



Toolkit Focus: Explanation

To create explanation writing which explains actions, ideas or processes to the reader, you might want to:

EYFS	Year 1 & Year 2	Year 3 & Year 4	Year 5 & Year 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to and discuss short simple explanations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a three part structure which should comprise of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A title which sets up expectations for the reader <i>e.g. Why we must look after our bees...</i>, An opening that introduces reader to the topic and signals the purpose of the text <i>e.g. Bees are winged insects which play an important role in our ecosystem.</i> An ordered list of reasons or events leading up to the outcome signalled in the title <i>e.g. Firstly, Bees are important because they can make honey. They also help trees and plants to grow ...</i> A conclusion which follows from the reasons listed in section 2 and links back to the title <i>e.g. So without bees, we would have no fruit. Now you know why they are so important.</i> Where appropriate, use generalising words: <i>e.g. most, many, some, few</i> Use conjunctions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> time and sequence: <i>then, before, when etc. first second etc.</i> to sequence information leading towards the conclusion; cause and effect to link reasons/motives and conclusions: <i>so..., so that..., because..., in order to... , that's why..., etc.</i> Use well-chosen adjectives to denote size, colour, behaviour etc. Use prepositions to show position and direction: <i>behind, above, towards etc.</i> Write in the present tense and usually 3rd person to give text an impersonal and objective voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend use of three-part text structure, boxing up the text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> general statement to introduce the topic, <i>e.g. in the autumn some birds migrate</i> a series of logical steps explaining how or why something occurs, <i>e.g. because the days get shorter and there is less light...</i>, steps continue until the explanation is complete. End with a summary statement or memorable piece of information: <i>As a result, Dinosaurs quickly became extinct along with about 50% of other animal species.</i> Interest the reader e.g. with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a title that captures the text The discovery of bubble gum; <i>Why are dragons extinct?</i> an exclamation: <i>Beware, foxes can bite!</i> questions, <i>Did you know that...?</i> tempting turns of phrase: <i>strange as it may seem..., not many people know that..., Interestingly...</i> add extra, interesting bits of information <i>e.g. the first balloons were made from animal intestines.</i> Collect and use a range of conjunctions and generalisers to link sentences and add interest for readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For cause and effect <i>e.g. this means that..., as a result..., owing to..., in order to, leading to..., where..., when..., therefore..., consequently...,</i> to add information: <i>e.g. as well as..., furthermore..., additionally..., moreover..., Not only...,</i> to compare: <i>like the..., similarly..., as with..., equally..., in contrast to., etc.</i> for emphasis: <i>most of all..., most importantly..., In fact..., without doubt., etc.</i> to generalise <i>e.g. all..., many..., the majority..., typically..., Like most..., always..., often..., sometimes., usually...</i> to conclude: <i>finally., so..., thus..., in conclusion..., to sum up..., which explains why..., etc.</i> Use technical language, explaining what it means where necessary. Use descriptive language to illustrate key points and help the reader build a picture of what is being explained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help readers to understand explanations through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions that link to their experiences <i>e.g. No doubt you will have seen a suspension bridge, and it is almost as likely that you have travelled over one.</i> giving examples: <i>other mammals, such as flying squirrels and gliding possums, can only glide for short distances.</i> Inventing similes to illustrate points <i>e.g. a tree's bark is like our skin..., the cables of a suspension bridge are stretched under tension like a spring.,</i> possible use of diagrams, charts, illustrations or models. Use expanding the range of conjunctions and generalisers, particularly those showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cause and effect use of provisional statements with words and phrases like <i>usually..., seem to be..., tend to...,</i> opinions as well as facts <i>e.g. Some people still believe that... It used to be thought that...</i> technical vocabulary to add precision <i>e.g. spine, compression, glucose</i> references to sources of evidence to add authority <i>e.g. Most people now believe..., However, last year, a new variety was discovered...</i> Vary sentence structure, length and type e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complex sentences to combine information effectively: <i>The Outer bark keeps a tree from losing too much water, which could happen easily in a plant so large...;</i> sentences with lists of three: <i>Pulleys are used on boats to hoist sails, in garages to lift engines and in cranes for shifting heavy weights;</i> active and passive voices: <i>suspension bridges have cables strung between tall towers from which a deck is hung (or suspended);</i> conditional and hypothetical (if...then) sentences <i>e.g.: If trees lose (were to lose) their bark, they would die because...; If Fleming hadn't accidentally noticed the mould, we might not have penicillin today.</i>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use mostly present tense, 3rd person in formal style for an unknown audience. Use correct punctuation for sentences, clauses, questions, exclamations. 	
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Typical ingredients of instructions text:

Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who wants to understand a process or event.
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help someone understand a process or why something is, or has happened.
Typical Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Series of logical – often chronological – explanatory steps Paragraphs usually beginning with a topic sentence. Often illustrated by diagrams to aid understanding.
Typical Language Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal language Present tense Causal sentence signposts to link explanation Generalisation Tentative language to refer to unproven theories. Detail to help understand points – often in form of information. Technical vocabulary
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does a bicycle pump work? Why does it get colder when you go up a mountain? How did the Egyptians build the pyramids?

