

Report Writing Unit

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Framework objectives

Text

13. to secure understanding of the features of non-chronological reports:

- introductions to orientate reader;
- use of generalisations to categorise;
- language to describe and differentiate;
- impersonal language;
- mostly present tense;

17. to write non-chronological reports linked to other subjects;

Sentence

2. to revise earlier work on verbs and to understand the terms *active* and *passive*; being able to transform a sentence from active to passive, and vice versa;
3. to note and discuss how changes from active to passive affect the word order and sense of a sentence;

Word

1. to identify mis-spelt words in own writing; to keep individual lists (e.g. spelling logs); to learn to spell them;
2. to use known spellings as a basis for spelling other words with similar patterns or related meanings;
3. to use independent spelling strategies, including:
 - building up spellings by syllabic parts, using known prefixes, suffixes and common letter strings;
 - applying knowledge of spelling rules and exceptions;
 - building words from other known words, and from awareness of the meaning or derivations of words;
 - using dictionaries and IT spell-checks;
 - using visual skills, e.g. recognising common letter strings and checking critical features (i.e. does it look right, shape, length, etc.);
4. to revise and extend work on spelling patterns for unstressed vowels in polysyllabic words from Year 5 Term 3;

Outcomes

Two written reports and reading and writing test practice paper

Intensive two-week plan for Year 6 Term 1 Unit 7: Report writing

	Shared text and sentence level	Guided	Independent work	Plenary
Analyse Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 45 from <i>Grammar for Writing</i>. Shared reading: read and discuss content of report text (e.g. Sample Text A); analyse and annotate for organisation of content and create report skeleton-frame. 	Reading	In pairs, analyse and annotate other report texts (e.g. Sample Text B) for organisation of content, and create report skeleton-frame.	Children explain the organisation of their text(s) and generalise for reports as a text type.
Apply Tuesday	Shared writing (demonstration) – fast planning. Import content from another curriculum area and organise it into report skeleton-frame.	Writing	In pairs, fast planning practice. Using children's existing knowledge of an agreed subject, make brief notes of content in report skeleton-frame.	Children explain the reasoning behind their planning.
Analyse Wednesday	Shared reading: analyse and annotate text (e.g. Sample Text A) for language features and create checklist for report writing.	Reading	In pairs, analyse and annotate another text (e.g. Sample Text B) for language features and add to checklist for report writing.	Children contribute their additional points for the checklist or explain how the existing checklist works for Sample Text B.
Apply Thursday	Shared writing (teacher as scribe) – referring to skeleton-frame. Write introduction and some paragraphs of the text using checklist.	Writing	In pairs and referring to skeleton-frame, write remaining and closing paragraphs of the text, using checklist.	Children explain the reasoning behind their writing in relation to the checklist.
Analyse and apply Friday	Shared reading and writing: revision (demonstration and teacher as scribe): revise the opening paragraph and two further paragraphs of the text.	Reading	Revise the remaining and concluding paragraphs of the text.	Children explain where and why they have made revisions.
Analyse and apply Monday	Unit 45 from <i>Grammar for Writing</i> .	Writing	In pairs, investigate the spelling of unstressed vowels (<i>Spelling bank</i> , page 69).	Recap on the principles behind the sentence work.
Analyse Tuesday	Shared reading: analyse report text (e.g. Sample Text C) at both organisational and sentence/word level.	Reading	Individually, analyse another report text (e.g. Sample Text D) at both organisational and sentence/word level.	Children explain their analyses.
Apply Wednesday	Shared writing (supported composition) – import content from another curriculum area, quick plan and write some paragraphs of text.	Writing	Individually, write remaining paragraphs of text.	Children explain the reasoning behind their writing.
Analyse Thursday	Shared reading: do part of a practice reading test paper on a report text, all together.	Individually, do part of a practice reading test paper (report text).		Finish test paper.
Apply Friday	Shared writing: do a practice writing test paper all together involving a report text.	Individually, do a practice writing test paper (report text).		Finish test paper.

Features of a report text

Purpose

To describe the way things are

Generic text structure

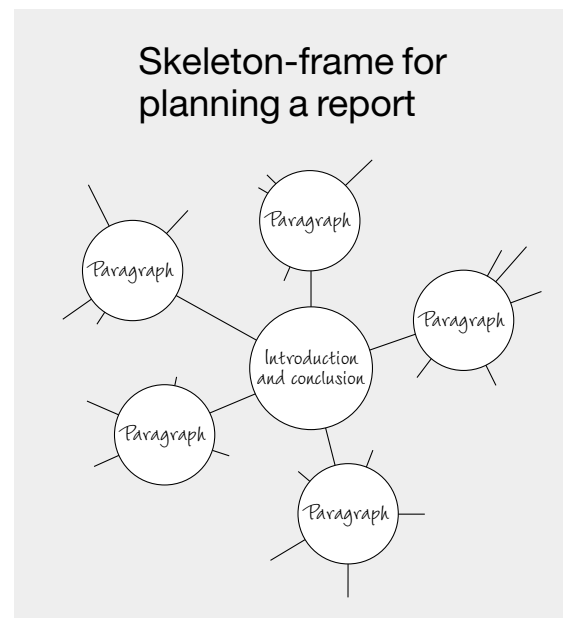
- an opening, general classification, e.g. *Sparrows are birds*
- more technical classification (optional), e.g. *Their Latin name is ...*
- a number of paragraphs about different aspects of the subject – these could be arranged in any order
- a description of their phenomenon, including some or all of its:
 - qualities, e.g. *Birds have feathers*
 - parts and their function, e.g. *The beak is ...*
 - habits/behaviours or uses, e.g. *They nest in ...*
- conclusion – an ending comment

Sentence/word level features

- focus on generic participant, e.g. sparrows in general, not Sam the sparrow
- use of present tense
- use of some passive constructions
- use of the impersonal voice (third person)
- use of words which generalise
- use of technical vocabulary relevant to the subject
- use of descriptive but factual language

Writer's knowledge

- plan under paragraph headings in note form
- use a range of resources to gather information
- select facts from a range of sources to interest the reader, e.g. books, CD-ROM, interviews
- possible use of a question in the title to intrigue the reader, e.g. *Yetis – do they exist?*
- be clear, so that you do not muddle the reader
- open by explaining very clearly what you are writing about – take an angle to draw the reader in
- use tables, pictures, diagrams to add more information
- possibly end by relating the subject to the reader, e.g. *Many people like whales ...*
- reports are factual but you could add comments or use questions to engage the reader
- re-read as if you knew nothing about the subject to check that you have put the information across successfully



Cheetahs

Cheetahs are members of the cat family and are the world's fastest land animals.

They inhabit open grasslands and scrub in Africa, southern Asia and the Middle East.

Cheetahs are often mistaken for leopards and have many similar features. Their distinguishing marks are the long, teardrop-shaped lines on each side of the nose from the corner of the eyes to the mouth.

The animals have muscular and powerful bodies which are aerodynamically perfect for short, fast runs. Their bendy backs keep the body flexible as they sprint. They can accelerate from standing to 40 mph in three strides and to a full speed of 70 mph within seconds. Cheetahs' feet are like running shoes and have grips and spikes to dig into the ground. The grips are special ridges on the animals' footpads and the claws act as spikes. These claws stay out all the time. This is different from other cats, whose claws tuck away in special sheaths in their paws.

Cheetahs are carnivores and eat gazelle and small antelope. A long tail helps the cheetah keep its balance as it swerves after its prey, using large eyes that point forward to judge distances accurately. Once the cheetah has pounced, the victim is gripped by the throat to stop it breathing. However, the cheetah has weak jaws and small teeth and cannot always protect its kills or its young, especially if tired out after a run.

Female cheetahs give birth to an average of three young that they rear by themselves. Once fully grown, the animals usually live alone, though males sometimes form small groups. Most cheetahs live about twelve years.

Cheetahs are now an endangered species and many conservationists are trying to help protect the habitats of these interesting creatures.

Sentence / word level

Text level

Title	Cheetahs
Introduction	<p>Cheetahs are members of the (cat family) and are the world's fastest land animals. They (inhabit) open (grasslands and scrub) in Africa, southern Asia and the Middle East.</p>
Paragraph 2	<p>Cheetahs (are often mistaken) for leopards and have many (similar) features. Their (distinguishing marks) are the long, teardrop-shaped lines on each side of the nose from the corner of the eyes to the mouth.</p>
Paragraph 3	<p>The animals have (muscular and powerful bodies) which are aerodynamically perfect for short, fast runs. Their (bendy backs) keep the body (flexible) as they (sprint). They can accelerate from standing to 40 mph in three strides and to a full speed of 70 mph within seconds. Cheetahs' feet are (like running shoes) and have grips and spikes to dig into the ground. The grips are (special) ridges on the animals' (footpads) and the claws act as spikes. These claws stay out all the time. This is different from other cats, whose (claws) stuck away in special sheaths in their (paws).</p>
Paragraph 4	<p>Cheetahs are (carnivores) and eat gazelle and small antelope. A long tail helps the cheetah keep its balance as it (swerves) after its prey, using large eyes that point forward to judge distances accurately. Once the cheetah has (pounced) the victim (is gripped) by the throat to stop it breathing. However, the cheetah has weak (jaws and small teeth) and cannot always protect its kills or its young, especially if tired out after a run.</p>
Paragraph 5	<p>Female cheetahs give (birth) to an average of three young that they (reap) by themselves. Once fully grown, the animals (usually) live alone, though (males) sometimes form small groups. (Most) cheetahs live about twelve years. Cheetahs are now an (endangered species) and many (conservationists) are trying to help protect the (habitats) of these (interesting) creatures.</p>
Paragraph 6	<p>Passive construction: this helps the reader see the attack from the victim's point of view.</p>
Conclusion	<p>Technical vocabulary</p>

The British barn owl

The barn owl is one of the most popular birds in Britain but is now extremely rare.

The bird favours open habitats such as grassland, hedgerows, the edges of fields or woodlands, stubble fields, drainage ditches and farmyards.

The barn owl is a carnivore and hunts for its favourite diet of small mammals and birds. It usually flies slowly back and forth, about three metres above the ground, using its large eyes and sensitive hearing to spot likely prey. If suitable perches, such as fence posts, are available, the bird may save energy by hunting from these. Once it has swooped silently down, a hooked beak tears into the victim. Food is often swallowed whole and the indigestible parts, such as the bones and fur, are regurgitated in the form of pellets.

When seen in flight, the general impression is of a large white bird. However, the upper parts are a beautiful golden buff colour, delicately marked in varying shades of buff and grey. It is only the face, breast and undersides that are mostly white.

After choosing a suitable hole in a tree or a ledge in an old building, the female barn owl lays between four and seven eggs in April each year. The owlets are fully developed after ten weeks and leave the nest after about fourteen weeks, by which time they must be able to survive alone. As many as one in four young barn owls die within a year for a variety of reasons.

The number of barn owls in Britain is decreasing. There are now fewer habitats where they can find mice, voles and other prey. In some areas, owls have been affected by chemicals and cannot lay proper eggs. This means that they cannot breed and increase their numbers. In addition, many birds have been killed accidentally as they fly across major roads and motorways.

The barn owl is one of nature's most graceful hunters. Many organisations in Britain, such as the Barn Owl Trust in the South West, are working towards their conservation.

Sentence / word level

Text level

Title	The British barn owl
Introduction	The barn owl is <u>one of the most popular birds in Britain</u> but is now <u>extremely rare</u> .
Classification	<i>Words which generalise</i>
Paragraph 2	The bird <u>favours open habitats such as grassland, hedgerows, the edges of fields or woodlands, stubble fields, drainage ditches and farmyards</u> .
Habitat	<i>Technical vocabulary</i>
Paragraph 3	The barn owl is a <u>carnivore</u> and hunts for its favourite diet of small mammals and birds. It <u>usually flies</u> slowly back and forth, about three metres above the ground, <u>using its large eyes and sensitive hearing to spot likely prey</u> . If suitable <u>perches</u> such as fence posts, are available, the bird may save energy by hunting from these. Once it has <u>swooped silently</u> down, a <u>hooked beak</u> <u>tears</u> into the victim. Food <u>is often swallowed whole</u> and the <u>indigestible parts</u> , such as the bones and fur, <u>are regurgitated</u> in the form of pellets.
Diet and hunting prey	<i>Technical vocabulary</i> <i>Words which generalise</i> <i>Present tense</i> <i>Descriptive but factual language</i>
Paragraph 4	When seen in flight, the general impression is of a large white bird. However, the <u>upper parts</u> are a beautiful golden buff colour, delicately marked in varying shades of buff and grey. It is only the <u>face</u> , <u>breast</u> and <u>undersides</u> that are mostly white.
Appearance	<i>Technical vocabulary</i> <i>Present tense</i> <i>Descriptive but factual language</i>
Paragraph 5	After choosing a <u>suitable hole</u> in a tree or a ledge in an old <u>building</u> , the <u>female</u> barn owl <u>lays</u> between four and seven eggs in April each year. The <u>owlets</u> are fully developed after ten weeks and <u>leave</u> the nest after <u>about fourteen weeks</u> , by which time <u>they must be able to survive</u> alone. As many as one in four young barn owls <u>die</u> within a year for a variety of reasons.
Nesting and babies	<i>Technical vocabulary</i> <i>Present tense</i> <i>Words which generalise</i> <i>Impersonal voice: third person</i>
Paragraph 6	The number of barn owls in Britain is decreasing. There are now fewer habitats where <u>they can find</u> <u>mice, voles and other prey</u> . In <u>some areas</u> , owls <u>have been affected</u> by <u>chemicals</u> and cannot lay proper eggs. This means that they cannot <u>breed</u> and <u>increase</u> their numbers. In addition, <u>many birds</u> <u>have been killed</u> accidentally as they fly across major roads and motorways.
Problems	<i>Present tense</i> <i>Impersonal voice: third person</i> <i>Words which generalise</i> <i>Passive construction</i>
Conclusion	The barn owl <u>is one of nature's most graceful hunters</u> . Many <u>organisations</u> in Britain, such as the Barn Owl Trust in the South West, are working towards their <u>conservation</u> .
Conservation	<i>Words which generalise</i> <i>Descriptive but factual language</i> <i>Technical vocabulary</i>

B.M.X.

The B.M.X. (Bicycle Motor Cross) is a bike designed and built for specific purposes.

The bike is generally made of steel so that it is strong and will not bend under the enormous stress that it is subjected to when being ridden. Some bikes, designed especially for B.M.X. racing, are made of aluminium because it is lighter.

The main difference between B.M.X. and other bikes is the undersized frame which allows maximum manoeuvrability. The wheels are also small, with wide tyres. Most have a gyro system of bearings and pulleys that allows the large, curved handlebars to spin 360 degrees. This enables the rider to perform dare-devil stunts and tricks. The saddle is low and not padded for comfort because the bike is often ridden by standing on the pedals or on strong, steel stunt pegs that are found on either side of the front and back wheels.

There are now centres in the country where B.M.X. riders take part in competitions. There is even an event called the 'X Games' which is the Olympics of the extreme sports world. Many young riders challenge themselves to imitate the daring and complicated exercises performed by the professionals.

Some bikers ride up and down slopes that look like larger versions of skateboard ramps, executing difficult jumps and spins at both ends. Others perform their tricks on flat ground, balancing on small areas of the bike itself. Specially designed B.M.X. bikes, with large, chunky tyres to provide more definite grip, race ten abreast over dirt tracks. There are now a number of separate areas where the bikes can be ridden safely away from cars and pedestrians.

B.M.X. bikes provide riders with the opportunity to use their skill and imagination to carry out gymnastic and artistic stunts.

Sentence / word level

Text level

B.M.X.

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The main difference between B.M.X. and other bikes is the undersized frame which allows maximum manoeuvrability. The wheels are also small, with wide tyres. Most have a gyro system of bearings and pulleys that allows the large, curved handlebars to spin 360 degrees. This enables the rider to perform dare-devil stunts and tricks. The saddle is low and not padded for comfort because the bike(s) often ridden by standing on the pedal(s) or on strong, steel stunt pegs that are found on either side of the front and back wheels.

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- Title
- Introduction
- Classification
- Paragraph 2
- Materials
- Paragraph 3
- Parts of the bike
- Paragraph 4
- Competition
- Paragraph 4
- Different activities
- Conclusion
- End comment

Hot deserts

A desert is a region that has less than 250 mm of rain a year. Rainfall often falls in violent downpours rather than evenly throughout the year.

More than one seventh of the land on earth is desert. Deserts are found all over the world: in Africa, Australia, Asia, North America and South America. The world's largest desert, the Sahara, stretches across North Africa from the Red Sea in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west.

Only a quarter of deserts are made of sand. Some are covered in pebbles or bare rocks. In other areas, shallow lakes have formed after rain. Once these have dried in the sun, a flat layer of salt crystals is deposited.

There is a huge range of temperature in the desert due to the fact that there are no clouds. Temperatures have been known to soar as high as 59 degrees Celsius in Libya and Death Valley, California, though 40 degrees is more usual. An egg could be fried on the blistering, hot rocks under the desert sun. During the night, the temperature falls rapidly to below freezing in some places.

Desert plants have to find ingenious ways of adapting to the harsh conditions in a desert. Long roots probe deep underground for precious water. Leaves have thick waterproof skins to avoid evaporation. Some plants, like cacti, store water in their thick stems.

Animals find desert conditions difficult. Some never drink but instead obtain necessary moisture from plants and other food. Many are nocturnal and rest in burrows or under rocks during the heat of the day. The gerbil, a popular British pet, originates in the sandy deserts of Mongolia and northern China.

Underground rivers and streams flow deep beneath deserts, bringing water from mountains hundreds of miles away. When these rivers reach the surface, an oasis is formed. Towns and villages are found nearby and people can grow a variety of plants in the fertile land.

A desert has an inhospitable climate but people, animals and plants have all learned to adapt and make the most of its resources.

Sentence / word level

Text level

Hot deserts *Spelling: unstressed vowel*
Technical vocabulary
Words which generalise
Present tense

A desert is a region that has less than 250 mm of rain a year. Rainfall often falls in violent downpours rather than evenly throughout the year.

More than one seventh of the land on earth is desert. Deserts are found all over the world: in Africa, Australia, Asia, North America and South America. The world's largest desert, the Sahara, stretches across North Africa from the Red Sea in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west. *Passive construction*

Only a quarter of deserts are made of sand. Some are covered in pebbles or bare rocks. In other areas, shallow lakes have formed after rain. Once these have dried in the sun, a flat layer of salt crystals is deposited. *Passive construction*
Technical vocabulary
Words which generalise

There is a huge range of temperature in the desert due to the fact that there are no clouds. Temperatures have been known to soar as high as 59 degrees Celsius in Libya and Death Valley, California, though 40 degrees is more usual. An egg could be fried on the blistering, hot rocks under the desert sun. During the night, the temperature falls rapidly to below freezing in some places. *Descriptive but factual language*

Plants *Spelling: unstressed vowel*
Technical vocabulary

Desert plants have to find ingenious ways of adapting to the harsh conditions in a desert. Long roots probe deep underground for precious water. Leaves have thick waterproof skins to avoid evaporation. Some plants, like cacti, store water in their thick stems. *Technical vocabulary*
Words which generalise
Present tense

Animals *Spelling: unstressed vowel*
Technical vocabulary
Words which generalise
Present tense

Animals find desert conditions difficult. Some never drink but instead obtain necessary moisture from plants and other food. Many are nocturnal and burrow or rest in burrows or under rocks during the heat of the day. The gerbil, a popular British pet, originates in the sandy deserts of Mongolia and northern China. *Technical vocabulary*

Oases: villages *Present tense*

Underground rivers and streams flow deep beneath deserts, bringing water from mountains hundreds of miles away. When these rivers reach the surface, an oasis is formed. Towns and villages are found nearby and people can grow a variety of plants in the fertile land. *Passive construction*
Technical vocabulary

Conclusion *Present tense*

A desert has an inhospitable climate but people, animals and plants have all learned to adapt and make the most of its resources.

Detailed lesson plans for Days 1 and 2

Day 1: shared reading and analysis

Day 2: shared planning for writing

Context

The class had been studying various aspects of rivers in their geography lessons and the teacher introduced this as the context for writing a report.

Day 1 – Shared reading and analysis

1. Introduce a sentence level activity on active and passive verbs in readiness for writing reports (taken/adapted from *Grammar for Writing*). Introduce this as an oral game for about 10 minutes so that the whole class can feel confident. Then allow five minutes on white boards to write some sentences. This can be paired work; each child writes a simple sentence and the partner changes it to passive. Explain to the children that you will be using passives later in the week.
2. Tell the children that they are going to look again at a type of writing they explored last year – a report. Put up the OHT of ‘Cheetahs’ (Sample Text A) and read through. Discuss the content for a couple of minutes.
3. Ask the children for the purpose of report writing (to give information).
4. Read the text again and annotate with the purpose of each paragraph.
5. Refer the children back to the skeleton-frame which they used to write a recount and ask them what they think a report skeleton-frame should look like. Ensure that they are clear that the paragraphs are non-chronological. Draw a report skeleton-frame diagram on the board and name the paragraphs.

Independent work

1. Children work in pairs and annotate the report on the barn owl (Sample Text B) in the same way as you have done with them on cheetahs.
2. Other reports from books or from the Internet should be available so that more able children can check that these satisfy the criteria for organising report writing.
3. Five minutes before the end of independent time, ask the children to get into groups (three pairs to a group) to compare ideas and appoint a spokesperson to feed back to the class in the plenary.

Plenary

1. As the children feed back, write their ideas onto a skeleton diagram for the barn owl report.
2. The children should then look back at the one they did with you on cheetahs. Do both reports follow the same format in terms of purpose and organisation?

Day 2 – Application: shared planning for writing

1. Remind the children of some work they have been doing in another subject. The facts that they are going to use should be easily accessible during the lesson. For example, they might create a ‘wall of facts’, written on strips of paper.
2. Draw an appropriate number of boxes on the board for the themes the children are likely to come up with. If the board is small, use a number of pieces of card and fasten them around the room.
3. Choose children to come out quickly and move the facts from the wall to an appropriate place in the boxes. Ask them what they will be doing in this exercise. They should realise that they will be planning what to put into their paragraphs. The children can then give an overall purpose to each paragraph. It will take a little time but this is necessary to model the process that a writer must go through. It should be clear from the boxes that each paragraph will contain a number of related pieces of information. Write the overall theme above the facts that the children have placed.
4. Discuss what should go in the introduction. Make a note.
5. Produce another report skeleton-frame – like the ones used yesterday. Transfer the themes to the circles and make a note about the introduction in the centre.
6. Discuss a possible ending comment and note down the idea under the diagram.

Independent/guided work

Children should work in pairs and use large sheets of sugar paper on which you have drawn a report skeleton-frame. Ask the children to plan the paragraphs for a report on their own school. The overall purpose/theme of each paragraph should be written in the circle.

Plenary

1. Look at the children’s work on the sheets.
2. Ask children to comment first on good examples of report planning.
3. Next work together on any improvements – e.g. look at content that might be better grouped together, or split up. Share ideas about the content of the introduction and conclusion. Give advice on the type of information that makes a good introduction or conclusion.

Transcripts of lessons for Days 1 and 2

(taught by Year 6 teacher, Pat. Children's responses and contributions omitted)

Day 1 - Shared reading and analysis

Note: the texts for the shared and independent reading are on pages 10–13.

We're going to start with a game today. It's going to help you understand the difference between active and passive verbs. I'm not going to tell what the difference is now. I think you're going to be able to tell me in a minute - so I challenge you! Let's see - I'm going to give you a sentence and then say it another way - in what we call the passive voice. Listen carefully. 'I handed the book to Sam.' [Mimed.] Now listen. I'll say it in the passive. 'Sam was handed the book by me.' The same thing happened, didn't it, but the way I said it was different. I'll try another. 'Goldilocks cleaned the cottage in the wood.' We call that the active voice. I could also say: 'The cottage in the wood was cleaned by Goldilocks.' That would be the passive voice. [Wrote 'active' and 'passive' on the board.] Now I'll say one for Naomi and she can turn my sentence around. 'Naomi opened the classroom door.' Well done. Who'd like a go? OK, let's go round the room. One of you make up a sentence and then another change it to the passive voice I'll listen in. Now that one is interesting. Chloe, you said 'My Mum walked into town.' It didn't work did it? Do you know why? Brilliant! You've got it, though I think we can do better than say 'it hasn't got a "thing" to turn round'. The sentence Chloe made up didn't have a direct object so we couldn't turn it round and make it passive. You're doing so well that I think you can use your boards for a couple of minutes and write some sentences in pairs and try writing the passive Now, who's going to accept my challenge? Who would like to try to tell us what we mean if the sentence is in the passive Yes, you're right. In the passive, the subject of the sentence is having the action done to it - the cat was being chased by the dog. When we write in the active voice, the subject is doing the action - the dog was chasing the cat. I'm going to type up what we have just said because I think we should add it to our grammar board - then you can always refer to it. We're going to meet the passive voice again on Wednesday.

Do you remember how we read a recount text - a biography - earlier this term - and you helped me analyse how it was organised and written? You wrote some really good biographies yourselves after that. Well, today we are going to continue to study a text type you did last year - a report - and we are going to go through the same sort of process. [Switched on OHP - cheetahs text.] I'm going to read through the report. Follow carefully Did anyone know anything about cheetahs before? That's fascinating, Abdi, you visited the wildlife park when you were living in Africa, in Somalia? I see here from the conclusion that the cheetah is an endangered species. Latika? Garth? Paula? You're right, there isn't any solid information about why cheetahs are endangered. So what do you think the purpose of this piece of writing is? Exactly. Anyone who wants basic information would find my report useful, especially as I have organised it carefully to help them. Let's read each paragraph again. [Read introduction.] This is very short but it has a special purpose. What is that? Yes, it is the introduction. But can you tell me more? What is the introduction doing? It is saying what a cheetah is - we call this classifying or defining the subject. It might say something about why the subject is very well known. It is very general and doesn't have any detail. All that will come later. So I'll write a note beside it: general remark - definition; no detail. [Wrote] Let's move on. Ahmed,

could you read the second paragraph? What is that about? Yes, and how do you know? Good, so I'll write 'habitat' next to this paragraph. Now what is the subject or purpose of the third paragraph? Read it to yourselves. There's a tricky word there - remember what you have to do with long words like that Yes, Paula, read around each vowel - let's make it shorter by covering the '-ing' at the end - OK, have a go nearly there, that last bit is hard to work out - 'dis - ting - uish' yes, 'distinguishing marks'. Find the words that tell you the purpose of this paragraph Now we'll do the next three paragraphs in pairs. This half of the class can do paragraph 4 and this half can do paragraphs 5 and 6. Read it through, decide on the function of each paragraph - what is the main theme of the paragraph? Does it have subsections? Tell your partner what you think and when you have agreed, put a note down on your white boards. I want evidence to back up what you say That's probably long enough. Let's start on paragraph 4. Who can tell us the theme of this paragraph - what is it telling us? I'll write your suggestions up. Powerful bodies. Feet, running. They are all included. Why do you suggest powerful bodies, Mark? Yes, it is in the opening sentence, but does the paragraph go on to tell you about the different parts of the body? No, only the bendy back and feet Yes, well done Yemi, both are mentioned in the context of running. [Took feedback of paragraphs 5 and 6 in the same way.] Now we come to the conclusion. What is the purpose? It makes a kind of ending comment. It doesn't repeat anything but it does make an interesting comment about conservation. The conclusion makes a statement about the animal being endangered.

Do you remember the diagram we used to help us write the recount? There is a rather different diagram for this one. I'll show you. [Held up report skeleton-frame on a large piece of card.] I'm going to transfer the notes we made about the purpose of each paragraph to this diagram. I'm going to write the note we made for the introduction in the middle. Chloe, be ready with the next one Thank you. What did we say for paragraph 3, James? Next, Sam Yes, we decided on speed, didn't we? Paragraph 5, David, and you be ready afterwards, Rebecca, for paragraph 6 [Wrote on card as children replied.] What do you think this diagram tells us about the organisation of the paragraphs? a good idea. Let's test it. Would it alter the report if the paragraph on appearance came in a different place? What about the others? So it doesn't matter. After the introduction, a report has a number of paragraphs which could be written in any order. We call this 'non-chronological'. [Wrote this on the board.]

You're going to work in pairs now - the same pairs as last week. You will find a report about the barn owl on your tables. I want you to work together and write down the purpose of each paragraph - just like we did on the board. You will also see that I have put some books on your tables. I've marked the pages containing reports. Some of you will have time to read some of these and decide if they have the same format as the report on cheetahs. A few minutes before the end of independent time, I will ask you to form groups to pool your information

Plenary

I've put a new report skeleton-frame on the board. Let's see whether you all agree about how I should fill it in. Please could the five spokespeople stand up. Rajid, what did your group say about the first paragraph of the barn owl report? Do the rest of you agree? Yes, you all seem to agree there - the introduction classifies the barn owl as a bird and then goes on to give a reason for telling us about them - they are rare. Paula's turn to go first on the next paragraph - the others chip in if you disagree or want to add more Good, that was straightforward. What do you notice about this paragraph and the second paragraph on the cheetah report? Both habitat - but we've said that the whole point of non-chronological reports is that the paragraphs could come in any order. Any explanations? Yes, I'm sure you're right; the habitat is probably the first thing most people want to know. [Continued to write theme of each paragraph on the report skeleton-frame.] Now that we've done this, do you think that this report has the same format as the cheetah report? What do both introductions do? What about the paragraphs that follow? Do the conclusions have anything in common? That's a good point. The cheetah being endangered isn't mentioned till the conclusion, whereas the barn owl being rare was mentioned in the introduction and then reasons were given in one of the paragraphs and proposed action in the conclusion So you think that report isn't as well planned as the one on barn owls? What do the rest of you think about the other reports I put out for you to read? So who can summarise for me what we have learned yesterday and today about the organisation of report writing? Well done - tomorrow, we are going to use some facts from our geography lessons on rivers and organise them into a report.

Day 2 - Shared planning for writing

Over the last few weeks, we have been investigating various aspects of the River Thames. We've used the Internet, watched a video and done some fieldwork up the road. You all contributed to our 'wall of facts' last lesson. [Pointed to display on strips of coloured paper.] We are going to use the facts that we've collected in geography to write a report. We can't start the writing today because we haven't yet analysed the kind of language we need to use. Do you remember that we had to do that before you could write your biographies? However, you learned enough yesterday to get going on the first stage of any writing - planning. If we always plan carefully in advance, our writing is much more likely to have a clear organisation and so it helps the reader make sense of it. Remind me. What is the purpose of a report? So we have to organise these facts about the River Thames into the report skeleton-frame we worked on yesterday. That way our reader will be given clear information. What do you think we need to do first? Can we do that, though? Are you sure what you want to put in an introduction yet? Have another think I agree. We have to sort the facts into paragraphs. I've divided the board into four boxes and pinned up a couple of pieces of card over there in case we need more paragraphs. I've taken all the facts off the wall - here you are, one each - careful with the Blu-Tack. I want you to group the pieces of paper together and stick them up on the board so that we end up with a number of facts in each box that

are related to each other in some way. You may find yourself unsure about some. You may think that certain facts can go in more than one box. We can discuss that. David, could you read yours out and place it in any box on the board Marcia, read yours and decide whether it is the same or a separate paragraph from David's OK, Abdul and then Paula Now these four have identified three different paragraphs, so the rest of you will be getting a good idea whether there is a paragraph on the board which your fact will fit in, or whether you need to create a new one. Let's have three more people reading theirs out: James, Sam, Nazeem Now the others from this table can come out and find the most appropriate box for their facts There seems to be some disagreement about that last fact. Marcia, could you read all the pieces of paper out in this box and see if we can find agreement What are they all about? Yes. They are facts about what Thames Water is doing to safeguard the environment. Some of you went on the web site and took down that information. Now - back to the fact that Ceri put up. Why are some of you objecting to it? I see. But isn't that to do with the environment? What do the rest of you think? That table wants to see it in the box below. What is that about? Yes, lots of facts about our local study of the tributary. Is Ceri's fact a general point about the whole river or is it saying something about a particular part? I agree. Which part? OK, let's move it over here This is going well. All this discussion is really going to help your planning in future. It doesn't matter what you write - you always have to plan it. Let's finish off the last few now

So we have five paragraphs and a couple of bits of paper which don't really fit anywhere - one about the tidal part of the Thames, another about Thames Water and how it manages the environment, a local tributary, flooding in 2000 and industries on the river. Let's write those headings quickly onto the report skeleton-frame Now what about the introduction? What do we do in an introduction? Yes, we define or classify, but I think we have to say more than the fact that it is a river! Let's go back to these two facts we couldn't fit in. Could you read the first one, please, James Right, so that tells us the length - 210 miles. What does the other one say? Those link, don't they? The source is in Gloucestershire and the mouth is? Correct. So those two facts give us an overview of the river that the report will be about and provide a good introduction. Does it matter what order we write these paragraphs in? Correct. So what kind of report is it? Well remembered. A non-chronological report. Now, there is still something missing That's right, we haven't planned the conclusion yet. What is the purpose of the conclusion? That's hard, isn't it? What kind of ending comment could you make? That's quite a nice idea. You want to make a remark about people enjoying the river. Yes, we could. I'll note it down under the plan and we will see how we feel about that once the report is written.

Now it is time for you to have a go at planning on your own. You are going to quickly plan a report about our school. You all know lots about it! You are going to work in pairs again but this time you'll use the large pieces of sugar paper that are on the tables. I have already drawn a report skeleton-

frame for you but you can add more circles if you need them. What do you think you and your partner will put in the centre circle? Correct - your introduction - a word or two. What about the circles, Ben? Yes, just simply - don't write more than a word or two to show the theme. You can indicate some of the facts to go in each paragraph by putting spider's legs onto each circle like this. Again, condense your fact into a word or two. You can see why we needed a big bit of paper, can't you! If you can think of an idea for the theme of the conclusion you can note it under the diagram. We shall discuss them in the plenary . . .

Plenary

Let's look at the work that Majid and Sam have done. I want you to tell me if they have organised correctly for a non-chronological report? Yes, they have a note for the introduction and separate points in each circle. You managed to plan quite a lot of detail in the time you had. Well done, boys. Ben, read out the notes inside the circles What do you think? Are all those themes different or could any be combined? Why do you think the Year 6 trip needs a separate paragraph, Abdul? Yes, I see. The boys might think about that. It's a good point. Can these paragraphs be written in any order? Good. So it's a non-chronological report. You succeeded. Let's read their note about the introduction. 'Say where school is in country' - does anyone know one word we could use for that not quite. I'll give you a clue, we've used it in geography Right! Location. You can show your theme in one word. I'd like to see what another group thought about the introduction. 'Size and number of teachers' - that is very different. It does contain detail but the detail itself helps to classify the school. There isn't a right answer to what should go in the first paragraph so long as you remember what we said yesterday - it makes a general remark that introduces the subject. Now we'll see what these two thought should be in the conclusion - 'children like it - happy.' That's a nice summing up. Did anyone have another idea? Why do you say homework? Oh I see, because you do it after school so it should come last. What do the rest of you think? You explained that clearly, Julie. Homework is an example of one of the things about our school that you could write about in a report. Therefore, it goes in one of the paragraphs but it doesn't matter in what order. The conclusion should be more general and make a closing comment. I rather like the idea that you want to say that children like it and they are happy. You have done really well today. Tomorrow we are going to return to the cheetah text and analyse the way it is written so that you can eventually write your reports.

In-line skates

‘In-line skates’, or ‘rollerblades’, is the name given to the new generation of rollerskates developed since the 1980s.

They are based on a reworking of the original design for ‘dry land’ skates which were invented in the early 1700s. These in turn were adapted from the ice skates that had long been used in Holland to travel on frozen canals in winter.

In-line skates are made from thermoplastic resin that is light, yet strong and durable, and the wheels are ‘in-line’ as opposed to the four-wheeled parallel design used in roller skates for the previous 150 years. In-line skates incorporate a boot to protect and support the ankle, which fastens with buckles or Velcro strips. Most modern in-line skates feature a braking mechanism activated by the skater straightening one leg.

Skating can be dangerous as it requires a hard surface and high speeds can be reached quite quickly. Skaters should wear a helmet, protective knee and elbow pads and wrist guards in order to avoid risking broken bones.

(continued)

Sentence structure and punctuation

Text structure and organisation

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(continued)

Passive, it is unlikely that anyone knows who gave them these names
Present tense

Technical vocabulary

Brief use of past tense

Descriptive, factual

Technical vocabulary

Present tense throughout
rest of report

Technical vocabulary

Classification

History

Materials

Safety

Spelling

- dangerous – 3-syllable word ('e' – unpronounced vowel)
- support – 'pp'
- design – sign

They should confine their skating to safe areas and safe speeds, as they can easily injure other pedestrians if they crash into them.

Skating can be an effective method of keeping fit that is within the reach of many people. Once the initial equipment has been bought, there are no costly club, entrance or match fees. It can be enjoyed in most weathers and by people of all ages.

As well as being a popular sport and fitness activity, skating is an environmentally friendly way to travel, especially in towns and cities. By being twice as fast as walking, it can double the distance people are prepared to travel to work or school without using a bus or a car, and it does not cause traffic congestion or air pollution.

If more commuters were prepared to skate to work each day, the roads would be less crowded and the air would be cleaner.

Sentence structure and punctuation

Text structure and organisation

They should confine their skating to safe areas and safe speeds, as they can easily injure other pedestrians if they crash into them. *Safety*

Skating can be an effective method of keeping fit that is within the reach of many people. Once the initial equipment has been bought, there are no costly club, entrance or match fees. It can be enjoyed in most weathers and by people of all ages. *Fitness*

As well as being a popular sport and fitness activity, skating is an environmentally friendly way to travel, especially in towns and cities. By being twice as fast as walking, it can double the distance people are prepared to travel to work or school without using a bus or a car, and it does not cause traffic congestion or air pollution. *Environmentally friendly*

If more commuters were prepared to skate to work each day, the roads would be less crowded and the air would be cleaner. *End comment*

Passive voice

Technical vocabulary

Conditional used

Spelling

traffic – 'ff'
pollution – 'u'
weather – 'ea'

Composition and effect

Author offers advice in paragraph 4 and proposes skating as a healthy and low cost sport and suggests skating is an environmentally friendly mode of transport. This builds towards the conclusion in which the author suggests if more commuters skated, it would improve the environment.

Bananas

Bananas are found in tropical regions of the world where the climate provides plentiful rain and many hours of sunshine for most of the year. This enables bananas to be grown and picked all year round. The majority of the bananas eaten in the UK are imported from the Windward Islands in the Caribbean.

Banana plants grow from a small root to a height of about three metres. They produce suckers, one of which is allowed to grow to its full size and bears the fruit. These fruit start by growing downwards before they grow up towards the sun in large bunches. A fully grown bunch can weigh up to thirty-five kilos, the bananas at the bottom being smaller than those nearer the top. As the bunches develop the plants must be supported by stakes to prevent them from breaking or toppling over.

Bananas are very easily damaged and consequently great care must be taken when they are harvested. They are picked by hand before they are fully ripe, as they continue to ripen after harvesting. These green bananas are carefully transported to a packing station where they are washed, treated and labelled so their origin can be traced.

(continued)

Sentence structure and punctuation

Text structure and organisation

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(continued)

Passive voice to give distance between author and reader

Descriptive, factual

Generalising

Classification

Present tense throughout

Third person

Cultivation

Technical vocabulary

Passive voice

Pickers and handlers not identified

Harvesting

Spelling

bananas – first and last ‘a’ unstressed vowel

For the ten-day sea voyage from the Caribbean to the UK, refrigerated ships are used in which the temperature can be carefully controlled to prevent the bananas from spoiling.

Once unloaded at their destination, the green bananas are placed in special ripening centres for up to five days before being delivered to shops.

Bananas are easily peeled and digested, and contain important trace minerals as well as all the benefits of fresh fruit. They provide a quick, convenient yet healthy energy boost and are consequently popular with athletes and tennis players.

In fact, bananas are the UK's favourite fruit – we eat more of them each year than any other fruit.

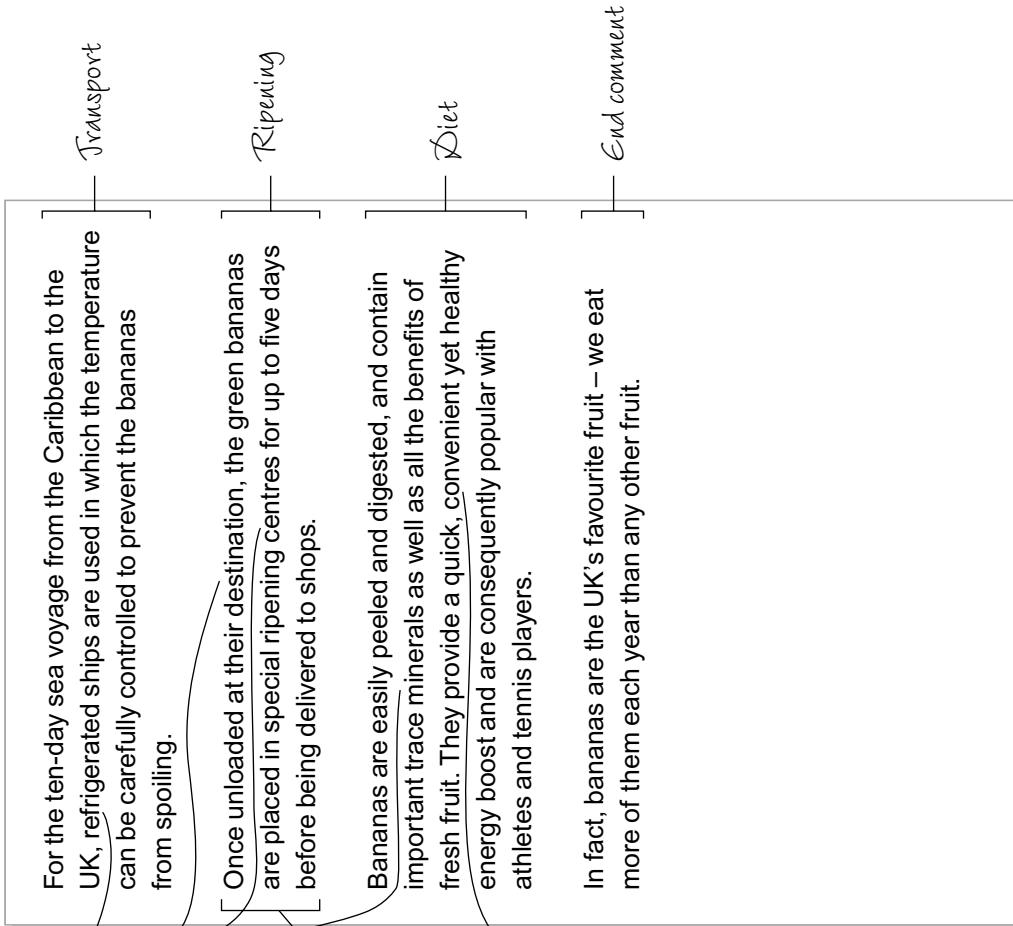
Sentence structure and punctuation

Technical vocabulary

*Complex sentence combines
chronological information
economically*

Descriptive, factual

Text structure and organisation



Composition and effect

Written in the present tense, third person, this is a factual, formally presented report. The penultimate paragraph describes why we have bananas in our diet which invites a direct connection with the reader in the final paragraph – using the first person plural.

Spelling

special – 'cial' /sh/ sound plus unstressed vowel

Guinea pigs

Guinea pigs, also known as cavies, originate from South America and can still be found there in the wild.

They belong to the rodent group of mammals and have no visible tail, four toes on each front foot and three on each back foot.

They live in large family groups in areas of long grass, using burrows abandoned by other creatures as they do not burrow themselves. Guinea pigs are herbivores, eating only grasses, vegetables and fruit.

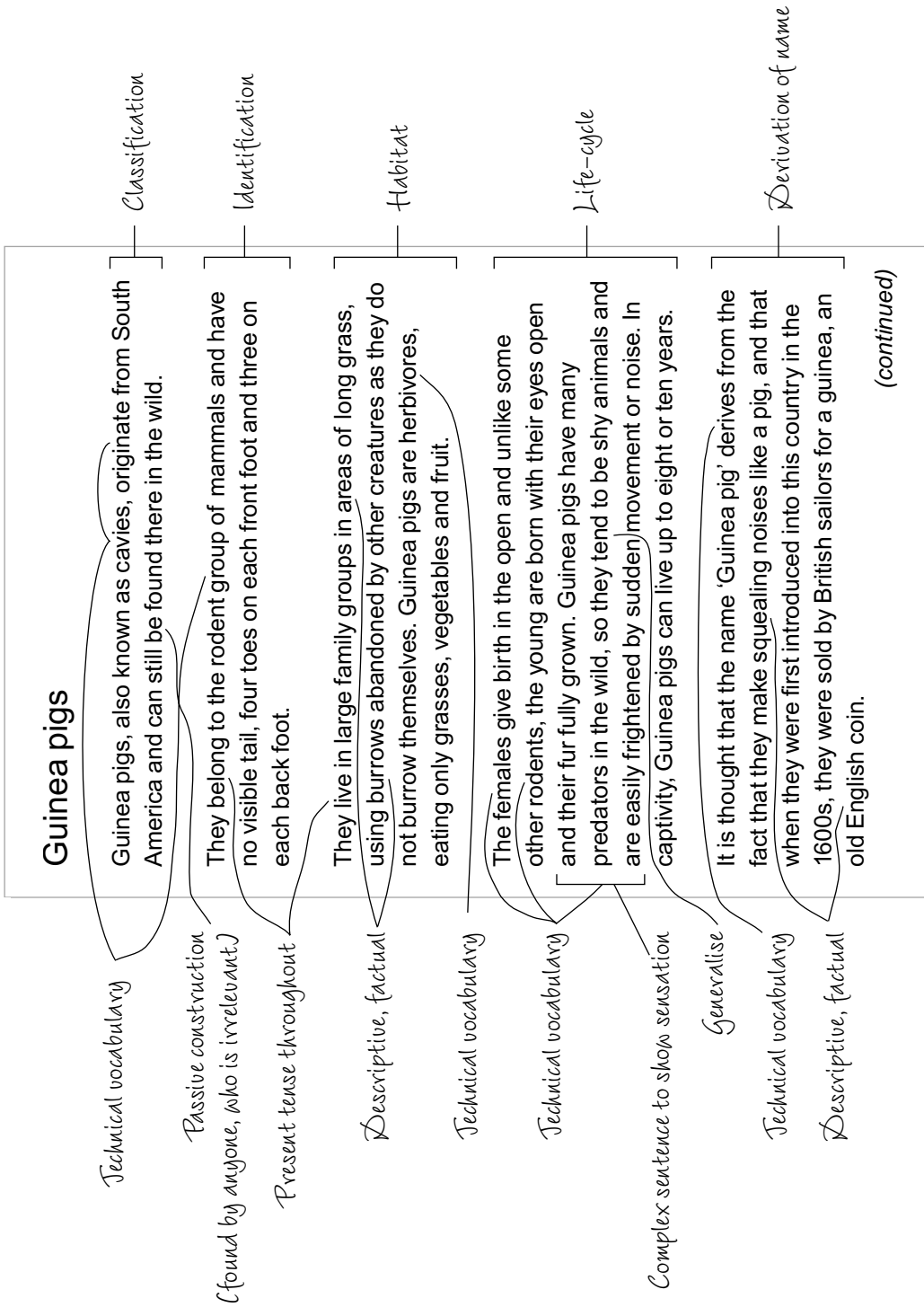
The females give birth in the open and unlike some other rodents, the young are born with their eyes open and their fur fully grown. Guinea pigs have many predators in the wild, so they tend to be shy animals and are easily frightened by sudden movement or noise. In captivity, Guinea pigs can live up to eight or ten years.

It is thought that the name ‘Guinea pig’ derives from the fact that they make squealing noises like a pig, and that when they were first introduced into this country in the 1600s, they were sold by British sailors for a guinea, an old English coin.

(continued)

Sentence structure and punctuation

Text structure and organisation



Spelling

rodent – 'ent' – unstressed vowel
sudden – 'en' – unstressed vowel
introduced – 'c'; intro – prefix 'o' unstressed vowel

There are now more than twenty-five different types of pet Guinea pig that have been developed by breeders. The most common are the short-haired, whose fur is short, smooth and shiny; the long-haired, whose silky hair reaches the ground; and the rough-haired, whose hair swirls round in rosette patterns all over its body and head. Each variety can be either one colour or several colours.

Guinea pigs make suitable pets for children as they do not require enormous amounts of care and attention, can live inside or outside, and are not nocturnal like hamsters. They become used to handling and grooming, and seldom bite. It must be remembered that Guinea pigs are sociable and should be kept in pairs or groups, though they will also live happily with pet rabbits.

Sentence structure and punctuation

Level of generality

Descriptive, factual

Level of generality

Technical vocabulary

Passive tense needed to refer to anyone who keeps guinea pigs

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Text structure and organisation

Development of varieties

Conclusion:
Guinea pigs as pets

Composition and effect

Purpose of text is to inform. The last paragraph (the conclusion) informs potential owners; the author has a particular audience in mind in this paragraph and language changes slightly, e.g. 'it must be remembered'. Passive voice used to add authoritative tone.

Spelling

different – 'ent' unstressed vowel
patterns – 'er', 't' unstressed vowel
several – 3-syllable word –
unpronounced vowel 'e' and
unstressed vowel 'a'

The London Marathon

Each spring sees the return of the Marathon, a race of over 26 miles on the streets of London.

Marathon races have featured as track events in the Olympic Games for many years. The original 'Marathon' was run by a Greek who covered this distance to deliver news of the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC.

In the late 1970s, several cities in the United States began to host Marathon races as more and more ordinary people took up running for fitness and pleasure. Chris Brasher, a former British running champion, took part in the 1979 New York City Marathon and was inspired to stage a similar event in London. He was able to find sponsors and organised the first London Marathon in March 1981.

Since that race, more than half a million people from all over the world have completed a London Marathon. In 2002, there were 32 899 finishers, a mixture of elite athletes, serious club runners and fun runners, many of whom competed for the first time.

(continued)

Sentence structure and punctuation

Text structure and organisation

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(continued)

Technical vocabulary

Opens in the present tense

Descriptive factual

Continues in past tense as history of Marathon is told

Approximations, precise detail not known/or considered important

Technical vocabulary

Technical vocabulary

General approximation

Precise detail from a more recent event

Classification

Derivation of name

History of the modern Marathon

Number of runners

Spelling

- world – word, work, worm, worst
- athlete – 'ete'
- compete
- pleasure – 'ea', 'sure'
- unstressed vowel

The race has developed into a major charity fundraising event, collecting over £181 million in 21 years through sponsorship. Numerous charities have benefited, from the large, well-known national organisations to the small, local ones.

Every year, thousands of spectators line the roads to cheer the runners and wheelchair users on. The route passes several of London's best-known landmarks including the Cutty Sark in Greenwich, Docklands, Tower Bridge and The Mall. Hundreds of thousands more around the world follow the televised race.

The London Marathon is now firmly established as one of the top sporting and fun events of the year in the UK.

Sentence structure and punctuation

Description, factual

General approximation

Commas to separate adjectives

Returns to the present tense

Technical vocabulary

Technical vocabulary

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Text structure and organisation

Money raised

Route

End comment

Composition and effect

Strikes balance between detail and general statements for a reader who needs a summary report.

Spelling

numerous – unstressed vowel 'ous'
benefited – only one 't'
route – 'ou'