



The Heys School

# English

## Choice of Vocabulary

Writers choose their vocabulary (their words) carefully. Answer these questions to see if you know when and why writers use certain types of vocabulary in their texts.

**Q1** Match up the type of vocabulary you would use with each type of text.

### Type of Vocabulary

technical language

formal language

simple language

### Type of Text

a story for a young child

a science textbook

a letter from the council

**Q2** Why do you think the writer of 'Celeb-Watch!' chose to use slang in the text below?

### CELEB-WATCH!

In this week's 'Celeb-Watch!', we found out all about Hollywood hunk Hank Harris's new squeeze. She's a real stunner! The happy couple seemed totally loved-up when we snapped them on the beach together in Honolulu.

**Q3** Why do you think Charles Dickens chose to use slang in the extract below?

An extract from *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens

"Do you live in London?" inquired Oliver.

"Yes. I do, when I'm at home," replied the boy. "I suppose you want some place to sleep in to-night, don't you?"

"I do, indeed," answered Oliver. "I have not slept under a roof since I left the country."

"Don't fret your eyelids on that score," said the young gentleman. "I've got to be in London to-night; and I know a 'spectable old gentleman as lives there, wot'll give you lodgings for nothink, and never ask for the change—that is, if any genelman he knows interduces you..."

**Q4** Which of the following statements about technical language is true? Write out the correct statement.

- i) Writers use technical language to make a topic easier to understand.
- ii) Technical language shows that a writer knows a lot about a subject.
- iii) Writers only use technical language to show off.

# Similes and Metaphors

Writers often use similes and metaphors in their descriptive writing.

Use the questions on this page to make sure you can tell the difference between them.

A gig review from a music newspaper

Any really great rock band knows that you have to keep your audience waiting. By the time The Brums arrived on stage, the audience were howling like wolves. Right from the start, singer Leo Ryder was a monster, roaring into the microphone. Guitarist Arnie X was possessed by the ghost of Jimi Hendrix as he played the most frantic guitar solos this side of Wigan. Jay Bryson beat the drums as if they were fires to be put out, but somehow managed to keep time as faithfully as an honest referee.

As soon as the band launched into their number 2 hit, 'The First Rule is...', the audience were like a seething wave of noise. If it wasn't already clear, this concert proves that The Brums are rock music heavyweights — and they certainly don't pull any punches.

Q1 Write 'metaphor', 'simile' or 'neither' next to each of these phrases.

- you have to keep your audience waiting
- the audience were like a seething wave of noise
- The Brums are rock music heavyweights



Simile of the Day

*A monkey is as much use to a vacuum cleaner as a vacuum cleaner is to a monkey.*

Q2 Which of these answers best explains why the writer describes the audience as "howling like wolves"?

- The shouting audience sounded quiet and tuneful, like wolf howls.
- The shouting audience sounded noisy and tuneless, like wolf howls.
- The audience were eating raw meat and were very hairy.

Q3 Is the description in Q2 a simile or a metaphor?

Q4 Copy and complete the table showing the similes and metaphors that the writer uses:

Thing being described	Description the writer uses	Simile or Metaphor	What this means
Leo Ryder			
Arnie X playing guitar			
Jay Bryson beating the drums			

***Hello, I'm three — I've never metaphor before...***

Fictional writing uses shiploads of metaphors and similes. They're imported from Greece, although some arrive on the black market to avoid customs tax. Learn to spot 'em. Without binoculars.

# Personification, Alliteration and Onomatopoeia

Personification, alliteration and onomatopoeia all make a text more interesting to read.

Q1 Match up the boxes to complete the examples of personification.

The willow tree

wailed noisily.

The chest

waved its boughs frantically.

The moon

waited patiently to be opened.

The wind

hid shyly behind the clouds.

Q2 Write a description of each thing below, using alliteration to make it more effective.

e.g. snake  *The snake slithered subtly across the sparkling sand.*

a) storm

b) cat

Q3 Write a list of onomatopoeic words that you could use to describe each thing.

e.g. piano music  *crash, plink-plonk, trill, murmur...*

a) an explosion

b) a motorcycle race

Q4 Write out an example of each of the following things from the newspaper article below.

a) alliteration

b) onomatopoeia

c) personification

## Terrifying Twister Terrorises Town

The quiet town of Marleysham was hit by a freak tornado yesterday. Although no one was injured, the residents are still in shock.

Mr Geale, who witnessed the tornado, said, "At first I heard this distant whooshing noise, but it got louder and louder. It sounded like a train passing right down the street. That's when I went to the window and saw it. I could hardly believe my eyes."

Local storm enthusiast Tilly McDuffel said, "I got in my car and drove after it, trying to get some footage. At one point I got right up close. As I was filming, I felt that it was staring right back at me. It was amazing."

## Imagery

**Imagery is about creating a picture in the reader's mind. Writers do this using descriptions. Think about the image the writer is trying to create, and what effect this has on the reader.**

An extract from the novella *The Case of the Missing Relic*

Tonight, the whole city seemed silent. Even the birds were asleep, and not a sound disturbed the eerie quiet. The river flowed gently past the houses as if it didn't want to wake up the slumbering inhabitants.

Inspector Graham paced the damp, dark streets, expecting trouble at any moment. He gazed up at the pale moon which lit the streets below, and held his gas lamp out with a trembling hand. He soon reached his destination. His heart hammered like a drum in his chest. In front of him he could make out the grey archway of a narrow doorway. The night before he had come across a pack of snarling dogs guarding it, but tonight they were absent. The door opened with a low creak at his push and he stepped cautiously over the threshold.

The room was an icy tomb, and his breath came out in clouds in front of him. He raised his lamp to cast a flickering glow over the dim inside of the room. The only furniture was a broad farmhouse table, upon which were several items — a cotton glove, a faded yellow sheet of paper, and a small stone carving of a man crouching as if about to pounce at the Inspector.

- Q1** Write out an example of a simile from the text, and explain why you think the writer has chosen to use it.
- Q2** a) In the last paragraph, the writer uses a metaphor to describe the room Inspector Graham walks into. Write it out.  
b) What effect does this metaphor have on the reader?
- Q3** Write out the part of the text that describes the stone carving.
- Q4** Write out the statement that explains the effect of the description in **Q3**.
- i) The stone carving is described as if it is alive — this effect is called alliteration.
  - ii) The stone carving is described as if it is alive — this effect is called onomatopoeia.
  - iii) The stone carving is described as if it is alive — this effect is called personification.
- Q5** Write out another part of the text that uses the same effect.

## Mood

Fiction writers build up the mood of a scene through the language they use. Mood is about how the text makes you feel — whether it's happy, sad, funny, frightening, exciting...

**A** At last the waiting was over. Rachel held the exam results envelope and watched her friends opening theirs. Some smiled with relief, some stared at the floor.

Her fingers tugged gently at the envelope.

Slightly open now...

Nearly there...

**B** The mood took hold of the family like a virus. Mealtimes were now a matter of muttered greetings, lowered eyes and shared silences. Even the cracked ceilings had begun to weep rainwater. Gordon knew that Dexter had been *only* a dog, but he was missed like a member of the family.

**C** Katie strolled amid the laughing guests, her son Daniel trotting at her side. The sun caressed Katie's skin, while a cool breeze tickled the hair falling on her neck. The grass beneath her feet provided a soft carpet. Katie hadn't felt so alive in years.

**Q1** Match up each of the texts A, B and C to one of the moods below.

tense

romantic

happy

horrific

funny

sad

**Q2** In text A, is Rachel in a hurry to open the envelope? Use evidence from the extract to back up your answer.

**Q3** Why do you think the writer of text B used the word "weep" instead of "let in"? Mention the overall mood of the text in your answer.

**Q4** What does the word "trotting" in text C tell you about how Daniel feels?

**Q5** What effect do the short sentences at the end of text A have? Write out the correct answer.

- i) They slow the pace down before Rachel opens the envelope, which builds up suspense.
- ii) They speed the pace up before Rachel opens the envelope, which creates a sense of excitement.

**Q6** Which of the three texts would the sentence below fit into? Write a sentence to explain your answer.

*Sadness hung heavily in the still air of the house.*

**Q7** Write a couple of sentences explaining what the phrase "muttered greetings, lowered eyes and shared silences" from text B tells you about the mood of the text.

