

Progression in Non-Fiction Writing

Non-fiction texts are wide ranging and occur in many forms in everyday life. The following tables select the most common forms of non-fiction. Many non-fiction texts in real life blur the boundaries between text types and their features. The most common language features are listed for each text type but variants of all text types occur, especially when they are used in combination. The features listed are often but not always present.

Discussion Texts

Discussion texts are not limited to controversial issues but polarised views are generally used to teach this text type as this makes it easier to teach children how to present different viewpoints and provide evidence for them. Discussions contrast with persuasion texts which generally only develop one viewpoint and may present a biased view, often the writer's own. Like all text types, discussion texts vary widely and elements of discussion writing are often found within other text types.

To present a reasoned and balanced overview of an issue or controversial topic. Usually aims to provide two or more different			
views on an issue, each with elaborations, evidence and/ or examples.			
Generic Text Structure	Grammatical Features	Planning and Preparation	
The most common structure includes:	Written in the present tense. This can	Questions often make good titles e.g.	
• a statement of the issues involved and a	include other forms such as present	Should everyone travel less to conserve	
preview of the main arguments;	perfect e.g. some people have	global energy?	
 arguments for, with supporting 	arguedsome people have said	Use the introduction to show why you	
evidence/examples;	Generalises the participants and things	are debating the issue e.g. There is	
• arguments against or alternative views,	it refers to using uncountable noun	always a lot of disagreement about x and	
with supporting evidence/examples.	phrases (some people, most dogs), nouns	people's views vary a lot.	
Another common structure presents the	that categorise (vehicles, pollution) and	 Make sure you show both/all sides of 	
arguments 'for' and 'against'	abstract nouns (power).	the argument fairly.	
alternatively.	 Heading and subheadings can be used 	Support each viewpoint you present	
Discussion texts usually end with a	to aid presentation.	with reasons and evidence.	
summary and a statement of	Paragraphs are useful for organising the	If you opt to support one particular	
recommendation or conclusion.	discussion into logical sections.	view in the conclusion, give reasons for	
	Uses adverbials e.g. therefore, however	your decision.	
	to create cohesion within and across	 Don't forget that discussion texts can 	
	paragraphs.	be combined with other text types.	
	Writers need to make formal and	• Re-read your explanation as if you know	
	informal vocabulary choices to suit the	nothing at all about the subject. Check	
	form of the writing by making generic	that there are no gaps in the information.	
	statements followed by specific examples		

- e.g. Most vegetarians disagree. Dave Smith, a vegetarian for 20 years, finds that...
- Layout devices such as diagrams, illustrations, moving images and sound can be used to provide additional information or give evidence.
- The passive voice can sometimes be used to present points of view e.g. It could be claimed that...it is possible that...some could claim that...
- Degrees of formality and informality can be adapted to suit the form of the discussion e.g. whether writing a formal letter on an informal blog. This can include vocabulary choices e.g. choosing habitat rather than home...indicates rather than shows.
- Because arguments include hypothetical ideas, conditional language, such as the subjunctive form can sometimes be used e.g. If people were to stop hunting whales...
- In discussions, complex ideas need developing over a sentence. Colons and semi-colons can be useful for separating and linking these ideas.

• Remember that you can adapt explanatory texts or combine them with other text types to make them work effectively for your audience and purpose.

Year Group	Grammatical Features to include in	Common Forms of Discussion texts:
	discussions	
1	N/A	Non-fiction book on an 'issues'
2	N/A	Write-up a debate Leaflet or article giving balanced
3	N/A	account of an issue
4	Consistent use of present tense (Y2) Use present perfect form of verbs (Y3) Effective use of noun phrases Use of paragraphs to organise ideas Use adverbials e.g. therefore, however Heading and subheadings used to aid presentation (Y3)	 Writing editorials about historical attitudes to gender, social class, colonialism etc. Writing letters about pollution, factory farming or smoking Writing essays giving opinions about literature, music or works of art

Explanation Texts

Explanatory texts generally go beyond simple 'description' in that they include information about causes, motives or reasons. Explanations and reports are sometimes confused when children are asked to 'explain' and they actually provide a report, e.g. what they did (or what happened) but not how and why. Although some children's dictionaries do include an encyclopaedia-like explanation, others are inaccurately categorised as explanation texts when they simply define a word's meaning. Like all text types, explanatory texts vary widely and are often found combined with other text types

To explain how or why, e.g. to explain the processes involved in natural/social phenomena or to explain why something is the way it is		
Generic Text Structure	Grammatical Features	Planning and Preparation
A general statement to introduce the topic being explained. E.g. In the winter some animals hibernate. • The steps or phases in a process are explained logically, in order. E.g. When the nights get longer because the temperature begins to drop so the hedgehog looks for a safe place to hide.	Written in present tense e.g. Hedgehogs wake up again in the spring.) • Questions can be used to form titles e.g. How do hedgehogs survive the winter? Why does it get dark at night? • Question marks are used to denote questions. • Use of adverbs e.g. first, then, after that, finally • Use of conjunctions e.g. so, because • Use prepositions e.g. before, after • Cohesion can be created, and repetition avoided through the use of nouns and pronouns e.g. Many mammalsthey feed their young • Indicate degrees of possibility using	Choose a title that shows what you are explaining, perhaps using why or how. • Decide whether you need to include images or other features to help your reader, e.g. diagrams, photographs, a flow chart, a text box, captions, a list or a glossary. • Use the first paragraph to introduce what you will be explaining. • Plan the steps in your explanation and check that you have included any necessary information about how and why things happen as they do. • Add a few interesting details. • Interest the reader by talking directly to them.
	adverbs e.g. perhaps, surely Sometimes	

- modal verbs can be used to express degrees of possibility e.g. might, should, will...
- Fronted adverbials can be used e.g. During the night, nocturnal animals...
- Relative clauses can be used to add further information e.g. Hedgehogs, which are mammals...
- Degrees of formality and informality can be adapted to suit the form of the discussion, so an informal tone can sometimes be appropriate e.g. You'll be surprised to know that ... Have you ever thought about the way that ...? And a formal, authoritative tone can also be adopted e.g. oxygen is constantly replaced in the bloodstream...
- The passive voice can sometimes be used e.g. gases are carried...
- Layout devices such as heading, subheadings, columns, bullets etc. can be used to present information clearly.
- Paragraphs are useful for organising the explanation into logical sections.
- Brackets, dashes and commas can be used to add extra information inside parenthesis e.g. oxygen (a gas found in air).

- Re-read your explanation as if you know nothing at all about the subject. Check that there are no gaps in the information.
- Remember that you can adapt explanatory texts or combine them with other text types to make them work effectively for your audience and purpose.

Year Group	Grammatical Features to include in discussions	Common Forms of explanation texts:
1	N/A	Explaining electricity, forces, food chains etc. in science
2	Consistent use of present tense Questions can be used to form titles Question marks are used to denote questions (Y1) Use conjunctions e.g. sobecause	 Explaining inventions such as the steam train, the causes of historic events such as wars and revolutions, explaining the role of the Nile in determining the seasons in Ancient Egypt
3	Express time, place and cause using conjunctions (e.g. so, because), adverbs and prepositions Heading and subheadings used to aid presentation	 Explaining phenomena such as the water cycle or how a volcano erupts in geography Explaining religious traditions and practices in RE Encyclopaedia entries
4	Use fronted adverbials Use of paragraphs to organise ideas Create cohesion through the use of nouns and pronouns	Technical manualsQuestion and answer articles and leafletsScience write-ups

Instructions/procedural texts

Like all text types, variants of instructions occur and they can be combined with other text types. They may be visual only (e.g. a series of diagrams with an image for each step in the process) or a combination of words and images. Instructions and procedural texts are found in all areas of the curriculum and include rules for games, recipes, instructions for making something and directions.

To explain how or why, e.g. to explain the processes involved in natural/social phenomena or to explain why something is the way it is		
Generic Text Structure	Grammatical Features	Planning and Preparation
Begin by defining the goal or desired outcome. E.g. How to make a board game. • List any material or equipment needed, in order. Provide simple, clear instructions. If a process is to be undertaken, keep to the order in which the steps need to be followed to achieve the stated goal. • Diagrams or illustrations are often integral and may even take the place of some text. (Diagram B shows you how to connect the wires.) • A final evaluative statement can be used to wrap up the process. E.g. Now go and enjoy playing your new game. Your	Use of imperative/command sentences e.g. Cut the card Paint your designsome of these may be negative commands e.g. Do not use any glue at this stage • Commas in lists can be used to separate required ingredients/materials • Conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions can be used to order and explain the procedure e.g. when this has been donenext addafter doing this • Relative clauses can be used to add further information e.g. Collect your jam from the fried, which may be bought or homemade • Cohesion can be created, and repetition	Use the title to show what the instructions are about. E.g. How to look after goldfish. • Work out exactly what sequence is needed to achieve the planned goal. • Decide on the important points you need to include at each stage. • Keep sentences as short and simple as possible. • Avoid unnecessary adjectives and adverbs or technical words, especially if your readers are young. • Appeal directly to the reader's interest and enthusiasm. E.g. You will really enjoy this game. Why not try out this delicious recipe on your friends? Only one more thing left to do now.
and enjoy playing your new game. Your beautiful.	 Cohesion can be created, and repetition avoided through the use of nouns and 	thing left to do now.Use procedural texts within other tetypes when you need a set of rules,

pronouns e.g. Add the egg and then beat it with a whisk.

- Additional advice can be added through the use of parenthesis e.g. (It's a good idea to leave it overnight if you have time) ...
- Conditional adverbials can be used, including as fronted adverbials to make suggested alternatives e.g. If you would like to make a bigger decoration, you could either double the dimensions of the base or just draw bigger flowers.
- Modals can be used to suggest degrees of possibility e.g. you should...you might want to...Different degrees of formality may be required e.g. Cook for 20 minutes/Pop your cheesecake in the oven for 20 minutes.
- Headings can be used to separate the equipment from the procedure.
- Layout devices such as bullet points, numbers or letters to help your reader keep track as they work their way through each step

guidelines or instructions to make something really clear for the reader.

Year Group	Grammatical Features to include in discussions	Common forms of instructional texts
1	Although, the Year 1 curriculum asks pupils to sequence sentences to write short narratives, simple instructions can be written. These should use the grammar and punctuation objectives listed in the National Curriculum for Year 1.	 How to design and make artefacts? Technical manuals: how to operate computers, phones, devices How to carry out science experiments or to carry out a mathematical procedure? How to play a game?
2	Use of command sentences Commas in lists	Writing rules for behaviour
3	Express time, place and cause using conjunctions (e.g. so, because), adverbs and prepositions Heading and subheadings used to aid presentation	 How to cook and prepare food Timetables and route-finders Posters, notices an
4	Create cohesion through the use of nouns and pronouns Use fronted adverbials	

Persuasive texts

Persuasive texts can be written, oral or written to be spoken, e.g. a script for a television advert or presentation. The persuasive intention may be covert and not necessarily recognised by the reader or listener. Texts vary considerably according to context and audience so that persuasion is not always a distinct text-type that stands alone. Elements of persuasive writing are found in many different texts including moving image texts and digital multimedia texts. Some examples may include evidence of bias and opinion being subtly presented as facts.

To argue a case from a particular point of view and to encourage the reader/listener towards the same way of seeing things		
Generic Text Structure	Grammatical Features	Planning and Preparation
An opening statement (thesis) that sums	Written in the present tense. This can	Decide on the viewpoint you want to
up the viewpoint being presented.	include other forms such as present	present and carefully select the
(Greentrees Hotel is the best in the	perfect e.g. people have said	information that supports it.
world. School uniform is a good idea.)	Often refers to generic rather than	Organise the main points to be made in
 Strategically organised information 	specific participants e.g. Vegetables are	the best order and decide which
presents and then elaborates on the	good for you. They This means that	persuasive information you will add to
desired viewpoint. (Vote for me because I	cohesion is created through the	support each.
am very experienced. I have been a	combined use of nouns and pronouns.	 Plan some elaboration/explanation,
school councillor three times and I have	• Uses adverbials e.g. therefore, however	evidence and example(s) for each key
)	to create cohesion within and across	point but avoid ending up with text that
 A closing statement repeats and 	paragraphs.	sounds like a list.
reinforces the original thesis. (All the	 Uses logical conjunctions, adverbials 	Think about counter arguments your
evidence shows that It's quite clear	and prepositions e.g. This proves that	reader might come up with and include
that Having seen all that we offer you,	So it's clear Therefore	evidence to make them seem incorrect or
there can be no doubt that we are the	Paragraphs are useful for organising the	irrelevant.
best.)	content into logical sections.	Try to appear reasonable and use facts
	Requires the writer to make formal and	rather than emotive comments.
	informal vocabulary choices by moving	

from generic statements to specific examples when key points are being presented. (The hotel is comfortable. The beds are soft, the chairs are specially made to support your back and all rooms have thick carpet.)

- Sentence types include rhetorical questions e.g. Do you want to get left behind in the race to be fashionable? Want to be the most relaxed person in town? So what do you have to do to?
- Modals can be used to suggest degrees of possibility e.g. this could be...you should...you might want to... Sometimes the second person is useful for appealing to the reader e.g. e.g. this is just what you've been looking for. This also enables adaptation of the Degrees of formality and informality so that the text appeals to the reader.
- Adjectives can be used to create persuasive noun phrases e.g. delicious chocolate...evil hunters...
- In some formal texts, it may be possible to use the passive voice e.g. It can be said...it cannot be overstated...

- Choose strong, positive words and phrases and avoid sounding negative.
- Use short sentences for emphasis.
- Re-read the text as if you have no opinion and decide if you would be persuaded.
- Remember that you can use persuasive writing within other text types.

Repetition can be used to strengthen	
your point of view. This also acts as a	
cohesive device.	
 Because arguments include 	
hypothetical ideas, conditional language,	
such as the subjunctive form can	
sometimes be used e.g. If people were to	
stop hunting whales	

Year Group	Grammatical Features to include in	Common forms of persuasive writing
	discussions	
1	N/A	Writing publicity materials such as tourist brochures
2	Written in present tense Rhetorical questions	based on trips to places of interest; writing editorials
	Effective use of noun phrases	to newspapers about controversial issues
3	Express time, place and cause using	 Writing letters about topics such as traffic on the
	conjunctions (e.g. so, because), adverbs and	high street or deforestations
	prepositions Use present perfect form of verbs	 Creating posters and leaflets about issues such as
4	Create cohesion through the use of nouns and	bullying, stranger danger or substance abuse
	pronouns Use adverbials e.g. therefore,	 Creating posters, articles and leaflets promoting
	however Use paragraphs to organise ideas	healthy living based on science work about teeth and
	Effective use of expanded noun phrases	nutrition
		 Writing book reviews for other pupils
		Book blurbs
		Political pamphlets
		 Applying for a job or a position on the school council

Reports

Non-chronological reports describe things the way they are, so they usually present information in an objective way. Sometimes, the selection of information by the writer can result in a biased report. As with all text types, variants occur and non-chronological reports can be combined with other text types. A text that is essentially a non-chronological report written in the present tense may include other text types such as other types of report, e.g. when a specific example is provided to add detail to a statement. (Sharks are often seen around the coasts of Britain but they rarely attack people. In 2006, a man was surfing in Cornwall when he was badly bitten but it was the only incident recorded there for twenty years.)

To provide detailed information about the way things are or were. To help readers/listeners understand what is being			
described by organising or categorising information			
Generic Text Structure	Grammatical Features	Planning and Preparation	
In the absence of a temporal	Often written in the third person and	Plan how you will organise the	
(chronological) structure where events	present tense e.g. They like to build their	information you want to include, e.g. use	
happen in a particular order, non-	nests It is a cold and dangerous place	paragraph headings, a spidergram or a	
chronological reports usually have a	to live.	grid.	
logical structure. They tend to group	• Sometimes written in the past tense, as	Gather information from a wide range	
information, often moving from general	in a historical report e.g. Children as	of sources and collect it under the	
to more specific detail and examples or	young as seven worked in factories. They	headings you've planned.	
elaborations. A common structure	were poorly fed and clothed and they did	Consider using a question in the title to	
includes:	dangerous work.	interest your reader (Vitamins – why are	
• an opening statement, often a general	 Questions can be used to form titles 	they so important?).	
classification (Sparrows are birds);	e.g. Who were the Victorians? What was	Try to find a new way to approach the	
• sometimes followed by a more detailed	it like in a Victorian school?	subject and compose an opening that will	
or technical classification (Their Latin	Question marks are used to denote	attract the reader or capture their	
name is);	questions.	interest. Use the opening to make very	
• a description of whatever is the subject	• Use of conjunctions e.g. so, because •	clear what you are writing about.	
of the report organised in some way to	Use prepositions e.g. before, after	• Include tables, diagrams or images e.g.	
help the reader make sense of the	• Cohesion can be created, and repetition	imported photographs or drawings that	
information. For example:	avoided through the use of nouns and	add or summarise information.	

- its qualities (Like most birds, sparrows have feathers.);
- its parts and their functions (The beak is small and strong so that it can ...);
- its habits/behaviour/ uses (Sparrows nest in ...)
- pronouns e.g. The Victorians liked...they were particularly fond of...
- Non-chronological reports are often organised into sections. This makes paragraphing a useful tool.
- Headings can be used to organise different sections.
- Layout devices such as heading, subheadings, columns, bullets etc. can be used to present information clearly. Consistent use across the text helps create cohesion. The passive voice is frequently used to avoid personalisation, to avoid naming the agent of a verb, to add variety to sentences or to maintain an appropriate level of formality for the context and purpose of writing. E.g. Sparrows are found in ... Sharks are hunted ... children were taught ...
- Requires the writer to appreciate the difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and that appropriate for formal speech e.g. the habitat of wood mice rather than where wood mice live.
- Adjectives and specifically comparative adjectives can be used to create description e.g. Polar bears are the biggest carnivores of all. They hibernate,

- Find ways of making links with your reader. You could ask a direct question e.g. Have you ever heard of a hammerhead shark? or add a personal touch to the text e.g. So next time you choose a pet, think about getting a dog.
- Re-read the report as if you know nothing about its subject. Check that information is logically organised and clear. Use other text-types within your report if they will make it more effective for your purpose and audience.

just like other bears. A polar bear's nose	
is as black as a piece of coal.	
 Brackets, dashes and commas can be 	
used to add extra information inside	
parenthesis.	

Year Group	Grammatical Features to include in	Common forms of report texts
	discussions	
1	Although, the Year 1 curriculum asks pupils to sequence sentences to write short narratives, simple non-chronological reports can be written about topics with which pupils are familiar. These should use the grammar and punctuation objectives listed in the National Curriculum for Year 1.	 Describing aspects of daily life in history (e.g. fashion, transport, buildings) Describing the characteristics of anything (e.g. particular animals or plants; the planets I the solar system, different rocks and materials; mythological creatures) Comparing and describing localities or geographical
2	Use present and past tense throughout writing Questions can be used to form titles Question marks are used to denote questions (Y1) Use conjunctions e.g. because to aid explanation Use adjectives including comparative adjectives to create description	
3	Express time, place and cause using conjunctions (e.g. so, because), adverbs and prepositions Headings and subheadings used to aid presentation	
4	Create cohesion through the use of nouns and pronouns Use of paragraphs to organise ideas	

Recounts

Recounts are sometimes referred to as 'accounts'. They are the most common text type we encounter as readers and listeners, not least because they are the basic form of many storytelling texts. Stories and anecdotes can have a range of purposes, frequently depending on the genre being used, and they often set out to achieve a deliberate effect on the reader/listener. In non-fiction texts they are used to provide an account of events. Recounts can be combined with other text types, for example, newspaper reports of an event often consist of a recount that includes elements of explanation.

To re-tell or recount an event that has happened in the past.					
Generic Text Structure	Grammatical Features	Planning and Preparation			
Structure often includes:	Usually written in the past tense with	Plan how you will organise the way you			
 orientation such as scene-setting or 	space for pupils to use the past	retell the events. You could use a timeline			
establishing context (It was the school	progressive form of verbs, e.g. the	to help you plan.			
holidays. I went to the park)	children were playing, I was hoping	Details are important to create a			
 an account of the events that took 	 Opportunities also exist for the use of 	recount rather than a simple list of events			
place, often in chronological order (The	the past perfect e.g. The children had	in order. Try using When? Where? Who?			
first person to arrive was)	triedearlier in the day, the owls had	What? Why? questions to help you plan			
• some additional detail about each event	hunted and Past perfect progressive	what to include.			
(He was surprised to see me.)	forms e.g. the children had been singing	• Decide how you will finish the recount.			
• reorientation, e.g. a closing statement	we had been hoping to go on this trip for	You'll need a definite ending, perhaps a			
that may include elaboration. (I hope I	a long time	summary or a comment on what			
can go to the park again next week. It	• Some forms may use present tense, e.g.	happened (I think our school trip to the			
was fun.) Structure sometimes	informal anecdotal storytelling (Just	Science Museum was the best we have			
reorganises the chronology of events	imagine – I'm in the park and I suddenly	ever had).			
using techniques such as flashbacks,	see a giant bat flying towards me!) which	 Read the text through as if you don't 			
moving the focus backwards and	also enables writing to meet different	know anything about what it is being			
forwards in time, but these strategies are	levels of formality and informality. In	recounted. Is it clear what happened and			
more often used in fiction recounts	these cases it is also possible to extend	when?			

opportunities to writing using the present progressive e.g. I am really hoping...

- Conjunctions are useful for coordinating events and showing subordination e.g. we went to the park so we could play on the swings...
- Events being recounted have a chronological order, so conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions are used e.g. then, next, first, afterwards, just before that, at last, meanwhile. Noun phrases (some people, most dogs, blue butterfly) can be used to add detail and interest the reader
- The subject of a recount tends to focus on individual or group participants, which requires the use of either first or third person e.g. Third person they all shouted, she crept out, it looked like an animal of some kind).
- In personal recounts, the first person is used e.g. I was on my way to school ... We got on the bus...
- Recounts can take many forms (diaries, letters, newspaper reports) paragraphing can be used to organise all of these.

• Is the style right for the genre you are using? (Technical/formal language to recount a science experiment, powerful verbs and vivid description to recount an adventure, informal, personal language to tell your friends about something funny that happened to you.)

• Uses adverbials e.g. therefore, however	
to create cohesion within and across	
paragraphs.	
Different degrees of formality may be	
required for different forms e.g. high	
formality if recounting in the style of a	
broadsheet newspaper or informal in a	
personal diary.	
Modals can be used to suggest degrees	
of possibility e.g. I should never	
havethey must be allowed	
Inverted commas can be used to	
punctuate direct speech e.g. eye-witness	
reports in newspapers, retelling a	
conversation in a diary or letter	

Year Group	Grammatical Features to include in	Common forms of recounts
	discussions	
1	Although, the Year 1 curriculum asks pupils to sequence sentences to write short narratives, simple recounts and retellings can be written about experiences with which pupils are familiar. These should use the grammar and punctuation objectives listed in the National Curriculum for Year 1	 Retelling stories in English lessons and other curriculum areas such as RE Giving accounts of schoolwork, sporting events, science experiments and trips out Writing historical accounts Writing biographies and autobiographies Letters and postcards
2	Use past and present tense throughout writing Use progressive forms of verbs Use	Diaries and journals Newspaper reports

	conjunctions for coordination and subordination Use of noun phrases	Magazine articlesEncyclopaedia entries	
3	Express time, place and cause using conjunctions (e.g. so, because), adverbs and prepositions Inverted commas can be used to punctuate direct speech		
4	Use of paragraphs to organise ideas Effective use of expanded noun phrases Fronted adverbials (e.g. Later that day)		