientation: re-state what they were famous for and their contribution to society i.e. what makes them memorable/special?	



## **Section 3 – Reports**

### **Generic Report Structure**

A report is used to present information about a subject. They are written to classify and /or describe using facts about the subject's parts, behaviour and qualities. Reports must use formal, subject specific language and must be written in third person.

A generic report structure looks like:

- 1.** A general opening statement in the first paragraph
  - This statement tells the audience what the text is going to be about.
  - This can include a short description of the subject.
  - This can include a definition of the subject.
- 2.** A series of paragraphs about the subject
  - Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence.
  - The topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph previews the information contained in the rest of the paragraph.
  - Each paragraph should give information about one feature of the subject.
  - These paragraphs may include technical language.
- 3.** A concluding paragraph
  - This paragraph signals the end of the text.
  - It can summarise the report.

## Reports and essays—what’s the difference?

A common problem is that students transfer what they have learned about essay writing to report writing.

Both essays and reports need:

- formal style
- careful proof-reading and neat presentation
- introduction, body and conclusion
- analytical thinking

But there are some essential differences between the two.

<b>A Report</b>	<b>An Essay</b>
Presents information	Presents an argument
Is meant to be scanned quickly by the reader	Is meant to be read carefully
Uses numbered headings and sub-headings	Uses minimal sub-headings, if any.
May not need references and bibliography/reference list	Always needs references and bibliography/reference list
Uses short, concise paragraphs and dot-points where applicable	Links ideas into cohesive paragraphs, rather than breaking them down into a list of dot-points
Uses graphics wherever possible (tables, graphs, illustrations)	Rarely uses graphics
May need an abstract (sometimes called an executive summary)	Will only need an abstract if it is very long, or if your lecturer asks for one specifically
May be followed by recommendations and/or appendices	Seldom has recommendations or appendices

# Humanities Reports

Most reports in History/Geography follow a similar structure. Below is an example of a basic report structure.

## 1. Title and Contents Page:

- a) This shows what the report is going to be about and what information is located in the different sections of the report.

## 2. Introduction:

- a) This is where the subject, and the message which will be conveyed throughout the entire report, is addressed.
- b) The purpose of the report, method of enquiry and limitations (if there were any) can also be briefly discussed here.

## 3. Body:

- a) This is the main section of the report, since the bulk of the information is presented here. Different topics should have different headings.
- b) Students should convey their main message by presenting a series of arguments, using references to support the arguments, and interpreting the findings.
- c) Any tables, graphs, diagrams or photographs which supplement the student's findings, should also be included in the body.

## 4. Conclusion:

- a) This is where all of the information and evidence, presented in the body of the report, is drawn together with a conclusion.
- b) No new information should be presented here.
- c) Students can, however, provide a short evaluation of the implications of their findings in this section.

## 5. Recommendations:

- a) This is where any recommendations of what either needs to happen next or what does not need to happen next.
- b) Recommendations need to be well justified.

## Example of Geography Report Structure for Year 9 Man Made Disasters Assignment:

### 1. Title and contents page

- a) Shows what the report is about and what information is contained in the report.

### 2. Introduction

- a) In the introduction, you need to outline what is the **purpose** of your report and what you are discussing in each of the sections outlined on your contents page.

### 3. How the disaster occurred

- a) You need to give an overview of what happened in your man-made disaster when and how it happened.
- b) Make sure you are detailed in your overview and your description of what happened is detailed. You may include any pictures in this section.
- c) This section is all about facts so you need to go through what happened without giving your opinion.

### 4. Human, economic, environmental and infrastructural impact of the disaster

- a) **Human Impact:** injuries and deaths of people
- b) **Economic Impact:** the cost of the disaster including any destruction and rebuilding efforts.
- c) **Environmental Impact:** any impacts to nature and animals.
- d) **Infrastructural Impact:** damages to buildings, roads, houses and other structures. You can also talk about how these were rebuilt and how long after the disaster the affected area got back to normal.

## **5. The response to the disaster**

- a) In this section you need to talk about how authorities (including police, fire departments and ambulances) responded to the disaster.
- b) You can also talk about whether or not their responses were affective and saved lives.
- c) You will also include how the different forms of government responded to the disaster and how they managed the clean-up and rebuild after the event.
- d) You can also include the capture and prosecution of any people who helped orchestrate the disaster.

## **6. Memorial of the disaster**

- a) You need to include how the anniversaries of the disaster are commemorated by the affected areas.

You can include pictures of monuments as well as how the affected communities commemorate different significant anniversaries (1 year, 5 years, 10 years etc...).

- b) If there is no memorial to the disaster, you must explain why.
- c) At the end of this section, you can include a picture of a significant monument or commemoration of the disaster (if applicable).

## **7. Conclusion**

- a) In this section, you need to explain why your chosen man-made disaster is considered a disaster.
- b) You can also talk about why this man-made disaster is so significant in history.

## **8. Recommendations**

- a) This is the last section of your report and you need to give recommendations which will prevent future disasters like this one from occurring again.
- b) You will have to think of these recommendations yourself and you must back them up with clear justifications, explaining WHY you have made those recommendations.

# Science and Maths Reports

## **Purpose:**

To inform and/or provide advice based on research undertaken or data gathered on a topic or issue.

## **Audience:**

Specific audience dependent on the type of report. May be a public audience or private audience (such as a board of directors).

## **Generic Features: Structure and Organisation**

A report is a highly formal and structured piece of writing. As a guideline, reports are usually organised in the following sections:

### Title Page

- Title of the report, Date, Prepared by statement, Prepared for statement.

### Abstract (optional)

- A summary of the topic of the report, research methods, results and discussion, conclusions and any recommendations.

### Table of Contents

- Include all major headings and relevant subheadings from the report with corresponding page numbers. Use leaders to guide readers' eye from heading to page number.

### Introduction

- Provide referenced background information, the aims of the report, its scope and any necessary definitions.

### Methodology (optional)

- Provide an explanation of the research techniques (how) and any difficulties and / or inaccuracies that emerged during the research process (e.g. procedure for experiment, observations, surveys, primary data collection, interviews, journal articles).

## Body / Statement of Findings / Recommendations

Formal and clear organisation of information in paragraphs, under subheadings, in the order presented in the abstract/table of contents.

- *Results*: Provide a discussion on the findings, any difficulties and / or inaccuracies that emerged during the research process. Summary of results in tabular or graphic form may be found here but all calculations must be in the appendix.
- *Recommendations*: This section appears in a report when the results and conclusions indicate that further work needs to be done or when you have considered several ways to resolve a problem or improve a situation and want to determine which one is best.

## Conclusions

- A summary of what was presented and discussed in the report. No new information should be included in the conclusion.

## Appendixes

- Include labelled copies of any documents which were too bulky to include in the report but which were referred to within the body of the report.
- Include all calculations.

## Reference List / Bibliography

- List all sources referred to in the report.

## **Language Features**

- Language should be formal and vocabulary is often factual and technical (nominalisation).
- Always write in 3rd person.
- Past tense is used.

Paragraph structure may not be used in all sections, but should be used in longer sections.

# Junior Science Practical Report

## **Purpose:**

To inform based on data gathered during scientific experimentation.

## **Structure and Organisation**

A prac write-up is a highly formal and structured piece of writing. It is organised in the following way:

### Title

Write a title for your investigation.

### Introduction

- Give background info.
- State the aim.
- State the hypothesis/prediction (which is normally an If.....then..... statement).
- State the independent, dependent and controlled variables and how they will be measured.

### Equipment

- Write a list of the items used and say exact quantity, size, concentration etc.

### Procedure

- List the instructions that would tell someone else how to do this experiment.
- This should be written in third person past tense.
- A diagram could be used with some written instructions showing what is to be done.
- Identify the safety risks within the experiment and how you would manage these risks throughout.

### Results

- Record all observed data from the experiment in this section.
- Record the data in suitable formats such as tables.
- Do not discuss your results, only state them.



## Discussion

Show how your results are related to your original aim/s and the hypothesis described in the introduction.

- What do the results tell you? Are there any relationships, patterns or trends? Remember to back yourself up by using your results. (Draw a graph here if applicable)
- Explain any identified relationships, patterns or trends in your results. Explain the scientific theory behind your results.
- What did you find out about this investigation? Was the outcome different from your prediction? Explain.
- Discuss any problems you had as you did your investigation. Did you have to make any changes to the experiment that you described in the method section?
- Could anything be improved or changed to make the results more useful (e.g. the fairness of the test, accuracy of results)?

## Conclusion

In this section, write a response to the aim/prediction/ hypothesis, with some justification. Plus state how your results may affect the future applications of science and technology in people's lives.

## Section 4 – Exams and Question Types

### Exams and Question Types – Multiple Choice

#### Description / explanation:

Multiple-choice questions are composed of one question (stem) with multiple possible answers (choices), including the correct answer and several incorrect answers (distractors). Typically, students select the correct answer by circling the associated number or letter, or filling in the associated circle on the response sheet.

**Example:** Distractors are:

- A) Elements of the exam layout that distract attention from the questions
- B) Incorrect but plausible choices used in multiple choice questions
- C) Unnecessary clauses included in the stem of multiple choice questions

Answer: B ✓

#### Examples of question types

There are several different types of multiple-choice questions that you will need to become familiar with. The following are some of the more common ones.

- **True / False:** These questions may require you to select either the 'true' (correct) or the 'false' (incorrect) answer
- **Odd one out:** You will need to establish a pattern amongst answer alternatives, and then choose which answer option is the 'odd one out' – the one that doesn't fit common examples: in number or object patterns or sequences.
- **Most accurate:** In social science subjects where exact answers are less likely, you may be asked to choose the 'most accurate' or 'best' answer to a question, e.g. which of the following options provides the best description of hypnosis?  
A. Hallucinatory sleep   B. Deep sleep   C. High suggestibility   D. Mind control

- **Grid format:** needs to be read carefully as they provide two sets of data to process. They may, for example, provide a set of solutions based on sets of answers being correct, e.g. Tissue oedema may result from:

A. protein-deficient diet. B. local accumulation of metabolites.  
C. loss of sympathetic vasomotor tone. D. venous congestion.

1. Answer 1 if A is correct
2. Answer 2 if A and C are correct
3. Answer 3 if A, B and C are correct
4. Answer 4 if D is correct
5. Answer 5 if A and D are correct

- **Extension questions:** These require you to 'extend' the stem by choosing the correct completion option. For example:

A business organisation, which exchanges inputs and outputs with its environment, and has the ability to adjust to changes in the environment, is called:

A. an adaptive system. B. a closed system. C. an open system. D. a controlled and responsive system. E. an open and adaptive system

### **Strategies and helpful hints:**

There are many strategies for maximizing your success on multiple choice exams. The best way to improve your chances, of course, is to study carefully before the exam. There is no good substitute for knowing the right answer.

To prepare for a multiple-choice exam, consider the following steps:

- Begin studying early.  
Multiple choice exams tend to focus on details, and you cannot retain many details effectively in short-term memory. If you learn a little bit each day and allow plenty of time for repeated reviews, you will build a much more reliable long-term memory.
- Eliminate options you know to be incorrect.
- Try to think of the answer before reading the options.
- Read the stem with each option.
- Read the instructions & questions very carefully.
- Calculate how much time you have to respond to all questions.
- If time allows, review both questions and answers.  
Sometimes you mis-read questions the first time.

# Exams and Question Types – Short Response

## Description / explanation:

Short-answer exam questions generally require you to remember and reproduce knowledge. They require you to respond in a variety of ways e.g. one word, a sentence, dot points, a paragraph, a diagram or by showing working.

Example:

Direction words	Response required
List...	You are asked to briefly note or state specific information in a list format. For example: "List the three major components of the CPU."
Explain...	You are asked to clarify, interpret, and elaborate on the material presented, to give reasons for differences of opinion or results, and to try to analyse causes. For example: "Explain the basic operation of the CPU as it processes instructions in memory."
Compare...	You are asked to identify characteristics or qualities that resemble each other; to emphasise similarities and also mention differences where appropriate. For example: "Compare optic fibre and coaxial cable as data transmission media."
Describe...	You are asked to state the most noticeable qualities or features. For example: "Describe the operation of the CSMA/CD medium access protocol."
Name...	You are asked to give the appropriate (discipline-specific) term by which something is known. For example: "Name the three types of modulation which can be used to encode digital data on an analogue wave."
Discuss...	You are asked to point out the important features and express some form of critical judgement. For example: "Discuss the role of cache memory within the memory hierarchy."

(Monash, 2007)

**Strategies:**

Read the question.

Identify key (direction) words in the question: What am I asked to do – highlight the skill i.e. describe, identify, explain, illustrate, compare, add etc.

Check to see if there are other sources, texts etc. to use to answer the questions.

Identify how to respond: one word, sentence, dot points, paragraph, diagram, show working. A clue may be how many lines there are, is there a box to fill in etc.

Jot down notes or ideas in the margin to assist with writing the response.

Answer the question.

# Exams and Question Types – Response to Stimulus

## Description / Explanation:

Response to stimulus requires a (usually) written answer to be given after viewing; listening to or reading a prompt (stimulus).

In the writing tests, students are provided with a 'writing stimulus' (sometimes called a prompt – an idea or topic) and asked to write a response in a particular genre or text type.

## Example:

**It is cruel to keep animals in cages.**

What do you think? Do you agree or disagree? Perhaps you can think of ideas for both sides of this topic.

Write to convince a reader of your opinions.

## Strategies:

1. Read the question. Underline or circle the key words. Make sure you understand what you need to do.
2. Look at the stimulus. Look for a theme.
3. Brainstorm. Write down every idea you can think of (character profile, names, plot development, descriptive words and phrases, lines of argument, facts and figures etc.) associated with your planned response.
4. Re-read the question.
5. Plan your response. Circle, highlight or number the brainstorming ideas that you will use. Ensure your response links clearly with the theme and stimulus piece.
6. Create a detailed plan of your response. Use headings and write notes that clearly show how your response will progress. This will be determined by the type of response you have been asked to give.
7. Write a draft of your response.
8. Proofread your draft.
  - Look for logical progression and flow of ideas
  - spelling errors
  - clumsy expression

- sentence and paragraph length
- variety of sentence structures for effect
- appropriate tone and language choice for genre

9. Rewrite if necessary.

# Exams and Question Types – Compare and Contrast

## Description / explanation:

Thinking about the ways two things are alike is called *comparing* - likeness.

Thinking about the ways two things are different is called *contrasting* – differences.

Finding how two or more things are alike and how they are different is called comparing and contrasting.

## Example:

There are two kinds of elephants. Some elephants live in Africa. Other elephants live in India. Both animals are quite large, but African elephants are a bit larger than Indian elephants. The ears of Indian elephants are about half the size of African elephants. Both elephants have long trunks, but both do not have tusks. Only African elephants have tusks.

Detail that tells how the elephants are alike :

COMPARING

They both are large.

They both have long trunks

Detail that tells how the elephants are different:

CONTRASTING

The ears of Indian elephants are smaller than those of African elephants.

Only African elephants have tusks.

Strategies:

- Read the question.
- Identify key words in the question – COMPARE/CONTRAST.
- Decide are you being asked to show how things are **alike**.
- Decide are you being asked to show how things are **different**.
- Look for and highlight **cue words** in the text that signal how things are alike (**COMPARING**): *both, same, like, alike, similar*.
- Look for and highlight **cue words** in the text that signal how things are different (**CONTRASTING**): *unlike, different, however, whereas*.
- Re-read the question and answer.

Remember: people, places, objects and events can all be compared and contrasted.



# Exams and Question Types – Matching Questions

## Description / explanation:

Matching questions have a content area and a list of names or statements which must be correctly matched against another list of names or statements. For example "Match the Capital with the Country" with the two lists "Canada, Italy, Japan" and "Ottawa, Rome, Tokyo". In the Quiz Module, each match is equally weighted to contribute towards the grade for the total question.

Example:

Link the correct answers

Unit of force	15 kN
1500 N	Newton
15000 N	Newton metre
Unit of torque	1.5 kN

Do not do this. We do not think it is funny.

Link the correct answers

Unit of force	15 kN
1500 N	Newton
15000 N	Newton metre
Unit of torque	1.5 kN

# Exams and Question Types – Essay or extended response exam question

See Section 2.1 – Essay

You would be expected to write in the same genre as outlined in section 2.1.

You must however consider that there will be a time constraint and it will be in exam conditions with little to no notes available to you.

It would be a good idea to revise content and skills and complete a **practice essay** in preparation for the exam.

## **Section 5 – Other Assessment Instruments**

### **Portfolio**

#### **What are portfolios?**

A portfolio is a collection of materials presented by the student to provide evidence of performance. It is a collection of different items of evidence that support a student's claim that they have the required skills, knowledge and understanding.

Here are some hints for preparing a portfolio:

- Ensure you read the task sheet carefully.
- Tick off items or tasks as you complete them.
- Put them in a folder that you will not lose.
- Start putting your portfolio together early – don't leave it until the last minute, or you are sure to forget something.

# Design Folio

The Design Folio is a document that the student presents along with a product. All of the activities involved in the design, development and production of the product, system or environment should be documented in a folio.

The folio should demonstrate:

- what the student was trying to achieve
- the process undertaken
- the decisions made
- the factors that influenced the decisions
- the justifications for the decisions made.

The Design Folio should provide the reader with a clear understanding of the process the student followed in developing and realising the project, from the student's first ideas through to their last thoughts about the success of the project. It should state exactly what the student was hoping to achieve and all the plans they put in place to implement their goals. It needs to clearly show the research and application of the conclusions of the research. There should be clear evidence of the use of development processes, investigation, experimentation and the like, and, importantly, the application of these and the ongoing evaluation to the progress of the project to a best satisfaction of the identified need.

The Design project involves designing a solution to a design challenge. They process and thus titles may include:

- identification of client need, want or opportunity
- development of design brief, design situation, design specification
- investigation and research, data collation, test and/or survey results
- use of design concepts, sketches, annotations, notes, workings, drawings
- development of proposed production materials, method, procedures, materials list
- photos of key production stages
- reflection on the production process
- evaluation and recommendations for improvement.

# Oral Presentations

Here are some hints for preparing for your oral presentation:

- First, clearly define your **purpose**, taking your target audience into account.
- Once you have decided your purpose, do your **research**.
- Plan the **organisation** of your material – have an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

1. **Introduction.** Think of a way to grab your audience's attention. Some useful openings are: a surprising or controversial statement; a quotation; some interesting statistics; a question. Plan this section carefully, and show how it links with the rest of your talk.

2. **Body.** Put your ideas into logical order. Write notes using headings or sub-headings. For each point that you make be sure to develop it further. Remember to use linking words (such as now, as a result, secondly, in addition, however, so, etc) to connect your ideas back to your original point.

3. **Conclusion.** This is very important because it is your last chance to make an impact on your audience. It is the place that you tie your conclusion back to your introduction to provide a powerful ending. When you tie in your conclusion be sure to summarise your main points, but don't introduce new material or fade out or stop abruptly.

- You need to know your material, and then you should be able to talk about it. This means you shouldn't memorise your presentation, but be prepared to talk about your topic.
- Select relevant visual and audio materials such as overheads, pictures, maps, diagrams, or audio or DVD recordings to illustrate the points you are making. Make clear the connections between these items and your presentation. These should smoothly integrate into your presentation and not cause delays and interruptions.
- Remember some nervousness ensures a flow of adrenalin and helps you to give a good speech. Thorough preparation will give you confidence. The more you speak and the more you practice the less nervous you will feel.
- Check carefully your speech is not too long, as you may lose marks. Read through your speech and time yourself.

## Delivering your talk

1. **Speak clearly** and slowly so that all your audience can hear.
2. Vary the volume (**voice projection**) and **speed** (pace) of your delivery to prevent a monotonous presentation.
3. Establish good **eye contact** with listeners to keep them personally involved.
4. Use posture, gestures and facial expression to **emphasise** what you are saying.
5. **Refer to notes** on palm cards but do not read your speech/presentation.

# Multimodal Presentation

A multimodal presentation is an oral presentation is given using more than one mode e.g. audio and visual. When preparing and presenting a multimodal presentation you should:

- Decide on the modes you will use in your presentation and discuss these with your teacher.
- Rehearse the presentation.
- Make sure that the technology you will be using actually works.
- Have a backup plan e.g. have your materials on a USB stick as well as in your email.
- Present confidently.

## Practical

- Teacher models the correct technique.
- Students practices technique in a closed environment/Skills development task.
- Student completes skill progression activities.
- Student completes skill in open environment.