Key stage 2 English writing teacher assessment moderation

Self-led training resources: Exercise 14

2023

Contents

Introduction

This exercise is part of a suite of training materials designed to develop understanding of the writing assessment framework. These materials address the knowledge and skills needed to support the moderation of key stage 2 (KS2) writing by local authority moderators. They may also be used by schools to support the teaching and assessment of writing at KS2.

The activities are designed for self-led learning but can also be used within group and trainer-led sessions. Discussion with colleagues is central to the assessment and moderation processes and opportunities to do this when using these materials will support effective training.

Training Exercise 14: Identifying and evidencing register and levels of formality at the expected standard (EXS) and working at greater depth (GDS)

This exercise consists of **five optional self-directed activities**.

Should you choose to do all five, the activities should take approximately **70 minutes** to complete, including reading time.

- Activity 1a: approx. 10 mins
- Activity 2a: approx. 10 mins
- Activity 2b: approx. 10 mins
- Activity 3a: approx. 20 mins
- Activity 3b: approx. 20 mins

In addition to this exercise, you will need the following document, on screen or as a hard copy:

- [Teacher assessment frameworks at the end of KS2 (English writing)](#)

You may also wish to have the following materials available:

- [English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2](#)
- [English appendix 2: vocabulary, grammar and punctuation](#)
- [Glossary for the programmes of study for English](#)
- [Teacher assessment exemplification: key stage 2 English writing](#)

The pen symbol indicates that you should make notes in the space provided. ✎

You can record your responses on a **hard copy** of this exercise document.

If working **on screen**, you can use the accompanying editable response document.

The pupil work examples used in this training are not full collections. Pupil scripts have been selected to demonstrate specific learning points.

Overview

This exercise consists of three sets of activities focusing on the following 'pupil can' statements for the greater depth standard (GDS) in the teacher assessment framework (TAF):

The pupil can:

- distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register
- exercise an assured and conscious control over levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary to achieve this

It supports the process of considering evidence in relation to these statements.

After completing this exercise, you will have:

- developed knowledge of register and levels of formality, and the features of Standard English (Activities 1 and 2)
- gained greater confidence in identifying and assessing register and formality in pupil work (Activity 3)

Your role

As a moderator, your role is to work alongside the teacher to build a picture of what a pupil can do from the evidence presented, benchmarked against your standardised knowledge of the framework. This is in order to validate, or challenge, the teacher's original assessment judgement. Moderation by local authority moderators supports the broader aim of quality assuring standards at a national level.

Activity 1: Reflecting on register and formality

Register describes varieties of spoken or written language tied to particular audiences, purposes and contexts. Variation between registers can usually be recognised through specific vocabulary and uses of grammar. For example, the register used in a legal document will be different from the register used in a chat with a friend, and the vocabulary and grammatical forms used in each case will differ.

How do audience and purpose relate to register and formality?

When writing for different audiences, the relationship between writer and reader determines the level of formality used, which is reflected in vocabulary choices.

In a letter of complaint to a company about a faulty product, for example, the recipient is usually not personally known to the writer, so a job title or department might be used rather than a name ('Manager' or 'Customer Services'), or there might be a generalised form of address ('To whom it may concern').

Grammatical forms will also reflect this relationship of distance, as opposed to familiarity. For example, passive and impersonal constructions focus on the matter to be addressed ('the damage was caused by', 'it is clear that').

These features support the high level of formality suited to most letters of this kind.

The purpose of a letter of complaint will also influence vocabulary, with terms that are specialised or specific to the context ('faulty wiring' or 'overheating').

Grammatical forms will also reflect purpose through, for example, modal verbs used to express wishes or obligations ('I would like' or 'must be refunded').

Taken together, these features relating to audience and purpose establish the register of the writing (or speech). A personal diary, a news article, a weather forecast or a sports commentary use different registers, and the differences between them are evident in the vocabulary and grammar of each.

Activity 1a: Reflecting on register in pupil writing

Consider the different kinds of writing that pupils do in the classroom.

What is the audience and purpose of each type of text?

Which features relating to register might you expect to see in each?

You may wish to record your thoughts in the **table** on the next page or on **page 2** of the response document.

Text type	Audience and purpose	Features relating to register and formality (vocabulary and grammar)
Narrative		
Description		
Diary		
Recount		
Letter		
Non-chronological report		
Instructions		
Balanced argument		
Advert		

Key points

Some features relating to a register are summarised below for different types of writing. Consider these alongside your responses in Activity 1. Text types are grouped together, where relevant, to highlight the overlap that often exists between the audience and purpose for different kinds of writing. Also, bear in mind that pupil writing is often written for an audience of peers, and the teacher, and is shaped by specific teaching purposes related to each task.

Text type	Audience and purpose	Features relating to register and formality (vocabulary and grammar)
Narrative Description Diary	**Narrative, description and diary writing** tend to have a **general reader** as the target audience and features that contribute to register usually relate to the **specific text type** (for example, science fiction, fantasy, traditional tale). Diary writing that is personal (rather than in role) will also reflect a relationship with an implied reader or the self, which again will influence the level of formality.	Writing in a particular character's voice will determine how the reader is addressed, and the kinds of language used. For example, an adult narrator or dialogue involving a variety of characters will affect vocabulary and grammatical features. Here, distinguishing between the **language of speech** and the **language of writing** is especially important. Pupils might also occasionally write for a younger age group, with a focus on ensuring that interest level, vocabulary and grammar are appropriate for this audience.
Recount	**Recount** writing is often aimed at a **non-specific reader** and can be written in a **personal** or an **impersonal** voice.	**Levels of formality vary** but **specific vocabulary** related to the context is used. Recounts can be in the voice of a character or persona and thus share some features of narrative writing. They might include quotations (for example, in a news report), reflecting speech.
Letter	**Letters vary in register**, depending on audience and purpose. They may combine **first person** voice with **second person**, to address the recipient, and **third-person** recount and explanation.	A letter to **a friend** is likely to reflect a more **informal** style of address, with non-technical and more expressive vocabulary (such as 'okay'). Speech-like forms might be included (such as contractions). Letters to an **unknown recipient** and which have a specific purpose will include vocabulary related to the context, be **formal** and use explanatory features, such as conjunctions and adverbials ('consequently', 'as soon as possible').

Non-chronological report	**Non-chronological reports** tend to be written for a **general audience**, and the informative purpose gives rise to **relatively formal, impersonal** writing in the third person.	**Specialised vocabulary** reflects the focus (for example, the environment, the natural world, a historical period) and grammatical forms may incorporate **subordination** to signal cause and effect, and purpose ('as a result', 'so that', 'in order to'). **Relative clauses** and **parenthesis** may expand details and reinforce the level of **formality**.
Instructions	**Instructions** tend to target a **general audience**, though they can **vary in their degree of formality**. A recipe might aim to provide additional tips and to enthuse the reader, and be written with a **personal** perspective, including the **second person** ('you'), while a complex set of instructions for constructing a model might be highly **impersonal**.	Vocabulary will be determined by the context of the instructions and may incorporate **specific details** to support accuracy, particularly for a complex task ('carefully', 'measure') and more flexibility to suit preference ('handful', 'plenty'). While grammatical features will reflect the manner of **addressing** the reader, with **imperative verbs** supporting the instructional focus and **conditionals** and **modals** emphasising choice, in more informal approaches ('if you like', 'you could try').
Balanced argument	A **balanced argument** presents and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of two opposing views on an issue. The informative and analytical approach is often conveyed through a **formal** register, foregrounding objectivity, though this is not always the case. A more **informal** approach might be adopted, for example, in an argument being presented to fellow pupils about an aspect of school life.	**Specific vocabulary** relating to the issue is included (for example, scientific terminology) and **conjunctions** and **adverbials** support the presentation of opposing points or supporting material ('even though', 'nevertheless', 'in addition'), particularly where a more **formal** register is adopted.
Advert	**Adverts** and other persuasive texts tend to adopt a direct address to the reader in the **second person**, satisfying the purpose of engaging and persuading.	Register tends to be **less formal** and feature positive or heightened description. Modals can also support this ('you should try', 'who could refuse') and the **active** or **passive** voice might be adopted as needed, along with **imperatives** ('you will be thrilled by', 'try it now').

Register and levels of formality in the national curriculum

The table below shows references to audience and purpose, as they relate to register and levels of formality in the Programmes of study for KS2 and English appendix 2: vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. You may also like refer to the (non-statutory) Glossary for teachers.

Spoken language – years 1 to 6
Pupils should be taught to: • select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

Year 5 and 6 programme of study
In vocabulary, grammar and punctuation: **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)** At this stage, pupils should start to learn about some of the differences between Standard English and non-Standard English and begin to apply what they have learnt [for example, in writing dialogue for characters].

Year 5 and 6 programme of study
In **composition**, pupils should be taught to plan their writing by: • identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own and to draft and write by: • selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning and to evaluate and edit by: • proposing changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to enhance effects and clarify meaning • ensuring correct subject and verb agreement when using singular and plural, distinguishing between the language of speech and writing and choosing the appropriate register

In **grammar, punctuation and spelling**, pupils should be taught to develop their understanding of the concepts set out in English appendix 2 by:

- recognising vocabulary and structures that are appropriate for formal speech and writing, including subjunctive forms

Appendix 2: vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Year 6: Detail of content to be introduced:

- **Word:** The difference between structures typical of informal speech and structures appropriate for formal speech and writing [for example, the use of question tags: 'He's your friend, isn't he?', or the use of subjunctive forms such as 'If I were or Were they to come' in some very formal writing and speech]

- **Sentence:** The difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing [for example, 'find out' – 'discover'; 'ask for' – 'request'; 'go in' – 'enter']

The table includes references to spoken language in the national curriculum, as well as writing, and this highlights the distinctions that pupils learn about and make in their own speech and writing.

Pupils begin to recognise features that contribute to meeting **audience and purpose**, and how register is established through **vocabulary and grammar**.

They also learn about the differences between **formal and informal** speech and writing, and when each is used.

This enables them to select the appropriate register for each piece of writing, and to maintain register as they write.

As Activity 1 has highlighted, most types of writing involve decisions about levels of formality, depending on the audience and purpose.

In Activity 2, we will look more closely at formality and informality as they relate to Standard English.

Activity 2: Considering Standard English and levels of formality

Pupils learn about the features of Standard English as part of their work in understanding audience, purpose and register. It is especially important to understand how Standard English relates to formal and informal speech and writing, and to recognise where non-Standard equivalents might be in use.

Activity 2a: Refreshing your understanding of what Standard English means

Consider what you understand about Standard English.

Read each statement in the table and note a brief response.

You may wish to record your thoughts in the **table** below or on **page 4** of the response document.

Statement	True	False	It depends
Standard English is always grammatically correct			
Spoken language is not Standard English			
Standard English means formal language			
Writing should always be in Standard English			

Each statement now has an explanation beneath it.

1. Standard English is always grammatically correct

True: Standard English is a variety of English that is understood widely as the official form of the language. Its grammatical rules are taught as the standard form of grammar and Standard English always follows those rules.

2. Spoken language is not Standard English

It depends: In formal contexts, such as when making a speech, Standard English is usual in spoken language. Standard English is also used in day-to-day speech (for example, "*Sorry, can't come tomorrow as I'm busy*"). This follows the agreed grammatical rules that characterise Standard English, with some more informal phrasing, such as "*can't come*", but without using slang or colloquialisms. Although Standard English is sometimes known as Standard Written English, it describes spoken language as well as writing. Spoken language can, of course, feature non-standard forms of grammar, and slang or colloquialisms. In such cases, it is not conforming to the conventions of Standard English.

3. Standard English means formal language

False: Formal language follows the grammatical rules of Standard English and it avoids vocabulary and expressions that are associated with casual interactions (for example, "*Thank you for this information. I look forward to seeing you tomorrow*"). However, Standard English can be informal and casual (for example, "*Thanks for the heads-up – see you tomorrow.*") Most interpretations of Standard English are of English used in a formal context. However, along a continuum of formality, Standard English can be used to describe some informal expressions that follow its uniform grammatical conventions without the use of slang, colloquialisms or other features of non-standard dialect.

4. Writing should always be in Standard English

False: Written texts are matched to their audience and purpose. In some contexts, casual, informal communication and non-standard equivalents of Standard English are appropriate in writing (for example, in a text message to a friend, "*Am gonna be late.*"). However, writing tends to be in Standard English, and this is the case with the vast majority of instances of pupil writing.

The focus for learning and teaching spoken language and writing is to **equip pupils with the skills to recognise and use the appropriate forms in different situations**. Standard English is used in formal contexts and in many informal contexts, and it is **used across most registers**. The vast majority of written texts are in Standard English and this is reflected in the writing that pupils encounter and create.

We will now consider some examples of pupils' writing, bearing in mind these points about audience, purpose, register and formality.

Extract	Formality: High, Medium, Low	Standard English (Yes / No)
1. a persuasive report to parents and school governors Examples of independence are plentiful on camp: packing and unpacking, collecting the correct equipment and tidying your room for room inspections. Since this is what your parents would normally do for you at home, it could be a challenge. Afterall, you would want your own child to be indepen[den]t, would you not?		
2. an informal letter You'll never guess what problems I've had. First of all, my goods was stolen and gone.		
3. a discussion of an issue Many leading scientists believe that living near a volcano has it's benefits as Geothermal Energy is a cheap way to create electrisity for the community.		
4. a dramatic chase scene "You guys are comin' with me!" boomed the green soilder. "C'mon, run!" screeched Anton		

Key points

The writing examples demonstrate a range of audiences and purposes, which determine the level of formality used. This in turn is reflected in the vocabulary and grammatical features, and whether Standard English is used. Some of the relevant features are summarised in the table below. As you read these, bear in mind your own observations.

Extract	Formality: High, Medium, Low	Standard English (Yes / No)
1. a persuasive report to parents and school governors Examples of independence are plentiful on camp: packing and unpacking, collecting the correct equipment and tidying your room for room inspections. Since this is what your parents would normally do for you at home, it could be a challenge. Afterall, you would want your own child to be indepen[den]t, would you not?	**Medium to high level of formality**: adult audience that is familiar but not personally known to the writer, official form of communication **Vocabulary** reflects context and audience: '*independence', 'plentiful', 'room inspections'* **Grammatical features** reflect formality: verb form manipulated to heighten formality: "*would you not?*" Expanded noun phrase suggests knowledge and authority: '*examples of independence*'	**Yes** Grammatical rules of Standard English are followed
2. an informal letter You'll never guess what problems I've had. First of all, my goods was stolen and gone.	**Low level of formality**: letter to friend, communicating news and experiences **Vocabulary** reflects context and audience: short, simple words, for example, '*guess', 'gone'* **Grammatical features**: direct address with contraction, reflect speech: "*You'll never guess*" Casual, conversational phrasing: "*my goods was stolen and gone*"	**No** Includes non-Standard subject verb use: "my goods was stolen"
3. a discussion of an issue Many leading scientists believe that living near a volcano has it's benefits as Geothermal Energy is a cheap way to create electrisity for the community.	**Medium to high level of formality**: discussion of an issue for a general audience **Vocabulary** reflects context and audience: '*leading scientists', 'benefits', 'community'* **Grammatical features**: multi-clause sentence with subordination to handle complex information and to suggest authority, and generalised noun phrase as subject: "*Many leading scientists believe that…*"	**Yes** Grammatical rules of Standard English are followed

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4. a dramatic chase scene "You guys are comin' with me!" boomed the green soilder. "C'mon, run!" screeched Anton	**Low level of formality**: speech within narrative reflects relationship between characters (narration itself is more formal) **Vocabulary** reflects context and purpose: colloquial phrase: "*You guys*" **Spelling** reflects speech and pronunciation: '*comin', 'C'mon*' **Grammatical features** reflect context: short phrases, active voice and imperative: "*C'mon, run!*"	**Yes** Grammatical rules of Standard English are followed

Reflection point: Are there any issues you have uncovered so far in this training? Are there any points that require clarification, or questions that have been raised? Record them here or on **page 6** of the response document:

As reflected in the examples, most pupil writing will be in contexts where Standard English is appropriate, though this may include language that is informal, casual or colloquial. Non-standard grammatical forms are typical and appropriate in certain contexts, particularly in informal communication between friends or close connections, and particularly in speech.

Activity 3: Choosing the appropriate register and maintaining register in writing

As we have seen, the register and level of formality used in writing are determined by purpose and audience, and the success and effectiveness of a piece of writing is closely tied to how well it is matched to purpose and audience (see Training Exercise 13 for further exploration of this). The TAF highlights these related skills.

Register and levels of formality in the assessment framework

At the expected standard, the pupil can:

- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader (e.g. the use of the first person in a diary; direct address in instructions and persuasive writing)
- select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires, doing this mostly appropriately (e.g. using contracted forms in dialogues in narrative; using passive verbs to affect how information is presented; using modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility)

We will now consider some examples of pupil writing.

Activity 3a: Evidencing register in pupil writing

Read pieces A and B from Bryce.

What is the purpose and audience of each piece?

Has an appropriate register been used? How are vocabulary and grammatical forms used to establish register?

You may wish to record your response by **annotating the texts** or using the **notepad** below or on **pages 7 and 8** of the response document.

After recording your responses, look at the key points noted about each piece.

Bryce – piece A: a diary entry

Context: The class had been reading 'Skellig' by David Almond and explored the creation of setting and atmosphere. They discussed possible locations and ideas for narratives with mysterious or 'spooky' settings and pupils then planned and wrote their own narrative. Bryce wrote in the form of a diary entry.

Dear Diary.   THE GNARLED FINGER

Let me tell you about the night which changed my life...

It all started with me going to bed, I was watching youtube shorts on my phone when my friend texted me, asking to explore the abandoned graveyard, which I knew was out of bounds, but agreed to go anyway. I tiptoed out of my house that night making sure not to wake my parents.

When we arrived at the graveyard, we faced a tall mossy gate, I pushed it but it wouldn't work so we to both tried because there were overgrown branches pushing on the otherside of the gate (Well thats what me and Ralph thought it was) We both felt a chill come over us. We both shivered. Suddenly the twisted branches turned into boney gnarled fingers. We froze. The boney fingers retreated into the st darkness. The gates suddenly swung open! Standing there, our mouths were hanging open in shock. We couldn't move and we thought our feet were stuck. As we entered, we heard an urgent crying of a crow. It started circling us, catching our attention. It looked to be leading us to something but it was dark so it was impossible to see where it was leading us so we decided to get our phones out, which it when we had realised they had died!

The structure was big and mossy, it must be a crypt I thought to myself. Tentetively, we edged into the crypt which was pitch black although our eyes just ajusted. We saw a gaping hallway. On the right of us so we decided to head down it. There was a door just at the end of the hallway. SUDDENLY, We heard a scream coming behind the door. Sneaking down the hallway, we took a

glimpse and saw a girl. "Hi" we said but she didn't answer so we repeated it and this time she answered. She spoke in a raspy voice "my name is Faith, I'm 15 and I reccomend don't come in any further because I've been kidnapped". Just then. A chill went over us.

I could hear sounds I never wanted to hear again - I froze. All I wanted to do was hide but I knew I had to get away. I slowly crept out of the graveyard as cold rain hit my face. I glanced over my shoulder but I couldn't see anything. For a moment I thought about Ralph and tears began to prick the back of my eyes. I bit my lip. "This is no time for tears". I said to myself. I began to run as fast as my legs could carry me and I didn't dare to look behind me for fear of what I might see. I ran to the door, and threw myself through it. I leaned against it panting, my lungs burning. I was safe! Just then, from round the corner of the door, emerged a single, gnarled finger...

✎ **Notepad**

Bryce – piece A: a diary entry

What is the purpose and audience of the piece?

Note examples of vocabulary that help to establish register, including levels of formality.

Note examples of grammatical forms that help to establish register (including levels of formality), for example:

- contracted forms in dialogues in narrative
- passive verbs to affect how information is presented
- modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility

How successful has the pupil been in choosing the appropriate register?

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Key points relating to piece A from Bryce

Now read these notes on piece A, and bear in mind your own observations.

Purpose and audience

- The piece contains elements of both diary form and narrative, resulting in a hybrid which does not fully satisfy the diary element, in particular.
- The main purpose of the piece is to create a story with a 'spooky' setting, and this aim dominates, along with serving a general readership that includes fellow pupils. This stimulates writing that is suitably descriptive, with events narrated to create suspense.
- The opening address and use of the second person (*Dear Diary / Let me tell you*) and first person (*I was watching*) signal the aim of confiding experiences in the style of a personal diary. The diary itself is fiction in this case, so there is some overlap with the narrative's broad purpose of engaging a general reader, but the specific aim of giving the reader an insight into events, as seen through reflections in the present moment, is initiated but not maintained.
- Narration of events dominates and with less reflection upon those events from a diary writer's vantage point. By the time it ends, the piece is more wholly a first-person narrative than a diary.

Vocabulary

- A relatively informal style is established through vocabulary reflecting everyday activities (*watching youtube shorts on my phone when my friend texted me*) and more casual expression (*aggreed to go anyway… well that's what me and Ralph thought… Hi*).
- Action is narrated in order to engage and build suspense through description. At times, language choices become more formal, specific and distanced from the chattier tone established in the diary, as a whole (*retreated… Tentatively… raspy… emerged*).

Grammatical forms

- Contractions are used in the piece, in keeping with the relatively informal diary style (*wouldn't, thats, couldn't, I'm, I've*). Some of these appear in the section of reported speech, when the writer encounters the girl, demonstrating the pupil's awareness of what is appropriate here, when presenting spoken language
- Sentence structures vary, reflecting the focus on creating atmosphere and presenting fast-paced action. Some long sentences are included, with clauses often joined with 'and', 'so' and 'but', which are more typical of informal speech (*It looked to be leading us to something but… so… so… which*).
- Standard English is used across the different levels of formality.

How successful has the pupil been in choosing the appropriate register?

- Diaries can vary in register, depending on writer and context. The pupil adopts a more informal and expressive tone when including reflections on events. However, the formality of some vocabulary in the piece creates inconsistency at times. As discussed above, the uncertainty about purpose leads to this mixing of registers, as personal and informal commentary is coupled with the heightened description and narration that is in keeping with the story task. This makes the piece less consistent and successful overall.

Bryce – piece B: a persuasive biography

Context: Using 'Cogheart' by Peter Bunzl as inspiration, pupils chose a famous Victorian figure to research. They explored features of persuasive writing and then each wrote a biography with the aim of persuading others that their chosen person was the most important Victorian.

ISAMBARD - KINGDOM - BRUNEL

The Victorian era was a period of time when people made inspiring inventions which still remain today. Amongst the many inovators, by far the most significant and has transformed our lives the most, is Sir Isambard-Kingdom-Brunel.

Brunel was born 9th April, 1806 and died 15th September 1859. This inventor built the Great Western Railway (G.W.R) which was a British Railway company that linked London and the Southwest and West. Two steam locomotives on the G.W.R appeared in the hit tv show, Thomas the tank engine called Duck and Oliver.

In his early years he worked as an assistant engineer on the project to create a tunnel under London's River Thames under the most difficult and dangerous conditions.

The industrial pioneer went to Caen - Normandy University located in France and studied fluent French and the basic principles of engineering. As he grew up he built dock-yards then he moved on to build the G.W.R in 1852 and finished two years later in 1854.

Thanks to Brunel I can travel from London to Liverpool instead of the common transport car, it's not just me he's helped it's millions accross England so I definetly deserves to be in the hall of fame and is truly the greatest Victorian inventor of all time. Railways encouraged people to move to different areas to find.

work. MPs were able to travel more quickly between their constituencies and, the to Houses of par Parliament Parliam ent in London. I'm not taking anything away from Dickens and Nightingale but Brunel definetly is the most outstanding builder of all time.
                                    engineer

✏️ **Notepad**

Bryce – piece B: a persuasive biography

What is the purpose and audience of the piece?

Note examples of vocabulary that help to establish register (including levels of formality)

Note examples of grammatical forms that help to establish register, including levels of formality, for example:

- contracted forms in dialogues in narrative
- passive verbs to affect how information is presented
- modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility

How successful has the pupil been in choosing the appropriate register?

Key points relating to piece B from Bryce

Now read these notes on piece B, and bear in mind your own observations.

Purpose and audience

- In common with piece A by Bryce, this writing has a dual purpose. Its main aim is to inform a general reader about a distinguished figure, Brunel, through a biographical text which contextualises him as a Victorian. The secondary aim is to persuade the reader that his achievements are of greater comparative merit than those of other distinguished figures of the period. Informing and persuading the reader are thus the drivers of register.
- Use of the third person supports the informative purpose (*The Victorian era was… This inventor built*) and the piece combines factual detail with evaluative comment (*transformed our lives the most… the most outstanding engineer of all time*).
- Where the first-person voice is used for this purpose, it highlights a slight shift in how the audience is addressed (*I'm not taking anything away from Dickens and Nightingale but…*), with direct personal comment in an informal tone foregrounded.
- The authority that factual, informative writing carries, where the 'facts speak for themselves', is part of the pupil's approach when giving an account of Brunel's achievements. However, the promotional element of the content, directly applauding achievements in order to impress, creates a contrast.

Vocabulary

- The language used in the piece helps to establish a formal register, with specific and technical vocabulary suited to the historical focus (*linked London and the Southwest and West… steam locomotives… industrial pioneer… basic principles of engineering*), and words that are associated with formal situations (*Amongst*).
- At times, the vocabulary is less formal and closer to casual spoken language (*hit tv show… definetly*), as the pupil tries to fulfil the persuasive purpose and adopts references that are deliberately contemporary and aimed at the target audience of today, and more directly, their peers.

Grammatical forms

- The formality of this piece is achieved through grammatical forms that highlight objective, factual information, including generalised subjects (*when people made… the many inovators… millions accross England*) a relative clause (*which was a British Railway Company*) and adverbials (*by far the most significant… under the most difficult and dangerous conditions*).
- Standard English is used throughout.
- At times, contracted forms appear (*it's… he's… I'm*) where the pupil presents a personal, subjective view of Brunel. This approach to meeting the persuasive

purpose conflicts with the overall formality of the register, in its conversational style (*it's not just me he's helped it's millions*).

How successful has the pupil been in choosing the appropriate register?

As this discussion has shown, the pupil takes a largely formal approach to the biography of Brunel and establishes a register suited to the informative purpose, for the most part. However, the additional persuasive intent leads to a hybrid approach, with a more informal style of expression evident at times. This creates some inconsistency in register overall.

Register at the expected standard

Pieces A and B from Bryce have highlighted how the choice of register is evidenced in pupil writing, and some of the ways in which register can vary within a piece. At the expected standard, the pupil can statement is:

The pupil can:

- select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires, doing this mostly appropriately (e.g. 'using contracted forms in dialogues in narrative; using passive verbs to affect how information is presented; using modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility')

As we have seen, the qualifier 'mostly appropriately' is important in helping to establish if writing collections are meeting this standard. Slips or inconsistencies might be evident within a piece of writing, but it is important to recognise evidence of vocabulary and grammatical features which establish register for the reader.

Additionally, variation in register can be traced back to uncertainty about the purpose and audience for writing, or where two purposes combine. The success of such pieces depends on how well the purposes themselves align, and on the pupil's assurance in balancing the associated ways of addressing the reader. Piece A could have successfully combined a personal diary with a complete narrative episode, if the voice of the diary writer sustained the same level of formality throughout, and if their present-moment reflections on past events were interspersed with the narrated action.

In the two pieces here, there is evidence to support the judgement that Bryce can 'select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires, doing this mostly appropriately'. However, the hybrid nature of both pieces points toward the importance of considering pieces across the range of a full collection.

In order to validate a judgement, moderators need to be assured that a pupil is consistently meeting all the statements in the standard when judged across a whole collection of the pupil's writing. You might find it useful to look also at the [Teacher assessment exemplification: KS2 English writing](#), particularly the discussion of work by Dani (WTS) and Morgan (EXS).

Register at the greater depth standard

We will now go on to explore how register is controlled and maintained in writing. It is helpful to consider the relevant statements at the greater depth standard, which state that the pupil can:

- distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register
- exercise an assured and conscious control over levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary to achieve this.

[Footnote: Pupils should recognise that certain features of spoken language (e.g. contracted verb forms, other grammatical informality, colloquial expressions, long coordinated sentences) are less likely in writing and be able to select alternative vocabulary and grammar.]

Activity 3b: Considering how well register is controlled and maintained

Read pieces A and B from Ash.

What is the register of each piece? Has an appropriate register been used?

How well is the appropriate register controlled and maintained within each piece?

You may wish to record your response by **annotating the texts** or using the **table on page 33** or on **page 9** of the response document.

After recording your responses, look at the key points noted about each piece.

Ash – piece A: a letter

Context: As part of their history topic on World War 2, the class read 'The boy in the striped pyjamas' by John Boyne. They explored the main character, Bruno, and noted words and phrases he uses in the story. They drew on these to plan and write a letter from Bruno to his grandparents, describing the situation after the family's move to Poland.

Out –With
Ausiviec
7000
Poland

Friday 7th June 1940

Dear & Grandmother,

I am writing to you in my new room, at this new house called Out –With. It's nothing like our house in Berlin and the whispering maids and moody butlers don't look friendly at all. Worst of all, Mother, Father and the Hopeless Case all say we'll be here for the 'forseeable future'. I miss Berlin and you and my three best friends for life: Karl and Daniel and Martin. Whoever Father works for must be very, very angry at him, after all who would want to live here?

Out –With is nothing like our house in Berlin, at least I knew what city I was in back there. Here, there are only three floors, no banister to slide down and hundreds and ~~thousander~~ thousands of people in grey, striped pyjamas. There's nobody to push you from pillar to post, no school and no other houses. In fact, the only similarities are the 'Hopeless Case' – still annoying as ever – and that Father's office is still 'out of bounds and no exceptions'.

Do you know who those people in the pyjamas are? It's rather concerning really. In front of it the fence there's a garden, the garden's nice. Rows of ruby-red roses and pink petunias border it with a bench facing the house, Gretel thought it was a bit

strange but on this occasion I can see why. The fence is as tall as the house and much wider than it too. It looks very spiky so I'm guessing it's made of barbed wire. I wonder why? There are loads of little huts but I'm not sure what they're for, going to the toilet maybe? It couldn't be for showering though because it looks like they haven't showered for decades! At least that's what Mother said. Another strange thing is that it's all boys: small boys, big boys, fathers, and grandfathers, Uncles and brothers. They all look very unhappy and their are soldiers so everywhere you look. I wonder if they're rehearsing a play? You know, the s type where the boys pretend to be girls.

I hope you and Grandfather are well, please tell Karl and Daniel and Martin I'll be back soon.

Kindly ~~to~~ regards, Your Grandson,

Bruno

Ash – piece B: an incident report

Context: The class focused on a specific event in 'The boy in the striped pyjamas' by John Boyne, considering the different viewpoints of key characters involved. They explored examples of incident reports and wrote their own report of the incident from the story, drawing on words and phrases used by characters in the book.

Case Number: XY P5866

Incident: Injury

Reporting Officer: Lieutenant Kotler

At approximately 1030 hours on the ^(morning of Saturday) 24th June 1940, I was approached by 'young' Master Bruno requesting an old tyre. I immediately instructed prisoner 22590 to accompany the young man ^(to) at the tyre shed and assist him with his childish endeavour. I have thoroughly ~~treated~~ investigated the unfortunate incident and ~~come~~ have come to ~~the~~ ^(my) conclusion that the rope provided by that insolent pest, Prisoner 22590, was tattered and inappropriate for ~~the current situation.~~ that magi. purpos.

Reporting witness: Pavel (Prisoner 22590)

~~Before I began~~

~~Firstly,~~ I sincerely apologise for my role in young Master Bruno's hapless accident. At around 10:30am on Saturday 24th June, Lieutenant Kotler instructed me to escort Master Bruno to the tyre shed and pick up some rope. Unfortunately, ~~my simple mindedness~~ ^(absent) ^(as I recall long days) ~~mindedness lead me to~~ picked up some frayed rope ^(his majestys swing) and before I knew it he had flown off. Once again, I am deeply sorry and ashamed for not checking the rope and ^(tyre) swing beforehand. I then helped him inside where his Mother tended to his wound. I apologise for my actions and ~~it shall not happen again.~~ wish nothing more than young Master Bruno speedy recovery.

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Victim Report : Bruno

On Saturday, I had the incredible idea of building the world's best tyre swing on the ginormous oak tree at the front of the house. So I went up to Lieutenant Kotler, who to the Hopeless case, as she giggled and twirled her around her finger so many times it made me dizzy and I don't see why g he would torture himself like that speaking to her. I asked him where I might find a spare tyre, he then shouted at Pavel to get me a tyre and some rope, which I thought was very unnecessary. Mother told us to be polite to everyone we met but Lieutenant Kotler so must have clearly forgotten that. Once I had my supplies, I then went to the tree where Pavel offered to help me set it up but I refused as I wanted to build the swing all by myself. When I finished building it, I then hopped on and swung higher than anyone ever before. This so is the scariest part, I I then lost my grip and my foot got stuck in the tyre! I was left

dangling upside down for a while and then my foot became unstuck. I fell millions of miles onto the ground and could have easily bled to death but I didn't even cry, not once. Then, Pavel came and cleaned my terrible wound and bandaged it. When, Mother came home, she told Pavel that if anyone asked, tell them that she cleaned me up! Mother has always

Ash	What is the register of the piece? Has an appropriate register been used?	How well is the appropriate register controlled and maintained within each piece through vocabulary and grammatical features, e.g. use of contractions, different verb forms?
Piece A: a letter		
Piece B: an incident report		

Key points relating to Ash's writing in pieces A and B

Now read these notes on both pieces, and bear in mind your own observations.

Ash – piece A

Choice of register

- informal register shaped by audience (writing to family member – grandmother – and assuming shared knowledge on the part of the recipient of the letter, *nothing like our house in Berlin… no banister to slide down… that's what Mother said… Gretel thought…*)
- specific relationship to grandmother shapes the extent of the informality (respectful tone, *I hope you and Grandfather are well*)

How well is register controlled and maintained?

- drawing on the novel, the pupil adopts a tone suited to the young character, Bruno, who is unaware of the true circumstances of 'Auschwitz' ('Out-With'), and vocabulary reflects his preoccupations, level of observation and mode of expression (*moody butlers… Worst of all… very, very angry at him…the 'Hopeless Case' – still as annoying as ever –… very spiky… loads of*)
- contractions reflect the familiar and relaxed context (*It's nothing like… don't look friendly… we'll be here… There's nobody… I'm guessing…*)
- direct, conversational interjections also support this relaxed register (*I wonder why?... going to the toilet maybe?... You know*)
- relative wealth and social status of Bruno's family is reflected in some of the formal language and structures, capturing the influence of language used in conversation with adults, including an impersonal pronoun subject (*Whoever Father works for*), expanded noun phrases (*Rows of ruby-red roses and pink petunias… as tall as the house and much wider than it too*) and adverbials (*on this occasion… At least*)
- modal verbs capture Bruno's speculation and conclusions about what he is seeing (*must be… who would want… It couldn't be*), in suitably informal style

Overall, the piece evidences some control of the chosen register, and the capacity to maintain this. The combination of the voice of the child from a well-positioned family, using some formal expressions (*annoying as ever… on this occasion*) and displaying youthful informality (*You know*) emerges in the letter. At times the choice of phrasing evokes a more specifically contemporary sense of Bruno as opposed to the period setting (*loads of… I'm guessing*), which challenges the sense of assured and conscious control over levels of formality being in place throughout.

Ash – piece B

Choice of register

- a mix of registers is intentionally included to match different voices and purposes: formal recounting by Lieutenant Kotler in an official role, deferential recounting by Pavel, who is being held in the camp, and informal, enthusiastic recounting of events from Bruno's child perspective
- register in each case matches each character's position and perspective on events

How well is register controlled and maintained?

Lieutenant Kotler

- vocabulary evokes the officer's world and the official language expected in such an incident report (*approximately 1030 hours… instructed… prisoner 22590… assist… endeavour… thoroughly investigated… unfortunate incident*)
- the specific hostility and biases of Kotler are revealed through subjective language (*childish… insolent*) which conflicts with the supposed objectivity of the context but matches the reality of the plot
- passive construction fits the formal reporting (*I was approached by…*) and past tense is used to recount events, with infinitive forms capturing activities (*to accompany… assist him*) and movement to a current perspective on events handled through the present perfect (*have come to*)

Pavel

- his prisoner situation is reflected in serious and formal vocabulary (*sincerely apologise… deeply sorry and ashamed… wish nothing more than*)
- active voice highlights the actions of others, in contrast with Pavel's innocence (*instructed me to escort*) and adverbs emphasise context and apologetic framing of events (*Before I begin… Unfortunately… before I knew it… Once again*)

Bruno

- words and phrases are chosen to reflect enthusiasm and age (*incredible… ginormous… all by myself… hopped on…scariest part… millions of miles*), including contractions (*don't… didn't*) reflecting Bruno's less formal approach to the written context
- present tense comment is incorporated in recounting (*I don't see why…*), along with modal verbs to express viewpoint freely (*why he would torture himself… could have easily*) and adverbs which specifically convey Bruno's exaggeration of his plight (*clearly forgotten… than anyone ever has before… easily bled to death… didn't even cry*)

Overall, piece B displays ample evidence of Ash's capacity to consciously control levels of formality with some assurance. As the discussion brings out, the different voices in the piece reflect different social positions, and relations in the world of the story, realised through the choice of vocabulary and grammatical forms. Presenting a single voice with the same degree of success would also provide evidence toward the GDS statements.

Conclusion

- Both pieces by Ash provide examples of the appropriate register being selected and maintained as needed, with conscious control of different levels of formality.
- Vocabulary and grammatical features are adapted skilfully to match the intended purpose, showing controlled variation where appropriate, and providing evidence toward the relevant GDS statement.
- However, it is important to bear in mind the scope of this discussion. The pieces do not contain examples of dialogue through which aspects of register that relate to spoken language could be evidenced. Additionally, the two pieces do not represent a full range of purposes. At times, repetition weakens piece A, and other aspects in both pieces, such as punctuation, include errors.
- In order to validate a judgement, you need to be assured that a pupil is consistently meeting all the statements in the standard when judged across a whole collection of the pupil's writing.

You might find it useful to look also at the Teacher assessment exemplification: KS2 English writing, particularly the discussion of work by Leigh (EXS) and Frankie (GDS).

Summary

In Training Exercise 14, you have

- explored register and levels of formality and how these relate to purpose and audience in writing
- considered the relationship of Standard English to register and formality
- considered relevant 'pupil can' statements at EXS and GDS
- explored evidence of register and formality in pupil work, considering statements at EXS and GDS