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This Study Unit is the property of the learner to whom it is given.

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LESSON 1

English belongs to everyone

About this lesson

This lesson focuses on learning English as an additional language. You'll think about why English is a powerful language in South Africa, and what this means for all the people who grow up learning a different language.

In this lesson you will

- | describe reasons for reading
- | talk about experiences of learning English
- | make a list
- | find meanings of words
- | prepare to write an essay
- | write paragraphs
- | organise paragraphs into a clear essay
- | describe ways you can improve your English





Why do we read?

We all read different things. Each time we read, we have a reason for reading.

The first activity will help you to think about some reasons why people read.

ACTIVITY 1

1. Look at the drawing above. It shows people waiting in the doctor's surgery. What are they all doing?
2. Make a list of the things each person is reading. Then next to each one, write down a reason why you think each person is reading. Write your answers in your notebook. For example:

The woman is reading the instructions on the medicine bottle.
Reason: she must know how much medicine to take.

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COMMENT

Don't worry if your reasons aren't exactly the same as those in the answer section. The important thing is to see that people read for different reasons.

ACTIVITY 2

Think about the things you read and the reasons why you read.

1. Make a list of five or six of the things that you could read every day.
2. Next to each item write down why you read it.
For example:

Newspaper.

Reason: to find the soccer results.

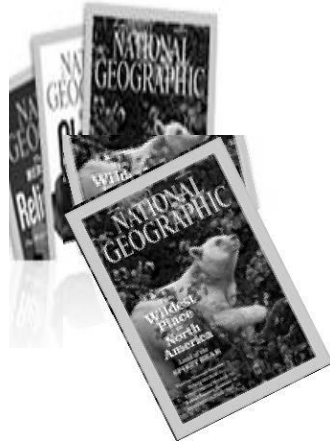
ANSWERS ON PAGE 129

COMMENT

You will have different reasons for reading different things. Here are three important reasons for reading:

1. Reading for survival: we do this kind of reading so that we can live from day to day. For example:

- | reading the name of the place where the bus is going so that you can catch the right one
- | reading the signs at the post office so that you stand in the right queue
- | reading the instructions on a bottle of medicine so that you know how much to take.



2. Reading to learn: we do this kind of reading to find information that will help us know more about the world, for example:

- | reading this lesson
- | reading a textbook.



3. Reading for pleasure: we do this kind of reading because we like to do it, not because we have to, for example:

- | reading a comic
- | reading a story.

Sometimes, you will read something for more than one reason. For example, learning can be both educational and fun.

ACTIVITY 3

In this activity, you'll think about the main reason why you read. This will help to show you how you use reading in your own life.

Go back and read the list you made in Activity 2. Next to each item on your list, write one, or a combination, of these reasons:

- | reading for survival
- | reading for learning
- | reading for pleasure.

COMMENT

What does your list tell you about how you use reading? Do you read mainly for survival, or for pleasure?

If you do a lot of different kinds of reading, you have probably already found ways to help you to read easily. But if you read primarily for survival, perhaps you have some difficulty with reading longer texts. This course should help you to find ways to improve your reading so that you can read a range of different texts with ease.

Is English important?

How many languages do you speak? Perhaps English is your second, third, or even fourth language.

These statistics tell us how many people in South Africa speak each of the eleven official languages as their primary language:

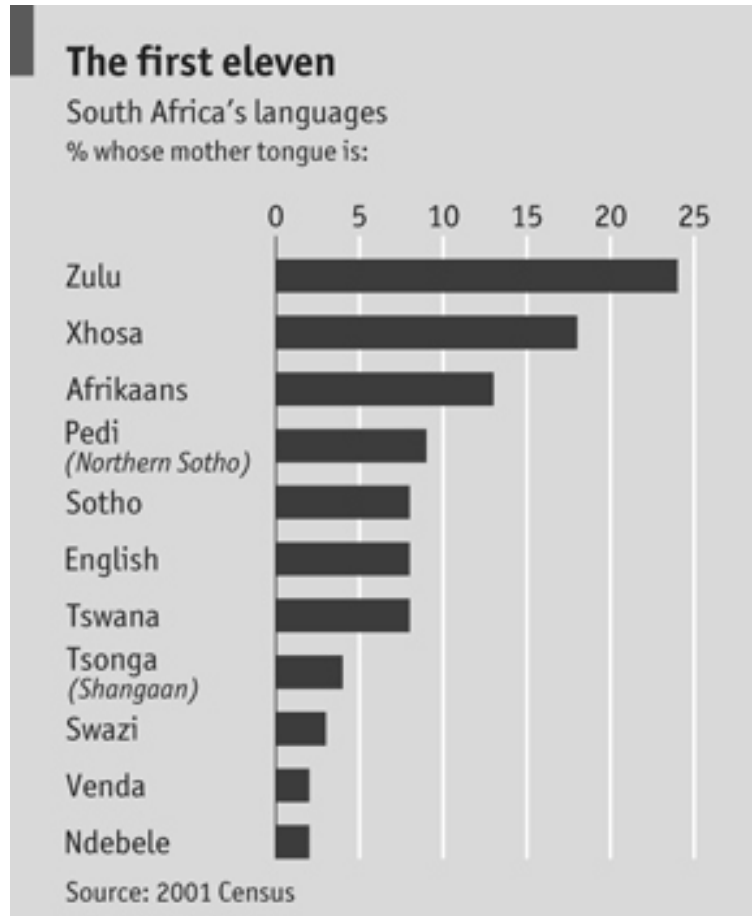
Language	Million	%
Zulu	8,54	21
Xhosa	6,89	17
Afrikaans	6,19	16
Tswana	3,6	9
North Sotho	3,44	9
English	3,42	9
South Sotho	2,652	7
Tsonga	1,35	3
Swazi	,926	2
Ndebele	,799	1
Venda	,763	1
Other	,942	2

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

("Hello" in 11 official languages)

sawubona (isiZulu, siswati)
 molo (isiXhosa)
 goeiemôre (Afrikaans)
 dumela, thobela (Sepedi)
 hello (English)
 avuxeni (xiTsonga)
 lotjhani (isiNdebele)
 ndaa (Tshivenda)

You may be surprised to see that English is quite far down on the list. But it is a very powerful language in South Africa. Many people say they want to learn English. One of the struggles that people face when they learn a new language, is learning a new vocabulary.



Working out the meaning

What do you do when you find difficult words when you are reading? Sometimes it seems impossible to understand the text because there are too many difficult words.

Usually there are three things you can do when you find a difficult word. You can:

- | look up the word in the dictionary
- | leave the word out and guess the main idea of what the person is writing
- | work out the meaning of the word from its context.

Working out the meaning of a word from its context can help you if you don't have a dictionary. The context is the place where a word is used. That means it is the sentence and the paragraph the word is written in.

When you work out the meaning of a word using its context, try to follow these steps:

- | read the sentence the word is in
- | read the whole paragraph the word is in
- | look for clues, such as examples, synonyms (words with the same meaning) and other related words to help you to work out the meaning.

For example, this paragraph was written to introduce a short article on organ regeneration. Even though the paragraph does not define 'organ regeneration', it is possible to work out from the context what this term means:

As every child knows, cut the tail off a lizard and, astonishingly, it grows back. Unfortunately, the ability to regenerate missing or damaged organs and body parts is largely lost in adult human beings. Except for blood, skin and a few other types of cells, we are unable to repair or renew most tissue after we leave the womb even though we retain the same genes that built those organs in the first place. Given the huge implications of being able to, say, repair a damaged heart, it is a small wonder that developmental biology is attracting a growing number of researchers seeking to tease out the mysteries behind cell growth.

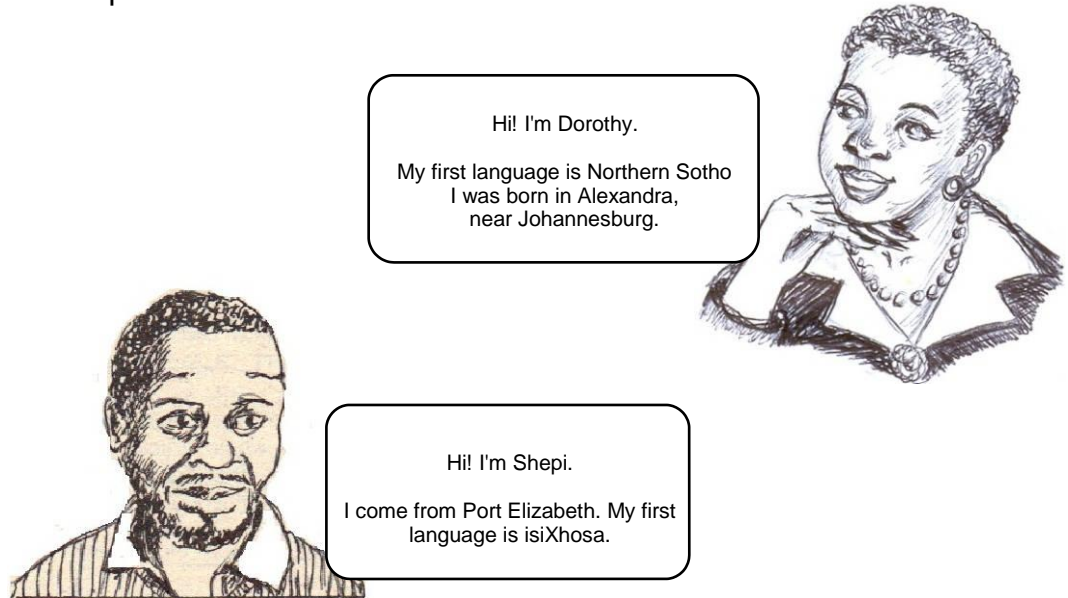
(From: Gleick, E. The Genetic Clues to a New Growth Industry in Time Special Issue, Summer 1997-98.

Firstly, the writer gives an example of organ regeneration (the way a lizard's tail grows back). The writer also uses synonyms for the word 'regenerate', namely 'grows back', and 'renew'. At the end of the paragraph, she gives an example of a human organ - the heart - that often needs to be regenerated or repaired. From these clues, we can work out that 'organ regeneration' means the rebuilding or repair of important body parts by the body itself.



Learning English as an additional language

Dorothy and Shepi learnt to speak English as an additional language. In Activity 4 you can read an extract from an interview where they describe their experiences.



ACTIVITY 4

1. Read through the interview with Dorothy and Shepi. While you are reading, think about your own experiences when you first started to learn English. How did you feel? What are your strongest memories? Write down your feelings as you read.

Interviewer: How did you learn English?

Shepi: My mother was a domestic worker in Port Elizabeth. She occasionally took me to her work and they had a young boy there that I used to play with. His name was Michael. We communicated despite the fact that I never spoke English and he never spoke isiXhosa, but you know, we would get along.

Dorothy: My first contact with English was at school. But when I look back, I don't think that was where I learnt English. During school holidays I used to go to my mother who was a domestic worker — that is where I learnt English... I had to communicate with a child at my mother's work—so it was more related to what I wanted to do at that point in time. I picked up certain words. Then I started constructing a sentence.

At school, I don't remember speaking English. What I learnt at primary school did not relate to my life outside school. Also, I was an athlete and I used to go to the Wanderers Stadium. There were a lot of whites there and I had to communicate with them. And the English I learnt at school didn't relate to that.

Interviewer: Did you think English was important when you were young?

Shepi: I was a regular caddie at the golf course. Now, informally, the English were always better at paying people. I think just their general attitude gave us the impression they were liberal. So English had this extra status which was even slightly better than Afrikaans and whatever, so we aspired to that. I mean we would speak it outside in the school yard and so on.

Dorothy: I think having English meant being better. I remember there was a girl in Grade Seven who was relatively fluent — she was at ease, and we were scared to communicate in English. We used to admire her and wish we could be like her, but it was intimidating.

2. Now answer these questions:

- a. Most of us think that school is the place for learning. But how did Dorothy and Shepi learn to speak English?
- b. When Shepi was young, why did he think that English was important?
- c. What do you think the word 'status' means? Try to find some words in the sentence to help you.
- d. In the last paragraph, Dorothy used the word 'fluent'. If you read the whole sentence, you will also find the words, 'she was at ease'. These are the clues to help you to work out that 'fluent' means to speak a language quickly and easily. What is the meaning of 'intimidating'? It is the last word in the passage.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 129

COMMENT

When you read you will always find new words. The way you choose to find the meaning of the new words will depend on the reason why you are reading.

For example, if you are in a hurry and you just want to get the main idea, you will just leave out the difficult words.

But, if you are reading for information, sometimes it is important to understand the word. Then you can use a dictionary if you have one, or try to find the meaning of the word from its context.

Preparing to write

Both Dorothy and Shepi learnt English outside school. They learnt English when they had to communicate. For example, Dorothy had to talk English to other athletes when she was training.

In the next activity, you'll think and write about your own feelings and memories of learning English. The aim of this activity is to show you a useful way to prepare your ideas before you start writing.

This kind of preparation is called brainstorming.

Brainstorming means you search your brain for all your ideas on a topic. It is a very useful way to start writing. When you brainstorm your ideas, you don't have to worry about how neat or correct your writing is. You may not even use all the ideas you write down. The important thing is you have made a start.

When you write an essay, for example, brainstorming will help you to collect and put in one place all the facts or ideas you want to write about. Then you can put your ideas in order and then you can write.

When you prepare first, it is much easier to write. It also makes it easier to write in an organised, clear way.

ACTIVITY 5

1. Think about the time when you started to learn English. How did you feel? How would you describe your first experiences?
2. In your notebook, write down the words, or sentences, which come into your mind when you think about learning English. Don't worry about spelling or grammar. Just write down the ideas that come into your mind. Write the words in any order and anywhere on your page.
3. Keep your page with your ideas. You will use it in the next activity.

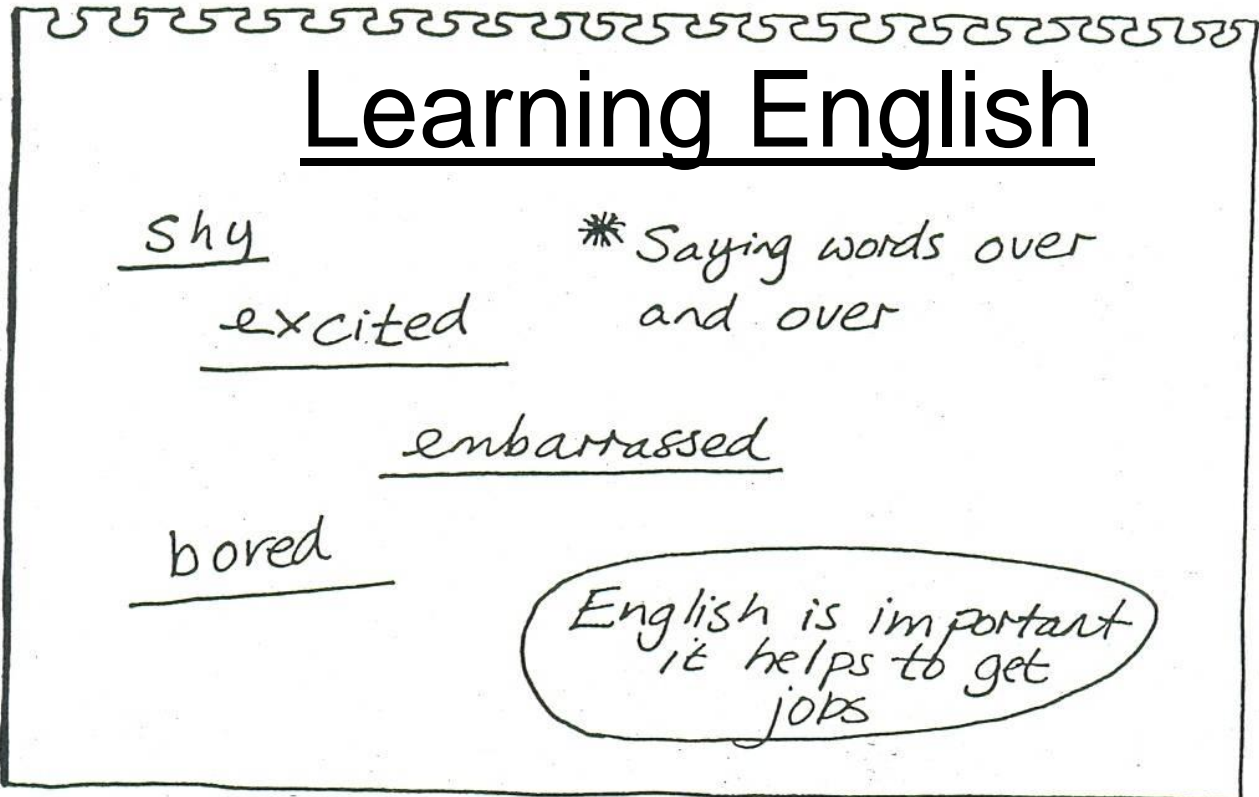
Organising your ideas

Now you have a page of ideas. The next thing to do is to organise your ideas. This means that you put all the ideas which are similar together.

It is important to organise your ideas for two reasons:

- | it helps you to check that you have got all the important facts, ideas or information
- | it helps the person who will read your writing to follow what you are writing.

For example:



- | the words which have a star next to them explain how you can learn new words.

ACTIVITY 6

1. Look at the page of ideas you wrote down in Activity 5.
2. Organise your ideas, using the example on page 11 to help you.

Paragraphs

Look at how the ideas are organised in the following paragraph:

'I think having English meant being better. I remember there was a girl in Grade Seven who was relatively fluent – she was at ease, and we were scared to communicate in English. We used to admire her and wish we could be like her, but it was intimidating.'

The main idea in this paragraph is the fact that Dorothy thought English was better. The other sentences explain more about how she felt.

This paragraph is separate from the other paragraphs, because it has one main idea. The other paragraphs have different ideas, like how Dorothy communicated in English.

Writers divide their articles or stories into paragraphs. This helps to make their writing clear and easy to follow. When you use paragraphs, you organise the facts, or information, or ideas you want to write about into groups. Each group can be a paragraph.

ACTIVITY 7

The aim of this activity is to write a short essay about your own experiences of learning English.

1. Look at the groups of words on your page. Then decide which group is the most important. That group of ideas can be your first paragraph.
2. Choose the main idea for your paragraph and link the other supporting ideas.
3. Then decide what the next most important group of ideas is. Each group of ideas can make a paragraph.
4. Try to write about three or four paragraphs in your notebook.

COMMENT

You have made a good start at preparing and organising your writing. You have written what writers call a first draft.

When you read your writing again, you may find some mistakes and make some changes. Then you will have written a second draft. Many writers write at least three drafts before they are satisfied with their writing.

Improving your English

Before you end off this lesson, think about how you can improve your English. Here are some ideas from Shepi and Dorothy in another extract from the interview:

Shepi: For me the ways of overcoming things were these self-initiatives like, you know, speaking to people I worked for whose mother-tongue was English. That helped me. I think what my experience taught me is that, if you draw from those things that surround your day-to-day life, then it becomes easier.

Dorothy: I became very conscious of the way I pronounce words. But what I do now is listen to other people – how they pronounce a word. In every meeting in my job there are new words that I pick up. I write them down and try to find out from the dictionary how to pronounce the word. I try to understand the context of the word and the way it is used.

By doing this course you will be improving your English. But remember, you have other things in your life that can help you. For example, you may know someone who is willing to speak English to you and help you practise. You will probably find that there are many ways in which you can use the experiences from your life to help you to learn.

CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- q describe the three main reasons for reading
- q describe your experiences of learning English
- q find the meaning of words by using clues in the context
- q prepare to write an essay by brainstorming for ideas
- q organise your ideas into groups
- q use groups of ideas to write paragraphs
- q explain the importance of organising your writing in paragraphs
- q describe ways you can improve your English, outside this course.

LESSON 2

Strangers in their own land

About this lesson

In this lesson you will read a magazine article about people who face problems because English is not their primary or first language. During the lesson you'll work out how the lives of such people can be made easier.

In this lesson you will

- | learn some useful ways of finding out what an article is about before you read it
- | find the main points in the article
- | identify and use linking words/conjunctions
- | change verbs from the present to the past tense
- | ask for directions.



Preparing to read

First, you will prepare to read an article by previewing . Previewing means reading some of the main parts of an article, like the title or the heading, to help you to find out what the article is about. It is like taking a short cut. You don't have to read the whole article to get an idea of what it is about.

Previewing can be very helpful because it will save you a lot of time. It can help you to:

- | choose what you want to read
- | find the information you want
- | read with understanding.

You will usually find a preparatory paragraph at the beginning of magazine articles. It gives a brief description of what you will read about in the article, and it aims to interest you in the article. Preparatory paragraphs are similar in this way to blurbs, which you will usually find on the back cover of a book. The blurb gives a brief description of the book and aims to promote it by attracting the reader's interest.

The article you are going to read is called Stranger in your own land. This article comes from a magazine called Language Projects' Review. This magazine is all about the different languages in South Africa.

Before you read the article, you will preview it.

ACTIVITY 1

1. Read the title of the article on page 18 and the short paragraph which comes just under the title, called a preparatory paragraph. The preparatory paragraph usually looks different from the rest of the text.
What do you think the title means? Writers often use the title to make an article look more interesting and to attract the reader to read further.
2. Use the preparatory paragraph to help you to predict, or guess, what you think the article is about.
3. Choose the answer which you think explains what the article is about:
 - a. Translators are strangers in their own land. Organisations will address the problems.
 - b. People who speak African languages need translators. Organisations are trying to solve the problems which translators experience.
 - c. No translation into and from African languages has happened.
 - d. Community organisations have trained translators.

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COMMENT

The preparatory paragraph tells you a bit about the article. It stands out from the rest of the article, so you can find it quickly and easily. It gives you a 'taste' of what to expect, so that you feel tempted to read more.

Now you know that the article is about the issue of translating into and from African languages. In South Africa, a lot of people who speak African languages feel like strangers in their own land because they don't speak English or Afrikaans.

How to understand what you read

The article Stranger in your own land has two parts. The first part is a story and is easier to read. The second part is a bit more difficult, but you can take short cuts to find the main ideas. In Activity 3 you will skim the second part of the article to find the most important information.

ACTIVITY 2

Read through the first part of the article on page 18. Stop when you reach the line before the sub-heading Language services . Then try to answer the questions in your notebook.

1. Have you ever had an experience like Mrs Tembi had? How did you feel? Write down a few words to describe how you felt.
2. What do you think the word 'literate', in the last sentence, means? Read through the whole paragraph.
3. Can you think of ways to make Mrs Tembi's visit to the hospital easier? Write down your ideas as they come into your mind.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 130

Stranger in your own land

Translation and interpreting into and from African languages has virtually been ignored as a professional activity up to now. During the last couple of months several developments have taken place within community structures to address this problem. Amanda Siegrühn compiled this report.

Mrs Tembi left home with her little three-year-old girl at the crack of dawn. Thandi sometimes cannot breathe and her mother fears that she will just slip away from her one day.

The two of them arrive at the gates of the Memorial Children's Hospital, a huge brick block. Finally she finds her way to admissions where she is handed a form to complete, a form with Afrikaans on the one side and English on the other.

A sense of helplessness and shame washes over Mrs Tembi, for she cannot understand the form. She tries to explain her problem to the woman behind the counter who doesn't understand isiXhosa.

One of the other patient's mother has to help her with the form.

Even the English/Afrikaans signs in the corridors leave her confused about where she is supposed to go. Finally one of the isiXhosa-speaking nurses point her in the right direction.

Eventually she and Thandi get to see a doctor. The doctor asks Mrs Tembi in English to explain her daughter's illness, but Mrs Tembi is lost. Once again, it is another patient's mother who has to fill in as interpreter.

After the examination the doctor makes his diagnosis – asthma. The fill-in interpreter explains what this means, and Mrs Tembi nods 'yes' to everything she says. Who is able to check, though, whether Mrs Tembi's interpreter, who probably knows some English and a little about medicine, has conveyed the right information? Who knows whether Mrs Tembi understands the implications of her daughter's illness?

The isiXhosa-speaking pharmacist at the hospital explains how she must administer the prescribed medicine.

The labels on the medicines are in the three local languages. Mrs Tembi sighs with relief. She knows that she won't make a mistake with the medicine - at least she was lucky enough to have had the chance to become literate in Xhosa.

Language services

For most South Africans this is the kind of situation they are confronted with when they attempt to gain access to public services. For us the question is, in what way could language skills have intervened to make this situation more tolerable?

Possible solutions are, on the one hand literacy and second language skills, and on the other hand, translation and interpreting (oral translation) services.

The first solution would be desirable: that we could live in a country where people would not need any language interventions since they would have the language and literacy skills to express themselves, be it in a lingua franca or one of the many South African languages. However, this is a solution which could only impact on future generations.

The second solution could offer immediate relief. It is the most practicable short - and medium-term intervention. It is quite ironic then that the whole question of translation and interpreting into and from the African languages is still not addressed by the state. Yet it is the state which should be providing the finances and infra-structural support for professionalised language services.

How far are we from achieving this goal at present? Let's take stock: all translator training, apart from a one-year course at Wits, takes place between the two official languages and some European languages.

It is only in the past year that translation and interpreting in the African Languages, as a professional activity, has received any attention. In fact, interpreting does not officially exist in South Africa, except in the courtrooms. The Department of Justice offers a short in-house interpreter training course.

Professionalising the field

There is very little contact amongst translators and interpreters which means that experience and problems relating to terminology and approach, as well as working conditions, are not shared. This seriously affects the quality of work, as well as the morale of translators and interpreters.

Participants in a series of meetings and the two initial training courses held this year, believe that an organisation addressing the needs of African language translators and interpreters would bring practitioners together in order to professionalise their work.

Training

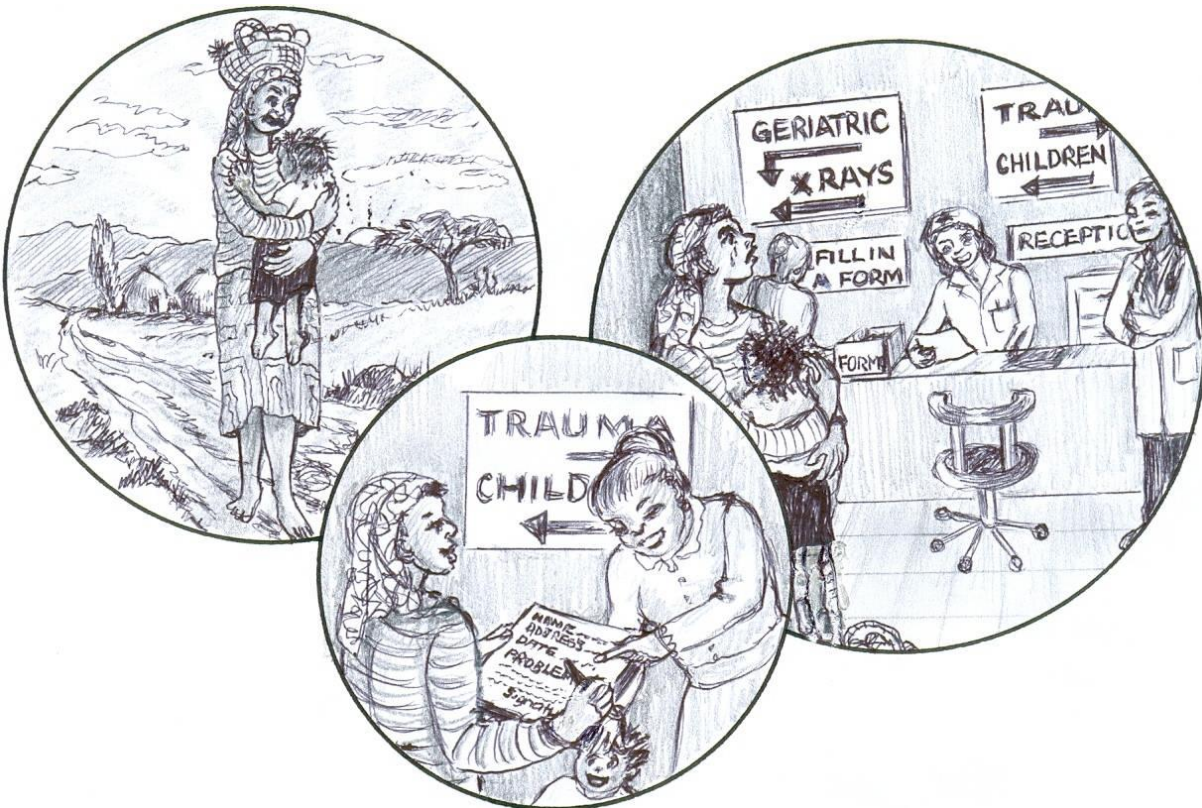
In April this year the National Language Project hosted an initial interpreter training course. Since the expertise is lacking in South Africa we had to recruit trainers from Britain, namely Robin Trew (a South African exile) and Jenny Mackintosh. The course lasted five weeks, concentrating on the following:

- | memory skills;
- | structured listening and note-taking;
- | flexibility;
- | appropriate terminology.

From: Language Projects Review, October 1992
National Language Project

COMMENT

The story about Mrs Tembi is the story of millions of South Africans. Her story explains why people are 'strangers in their own land'. The second section of the article looks at possible solutions to the problem. It is written in a very different style to the first section. The writer has to link the two sections of the article to make sense for the reader.



Linking the sections

The first paragraph in the section after the sub-heading 'Language services' starts with the words 'For most South Africans...'. This paragraph is the link between Mrs Tembi's story and the rest of the article. How does it make a link?

First of all, the first sentence says 'this is the kind of situation...'. The word 'this' means Mrs Tembi's story, so it links Mrs Tembi's story in as an example.

Secondly, there is a question: 'How can language skills make the situation easier?' This question tells us what the rest of the article is all about. In other words, we can expect to read about how working with language can help people who are not literate in English and Afrikaans.

Sub-headings

Can you see that the article has three sections? Each section has a small heading called a sub-heading.

Sub-headings divide a big article into smaller sections. This makes the article easier to read. Each sub-heading helps you to understand what the section is about.

ACTIVITY 3

1. Look at the sub-heading of the section Language services . What do you think this section is about?
2. Now read through the first paragraph after this sub-heading. What do you think 'public services' are?
3. There are two more sub-headings in the article. Use them to help you predict what each section is about. Write down one or two sentences for each section in your notebook.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 131

COMMENT

Now you have a lot of information about the article. But you didn't have to read the whole article to get all that information you used the title, the preparatory paragraph, the sub - headings and some of the paragraphs to skim the article. Skimming means reading the main parts of an article. It's a quick way to get a picture, or an idea, of the whole article.

Skimming is useful when you don't have a lot of time. Most of us are too busy to read a whole newspaper. If we just skim the headlines of the articles and read a few introductory paragraphs, we still have a good idea about the news for the day.

Identifying reading problems early

Instead of waiting for a child to experience reading delays, scientists now say they can identify the reading problem even before children start school, long before they become labelled as poor students and begin to lose confidence in themselves.

Although typically diagnosed during the second or third grade of school - around age 7 or 8 - a team from Children's Hospital Boston

see signs of the disease on brain scans in children as early as 4 and 5, a time when studies show children are best able to respond to interventions.

Gaab said most children are not diagnosed until third grade, but interventions work best in younger children, hopefully before they begin to learn to read.

ACTIVITY 4

In this activity, you'll read the section called 'Language services' more carefully, to find out about some solutions to the problems of translating and interpreting.

You have already read the first paragraph of the second section. In the second and third paragraphs the writer tells us that there are two possible solutions to the kind of problems Mrs Tembi had. The writer introduces the solutions by writing 'On the one hand, on the other hand'. This usually tells us that two things are going to be compared.

1. Read the paragraph that starts, 'Possible solutions are ...' and write down the solutions the writer gives. Use the phrases 'on the one hand' and 'on the other hand' and try to use your own words to explain each solution.
2. The writer tells us the positive and negative side of each solution. The table below summarises the negative sides of each solution. Fill in the positive side.

Solution one: to teach literacy and additional language skills to everyone.

Positive

-

Negative

- It will take a long time and will affect people in the future (note: the writer uses 'however' to introduce this point)

Solution two: to provide translation and interpreting services

Positive

-

Negative

- the state has not provided these services (note: the writer uses 'yet' to introduce this point)

ANSWERS ON PAGE 131

Looking at language

You saw in Activity 4 how the writer used words like 'however' and 'yet'. They are called linking words because they show a connection or link between one sentence and the next. When a writer uses 'however' and 'yet' this is a sign that he or she is introducing a different idea or reason. Linking words can also be used to join two sentences so that they become one long sentence. When linking words are used to join sentences, they are called conjunctions. This writer uses the word 'since' as a conjunction.

ACTIVITY 5

In this activity you are going to look at a different aspect of language: present and past tense.

1. Look at Mrs Tembi's story in the article. Can you see that most of the story is written in the present tense? It seems as if it is happening now. Look at the verbs in the second paragraph: 'arrive', 'finds', 'is handed'. The verbs are all in the present tense.
2. Imagine that you went with Mrs Tembi to the hospital. The next day you told your friend what happened at the hospital. Because you are telling your friend about something that happened yesterday, you need to use the past tense, for example:

Eventually she and Thandi got to see a doctor. The doctor asked Mrs Tembi in English to explain her daughter's illness, but Mrs Tembi was lost. Once again it was another patient's mother who had to fill in as interpreter.

3. Now change paragraph 7 into the past tense. (Paragraph 7 starts 'After the examination ...'). Here are some useful steps to help you:
 - | first underline the verbs
 - | then change the verbs into the past tense.

Write your paragraph in your notebook.

4. Do you think the article was written recently? Give reasons for your answer.

COMMENT

Some of the verbs you changed end in '-ed', for example, 'explained'. Many verbs can be changed from the present tense to the past tense by adding '-ed'.

But in other instances you had to change the whole word to make it past tense, for example, you changed 'makes' into 'made' and 'is' into 'was'. There are many verbs like this in English. They are called irregular verbs.

Here are some examples of irregular verbs:

say - said
go - went
am - was
see - saw
write - wrote
buy - bought
catch - caught
run - ran
wake - woke
may - might

Perhaps you are wondering how you will ever know which are the irregular verbs and how to change them into the past tense? When you read and hear and speak more English, the irregular verbs will come to you more easily.

Asking for directions

One of the problems Mrs Tembi had at the hospital was finding her way. She didn't understand the signs on the wall. She couldn't speak English, so she couldn't ask anybody how to find the way to the doctor. In the next activity, you'll practise asking the way in English.

ACTIVITY 6

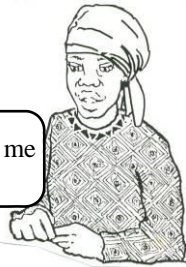
You can do this activity with a partner.

Imagine you are at the station and you need to catch a train to your new job. Take turns with your partner, asking for and giving directions.

If you don't have a partner, write down what you would say to someone walking past.

Asking for directions

Excuse me, can you tell me where I will find ...?



Do you know where ...?



How do I get to the station from here?

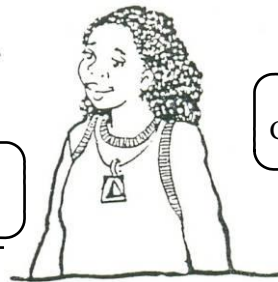


Could you please give me directions to ...?



Can you tell me how to get to ...?

Is the station near here?



COMMENT

Try to practise asking for directions. Ask someone the way to the station, or to the shop, or directions to any place. The important thing is to practise asking for directions in a real situation.

CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- prepare to read by previewing
- q save time when you read by skimming the title, preparatory paragraph, sub-headings and introductory paragraphs of each section of an article to get an idea of what it is about
- q identify and use linking words and conjunctions
- q change verbs from the present to the past tense
- q use useful expressions to ask for directions.

LESSON 3

Let's think about youth

About this lesson

In this lesson you will read an article about young people in our country. You can use ideas from the article to help you to write your own ideas about youth.

You should keep the writing exercises you do in this lesson, because you will need to use them in Lesson 4.

In this lesson you will

- | prepare to read a magazine article with questions in mind
- | find the main idea in a paragraph
- | use mindmaps to help you to plan your writing
- | organise your writing into paragraphs, so that each paragraph has a main idea
- | check your writing to make sure that it is coherent.



Preparing to read with questions in mind

The article comes from a magazine for young people called Upbeat. You can find articles in Upbeat about health, teenage problems, sports stars, and so on.

Researcher: someone who collects facts and information about a subject, and tries to gain new knowledge or understanding

These days, people have a lot to say about the youth. So, some researchers from Wits University went to find out what the youth really think about their own future. In the article on page 28, you can read how the researchers interviewed many young people all over the country.

You can read the full article in Activity 2. First you'll prepare to read. In Lesson 2, you prepared to read an article by reading the title and blurb to help you predict what the article was about. Another way you can prepare yourself for reading, is by asking questions about the article before you read it. This will help you to focus and to think about what you will read even before you start.

ACTIVITY 1

1. First read the title and preparatory paragraph of the article on page 28. Then write two sentences to describe what you think the article is about.
2. Now try to answer these questions in your notebook:
 - a. What problems do young people have? Think about the young people you know and write down your own ideas.
 - b. Why do you think young people have these problems?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 132

Reading for meaning

By giving some thought to the problems youth in South Africa face, you have prepared yourself for reading the article. Now you can read the article and find some information about the future of South Africa's young people.

The first time you read, you will try to get a general picture of what the article is about. The second time you read, you will think more carefully about what the writer has to say.

ACTIVITY 2

Read through the article. While you read, see if the problems you wrote down in Activity 1 are also in the article.

Making a future for our youth

On March 22, people from all corners of South Africa, left their homes. Buses, combis and cars, off-loaded youth at the Alpha Centre in Broederstroom outside Johannesburg. Everyone had come together to talk about the youth of our country and what the future holds for them.

Thousands of young people are not at school. Many more can't find jobs or are homeless with little to eat. Others are frightened and scarred by the violence that surrounds them. Apartheid has brought hardship and pain to millions of people in this country.

Ongoing violence, poverty and poor schooling have left over three million young people without a decent education, jobs or opportunities to develop their talents. These young people have come to be known as 'marginalised youth'. Apartheid has left them with little hope for the future. The government doesn't care about them. Often their own families can't help them either.

But they have not been forgotten. At the National Youth Development Conference youth, parents, teachers and political leaders debated and discussed ways to solve the problems of marginalised youth in our country.

'TALKING HELPS'

Ed de la Torre was a guest speaker from the Philippines. He encouraged everyone to discuss the problems that youth face. 'Negotiations are good. Constant talking helps close gaps between people. I am glad to see people coming together to discuss problems affecting the youth.

Political babies, unlike human ones, are products of many parents. The outcome of this conference should be the product of everyone's effort. And we should all be proud of that,' he said. People from organisations around the country spoke about the many problems that face the youth in their regions. Many spoke of unemployment and child labour, teenage pregnancies and violence. At school, youth faced boycotts and an ongoing shortage of books and facilities.

'GROWING UP TOUGH'

On the second day, a very interesting survey was presented. The Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) did a national survey of South African Youth. They interviewed 2 200 people of 16-30 years. They spoke to youth of all races, in cities and villages around the country. CASE asked youth about their education, their experiences of violence, their feelings about themselves and their hopes for the future. These are some of the things that made everyone think:

- | the most common reason women have for ending their education early, is pregnancy
- | four million young Africans live in homes without electricity
- | apartheid education has denied black youth a decent schooling. 1,1 million black youth have only a primary school education. But most white youth have completed their secondary school education.
- | three million youth are unemployed
- | youth of all races are scared and worried about their future.

WHITE YOUTH

People at the conference had lots to say about this survey. Some felt that white youth should not have been interviewed because they do not face the same problems as black youth. They have not been disadvantaged by apartheid. Others felt differently. They argued that white youths have also suffered family breakdowns and abuse. They said white youths are also victims of apartheid.

THE WAY FORWARD

Everyone discussed different ways to solve the big problems facing the young people of our country:

- | they agreed that a National Youth Development Forum (NYDF) needed to be established. The main aim of this forum is to make sure the youth get education and training that will develop their talents
- | there must be job creation and skills training programmes for youth in their areas
- | crisis centres must be started to provide help and counselling to victims of violence and abuse.

Upbeat asked Zenzele Phakathi from Ulundi, Durban for his views on the conference:

'Bringing together youth from different ideologies and backgrounds, is a major achievement in this country. However, I think the conference was not fully representative. White youth from political parties were not present. It would have been useful to exchange views as we face the future together.'

The Youth Book: A Directory of South African Youth Organisations, Service Providers and Resource Material

You will find the names and addresses of sporting clubs, church groups, political organisations, study groups, youth centres and lots more.

You can order a copy of The Youth Book from PRODDER.

Their address is:

Programme for Development Research
(PRODDER)
Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
PO Box 32410
Braamfontein
2017
Tel. (011) 4826150
Fax: (011) 4824739

conference:	a meeting where people come together to discuss a common problem or a common interest.
scarred:	to be damaged or marked forever by a bad experience.
survey:	a detailed investigation of something, for example people's behaviour or their opinions.
forum:	a meeting where people get together to discuss important matters.
counselling:	advice and help from a doctor, a psychologist or someone trained to counsel people.
ideologies:	a set of beliefs that people have, for example socialism, capitalism.
marginalise:	to make things or people seem unimportant or left out of the main group.



COMMENT

Did you find it useful to read with questions or ideas in your mind about the topic? It should help you to read more actively and to understand more of what you are reading, because:

- | you will have your own ideas about the topic
- | you will look for answers to your questions.

ACTIVITY 3

1. Read through the section called *Growing up Tough*, and answer the following questions in your notebook.
 - a. This section is all about the problems the youth have. The word 'tough' means being strong and able to cope with hardship. Do you think the word 'tough' describes the young people you know? Remember to give a reason for your answer.
 - b. In the third sentence of this section, the writer uses the word 'interviewed'. Read through the next two sentences. Can you find two words that help you to work out what 'interviewed' means? Write the words down. Then write a sentence to explain what you think 'interviewed' means.
2. Read the section called *White Youth*. The writer gives two opinions about white youth. Can you find the sentence which links the two opinions?
3. The last sub-heading in the article is *The Way Forward*. What do you think this section is all about?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 132

COMMENT

Although you haven't read the whole article, you have already found a lot of information by reading the sub-headings and some of the sections. You also found the meaning of the word 'interviewed' by looking at its context, or where it belongs in the article. You thought about the young people you know, and your opinion of what they are like. You also provided reasons for why they might be like this. The young people who attended the conference had a chance to say what they think about the youth of South Africa. Later in this lesson, you'll have a chance to write down your own thoughts on the matter.

Organising your ideas for writing

In the last activity, you saw that the writer divided the article into sections. Each section had a sub-heading, for example, *Growing up Tough*. The writer also had a plan for her whole article. She had:

- | a title
- | an introduction (the first three paragraphs)
- | four sections (each section tells us about different things that happened at the conference)
- | and a conclusion.

Notice that the writer also organised each paragraph carefully. You have already done this in your own writing in Lesson 1, when you wrote a passage on your feelings about learning English:

- | first, you wrote down some ideas by brainstorming
- | then you grouped similar ideas together
- | then you wrote a few sentences to make a paragraph.

Each paragraph has a main idea

When you have to read a lot of articles or books to find information it can take you a long time. But if you find the main ideas in each paragraph, it should be easier to understand and to remember what you read.

Most good writers try to put one main idea in each paragraph. Then the other sentences in the paragraph explain the main idea. For example, in the paragraph below, the sentence with the main idea is underlined. The other sentence helps to explain the main idea by giving examples.

There are many different types of crime. Stealing, hurting, killing or insulting people, are all crimes.

ACTIVITY 4

1. Read the first paragraph of the article, and underline the sentence which has the main idea.
2. Now read paragraph 5. (It starts 'People from organisations ...') Underline the sentence which has the main idea.
3. Now make a list of the problems which the writer mentions in the rest of paragraph 5. Write your list in your notebook.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 132

COMMENT

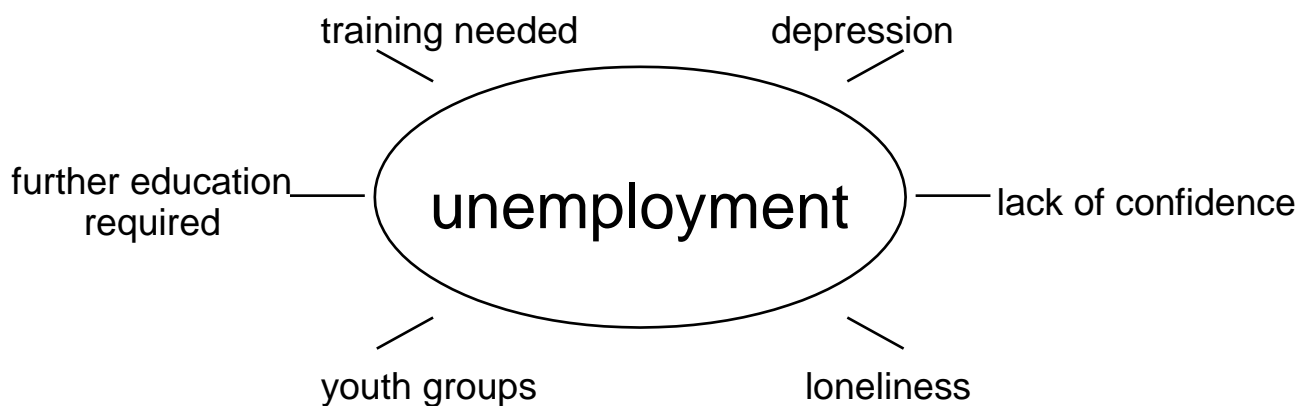
The main idea doesn't always appear in the first sentence in the paragraph. Sometimes it can come at the beginning, sometimes in the middle, or it can come at the end.

In the next section you can practise writing paragraphs. Each paragraph you write will have one main idea.

Writing paragraphs

In Lesson 1 you used brainstorming to search for ideas. This helped you prepare to write. When you brainstorm, you can write down your ideas in a mindmap. A mindmap is a collection of ideas that you brainstorm, but the ideas are linked together.

For example, if you decide to think about a problem like unemployment, your mindmap might look like this:



You can see that the main idea is unemployment. All the other ideas support the main idea.

Try to do a mindmap in your notebook when you brainstorm in the next activity.

ACTIVITY 5

1. Think about the young people you know – perhaps yourself, youngsters in your family, or the young people living in your street.
2. Now brainstorm: let all the thoughts and ideas you have about young people come into your mind. Write them down in your notebook.
3. Now find one main idea. Try to draw a mindmap, using the main idea. The other ideas will support the main idea.
4. You can draw more than one mindmap if you can think of more than one main idea.

ACTIVITY 6

Imagine that a researcher at CASE asked you to write down some information in a short article. In your article you must describe the young people you know. The CASE researcher wants you to answer these questions:

- | what are youth like?
- | what are their problems?
- | how do they try to solve their problems?

You can use the ideas you wrote down in the last activity to help you.

1. Look at the questions from the CASE researcher again. Write each of the three questions at the top of a sheet of paper, as headings. Under each question, jot down any ideas you have to answer it.
2. Now try to start writing some paragraphs. You can use your answers to the questions as a guide. For example, the question, 'What are youth like?' could give you the first couple of paragraphs, and so on. Keep your paragraphs, because you will use them later to write an article on youth. You will give the article to your tutor for assessment at the end of Lesson 10.

COMMENT

This is an example of how a paragraph might look:

The youth in my area are very angry. There are many reasons why they are angry, but the main reason is that there are no jobs for them. Sometimes, especially during stayaways or school boycotts, they become violent. I think they are very frustrated and they feel as if nobody cares about them.

Can you see that the main idea in this paragraph is: the youth are angry. The other sentences explain why they are angry, and what their anger leads to.

Now read through your paragraphs again. Don't worry about the spelling and grammar now. You can check that later. Ask yourself:

- | does each paragraph have a main idea?
- | do the other sentences in the paragraph also say something about the main idea?

Good writers read over their writing time and time again until they are satisfied that it makes sense. They ask: can the reader follow what I am trying to say?

CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- r prepare to read, using questions
- r use mindmaps to help you to plan your writing
- r include one main idea in each paragraph when you write
- r check your writing to make sure that the reader can follow what you are saying.

LESSON 4

Ezekiel Sepeng's story

About this lesson

In the last lesson, you read an article about a conference for the youth. You read about the many problems our youth experience. The article you will read in this lesson is about one young person who has achieved success in spite of many difficulties, Ezekiel Sepeng.

In this lesson you will

- | read an article and find out how the writer planned his writing
- | write an introduction and conclusion
- | listen for the main points in an interview
- | see why we use the past and present tenses.



Previewing the article

In the first activity, you'll preview the article. You'll use the title, preparatory paragraph and the first paragraph of the article to help you to predict what it is about.

ACTIVITY 1

1. Read the title and the preparatory paragraph of the article about Ezekiel Sepeng on page 37. Write two or three sentences in your notebook saying what you think the article is about.
Note: In this article the preparatory paragraph appears above the title.
2. Now read the first paragraph. Write down some questions that you have about Ezekiel Sepeng. What would you like to find out about him?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 133

COMMENT

You have read the first paragraph of the article. It's called the introduction. The introduction helps to interest you in the topic of the article. It also tells you what you can expect to find out when you read the article. Notice that the introduction to this article is only one sentence, but the sentence contains a lot of information.

Writing an introduction

What happens when you meet a person for the first time? Usually someone you both know will introduce you and tell you something about the person. For example: This is Cheryl. She works with my daughter.

Now you have a little bit of useful information about this person before you talk to her. You can use this information to ask her questions and to find out more.

When you start reading a book, a letter, or an article, it's like meeting someone for the first time. Writers first introduce you to their writing in an introduction. A good, clear introduction has information about what is in the text. It helps you to focus on the topic and to ask questions about it.

SOUTH AFRICA'S LATEST RUNNING SENSATION, EZEKIEL SEPENG IS CONFIDENT HE CAN BECOME A WORLD CHAMPION...

Gunning for Gold

EZEKIEL Sello Sepeng, the talented 19-year old pupil from Potchefstroom, was one of the few local athletes that really shone in the World Athletics Championships held in Stuttgart, Germany.

The youngster broke his own South African junior 800m record in the semi-final, clocking a time of 1 min 45.04 sec (1:45.04).

This qualified him for the final, where he finished fifth despite being the youngest runner in a strong line-up.

'Only experience stood between myself and a gold medal in the world champion-ships,' Sepeng believes. 'After qualifying for the final, my aim was to go all out and win.

'Right from the beginning of the games, I told myself that I would be going for gold.

'I did not go there to learn or gain experience, but to show the whole world what I could offer. My determination and confidence worked well for me.'

Confident words from an athlete who only began serious running when he joined the Ikageng Athletics Club at fifteen.

He began entering half-marathon and 10km races, but it was when his first coach, John Sekano, advised him to concentrate on shorter distances that Sepeng showed what he could do..

Sekano realised that the youngster had good speed, but lacked the stamina needed for longer distances. An 800m specialist was born.

Sepeng won his first two 800m races. He finished the first in 1:59, and topped that with 1:56 the next time .

After this great performance, Potchefstroom Boys High wrote a letter to his team offering Sepeng a

bursary to study at their school and run for them.

Under the watchful eye of his new teacher and coach, J P van der Merwe, Sepeng took part in many school athletics meetings that year, improving with every race he run.

His chance to prove himself on the national circuit came when he took part in the South African Junior Championships in Cape Town.

'It was my first major competition and I came second! I ran 1:49, which was my personal best,' he says. 'But coming second was a disappointment to me, and I told myself that next time I would win.'

Then, he finished fifth when he represented South Africa in the Junior World Championships in South Korea. Sepeng was disappointed with his performance, even though his time of 1:47 broke the South African under-19 record held by Tony Wheeler for 20 years.

Olympics in 1996

Running on home ground in Potchefstroom, he improved his record with a time of 1:45,97. This qualified him for Stuttgart. Then, in the SA Junior Championships in Germiston, he scored a double when he took the 800m and the 1 500m titles. He became the holder of both the national junior and senior 800m titles when he won the senior event at Bellville.

Sepeng's coach, J P .van der Merwe, is proud of the youngster's achievements. 'The boy is



Ezekiel Sepeng in the 800m heats of the World Athletics Championships in Germany.

stamina:	The physical energy needed to do a tiring activity for a long time.
refined:	Improve something by making small changes to it.
endurance:	Ability to handle a painful or difficult situation.

extremely talented, dedicated and determined.

'When I started to work with him, he already had talent. I just refined it here and there.'

Now Sepeng has his eyes set on the biggest prize of all— he aims to bring the gold medal back to South Africa from the 1996 Olympic Games to be held in Atlanta, in the United States of America.

'I've already started to prepare myself for the Games. I'm training twice a day every weekday. In the mornings I run 6km, and in the afternoons I'm on the tracks working on my speed and endurance. I am very optimistic that I will win gold for my country in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics,' he says with the simple confidence of an athlete who believes in himself.

ACTIVITY 2

1. Read the article *Gunning for Gold*. Underline the text that answers the questions you thought about in Activity 1.
2. Then answer the following questions in your notebook.
 - a. Find two words in the first seven paragraphs of the article to describe the kind of person Ezekiel Sepeng is.
 - b. When Sepeng first started running, what kind of races did he run in?
 - c. Why did his first coach advise him to change?
 - d. In 1993, when this article was written, what were Sepeng's plans for the future?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 133

COMMENT

The article you have read is all about one young athlete, his career and his plans for the future. The article was written in 1993. What has happened to Ezekiel Sepeng since then? Here is an update on his life:

Ezekiel Sepeng won a silver medal in the 800m at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. After moving to Johannesburg, he started training in more hilly terrain. At an athletics meeting at Stellenbosch University in January 1997, he won the mile event. Sepeng represented South Africa in the 800m at the World Championships in Athens in August 1997. He did not win, and was criticised for poor tactics. 'I ran a bad, bad race,' he said. 'If you make one mistake in the 800m then you're out.'

In 2002, he took 3rd place in the European Indoor series 800m and in 2004 he won the silver medal in the African Championships. Sepeng was banned from running between 2005 – 2007 as he tested positive for dope.

Writing a conclusion

If an article has a lot of information in it, the conclusion provides a summary of the main ideas. For example, a conclusion of an article about young people and drug problems could end like this:

We can see that our young people face many temptations to abuse drugs. They are under pressure from their friends. They have many personal problems which they think drugs can solve. They can get hold of drugs very easily. We need to make a united effort to stop drugs.

Just as writing an introduction is like introducing someone, writing a conclusion is like saying farewell. Your readers must know that they are at the end of the article, letter or story.

Sometimes the writer links the conclusion and the introduction. For example, here are the introduction and the conclusion for an article about District Six, near Cape Town:

Introduction:

District Six was Cape Town's liveliest neighbourhood before it was obliterated from the Eastern Boulevard all the way up to the mountain. Declared a 'white group area' in 1966 under the Group Areas Act, the senseless ruin began soon afterwards. Sixty thousand people, including families who had never known another home, were carted away to places like Bonteheuwel, Manenberg and Hanover Park while their original neighbourhoods died a little more with each removal.

Conclusion:

Thirty years later, all that is left is a colourful blur of houses at the end of Aspeling Street, home to a few 'forgotten' residents and their memories. Aspeling Street is a photograph faded around the edges, a remnant of the spirit of District Six, But the women who still live there keep this spirit alive.

Adapted from Rothfuchs, S. 'Forgotten but not gone'
in Sunday Life 15 June 1997.



Can you see the connection between the introduction and the conclusion? The writer starts the article by describing how vibrant District Six used to be and how it was destroyed. He concludes the article by saying what is left of District Six and how, although it is gone, it lives on in people's memories.

Did you notice that the writer uses different tenses? He does this to show the different times he is writing about. In the introduction, he writes about the past, about things that happened thirty or more years ago. So the verbs are in the past tense, for example 'was', 'were' and 'died'.

In the conclusion, the writer writes about District Six today. So, the verbs are all in the present tense. For example 'is', 'live' and 'keep'.

An interesting difference between the introduction and conclusion is the way the writer looks for something positive to say so that he can end on a happy note.

In the next section you'll have a chance to draft an introduction and conclusion for your own writing. You'll need the writing you did in Lesson 3 about the youth in your area.

ACTIVITY 3

In Lesson 3 you wrote a draft report on the youth in your area. You described what the young people you know are like, what their problems are, and so on. This is the main part of your report. Now you can plan and write an introduction and conclusion.

1. Write a short paragraph to introduce your report for the CASE researcher. Here is what you must check for in your introduction:
 - a. Does your introduction tell your reader what you are going to write about? For example:

'There are many young people in the area where I live. I have been to talk to them about how they feel about their problems.'

- b. Does your introduction make your reader want to read further? For example:

The young people I know are excited and looking forward to the future.

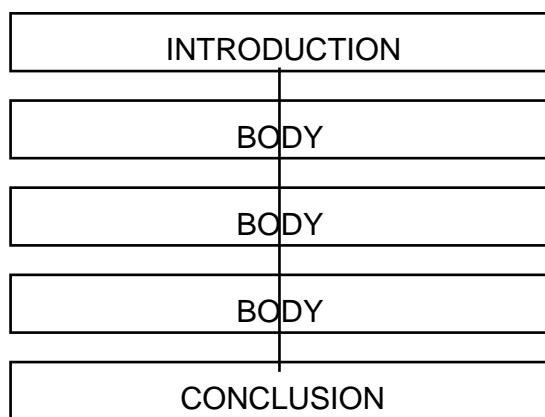
2. Write a short paragraph to conclude your report. Here is what you must check for in your conclusion:
 - | does the conclusion link up to the introduction?
 - | does the conclusion end off your writing, so that your readers know they have come to the end?

For example, you could end off like this:

The problems I have outlined in this report have to be solved by consulting the young people themselves. Listen to them. The energy which sometimes causes them to be destructive is also the energy that must be used to rebuild our community and to make their dreams a reality.

COMMENT

Notice that you wrote your introduction and conclusion after you had written the body of your report. So you first had a clear idea of what your article was about. Then you introduced it and concluded it. You can show your report as a diagram:



Show what you have written to a learning partner for comments and suggestions. Ask your partner if your article is clear and easy to read and whether your introduction and conclusion help your readers to find out what you are writing about in a simple and logical way.

Revising the writing process

In the first four lessons of this unit, you learnt the steps you should take when you write. You learnt to:

- | prepare to write by brainstorming to get some ideas,
- | use mindmaps to organise your ideas into groups
- | write your ideas in paragraphs, so that each paragraph has a main idea
- | write an introduction and a conclusion to interest your readers in your writing and to help them to understand your main points.

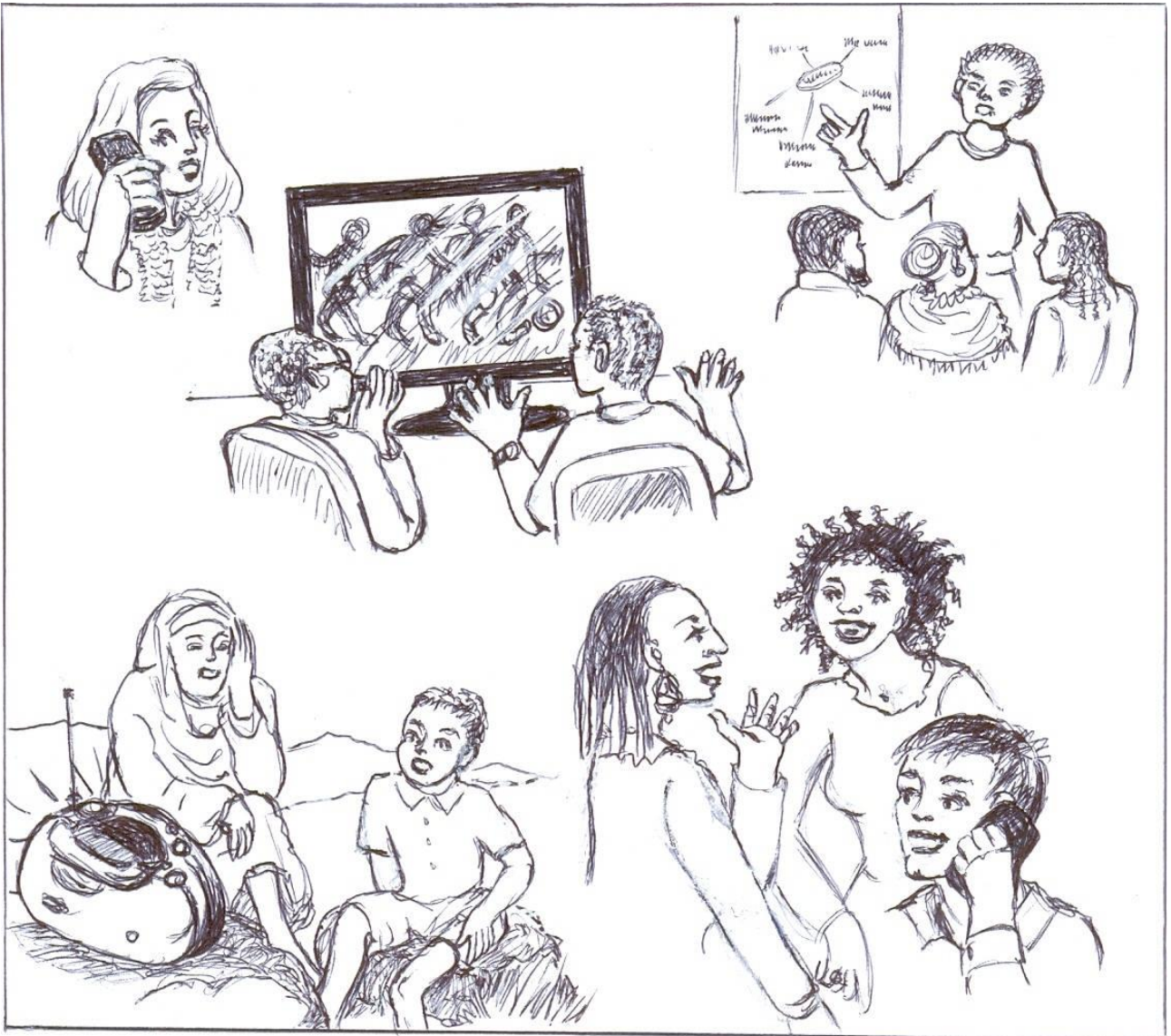
All these steps make up the writing process. A process means doing something step-by-step to achieve a particular result. It means building up from small things - like your first five words in the brainstorming exercise - to bigger things, your article.

Listening skills

In the last three lessons you practised your reading, writing and speaking skills. But there is another important way to communicate – listening.

In the cities, people have access to newspapers, TV and the radio. But many South Africans living in the rural areas depend only on the radio for information and for entertainment. So, listening is an important way to spread ideas and to increase communication.

In your studies, or in your work, there are many different occasions when you have to listen. In this section you will practise your listening skills.



ACTIVITY 4

In this activity you will listen carefully to the introduction to an interview on the tape. The interview is with a young man called Andy Phopi. The introduction contains information which will help you to understand what Andy Phopi has to say in the rest of the interview.

Listen to the whole tape first, to get a broad idea of what Andy has to say. Then you can listen to parts of the tape to find the answers to each question.



1. Listen to the introduction on the tape. It starts, 'Hello learners ...' and ends '...young people and their problems'. Stop the tape at the end of the introduction and write down what you think the interview will be about.
2. Before you listen to the rest of the tape, look at these questions:
 - a. Can you give some information about Andy's family?
 - b. What is Andy's attitude towards his parents? (In other words, how does he feel about his parents?)
 - c. What suggestions does Andy make for solving the problems that learners have?
 - d. What does Andy think about the future?

Now listen to the rest of the tape and answer the questions in your notebook.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 134

COMMENT

In this activity you were able to rewind the tape and play it again as often as you needed to. In real life, you can't get someone to repeat themselves over and over when you want to understand what they say. But by using clues like the introduction you are able to predict what is to come.

Did you have difficulty understanding what Andy or the interviewer said because of the way they spoke? In other words, did you struggle to follow because either of their accents sounds different to the voices you normally hear? If so, you will need more practice listening to different ways of speaking, or accents. One way to get practice is to listen to the radio (or TV if you have one) as much as you can. You will hear quite a lot of different voices and ways of speaking English.

CHECKLIST

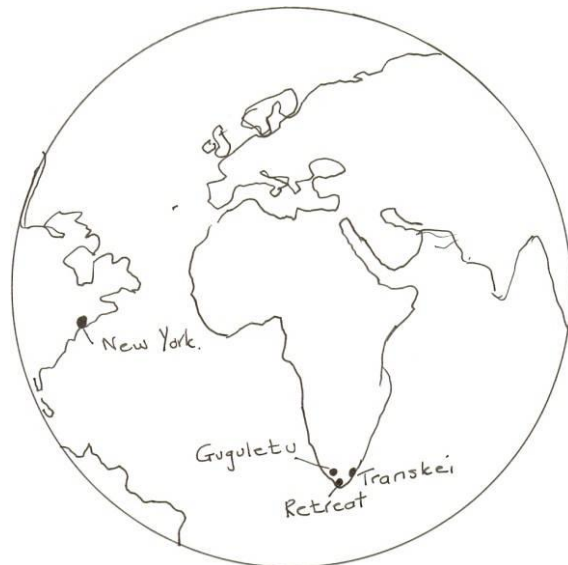
Are you able to:

- r explain why it is important to write an introduction and a conclusion
- r write an introduction which describes what is in the body of the writing and interests the reader
- r write a conclusion which links up to the introduction and ends off (concludes) your writing
- r prepare to listen to an interview or lecture by using the introduction.

Why do we write and who do we write for?

People write for many different reasons. One reason for writing is to give information. For example, an article you read in a previous lesson gave you information about a conference for the youth. Another reason for writing is to send important news, for example, you might write a letter to someone in your family to tell them that you have passed your exams.

The first extract you will read comes from a book called *To My Children's Children* by Sindiwe Magona. Magona was born in Transkei (the Eastern Cape). When she was very young she went to live with her parents in Retreat and later Guguletu in Cape Town. As an adult, Magona worked for the United Nations Organisation (UNO) in New York. This book is the story of the first twenty-three years of her eventful life.



In the next two activities, you'll read the extract from Magona's book. Then you'll decide why she wrote it and who she wrote it for.

ACTIVITY 1

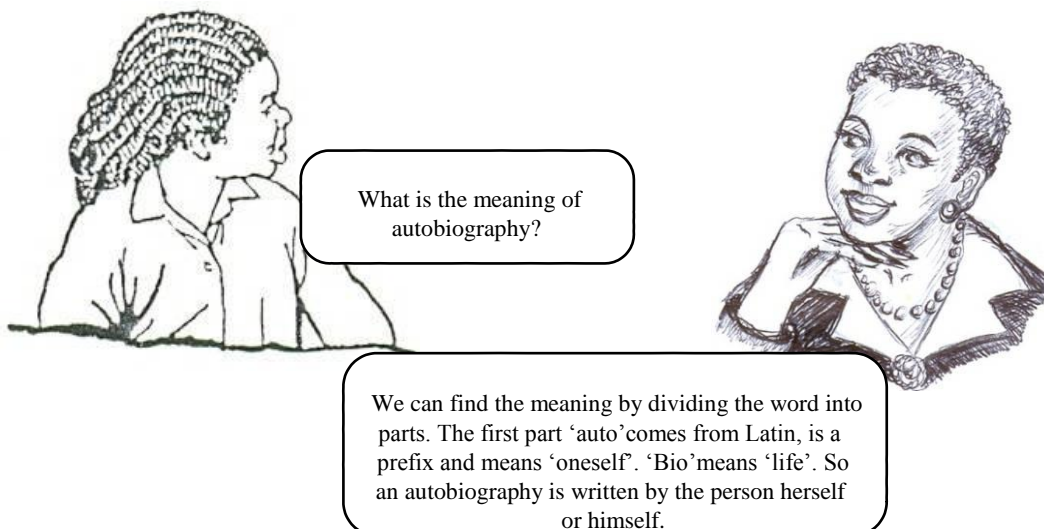
1. First read through the whole extract on pages 48 and 49. Try to get an idea of what it's about. When you are reading, notice that:
 - | the story is written in the first person. The writer writes about herself. She uses the pronouns 'I' and 'we'.
 - | The writer includes lots of descriptions. She gives the reader lots of information about the things she is talking about, so that we can picture them in our minds. She uses lots of adjectives (describing words).

2. When you have read the extract, answer the following questions in your notebook.
- In this part of the story, Sindiwe Magona still lived in a rural area in Transkei (the Eastern Cape) with her grandparents. Read the first two paragraphs and find the words or phrases that give you clues that she lived in a rural area.
 - In paragraph 5, Magona writes about the emotions (feelings) she and the other children experienced when they listened to the stories. Find the words or phrases that describe two emotions they had.
 - In paragraph 6, Magona writes about the tradition of storytelling. A tradition is like a custom, or a way of doing things that stays the same for many, many years. Why do you think she explains about the tradition of storytelling to her readers?
 - In paragraph 6, we read that Magona's uncle Masondo and her cousin, Sondlo were 'masters of the art'. Read the paragraph again and find a word that helps you to work out what a master of the art is.
 - Magona writes the first seven paragraphs in the past tense. She is writing about something that happened a long time ago. But in the rest of the extract she changes to the present tense. Why do you think she suddenly changes the tense she is writing in?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 134

COMMENT

Magona's book is an example of writing called narrative. A narrative is a story. Usually, narratives are in the past tense because writers tell us stories about things that happened in the past. Narratives can also be very descriptive, like Magona's book. Magona's book is a special kind of narrative, called an autobiography.



EA Y DAYSRL

- 1 By age three I had a baby sister and was, by definition, no longer a baby and thus qualified to sit around the fire with the other children, waiting for the evening meal and evening prayers thereafter.
- 2 The grownups busied themselves with evening chores; among the last, putting the grass mats on which we slept (perhaps less than on the benches of the village had beds) in place. Some, at this time, would be preparing what would be breakfast the following day.
- 3 Always, however, there was at least one adult, usually grandmama, sitting with us around the fire. To keep children awake, she would tell us bits of the fairy-tales of amaXhosa.
- 4 There were tales about ogres and giants about animals of the forests, great beasts, and about little hopping creatures of the veld. There were tales about animals of the river, huge scaled crocodiles that could swallow people and animals whole, or crushing them to death as they did so. And later on, when hungry they would bring them up and chew them to cud.
- 5 There were happy tales also; princesses and princes and queens and chiefs and chieftainesses: stories that we listened to and believed. Stories that were told with such vivid detail and in such modulation of voice that we children saw them in our minds and lived them in our feelings; crying when a little orphaned girl, on her way to her uncle or grandparents who would look after her (this would be a girl an angel always I've heard of, far away) fell into the hands of an ogre disguised as a kindly little old lady, with designs to have her for his dinner. We read with laughter—the kind of laughter that leaves you feeling weak in your belly, tears streaming down your face; honest honest nonsense and decorous laughter—when cruel giants and cannibals came to get us, usually by inadvertently falling prey to the very traps intended for their victims.

fairy-tales:
 stories in which magical things happen
 vivid:
 clear, strong modulation:
 changing your voice as you tell different parts of the story, e.g. speaking like a giant if you are reading about a giant
 ogre:
 a giant or monster

6. Both men and women tell folktales to children. These stories are handed down, by word of mouth, from generation to generation. In my own family, the outstanding storytellers of my childhood were my maternal grandmother, a paternal uncle, Masondo and a cousin, Sondlo. When either of these two men came to visit, we would listen to their tales well into the night, willingly warding off sleep. They were masters of the art.
7. Sometimes other games were introduced of an evening. Sparks on the three-legged cast-iron pot, sparks produced by scratching the pot on the fire with one of the logs burning underneath, become *abay eni* ; the team of negotiators for a daughter's hand in marriage.
8. An uncle or aunt will say, 'Let us see how many *abay eni* will come to ask for so and so one day' (naming one of the little girls present).
9. So saying, they will take one of the little sticks of wood burning under the pot and scratch the side of the pot with one bold stroke. Immediately sparks will become visible where the pot had been scratched. Everyone, especially the one-distant-day bride-to-be, is now spellbound. The counting begins: 'One, two, three, four, five ... 'Goodness!' someone else will butt in, 'Where will we put such a big party?' Another will ask, 'How will we feed so many people?' 'Girl, it looks like you will marry into a well-to-do family; otherwise how could they send so many people? 'This little game ends with much leg-pulling and laughter and no little sense of importance in the future bride.

decorum:
good manners,
good
behaviour ,
modesty ,
respectability
inadvertently:
by accident,
unintentionally ,
without
realising
negotiators:
people with
different
interests who
come to an
agreement and
make
arrangements
leg-pulling:
teasing or
making fun of
someone



ACTIVITY 2

In this activity, you'll work out why Magona wrote her book and who she wrote it for. You have got quite a lot of information about the book:

- | title: To My Children's Children
- | information about the author: she grew up in Transkei (the Eastern Cape) and Cape Town
- | the book is her life story
- | she wrote about her feelings
- | she wrote about the traditions she grew up with
- | she wrote a lot of descriptions.

Now answer these questions in your notebook:

1. Who do you think Magona wrote this book for?
2. Why do you think she wrote the book?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 134

COMMENT

Magona's book has an **audience** – in other words, the people that she wrote the book for – her grandchildren.

Her book also has a **purpose** – in other words a reason (or reasons) why she wrote the book. She wanted to share her experiences and memories.

Writing to suit our audience and purpose

In the course so far, you have read different kinds of writing. You have read a few articles from magazines, interviews, and an extract from an autobiography. Each kind of writing is written in a particular way. For example, sometimes writing has sub-headings and a lot of facts, like the article about the youth. Other times, writing has lots of descriptions about feelings, like Sindiwe Magona's book.

In the next section you are going to compare two different pieces of writing to work out how the writers have written to suit their audience and purpose. Sindiwe Magona's book is like a long 'letter' to her grandchildren in which she describes her experiences and memories. In Activity 3 you'll read a different kind of letter and compare it with Magona's writing.

ACTIVITY 3

On the next page is a letter which Ezrom Mofokeng wrote to a magazine called Drum. Ezrom Mofokeng lives in Reitz, a small town in the Free State. Skim the letter and then answer the questions.



1. The editor of the newspaper gave a heading to the letter. He called it Xmas driving picked out . Why do you think he chose this title?
2. Read the first paragraph of the letter. The writer introduces his letter. What important information does he give in his first paragraph?
3. Read the second paragraph. Here the writer introduces his personal opinion. What is his opinion on the topic?
4. Now read the rest of the letter. What reasons does the writer give to support his opinion? What is his conclusion or recommendation?
5. Letters to the editor usually express the writer's opinion, or ideas. The writer uses mostly short sentences. Why do you think he uses this style?
6. The writer uses the present tense. Why do you think he chooses to do this?
7. Why do you think the writer wrote the letter? What was his purpose?
8. Who did he write the letter for? Who was his audience?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 135



COMMENT

Ezrom Mofokeng tries to express his ideas so that people will take his opinion seriously. He uses short sentences and he writes in the present tense.

He also planned his letter carefully. In a short introduction he tells readers what his topic is. He gives his opinion on this topic in his second paragraph. In a brief conclusion he gives his recommendation.

The way Mofokeng planned his writing is called the structure .
(You learnt about the structure of writing in Lesson 4 of this unit.)

ACTIVITY 4

In this activity you'll work out how writers write to suit their audience and purpose.

1. Read through each text again and think about how Magona and Mofokeng write to suit their audience and purpose.
2. Make two columns in your notebook:

Sindiwe Magona's autobiography	Letter to the editor

Then look at the list of phrases (groups of words below). Each phrase describes how each text was written. Put each phrase into the correct column.

For example, the phrase 'descriptions of feelings' goes in the column headed Sindiwe Magona's autobiography.

short sentences
lots of describing words
descriptions of feelings
formal language
expressing anger and frustration
the writer is personally involved
a tight, neat structure
long, detailed descriptions
short and to the point

ANSWERS ON PAGE 136

COMMENT

Sindiwe Magona's autobiography is personal, friendly and full of her feelings like sadness, fear and excitement.

On the other hand, Mofokeng's letter to the editor is short, formal and to the point. He catches the readers' attention by writing in a way that is quick and easy to read.

It's very important that you think about your audience and purpose when you write. For example, when you write to a close friend, you can write about your feelings. But when you write a letter to apply for a job, it is inappropriate to tell a manager that you are feeling depressed and nervous about your application.

ACTIVITY 5

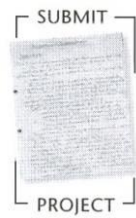
Imagine that you are a grandmother or grandfather. You would like to write a personal letter to your grandchildren describing your childhood. You want to tell your grandchildren about some of your most important experiences. Follow these steps when you write:

1. Use brainstorming to try to think about events in your childhood that stand out in your memory. What are the things that you remember best about your childhood? Remember that when you brainstorm, you write down all the words that come into your mind when you think about the topic. Don't worry about neatness or being correct.



2. Choose one memory that you would like to write about in detail.
3. Write the story of that memory in about five or six paragraphs. Each paragraph should contain one main idea. Organise your paragraphs so that they make sense to the reader. You might want to organise them in chronological order, starting with what happened first, and ending with what happened last.
4. When you are writing, think about your audience (your grandchildren) and your purpose (to communicate your memories).
5. Remember, when you write, try to:
 - | describe your feelings
 - | write as if you are talking to your grandchildren. Use words that they could understand and ideas that they would enjoy.

When you have finished, correct your work, rewrite it and give it to your tutor for assessment.



COMMENT

Perhaps your childhood memories are painful ones, or perhaps you chose something joyful to write about.

In the lessons to come, you'll practice different kinds of writing for different audiences and purposes.



CHECKLIST

Are you able to:

- r explain what an 'autobiography' is
- r understand that all writing has a particular audience and purpose, and the way we write must suit the audience and purpose
- r describe the differences in style between an autobiography and a letter to the editor of a newspaper
- r think about who you are writing for and why you are writing, and choose an appropriate style.
- r write a letter.
- r discuss use of pronouns.
- r see how descriptive adjectives are important when writing a description.
- r determine why writers use different tenses.

Please make sure you have given the letter you wrote in Activity 5 to your tutor, for assessment.

3. Your answer could look like this:

I think the punishment was cruel and ineffective. I think this because in my own experience to make fun of children for doing wrong does not teach them anything. It made me feel angry and I certainly didn't always learn from it.

4. If you scanned the passage, the keyword which leads you to the place where you'll find the answer is 'today'. The writer tells us how he feels now about the way in which he responded to his punishment. He writes that he feels glad ('I take comfort') that he didn't try to escape his punishment by telling on another child who spoke Welsh.