

The logo for the National Literacy Trust, featuring the text 'National Literacy Trust' in white on a red background with a yellow-to-orange gradient border.

National
Literacy
Trust

Changing life stories

A collection of white line art on a dark blue background. The art includes a large, stylized face on the left, a rainbow in the center, and various geometric shapes like circles, squares, and stars scattered throughout. A wavy white line separates the art from the text below.

WORDS FOR WORK

**Secondary school
work booklet**



Hello,

This activity pack is designed for secondary school students. It has been put together by the National Literacy Trust, a charity changing life stories by improving literacy skills in communities and supporting schools and nurseries.

These have all been designed to help you engage in literacy activities during the summer holidays. All you will need is something to write with. This booklet is yours, so you can make any notes or complete any activities in the booklet if you like.

Part 1 covers employability tips, skills and activities to improve your communication skills. Read the information given and have a go at trying the activities yourself.

Part 2 is writing activities to try your hand at writing fiction, poetry and non-fiction outside of school.

For further ideas on school-holiday activities visit [wordsforlife.org.uk/zone-in](https://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/zone-in) for lots of literacy-based resources you can complete at home.

We hope these will be useful!

Best wishes,
The National Literacy Trust team



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CV writing

A CV, also known as a Curriculum Vitae, or a résumé, is a written overview of your skills, education, hobbies and work experience. You will often need a CV when applying for jobs, internships, apprenticeship and volunteering opportunities.

WHAT SHOULD A CV INCLUDE?

Whilst there are no firm rules on what a CV should include, there are certain key pieces of information that all CVs should include.

- 1. **Your personal details.** This should include your name and a professional email address
- 2. **A personal statement.** A brief personal summary of who you are and what your aspirations are
- 3. **Relevant key skills.** These can include any additional languages, digital and creative skills
- 4. **Work experience.** Showcase all work experience with the most recent first
- 5. **Education and qualifications.** Include all formal qualifications with the most recent first

FORMATTING A CV

The presentation of a CV is just as important as its content. Make sure your CV is clear, concise, succinct and easy to read by following these five rules:

1. **Be logical**
2. **Keep it succinct**
3. **Check spelling and grammar**
4. **Choose a professional font**
5. **Use headings and bullet points**





ACTIVITY - WRITING YOUR OWN CV

Using one of the templates below, write your own CV and send it to us at wfw@literacytrust.org.uk for some constructive feedback from industry experts.

CONTACT

Address:

Phone:

Email:

LinkedIn:

PERSONAL SUMMARY

EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENTS

WORK EXPERIENCE

T

Job interviews

DIFFERENT TYPES OF JOB INTERVIEWS

There are several different ways to conduct a job interview. How you need to prepare for them will vary.

Phone

Instead of inviting candidates in for an interview, many employers host their first round of interviews over the phone. It is a quick and cost-effective way to whittle down a list of candidates.

Tip: Whilst you won't need to worry about your body language or dress code, a telephone interview will test your social and communication skills.

Video

Video interviews have grown in popularity over the last few years. It is a quick and easy way to connect people in different locations.

Tip: It is a good idea to prepare for a video interview as you would a face-to-face interview. Dress for the occasion, do your research and remember to think about your body language.

One-to-one

One-to-one interviews are slightly less formal than a panel interview but it is still important to prepare well. A one-to-one interview means you are more than likely to be directly questioned by someone in charge. It is a good idea to think of some strong questions to ask at the end of the interview.

Tip: Try to build a friendly rapport with the interviewer whilst keeping it professional. Remember, if they like you as a person then you are more likely to be offered the job.

Panel

These are popular with larger companies and will involve a group of interviewers taking turns to ask questions. This can sometimes feel intimidating so it is vital that you prepare for this in advance.

Tip: Treat all of the people on the panel with equal respect, you may not know who is in charge and has the final hiring decision. When answering a question, focus on the person who asked it.

Group

A group interview will involve multiple candidates being interviewed at the same time. It is often used when employers are looking to hire more than one person for a role. This interview style is popular for industries like food service, retail and hospitality.

Tip: Try to include everyone in a group activity. Whilst your leadership skills are being assessed, it is also important to show the interviewer that you can work well in a team.

TOP TIPS FOR NAILING AN INTERVIEW

- 1 **Be prepared for the question, “What do you know about us?” or “Why do you want to work for us?”.** Research both the company and the wider industry. You should be able to find out information about the company’s history, mission and values, staff, culture and recent successes on their website. If they have a blog and social media presence, that can also be a useful place to look.
- 2 **Be on time.** If your interview is taking place in an unknown area, practise your route to guarantee you do not get lost.
- 3 **Try to stay calm and relaxed.** If you need to take a moment to think about an answer, then explain that to your interviewers rather than start your answer with “um...”.
- 4 **Know your CV.** Your interviewer will prepare their questions based on the information you provided on your CV or application. Remember to be positive about your skills and experiences.
- 5 **Prepare.** Research common job interview questions and practise your answers. This will help you feel more relaxed going into the interview.
- 6 **Practise.** The more familiar interviewing feels to you, the more relaxed you will come across. Meet with mentors, colleagues and friends for mock interviews to gain confidence in answering routine interview questions.
- 7 **Don’t panic.** If you are stuck on how to answer a question, don’t be afraid to stop and think before answering. Take a sip of water if you need to.



- 8 **Plan your outfit.** Make sure your clothes are smart but comfortable. It is always better to be too smart than too casual. If you have purchased a new outfit, consider wearing it before your interview to ensure you feel comfortable.
- 9 **Follow up after the interview.** This should be a short email within 24 hours of your interview to thank the interviewer for their time.



ACTIVITY - MOCK VIDEO INTERVIEWS

1. Describe what you think you will be doing in this role and what interests you about our organisation
2. What can you bring from your past experiences and what have been your main achievements so far?
3. Tell me about a time when you had an idea to do something in a different way and think outside of the box
4. Describe a time when you worked as part of a team
5. Describe a time when you have had to deal with a difficult situation and what was the outcome
6. Why do you want to work for us?
7. Describe a team situation when you showed leadership
8. Where do you see yourself in five year's time?
9. Do you have any questions for us?

Being able to write, create and present a presentation is an important employability skill.

INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS

Think of five people you know of who have delivered inspirational speeches. These may be people in the public eye or lesser known singers, political figures, sportspeople, artists or ordinary citizens who have made a big impact on others.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____



Watch the video of Emma Watson’s speech at the UN (linked below) and write a short paragraph on what you think makes the content and delivery so effective.

Emma Watson – UN speech. [youtube.com/watch?v=gkjW9PZBRfk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkjW9PZBRfk)



ACTIVITY - WRITING A PRESENTATION

Activity - Write a 5 minute presentation on one of these two topics:

1. One thing I would change about the world and why
2. What is my dream job and why

Introduction

An introduction to you and your chosen topic

Outline your topic

Outline your topic and why it is important to you

Detailed examples to support your topic

Provide examples about your topic to support your point

Closing statement

What is your final message from your presentation? Highlight the key points

Conclusion

30 seconds to thank your audience

Questions

Prepare four questions that your audience might ask about your presentation

Writing styles

FORMAL AND INFORMAL WRITING

When writing a letter or an email, the writing style plays a very

important role, especially when you are trying to impress a potential employer.

There are two main writing styles to consider: **formal** and **informal**. The tone, word choice and structure vary according to your audience.



Formal writing is used when we do not know the reader. It is used when writing for academic and professional purposes.

Informal writing is used for personal and casual communication. In informal writing a personal and emotional tone is used and the reader is directly referred to by the words `you` or `your`. It is used when writing personal emails, text messages and letters to friends and family.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

	Formal Writing	Informal writing
Purpose	A formal writing style is needed when applying for jobs, work experience and when you are writing to someone you do not know	An informal writing style is used when writing for a personal or casual purpose to a friend or family member
Sentences	Should be long and without abbreviations	Short and simple
Personal pronoun	Third person	First and second person
Tone	Professional and polite	Personal and friendly



TIPS FOR WRITING FORMAL EMAILS WITH CONFIDENCE:

1. **Know your audience.** The way you address a potential employer, teacher or work colleague is very different to the way you speak to a friend online.
2. **Start with a name.** Do you know the person by name? It is always best to address a person by name if you know it. `Dear Susan` would be appropriate for someone you have not met, whereas `Hi Susan` is more suitable for a familiar contact or a person you talk to regularly.
3. **Keep it short.** The workplace is a busy environment. It is best to make your point quickly. However, avoid coming across as rude with one word answers.
4. **Sign-off.** If you opened with `Dear Sir/Madam` the correct formal sign-off is `Yours faithfully` whereas a message to `Mr Davies` should end with `Yours sincerely`. There are various less formal sign-offs such as a simple `Thank you`.
5. **Check your tone.** What you write does not always come across in the same way as if those words had been spoken. Before you hit send, double check your words will not be read as too blunt or too casual.
6. **Check for errors.** Double and triple check for any spelling or grammatical mistakes.



ACTIVITY - WRITING YOUR OWN FORMAL EMAIL

Looking at the below template and the Words for Work word bank, write your own formal email asking for work experience for your dream job.

Subject:

Email text:

Fiction writing

Task:

- 1 Choose one (or more) of the tasks to experiment with writing creatively
- 2 Don't worry! You don't have to write a whole story

Fairy tale remake:

Choose a fairy tale and give it a modern twist: what if Hansel and Gretel had Google Maps? Who said the princess needed rescuing? What if the tooth fairy was real and started demanding adult teeth because they're worth more? You can recreate a famous fairy tale or write your own using the classic fairy tale tropes but set in today's world.



Rewrite a song:

Choose your favourite song and rewrite it. Search the lyrics online and see where you can change lines or words, or completely rewrite it from another person's perspective. Does it still sound the same, or has it become a new song altogether?



Dystopian:

The year is 2061. What has happened? Are Smartphones attached to our wrists? Is there a planet left? Have we embarked on an endless journey through space, or on a train to save humanity? Or has the world united after a life-changing event? Describe the scene and give the reader clues about what society is like 40 (or more) years into the future.



Non-fiction writing

Task:

- 1 You will write a non-fiction article of 300 – 500 words
- 2 Choose one of the tasks below

Biography:

Biographies are interesting insights into someone's life. You could write about a famous person (past or present) or someone in your family who has had an interesting life. The best biographies are well researched and use language cleverly to make the reader feel like they knew the person without ever having met them.



Review:

Local café? Favourite band? The worst or best film you've ever seen in your life? Fantastic park or zoo near you? Is a Switch worth the money? Is this the best way to curl your hair? You can review anything! Your review must be informative and have a strong opinion to engage your readers and potentially convince them to buy, listen, watch or visit.

Apple headphones 2021: which AirPods or Beats are right for you?

By Olivia Tomblin 13 days ago

Apple headphones are getting better and better



Speech writing:

Lots of people in the media have speech writers: royalty, politicians, celebrities. They are people who can use words cleverly to inspire or persuade the audience to do or think differently about a topic. Your speech can be about whatever you want (and doesn't need to contain any techniques as long as it's meaningful and powerful!). You can imagine yourself as a world-famous celebrity, Prime Minister of the UK or campaigning on an issue important to you.



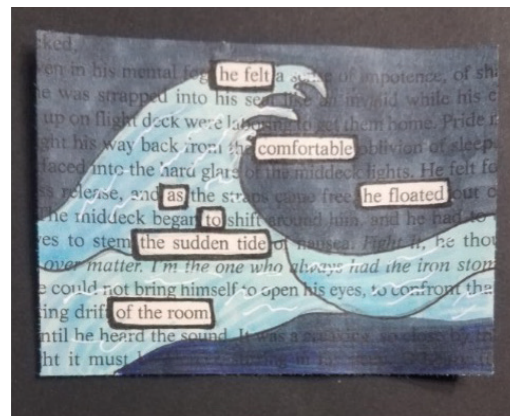
Poetry writing

Task:

- 1 Choose one (or more) of the ideas to write a poem
- 2 Remember: a poem doesn't have to rhyme, have any techniques or even be in lines
- 3 Think of a poem as a collection of well chosen words that create meaning for a reader
- 4 You can imagine it as spoken word poetry or written poetry

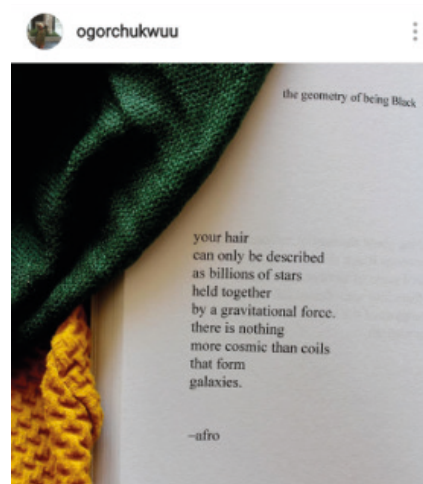
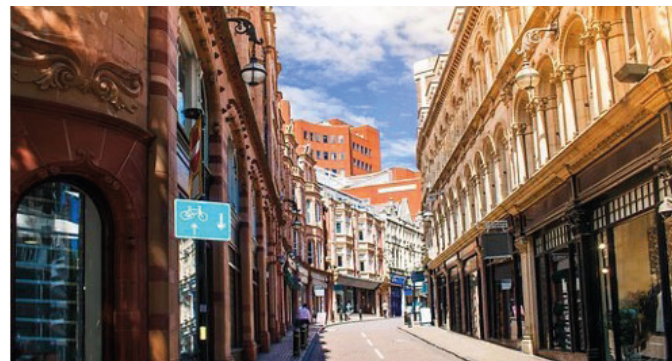
Newspaper poetry:

Find a newspaper, junk mail or anything around your house that has words on and you don't mind ripping up. (You can copy it out if you need to keep it). Choose words and sentences at random and then arrange them to give them meaning. The results of this can range from being complete nonsense to really powerful!



City poetry:

Do some research about your town or city. Create a list of place names, perhaps famous people who lived there, landmarks or even reviews from visitors and create poetry out of it. Or you can listen to the sounds of your street or town centre and describe the sights, sounds and feeling of your town. For city poetry inspiration, listen to George the Poet's *My City*.



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