



**Cambridge Assessment**  
International Education

## Lesson plan

Writing a reflective commentary

## Lesson plan – Writing a reflective commentary

### Writing a reflective commentary

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Learning objectives:</b> | By the end of this lesson learners will be able to write a reflective commentary on a piece of their own writing.   |
| <b>Lesson objectives:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners will be able to demonstrate the reasoning behind their writing choices and relate these to their intended readership.</li> <li>• Learners will identify appropriate features of form, structure, and language.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Vocabulary:</b>          | Sentence types – declarative, interrogative, exclamative, imperative.   |
| <b>Previous learning:</b>   | Learners have explored a range of writing forms in preparation for both the short writing and extended writing tasks.   |

### Plan

|                  | Activities   | Guidance  |
|------------------|--|---|
| <b>Beginning</b> | <p>Ask learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what they would expect to read in a commentary, and</li> <li>• what specifically, a <b>reflective</b> commentary might contain.</li> </ul> <p>Explain that a good commentary should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain concisely how your writing matches the task, audience, and purpose set by the brief in the question,</li> <li>• comment (as appropriate) on the form, structure and language used,</li> <li>• support your comments with appropriate references and quotations, and</li> <li>• demonstrate an awareness of the effect on the reader/audience.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources:</b> examples of learners' own writing.</p> | It may be useful to share an example of a commentary with learners so that they can identify some of the features.  |
| <b>Middle</b>    | Learners look at a selection of writing tasks and work in pairs to assess the specific requirements of the writing questions where they will have to write a piece of no more than 400 words, e.g. create a sense of atmosphere; a sense of isolation; a sense of fear and desolation; a calm after the storm.   | It is very important that learners learn to write to the required word count so that this becomes a clear framework for the exam. Writing concisely is an important skill and allows time to consider the effects a learner wishes to include in their own writing. |

## Writing a reflective commentary

In pairs, learners can practise writing short extracts in preparation for writing up to 400-word pieces of writing.

Discuss the possible strategies for writing the reflective commentary. Two possible approaches are:

**Option A:** Work through the text you have written one paragraph or section at a time, following its structure. For example: *I start by ... Then, in the next paragraph...*

This is a good strategy because it ensures a methodical coverage. Drawbacks: if a technique is used in more than one paragraph, then there would be unnecessary repetition.

**Option B:** Work through the different elements mentioned in the task.

A good strategy because you can cover several references to, for example, colour in one comment. You are more likely to be efficient and concise using this approach.

Drawbacks: there is a danger in spending too much time on one element and not leave enough time to write about other important points. It can also be challenging to make several references in one sentence or paragraph.

Learners should choose one of these suggested activities working in pairs to plan and write a response and then a reflective commentary.

- You have been asked to contribute a descriptive piece of writing about an isolated and rugged landscape to a creative writing website. Create a sense of the wilderness atmosphere and focus on the size and form of the landscape to help your reader imagine the scene.
- You have been asked to contribute to the 'Mountain Rescue' log section of the safety group's website. Write the first part of your report on the rescue of a small group who were trapped in an isolated and rugged landscape. Create a sense of the drama and danger that the group faced in this landscape by writing about the actions taken by the rescue team in the rugged landscape.
- You have been asked to contribute to a website for extreme adventure holidays about trekking in an isolated and rugged landscape. Create a sense of the challenges and action which can be experienced in the landscape and focus on the range of exciting possibilities on offer.

Exploring past papers can enable learners to identify the types of tasks that may be set.

The reflective commentary requires learners to comment on the form, structure, and language of their writing. They should also consider how their chosen effects impact on the reader or audience. So, they are commenting on the reasons for the selection of language, identifying features/devices, explaining organisation of the piece of writing, and referring to typical aspects of form.

| Writing a reflective commentary   |   |                               |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
|   | <b>Resources:</b> Past papers to look at tasks that have previously been set for Q1a and Q1b.   |                               |
| <b>End</b>  | Pairs should read one another's work; checking that features of form, structure and language have all been included and their effects considered. |                               |
| Additional information  |   |                               |
| Differentiation   |   | Assessment                    |
| Select extracts that are more accessible or challenging in terms of language choices for learners. Different pairs/groups can work on different extracts or different sections of an extract. |   | Peer assessment and feedback. |
| Follow-up work  |   |                               |
| Select a different task from the three choices given in the lesson to write a short piece of writing and commentary for homework.   |   |                               |