

Explanation Writing: Language Features

An explanation is a piece of **non-fiction** writing which describes **how** or **why** things happen.



Simple Present Tense

The tense in writing is always related to time i.e. past, present and future.

Simple present tense is where you're using a verb to describe **things that happen repeatedly in the present** or to share **factual information** that doesn't change.

Examples:

I **clean** my teeth every day.

The sky **is** blue.

If the lost fluids **are** not replaced then dehydration sets in.



2nd or 3rd Person Perspective

In **2nd person perspective** you speak directly to the reader, especially when you're explaining the technicalities of how something works or happens. You'll use pronouns like...

you your yours

In **3rd person perspective** you write as though you're an outsider looking in. You'll use pronouns like...

**he she him hers
they them theirs**



Technical Language

Use technical and detailed vocabulary to explain your topic.

Top Tip:

If you think your reader might not understand a word then use brackets to drop in an explanation. For example:

This transforms the water into oxygen and the carbon dioxide into glucose (a simple sugar).

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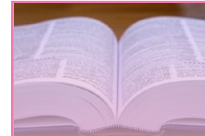
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Subject Specific Nouns

A specific noun is a word that names a certain person, place, thing, or idea. Replacing general nouns with specific ones will make your writing clearer and more vivid for your readers.

	General Noun	More Specific	Most Specific
Person	man	scientist	Albert Einstein
Place	location	planet	Mars
Thing	plant	tree	Kauri
Idea	fashion	clothes	tuxedo



Descriptive Verbs and Adjectives

Use a Thesaurus to find synonyms - avoid repetition. There are so many descriptive synonyms you can choose from that will make your explanation writing more fresh and interesting.

For example:

fly (verb) = float, glide, drift, circle, dart, dash, soar.



big (adjective) = enormous, gigantic, hefty, vast, massive, immense.



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Transitional (Linking) Words & Phrases				
To Add Information	To Give An Example	To Emphasise	To Generalise	To Conclude
additionally	for example	above all	all in all	finally
in addition	for instance	after all	as a rule	in conclusion
also	thus	certainly	as usual	last
besides	in other words	indeed	for the most part	lastly
equally important	as an illustration	in essence	generally	still
furthermore	in particular	in fact	generally speaking	to wrap it up
moreover	at other times	in other words	in general	to conclude
too	besides this	of course	on the whole	
again	furthermore	to repeat	ordinarily	
first	however	surely	typically	
nevertheless	in fact	truly	usually	
otherwise	in spite of this	equally important		
or	next	in contrast		
second	similarly	most importantly		
then	to explain	now specifically		
third	to illustrate	therefore		
added to this		while this may be true		
		with this in mind		
		yet		

Cause and Effect Words and Phrases	
To Show Relationships	
as a result	on one hand
consequently	on the other hand
as a consequence	otherwise
therefore	similarly
then	since
so, so that	this happens
as a result of	an outcome of
because, because of	while
produced by	a consequence
although	even so
at the same time	however
caused by	in contrast
either/or	equals
in the same way	such as
likewise	the effect of
neither/nor	effectively
due to	that is why
accordingly	the end result
responsible for	in order to
the outcome	owing to
gives rise to	which in turn