

WRITING GUIDE

WRITING SKILLS

WORD ORDER

Word order is very important in English. The usual order is: **subject + verb + object + additions**

Note

- 1 If a sentence has both a direct and indirect object, there are often two possibilities:
He showed **me his new car**. ✓
He showed **his new car to me**. ✓
- 2 Many time expressions can come at the beginning or the end of the sentence:
Yesterday, I found someone's wallet. ✓
I found someone's wallet **yesterday**. ✓
- 3 Never separate the verb from its object(s). We cannot say:
I found yesterday someone's wallet. ✗
- 4 Adverbs of manner can come in several positions, but not between the verb and object.
Slowly, she began her speech. ✓ She began her speech **slowly**. ✓
She **slowly** began her speech. ✓ She began slowly her speech. ✗
- 5 Some adverbs of frequency can come at the beginning or the end of the sentence, or before the main verb.
Sometimes we celebrate Christmas together. ✓ We **sometimes** celebrate Christmas together. ✓
We celebrate Christmas together **sometimes**. ✓ We celebrate sometimes Christmas together. ✗

Notes:

If the main verb is *to be*, the adverb of frequency follows it.

They are **often** in touch on Facebook. ✓

Always and *never* cannot begin or end a sentence. We cannot say:

Always we give each other presents. ✗

We forget to take a photo never. ✗

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

The verb is singular or plural, depending on the subject.

He lives in London. (singular) / **They live** in London. (plural)

Note

- 1 Singular nouns that refer to groups can have either singular or plural verbs.
The crew **was** / **were** glad to get home.
- 2 Amounts and measurements have often got singular verbs.
One hundred dollars **is** the final price.
Twenty kilometres **seems** like a long way to walk.
- 3 Words like *anyone*, *everybody* and *nobody* have got singular verbs.
Does anyone **know** that man?
I think everybody **agrees** with me.
Nobody **likes** my cooking.
- 4 Uncountable nouns have got singular verbs, even if they end in *s*.
Physics **is** considered a difficult subject.
The news **sounds** good.
- 5 Some nouns are always plural.
Brand-name **clothes** are expensive.
These **binoculars** don't work very well.

USE OF ADJECTIVES

- Adjectives come before nouns and after certain verbs (*to be* or stative verbs).
 a **large** house ✓ a house **large** ✗ They seem **lovely**. ✓
- The adjective form for singular and plural nouns is the same.
 a **magnificent** painting / **magnificent** paintings ✓ **magnificents** paintings ✗
- Adjectives follow a specific order: **opinion** + **size or age** + **shape** + **colour** + **origin** + **material**.
 an **uncomfortable, old, wooden** chair ✓ an **uncomfortable, wooden, old** chair ✗

CONNECTORS

Connectors are linking words which join ideas and show how those ideas are related to one another.

I felt a bit shy **because** I didn't know anyone. (to give a reason)

She was wearing a coat **despite** the heat. (to express a contrast)

He was exhausted, **so** he went to bed early. (to describe a result)

They also help us to organise our writing and make it easy for the reader to follow.

In contrast to countries like Spain and France, in Britain the weather is often quite unpredictable, with sudden rain at any time of the year. **For this reason**, the weather is one of the most popular topics of conversation among Brits. If you're visiting Britain, you should always carry an umbrella **so as not to** get caught in an unexpected shower. **Even though** they often complain about the weather, most Brits realise that their country is lovely and green **because of** the frequent rain.

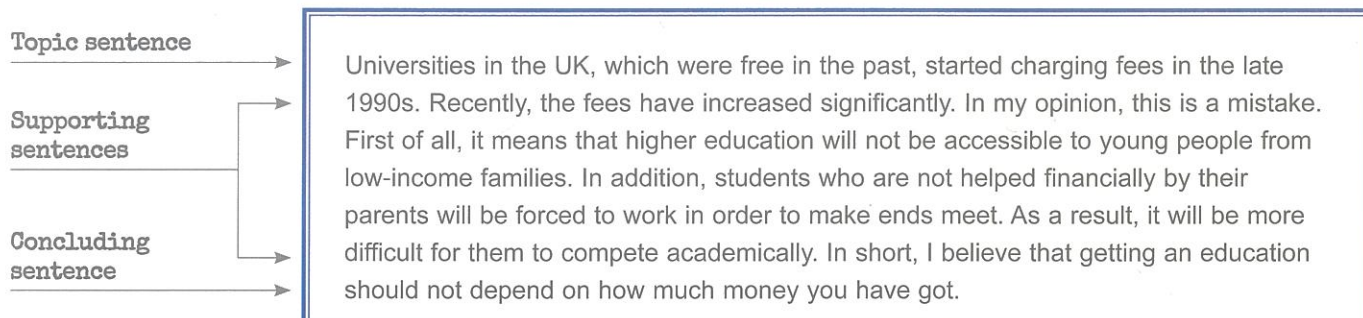
Study the chart of connectors and phrases below.

Use	Examples
to add points on the same topic	and / in addition / furthermore / moreover / what's more / besides / also / too / as well as
to express a contrast	but / however / nevertheless / yet / still / although / even if / even though / in spite of / despite / while
to describe a cause or reason	because (of) / since / due to / as / as a result of / one/another reason for ... is ...
to describe a result	so / therefore / consequently / thus / as a result / as a consequence / for this reason / that is why
to show purpose	in order (not) to / so as (not) to / so that / to
to describe similarity	similarly / likewise / in the same way
to express personal opinions	in my opinion / I (strongly) believe (that) / I think/feel (that) / in my view / it seems to me (that) / personally / as I see it
to introduce facts	in fact / as a matter of fact / actually / the truth is (that)
to make general statements	in general / generally / as a rule / on the whole
to list points	to begin/start with / in the first place / first of all / for one thing / <i>firstly, secondly, thirdly</i> / finally / lastly
to give examples	for example / for instance / such as / like / particularly / in particular / especially / (more) specifically
to introduce opposing points	on the one hand / on the other hand / in contrast / contrary to / it can also be argued that / but there are people who say/think (that)
to show sequence	first / at first / in the beginning / before / next / then / soon / meanwhile / later / after that / afterwards / at last / eventually / finally / in the end / during / when / after a while
to show time	when / while / before / after / until / as soon as / by the time
to conclude	in conclusion / to sum up / in short / all in all

WRITING A PARAGRAPH

A paragraph consists of several sentences about a certain topic. It has the following parts:

- 1 a **topic sentence** which gives the main idea of the paragraph
- 2 **supporting sentences** which add reasons, details and examples
- 3 a **concluding sentence** which leads on to the next paragraph or summarises the main idea



The parts of a paragraph should flow logically. The paragraph must be easy to understand. You can accomplish this by:

- 1 using pronouns to refer back to the nouns in the text
- 2 using connectors to show the connections between ideas (see the chart on page 123)

WRITING AN ESSAY

An essay consists of several paragraphs about a topic. There are many different kinds of essays, but they all have the same basic plan:

1 THE OPENING

The opening is a general presentation of the topic. Try to start your essay with an opening that will catch your reader's interest. Here are some ideas:

- a Begin with a question.

Remember how embarrassing it used to be to fall asleep in class? Well, at Kennedy School it's perfectly all right. This historic school has been converted into a hotel.

- b Begin with a short anecdote about real or imaginary events.

Jill Massena walked into her old third-grade classroom, remembering her school days years ago. She drew a picture on the blackboard, took off her shoes and relaxed on the king-sized bed. This may sound strange, but the school where Jill studied is now a hotel.

- c Begin with a surprising fact.

There's a hotel in Portland, Oregon, that has blackboards in the guest rooms and a pub called Detention Bar.

If you can't think how to begin, don't worry. Go on to the body of the essay. You can always write the opening later. The important thing is to keep going.

2 THE BODY

The body has got one or more paragraphs which develop the topic. When you prepare to write, you brainstorm for ideas (see page 125). Then you choose ideas to use and put these ideas into groups in a logical order. Use these groups of ideas to write the body of the essay. Each group of ideas will become a separate paragraph.

3 THE CLOSING

The closing is a paragraph which summarises the main idea or presents a conclusion. It should not bring in new ideas. In some cases, the closing may be similar to the opening, but presented in different words. It should always leave the reader with a strong impression.

In short, the Kennedy School Hotel is a unique and enjoyable place to stay. I recommend giving it a try the next time you're in Portland.

THE WRITING PROCESS

STEP 1

BRAINSTORM FOR IDEAS

- Write down all the ideas you can think of.
- Don't worry about whether all the ideas are relevant.
- Don't worry about grammar or spelling.
- You can write in your own language.

STEP 2

ORGANISE YOUR IDEAS

- Decide which ideas to keep and cross out the others.
- Group similar ideas together.
- Organise the groups according to a writing plan.

STEP 3

WRITE A FIRST DRAFT

- Write your first draft on the computer or by hand. If you are writing by hand, use a pencil. Leave wide margins for notes.
- Leave space between lines for additions and corrections.
- Write quickly. Don't worry about neatness or accuracy.
- If you can't think of a word in English, write it in your own language. Look up the word in a dictionary later.
- If you can't spell a word, write it any way you can. Then check the word in a dictionary or use a spellcheck when you have finished.

TOPIC: Credit Cards – The Best Way to Shop?

(A) convenient – no need to worry about how much cash you've got

(A) safe – no danger of cash stolen

(B) sometimes a high fee is charged

(A) can be reported and cancelled if stolen

~~(A) reports help you keep track of spending~~

(A) can be used to buy online

(B) number can be stolen from a receipt, over the phone or from a website

(B) can encourage you to spend more than you have

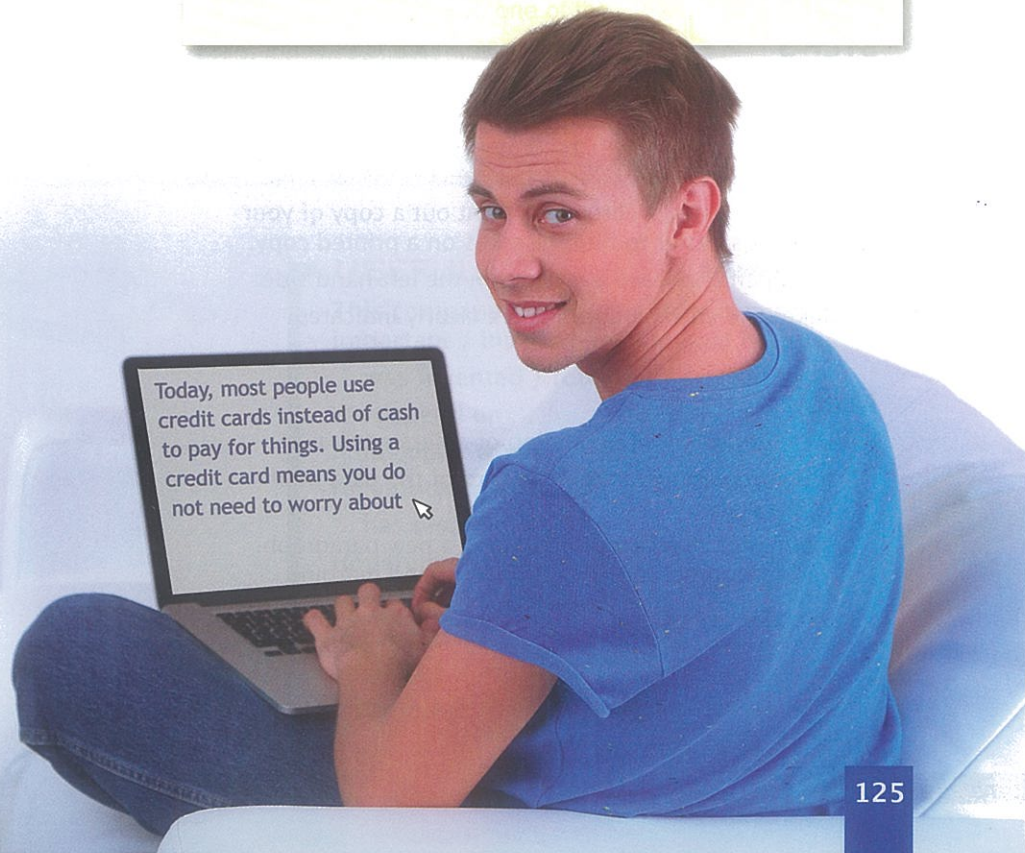
~~(B) you can't see how much you've spent or how much you've got left~~

(A) you sometimes get special discounts

(B) can lead to uncontrolled spending

Group A – advantages

Group B – disadvantages



STEP 4

CHECK YOUR WORK

- Use the Writer's Checklist to improve your work.

WRITER'S CHECKLIST

Organisation

- ✓ I organised my work according to a plan.
- ✓ Each paragraph has one topic.
- ✓ My paragraphs are clearly indicated.
- ✓ My ideas are in a logical order.

Language

- ✓ My grammar is correct.
- ✓ My spelling is correct.
- ✓ My word order is correct.
- ✓ My punctuation is correct.
- ✓ I used capital letters correctly.
- ✓ I used adjectives correctly.

Today, credit cards are used by almost everyone.
Credit cards are very ~~convenient~~ ^{convenient}, because ~~of~~ you
don't have to worry about how much cash you
have got. If you notice that your card ~~have~~ ^{has}
been stolen, you can ~~to~~ call and cancel it so that
no one can use it. This is impossible if someone
~~your cash~~ ^{has} stolen.

Content

- ✓ My work is interesting and original.
- ✓ I began with a suitable opening sentence.
- ✓ I presented my ideas clearly.
- ✓ I included only relevant ideas.
- ✓ I supported my ideas with details and examples (opinion, for and against essay).
- ✓ I ended with a suitable closing sentence.
- ✓ I used connectors to link my ideas.

STEP 5

WRITE A FINAL DRAFT

- If you are writing by hand: copy your corrected work neatly onto a clean sheet of paper.
- If you are using a computer: print out a copy of your essay. It's easier to find mistakes on a printed copy.
- Use a pen and leave a margin on the left-hand side.
- Make sure your paragraphs are clearly indicated.

Note

You can indicate the beginning of a paragraph by:

- 1 indenting (moving the first word of the paragraph to the right).
- 2 skipping a line before beginning a new paragraph. Each paragraph begins at the left-hand margin.

Both styles are correct, but be consistent in your writing.



MODELS

An Informative Essay

An informative essay contains factual and objective information about a topic, such as its history, how it developed and what makes it special. Look at the topic below. Then study the plan and read the model.

TOPIC

Write an informative essay about an invention.

Plan

Opening

Introduce the topic and basic facts

Body

Develop the topic with facts and details

Closing

Summarise the main points

MODEL

Plastic – Friend and Enemy

It's hard to imagine modern life without plastic. We depend on this amazing material for almost everything we use, from toys to telephones, cars and computers. However, in recent decades, people have become aware that plastic has a dark side as well.

Bakelite, the first completely synthetic plastic, was invented by Leo Baekeland in 1907. Durable, strong and light, this revolutionary product could be moulded into any shape. It was also very inexpensive, since it did not depend on limited supplies of natural resources.

Since then, plastic technology has enabled the invention of countless innovative products and made them affordable to the average consumer. Nevertheless, today we know that plastic is extremely destructive to the environment, piling up in landfills and in the oceans.

In conclusion, although plastic is critical to our way of life, it is also one of the biggest threats to life on our planet. Hopefully, in the near future, scientists will find environmentally friendly solutions that will enable us to continue enjoying plastic products without harming planet Earth.

For Practice, see Workbook Skills Practice Writing, page 83

USEFUL LANGUAGE

This company / product / item is special / important / invaluable / unusual because ...

... was invented / founded / started by ...

We depend on ...

It all began when ...

revolutionary product ...

... has enabled ...

Hopefully, ...

In the near future, ...

In conclusion, ...

In short, ...

To sum up, ...

A Formal E-mail

The usual purpose of a formal e-mail is to apply for a job, request information or make a complaint. When writing a formal e-mail, we should state our purpose clearly, provide all necessary information and use formal, polite language. Look at the topic below. Then study the plan and read the model.

TOPIC

You are planning a holiday. Write a formal e-mail to a hotel asking for information.

MODEL

Plan

Greeting

Opening remarks

Give reason for writing

Body

Requests for information

Closing remarks

Signing off

Send Options... Help

To holidayhotel@info.com

Subject Request for Information

Dear Sir / Madam,

My friend and I are planning to spend a week in Paphos. I came across your website online and was impressed by the appearance of your hotel and the positive reviews. However, before making a reservation, I would like to ask a few questions.

First of all, I would like to know whether the hotel is within walking distance of the beach, and whether there are shops and restaurants nearby. I was also wondering what transport is available to and from the airport. In addition, could you please tell me whether all your rooms have balconies?

We are interested in renting bicycles and touring around the island, as well as doing some snorkelling. Is it possible to find these services at or near the hotel? Finally, would you be able to send me detailed information about good routes to bike on? I would appreciate it very much.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Thompson

Internet

For Practice, see Workbook Skills Practice Writing, page 82

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Greetings

Dear Mr / Ms ... ,

To whom it may concern,

Dear Sir / Madam,

Opening Remarks

I am writing in reply to ...

I came across your ...

Useful Expressions

I would like to ask ...

I would like to know ...

I was also wondering ...

Is it possible ... ?

Would you be able to ... ?

I would appreciate it very much.

Closing Remarks

I look forward to your reply.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Signing Off

Yours faithfully,

Yours sincerely,

A For and Against Essay

A for and against essay presents both sides of an issue. It often concludes by supporting one of the sides. Look at the topic below. Then study the plan and read the model.

TOPIC

Write a for and against essay about the advantages and disadvantages of spending one year studying at a university abroad.

Plan

Opening

Introduction to the topic

Body

Arguments for one side of the issue, with supporting details and examples

Arguments for the other side of the issue, with supporting details and examples

Closing

Summary of issue and writer's opinion

MODEL

Studying Abroad

More and more UK students are considering the option of doing part of their university studies abroad. Living and studying in another country sounds wonderful, but it has drawbacks as well as benefits.

On the one hand, studying abroad can open your mind to new experiences. You'll be able to truly understand the culture of another country by living there and joining the local students in classes and activities. In addition, it's an excellent chance to become independent because you'll have to manage on your own in a new place, far from your family.

On the other hand, even though it may be temporary, moving far from home has its problems. It often takes a long time to get used to a new culture, and it could be difficult to make friends with people who have a different mentality to your own. Moreover, studying in another language, although it will help you become proficient, may be more frustrating than you thought.

In my opinion, students should study overseas if they get the opportunity. However, although it can be a fantastic experience, it's up to each person to decide if they're able to deal with the challenges involved.

For Practice, see Workbook Skills Practice Writing, pages 81 and 82

USEFUL LANGUAGE

More and more ...

It has drawbacks as well as benefits.

On the one hand, / On the other hand, ...

In addition, ...

Moreover, ...

Although ...

To sum up, ...

In conclusion, ...

In my opinion, ...

I believe that ...

I feel that ...

An Opinion Essay

An opinion essay states an opinion and tries to convince the reader that this opinion is correct by supporting it with reasons, facts and examples. Look at the topic below. Then study the plan and read the model.

TOPIC

Write an opinion essay on the following topic:

Building new motorways or improving public transport – which is better?

Plan

Opening

Presentation of issue and opinion

Body

Reasons, facts and examples to support opinion

Closing

Summing up and restatement of opinion

MODEL

Building New Roads – a Good Idea?

The government in our area is spending millions of euros on constructing several new motorways. In my opinion, this is a mistake. I believe that the money should be spent instead on improving public transport.

First of all, improving motorways may reduce traffic for a short time, but this will only encourage more people to buy cars. This will lead to worse traffic jams, more pollution and global warming. Secondly, building more roads harms the landscape, since the natural habitats of plants and animals are destroyed and covered by huge areas of asphalt.

Making public transport an attractive alternative to private vehicles would prevent this damage. More people would use trains and metros, so that there would be fewer cars in and around the city. This would reduce noise and carbon monoxide levels, resulting in a cleaner and more pleasant environment.

In short, I believe that improving public transport is much better than building more motorways. If people could rely on an efficient transport system, there would be less congestion, less destruction of nature and a decrease in noise and pollution.

For Practice, see Workbook Skills Practice Writing, page 81

USEFUL LANGUAGE

In my opinion, since ...
This is a mistake.	... so that ...
I believe that resulting in ...
First of all, ...	As I see it, ...
Secondly, ...	In short, ...
This will lead to ...	In conclusion, ...
... because ...	

A Summary

A summary provides the reader with the main idea of an article in as few words as possible. It includes the important points, but not examples or details, and often contains language similar to, but not identical to, the article. Look at the topic below. Then read the original article and the model summary.

TOPIC

Write a summary of an article, using 60-80 words.

MODEL

Vinyl Records Make a Comeback

Today, young people listen to music on their mobile phones, music players and computers. However, if they asked their parents and grandparents how they listened to music when they were younger, the answer would be unanimous – they purchased vinyl records and played them on their record players. For the last 20 years, records have been available only in second-hand and speciality shops. However, these vinyl treasures are currently making a comeback.

Digital compact discs (CDs) were introduced into the market in 1982. By 1985, their success was so great that it led to a crisis in the vinyl record industry. With the rise of the CD, replacement parts for record players became unavailable as records gathered dust in people's basements. In fact, by the end of that decade, vinyl records were considered obsolete.

Contrary to expectations, some music lovers were dissatisfied with the new digital technology. Even today, Adam Johnson, a New York music dealer, says, "If I evaluate the sound quality of various formats, no digital format sounds as warm and alive as an old record does." Karen Scott, a music collector, adds, "Records are just like books in the sense that when you buy one, you own an original copy. Digital technology ruins that."

In recent years, more and more consumers appear to share Johnson's and Scott's view. Vinyl record sales have gone up for several years in a row, with a 30 to 40 per cent gain over the last few years. Not only are records being produced again in greater numbers, but record players are also being manufactured and sold by the leading electronics companies. Is this the end of CDs and music players? Probably not. Unlike digital formats, records can only be played at home. Yet one thing is for sure: Records are back in a big way.

Model Summary

Plan

One cohesive paragraph which includes only important information

Vinyl Records Make a Comeback

Vinyl records, which were the only type of music format available in previous generations, were made obsolete in the 1980s by the rise of CDs. However, they are now becoming popular again. Some music lovers claim that the sound of a vinyl record is superior to digital sound. Others add that only records can provide the satisfaction of owning an original copy. Consequently, in the past few years, the sales of both vinyl records and record players have increased dramatically.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

However, ...

Some ... claim that ...

In the past few years, ...

... has increased dramatically.

Moreover, ...

Apparently, ...

Clearly, ...

Although ...

Consequently, ...

An E-mail for a Job Application

When applying for a job, it is common to write a cover letter that is sent with your CV. It's important to follow the correct format and to use appropriate language. Read the advert below. Then study the plan and read the model.

TOPIC

LIFEGUARDS NEEDED NOW!

Summerfields Country Club is looking for full-time lifeguards. To qualify you must be:

- At least 18 years old
- In possession of a nationally recognised lifeguard qualification
- Hardworking, dedicated and reliable

**APPLY TO: The Personnel Manager, Summerfields Country Club,
Crest Lane, Norfolk PE38 9PP or personnelsummerfields@bighat.com**



Plan

Writer's address and date (Not required when writing an e-mail)

Details

Person who will receive the application

Greeting

Reason for writing

Body

Relevant personal details and qualifications

Closing remarks

Signing off

MODEL

24 Kenton Road
Kings Lynn PE3 1JK
30th May, 2022

The Personnel Manager
Summerfields Country Club
Crest Lane
Norfolk PE38 9PP

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing in response to your advert posted on the JobSeekers site on 28th May. I would like to apply for the position of full-time lifeguard.

I am 18 years old and have a National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ), which I did in June last year. In addition, I recently completed a first-aid course with the St John Ambulance organisation. My work experience includes accompanying the Falmouth Scouts on their summer camp, where I was responsible for the pool safety of the 10- to 12-year-olds, as well as working for two months at the Sandy Bay municipal pool. I have included copies of references from both these places of work.

In addition to the above, I am a hard-working, reliable person and I take my responsibilities very seriously.

I hope you will consider my application favourably. I would be happy to attend an interview at any time that is convenient.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,
Karim Blakely

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Dear Sir / Madam,
Dear Mr / Mrs / Ms ... ,

I am writing in response to ...
I would like to apply for ...

My work experience includes ...

I hope you will consider my application favourably.

I look forward to hearing from you.

A Curriculum Vitae

When applying for a job, you will often have to supply the employer with your personal details, as well as your educational qualifications and work experience. There are a number of different ways to present a CV, but whichever format you use, make sure your information is presented clearly and accurately. Below is an example of a CV which can be used as a model for your own.

MODEL

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name	<i>Belén Rodríguez Martín</i>
Address	<i>C/ Ronda de Valencia, 224, Alicante</i>
Telephone no.	<i>607755848</i>
E-mail	<i>elenbe85@gmail.com</i>
Nationality	<i>Spanish</i>
Date of birth	<i>4th May, 2004</i>

WORK EXPERIENCE

Dates	<i>2020-2021</i>
Name of employer	<i>Biblioteca Miguel de Cervantes</i>
Occupation or position held	<i>Library worker (part-time)</i>
Main activities and responsibilities	<i>Help people find information, organise books and file documents</i>

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Dates	<i>2019-2021</i>
Name of school	<i>IES Gran Capitán</i>
Principal subjects covered	<i>English language, history, literature</i>
Title of qualification awarded	<i>Secondary School Graduate – Bachillerato</i>

SKILLS AND PERSONAL ABILITIES

Languages	
Mother tongue	<i>Spanish</i>
Other languages	<i>English (good level written and spoken) French (fluent)</i>

COMPUTER SKILLS

General	<i>Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint</i>
Graphics or multimedia	<i>Photoshop, InDesign</i>
Programming	<i>Visual Basic</i>

OTHER SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE	<i>2018-2019: photo editing</i>
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DRIVING LICENCE	<i>Licence for 125cc motorbike</i>
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A Narrative

A narrative tells a story. It describes a series of events and the feelings of the people involved. Look at the topic below. Then study the plan and read the model.

TOPIC

Write a narrative about an adventure.

Plan

Opening

Set the scene and introduce characters

Body

Tell events in the story and how the characters felt

Closing

Tell the ending of the story

MODEL

Alone in the Mountains

It was a cloudy autumn day, and the tourist jeep had left us at the top of the mountain. Our plan was to hike all the way down. All around us there was thick forest, with no other people in sight.

After finding the path, we began to descend slowly, as it was far rockier and more slippery than we had imagined. Then suddenly, Keith slipped on a rock and fell. He tried to get up, but his leg hurt too much. With no phone reception, we had no idea how to get help.

Luckily, a few minutes later some other hikers came along. They promised to notify the rescue services as soon as they reached the village, and then they were gone. As the hours passed, we began to wonder if they had forgotten. We were all frightened and poor Keith was in pain, but at least the injury didn't seem serious.

Finally, a helicopter came to rescue us. After Keith had been checked at the clinic, we got back to our hotel exhausted. Once we were safe, it all began to feel like an exciting adventure! I wish I could find those hikers to thank them for keeping their promise.

For Practice, see Workbook Skills Practice Writing, page 83

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Time Expressions and Connectors of Sequence

at first	now that
before	while
after	during
next	meanwhile
later	eventually
when	a few minutes later
until	as the hours passed
as soon as	finally

Useful Expressions

I / We began to wonder if ...
Suddenly, ...
Luckily, / Fortunately, / Unfortunately, ...
To my surprise, ...
I felt ...
It turned out to be ...