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# 3

## Reading and Responding

aims

I will learn to:

- Look for clues
- Recognise writing genres
- Be aware of different types of writing
- Read with a goal in mind
- Make a personal link or connection
- Question the text
- Reflect on the story and writing
- Use PIE (Point, Illustrate, Explain)

### Different types of writing

There are many different types of text that you may be asked to read and respond to. Each text is different in its layout and the type of language it uses. Below are some examples that you may be asked to read:

<b>Interview</b> →	has an interviewer and an interviewee (the person being interviewed). The language can be formal or informal, and the responses can be very personal.
<b>Letter</b> →	is addressed to someone, has a date, a greeting and sign-off. The language can be informal or formal depending on the purpose of the letter.
<b>Review</b> →	is when someone judges something they have experienced, for example, a film. The language can be formal or informal based on what the review is about and the people it is written for.
<b>Drama</b> →	is a play and has at least one character, but usually two or more. The language is generally informal as it reflects what people say in everyday conversation. However, plays written in other centuries – for example, those written by Shakespeare – may have a more formal type of language.
<b>Novel</b> →	is a fictional (made-up) story. It usually features more than one character and has a mixture of both formal and informal language.

<b>Article</b>	→	is an opinion piece. It can be either serious or humorous and so can have formal or informal language depending on the subject. It can have a mixture of information, statistics, quotes and opinion.
<b>Speech</b>	→	is an opinion piece which is spoken. It is usually spoken to an audience, has a greeting, information, statistics, quotes and opinion. It can be serious or humorous.
<b>Blog</b>	→	is an online opinion piece. It can be serious like an article or more informal like a diary entry.
<b>Song lyrics</b>	→	<i>are like poems. A song can have all the techniques that poems have, such as rhyme, alliteration, etc.</i>
<b>Email</b>	→	is like an online letter. It can be either formal or informal depending on the subject matter.
<b>Report</b>	→	is usually an investigation into something. It should outline its findings, its recommendations and solutions.

As you can see, each form of writing has its own style or genre, and some, like books, emails and blogs, can be written in more than one style or genre.

## Understanding genre in books



Genre describes a specific style or category of writing in books and literature. Readers expect certain things from different genres. For example, we would expect that books in the science fiction genre will have something to do with space or could feature futuristic settings, whereas fantasy books might have magic or supernatural characters in them.

### Genre types

**Romance** – has a love story between two people with a happy and optimistic ending.

**Science fiction** – has a futuristic setting or characters who have some connection with space.

**Fantasy** – has a setting or characters that have some connection with magic or the supernatural (ghosts and spirits).

**Autobiography** – is about a person's life, written by that person, and has lots of personal thoughts and emotions.

**Biography** – is about a person's life but is written by someone else. It usually has more information with fewer personal thoughts and emotions.

**Drama** – has a more serious tone to the story with lots of emotional highs and lows.

**Action and adventure** – has a big threat or danger and chases, which create lots of excitement.

**Horror** – has some connection to fear or death or the supernatural.

**Mystery** – has a problem or puzzle that needs to be solved.

**Travel** – has stories about a person's travels to different places.

**Historical fiction** – is a story that is based around a historical event or period.

**Young adult (YA)** – is a story written with teenagers and young adults in mind.

## How to be an effective reader

### Step 1

#### Before reading, you need to:

1. Look at the **title** of the text
2. Read any **background information**
3. Look at any **images** that accompany the text
4. Check if there are any **links** between these three things.

### Step 2

#### First reading:

1. Read the **whole** piece to get the **gist (general idea)** of it
2. If there are any **words or phrases** you don't understand, try to **read the sentence again** and **guess** what the word or phrase **might mean**.

## How to be an effective reader

### Step 3

#### Second reading:

1. Go to the questions and **underline key words**
2. **Read the text again** to see if you can **spot the answers** or any of the **key words**
3. Write **your own notes** at the side of the paper if you spot anything.

### Step 4

#### Response to your reading:

1. How did **you** feel about the text you have just read?
2. Did the writer succeed in getting **you** to **like it** or were you **disappointed**?
3. Do **you** share any **links or connections** with the speaker(s) of the text?

## Successful reading in action

Read the following review of Ed Sheeran's third album,  $\div$ , and find out what the album tells us about this really successful but down-to-earth singer.

### Sample review

From the typical Sheeran ballad to rapping about Ireland's very own Galway, this album is a very mixed collection for the singer-songwriter who has previously given up social media for a year and who is Taylor Swift's bestie.

Background information

Examine the images



For such a young man, a lot of people often ask themselves 'Is there anything that Ed Sheeran can't do?' On the back of two very successful albums entitled  $\times$  and  $+$ , the third album had a lot to live up to. One reason for this success is that he doesn't stick to just one genre of music. Like his previous albums, Sheeran features songs that blend a lot of different music techniques and genres such as rap, pop, folk and digital mixing. There is something for everyone on this album.

Another reason is that Sheeran writes from the heart. His lyrics tell stories about his experiences of being an average guy who has to deal with the same things other people do. He also uses family influences in tracks such as 'Galway Girl' where Sheeran gives a nod to his Irish roots. He is huge over here in Ireland and it is great that Sheeran uses that mixture of traditional music with his own blend of rap and pop to create this very catchy track.

The album also features a song about his grandmother's funeral called 'Supermarket Flowers', which is slow and pleasing to the ear. Sheeran's ability to be the superstar and the everyday man contributes to his popularity, but it would be nothing without his unique talent for creating fun songs.

That is not to say that Sheeran doesn't find his success a little stressful. He is reported to have stayed away from **social media** because he was anxious and overwhelmed by so many people wanting different

Key words from Question 1

things from him. However, Sheeran makes the most of his current situation and seems to acknowledge how lucky he is. He looks to popular singers such as **George Michael**, who died so young, and realises the impact that George had on his fans. Sheeran, himself being a big fan, was really surprised and saddened by his death.

Key words from Question 2

On the other hand, it seems that this album embraces life and has fun with it. Definitely the song to really watch out for is 'Shape of You'. This balances a great vocal performance along with an insanely catchy beat.

This album is full of pop genius, but it isn't for everyone. Part of Sheeran's appeal is the variety in his music, but I think this album might go a bit too far with that for some fans. Not everyone will like jumping from an Irish inspired hit to a simpler groove featured in other songs.



## Sample questions and answers

### Questions

Genre type – review

1. Ed Sheeran removed himself from social media because:
  - A. He just wasn't really interested in Snapchat any more
  - B. He felt under pressure to constantly help people
  - C. He realised that all his time was spent on social media
  - D. He was bored.
2. Why was Sheeran affected by George Michael's death?
  - A. It was under very tragic circumstances
  - B. He was a singer just like himself
  - C. He didn't want to lose another legend
  - D. He was very popular.
3. What does the reviewer think about the album?
  - A. Hates it
  - B. Likes some songs but doesn't like others
  - C. Likes it but thinks that it isn't for everyone
  - D. Can find no fault with the album.

B

D

C



## Answering questions

In the exam you are given lots of different texts to read and you are asked different types of questions.



Comprehension questions can be asked like multiple choice, true or false, or find the odd one out. Below is an example of multiple-choice questions based on a movie poster.

### Example Section A – Reading Comprehension

#### Question 1

10 marks

Based on what you can see in both of the posters, write the letter corresponding to the correct answers in the box.

(a) The film *Song of the Sea* opens in cinemas on:

- A. The ninth of December
- B. The nineteenth of November
- C. December the nineteenth
- D. December the ninth

(b) As a rating, one of the reviews rewards the film:

- A. Four stars
- B. Thumbs up
- C. Five stars
- D. An Oscar

(c) The director of a *Song of the Sea* also directed a film called:

- A. *The Academy Award*
- B. *Dazzling*
- C. *The Secret of Kells*
- D. *A Beautiful Film*

(d) When one of the reviews says that the film is 'spellbinding', it means that:

- A. The film is about wizards and magicians
- B. You will leave the film feeling dizzy
- C. The film will hold your interest completely
- D. The film is confusing

Apart from comprehension questions, you can be asked anything at all – see an example on the following page. However, it is important that you remember that these questions will all be based around your own understanding of the text and your feelings towards it.



**Question 2**

**5 marks**

Based on what you can see in the two posters, who do you think would enjoy this film? Explain your answer.

---

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---

---

**Phrases to help you express your personal opinion:**

I think that ...

In my opinion, ...

I feel ...

I believe ...

My impression of ...

I hold the view that ...

To me, ...

Personally, I'd say that ...

From my point of view, ...

**Did you like or dislike something?**

**Words and phrases to help you:**

*Like*

- Enjoy
- Agree
- Admire
- Terrific
- Marvellous
- Adore
- Delighted
- Pleased
- Satisfied
- Marvel at
- Respect
- Applaud
- Appreciate



If you are asked whether you like or dislike something, it is important to try and use different words and phrases to help you explain why.

*Dislike*

- Hate
- Disgusted
- Disagree
- Detest
- Loathe
- Condemn
- Abhor

**Success criteria for answering questions**

**Point, Illustrate, Explain (PIE)**

When reading and responding, you must always refer to the text. Use the following formula to help you each time:

- P – Point:** Using the key words from the question, answer the question and make your point.
- I – Illustrate:** Select a quote or pick out something from an image to back up your point.
- E – Explain:** Tell the reader why you have picked the quote or the aspect from the image. Use your own personal opinion or experience to explain how it helps to answer the question.

## Example – Ed Sheeran review answers

What impression do you get of Ed Sheeran from reading the review on pages 24–25?

- [P] I believe that Ed Sheeran is a clever and talented man.
- [I] He also uses family influences in tracks such as 'Galway Girl' ...
- [E] Sheeran is very smart to write songs that appeal to a wide range of fans. The song 'Galway Girl' was written with his Irish fans in mind because he is so popular over here. By doing this, Sheeran is keeping all his fans happy. They also feel that they know him more because he shares a personal connection.

## Practice makes perfect

This is an extract from *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness.

### Sample extract

The monster showed up just after midnight. As they do.

Conor was awake when it came.

He'd had a nightmare. Well, not a nightmare. *The* nightmare. The one he'd been having a lot lately. The one with the darkness and the wind and the screaming. The one with the hands slipping from his grasp, no matter how hard he tried to hold on. The one that always ended with–

'Go away,' Conor whispered into the darkness of his bedroom, trying to push the nightmare back, not let it follow him into the world of waking. 'Go away now.'

He glanced over at the clock his mum had put on his bedside table. 12.07. Seven minutes past midnight. Which was late for a school night, late for a Sunday, certainly.

He'd told no one about the nightmare. Not his mum, obviously, but no one else either, not his dad in their fortnightly (or so) phone call, *definitely* not his grandma, and no one at school. Absolutely not.

What happened in the nightmare was something no one else ever needed to know. Conor blinked groggily at his room, then he frowned. There was something he was missing. He sat up in his bed, waking a bit more. The nightmare was slipping from him, but there was something he couldn't put his finger on, something different, something–

He listened, straining against the silence, but all he could hear was the quiet house around him, the occasional tick from the empty downstairs or a rustle of bedding from his mum's room next door.

Nothing.

And then something. Something he realized was the thing that had woken him. Someone was calling his name.



Conor.

He felt a rush of panic, his guts twisting. Had it followed him? Had it somehow stepped out of the nightmare and—?

‘Don’t be stupid,’ he told himself. ‘You’re too old for monsters.’

And he was. He’d turned thirteen just last month. Monsters were for babies. Monsters were for bed-wetters. Monsters were for—

Conor.

There it was again. Conor swallowed. It had been an unusually warm October, and his window was still open. Maybe the curtains shushing each other in the small breeze could have sounded like—

Conor.

All right, it wasn’t the wind. It was definitely a voice, but not one he recognized. It wasn’t his mother’s, that was for sure. It wasn’t a woman’s voice at all, and he wondered for a crazy moment if his dad had somehow made a surprise trip from America and arrived too late to phone and—

Conor.

No. Not his dad. This voice had a quality to it, a *monstrous* quality, wild and untamed. Then he heard a heavy creak of wood outside, as if something gigantic was stepping across a timber floor.

He didn’t want to go and look. But at the same time, a part of him wanted to look more than anything.

## Sample questions and answers

### Question 1

5 marks

True or False:

This was the first time Conor had this nightmare

The only person Conor told about his problems was his dad

His mother was sleeping next door

It was summer

His dad was on a trip to America

F
F
T
F
T



Allow 3 minutes for 5-mark questions.

### Question 2

20 marks

1. Having read the text and examined the film poster on the previous page, describe whether you think the monster is scary or pleasant?



Allow 12 minutes for 20-mark questions.

### Sample answer using PIE

[P] My impression of the monster is that he is pleasant. Having examined the poster, I believe he is a kind monster but just looks scary.

[I] In the image, it looks like he is giving his hand to the boy as if he is trying to be friendly. The colours in the background are orange and yellows, and this makes me think of being warm and safe.

[E] Personally, I’d say the monster looks and sounds scary but is actually quite nice in person.

2. Do you think this sounds like an interesting story? Would you read on?

### Sample answers using PIE

[P] *I feel that this story sounds like a very interesting one because I adore stories that have monsters in them.*

[I] *'Then he heard a heavy creak of wood outside, as if something gigantic was stepping across a timber floor.'*

[E] *Conor hears the monster but doesn't see him and he doesn't know where he is. This makes the extract quite scary to read because we don't know what is going to happen.*

[P] *I also would like to read on because Conor sounds like an interesting person.*

[I] *'He didn't want to go and look. But at the same time, a part of him wanted to look more than anything.'*

[E] *Conor is thirteen, and he is trying to be brave now that he is older. He tells himself 'Don't be stupid,' when he tries to convince himself to be brave. The fact that part of him wants to look at the monster shows us that he wants to try and face his fears.*



If you have the time, try and write two PIE paragraphs to achieve the best marks.

## Practise your reading

The *Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery* Game – A Portkey to Hogwarts?

### Sample review

A lot of people would die for the opportunity to spend a day at Hogwarts, meet all the characters and learn how to become a wizard. Well, here is your chance to meet Dumbledore, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley with the new mobile game *Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery*. The game was released on 25 April 2018 to the excitement of Harry Potter fans. However, as a game, it had a lot to deliver to make players happy.



The game starts with an invitation from Dumbledore to begin your wizarding studies at Diagon Alley. While the graphics are basic, they do the job (they remind

you of watching a cutsie version of the film). The game includes a lot of little things for fans such as voice-overs from the film's actors, references to hidden secrets and Harry Potter favourites such as the Sorting Hat.

Players are able to create their own character to walk around the magical world of Harry Potter. They can cast spells and create potions and find out who their friends and enemies are. However, problems occur very quickly if your character becomes entangled in a Devil's Snare and you run out of energy. At this point, the game will ask you to pay money in order to recharge your battery or you have the option to wait an hour.

Anyone who likes to play video games will not want to be stopped for an hour every time they become involved in a Devil's Snare. Asking players to wait for such a long time is a big downfall to this game. It certainly feels like a money-making scheme and fans of Harry Potter will find that they are frustrated at the game. It is hard to get through even a single wizarding class without tapping to see if you can go on or wait for the message to pay money.

Fans of Harry Potter are going to be very disappointed at this game as they will simply have to pay out a lot of money if they want continuous play. Even without the interruptions, the game becomes a little unexciting and boring. Once you have been to a couple of the lessons, they don't seem that exciting any more and even Harry Potter fans would lose interest. It's sad to say that *Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery* is no mystery; it is just not worth it.

## Time to practise



### Sample questions

#### Questions

35 marks



Allow 25 minutes for  
35-mark questions.

1. Answer the following questions:

(a) What is the name of the video game?

---

---

(b) What two characters could you meet?

---

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(c) Name one place you go to study to become a wizard.

---

---

(d) When was the game released?

---

---

(e) Name two things that Harry Potter fans would like about this game.

---

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2. Do you think the writer liked the game? Write down two points and refer to the text when answering.

[P] 

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---

[I] 

---

---

[E] 

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---

---

---

[P] 

---

---

[I] 

---

---

[E] 

---

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## Section B – Reading and Responding Imaginatively

My name is Tomas Porec. I was seven years old when I first met the unicorn lady. I believed in unicorns then. I am nearly twenty now and because of her I still believe in unicorns.

My little town, hidden deep in its own valley, was an ordinary place. But when I was seven it was a place of magic and wonder to me. I fished in the stream below the church, tobogganed the slopes in winter, swam in the lake in the summer.



I never did like school though. It wasn't the school's fault, nor the teachers'. I just wanted to be outside all the time. I longed always to be running free up in the hills. As soon as school was over, it was back home for some bread and honey – then off out to play. But one afternoon my mother had other ideas. She had to do some shopping in town, she said, and wanted me to go with her.

'I hate shopping,' I told her.

'I know that, dear,' she said. 'That's why I'm taking you to the library. It'll be interesting. It'll be good for you. There's a new librarian lady and she tells stories after school. Everyone says she's brilliant.' She walked me up the steps into the library. 'Be good,' she said, and she was gone.

I could see there was an excited huddle of children gathered in one corner. I noticed they were all jostling each other, as if they were desperate to get a better look at something. Suddenly they were all sitting down and hushed, and there in the corner I saw a unicorn. I could see now that he was made of carved wood and painted white, but he was so lifelike that if he'd got up and trotted off I wouldn't have been at all surprised.

Beside the unicorn and just as motionless, just as neat, stood a lady with a smiling face, a bright flowery scarf around her shoulders. When she sat down slowly on the unicorn and folded her hands in her lap I could feel expectation all around me.

'The unicorn story!' cried a little girl. 'Tell us the unicorn story. Please.'

She talked so softly that I had to lean forward to hear her. But I wanted to hear her, everyone did, because every word she spoke was meant and felt, and sounded true.

After she had finished no one spoke. Then a hand went up. It was a small boy from my school, Milos with the sticky-up hair. 'Can I tell a story, miss?' he asked. So sitting on the unicorn he told us his story. One after another after that they wanted their turn on the magical unicorn. I longed to have a go myself, but I didn't dare. I was frightened of making a fool of myself, I think. The hour flew by.

One afternoon the unicorn lady took out from her bag a rather old and damaged-looking book, all charred at the edges. It was, she told us, her very own copy of *The Little Match Girl* by Hans Christian Andersen. 'Why's it been burnt?' I asked her.

'This is the most precious book I have, Tomas,' she said. I'll tell you why. When I was very little I lived in another country. There were wicked people in my town who were frightened of the magic of stories and of the power of books, because stories make you think and dream; books make you want to ask questions. And they didn't want that. I was there with my father watching them burn a great pile of books, when suddenly my father ran forward and plucked a book out of the fire. The soldiers beat him with sticks, but he held on to the book and wouldn't let go of it. It was this book. It's my favourite book in all the world. Tomas, would you like to come and sit on the unicorn and read it to us?'

I had never been any good at reading out loud. But now, sitting on the magic unicorn, I heard my voice strong and loud. It was like singing a song. The words danced on the air and everyone listened.

## Question 1

20 marks

Base your answers on the text printed on the previous page. Place a tick ✓ in the box beside the correct answer. Tick one box only in each case.



Allow 12 minutes for 20-mark questions.

- (a) What age does the narrator Tomas tell the reader that he is now?

Nineteen

☐

Twenty

☐

Twenty-one

☐

Thirty

☐

- (b) Why did Tomas not like school?

He didn't like reading.

☐

He always wanted to be outside.

☐

He had no friends there.

☐

The teachers were not nice.

☐

- (c) Which of the following statements is false?

Tomas's mother left him at the library because she thought it was good for him.

☐

Tomas's mother left him at the library because she wanted to go shopping.

☐

Tomas's mother left him at the library to do his homework.

☐

Tomas's mother left him at the library to hear the unicorn lady's stories.

☐

- (d) Why was Tomas frightened to read a story while sitting on the magic unicorn?

He was scared of the unicorn lady.

☐

He was afraid of making a fool of himself.

☐

He thought that storytelling was just for younger children.

☐

He was too busy tobogganing.

☐

## Question 2

10 marks

Why do you think *The Little Match Girl* was the unicorn lady's most precious book? Explain your answer.

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Allow 6 minutes for 10-mark questions.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a margin at the top, and the entire sheet is framed by a thin black border.

## Cheat Sheet: Tips for successful reading and responding

**You must:**

1. **Read** the text and questions carefully
2. Use **PIE**
3. Be able to recognise each **style of writing**
4. Use correct **punctuation and grammar**

## You should:

5. **Learn phrases** to help you **express your opinion**
6. Watch your **timing**
7. **Proofread** your answers

## You could:

- 8. Learn key vocabulary** to help you answer questions



It is really important when using PIE that you write as much as you can for your explanation. Aim for four or five sentences.