

Ravens Wood School

Sixth Form

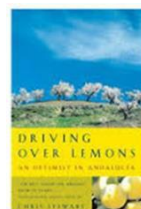
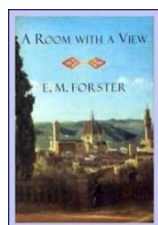


Preparing for Success

English Language and Literature Combined

Pre-Course Task

Student Name: _____



Read the following tutorial that was published as part of a travel writing workshop. Highlight and annotate the information and complete the suggested tasks as you do so.

Some vocabulary is already highlighted and you may need to look the meaning of this up and label it.

When is the best time to produce a feature on travel?

It is actually best, according to some, to begin the actual piece of writing when you return. While you are away, your perspective is different – you are immersed in a different culture and you cannot focus to the same extent on what people will actually find interesting when back in your own culture.

You, the traveller are a different person from the writer.

The story of the journey is hidden from the traveller until the journey is over. The traveller is a tainted witness, too caught up in events to give a reliable account.

What sort of style features should I include?

The style you have to use for travel writing is very similar to that which you might use in other types of journalistic writing. This might include:

- A mixture of different sentence lengths for interest and effect
- Fairly clear and **unambiguous** style
- A minimum of technical language/ **jargon** that is not accessible, but you may wish to include words from the fashionable **vernacular** of the moment e.g. **zeitgeist** or **FOMO**
- Avoid thoughtless and lazy use of clichés

Examples of clichéd language in travel writing

Azure seas

Shimmering white sands

Palm fringed

Stepping from the plane, the heat hit me like a warm flannel

Stepping from the plane was like opening an oven door

Dark clouds loomed

Snow-capped mountains

Lush vegetation

Last great wilderness

Land of vivid contrasts

Vibrant city

Golden beaches

Tropical paradise

I'll be back

Examples of frequently and potentially overused words/phrases

Picturesque

Beautiful

Quaint

Pretty

Scenic

Charming

Mountains, peaks or buildings that 'loom' or 'tower'

Buildings standing 'prominently'

Cities that 'sit'

Is famous for

Attractive

Historic

Dramatic

Well-preserved

Friendly locals

Majestic

Elegant

Cling

Flank

Enjoys

Offers

Boasts

Traditional

Dominates/ is dominated by

Toytown

Show, don't tell!

Instead of overdoing it on these words and phrases, you need to give your own sensitive, original response to what you see on your visit/ travels

If you have been somewhere and had a good time or been to an unusual destination, that isn't enough.

However unlikely your location or adventurous your method of getting there or how expensive your hotel, all that counts is the way that you manage to express what it felt to be there.

Practice task – style

Take ten minutes to describe one of the following, based on an experience from your own travels or visiting places – write approximately fifty words. Assume that we know the place that you have been in and the relevant context/ background.

- Mountain or view from a mountain
- Valley
- Waterfall
- Sunrise
- Sunset
- Beach/ view of the sea
- Rainforest view
- An unusual building or piece of architecture

A note on tense

Normally, you will put a feature in past tense, but you can use the present tense. This conveys immediacy. It can make your introduction, for example, more exciting.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The simplest possible structure is a beginning, middle and end, just like you have always been taught so far at school. But in reality, the introduction will often precede the beginning of the actual narrative – frequently, the introduction is separate from the narrative itself.

Thinking about introduction, remember that the **function** of an introduction feature is to sell the reading of the whole text –to ‘make the reader want to read on’.

A good introduction will try out more than one selling line on the reader – you cannot just rely on the interest of the subject matter itself.

Types of introduction

- Striking quotes
- Colourful scene setting
- Posting questions/ putting a **paradox** in front of the reader
- Use exaggeration/ hyperbole e.g. *Even the sheep are adrenaline junkies!*
- Any kind of exciting material from the feature – you could even pull out the most exciting material you have from elsewhere in the piece and make it your introduction

Practice task

Take 5-10 minutes to write a really exciting introduction for a travel feature based on somewhere you have been. Try out one of the introduction types above.

Have a go!

Endings

The function of an ending is not to sell the piece of writing to the reader – you have already done that! Nor is it actually to ‘round off’ the piece of writing as we often say. We are in fact looking for closure, rather even than an ending- it doesn’t need to be suggestive of ending!

What closure means

Anything which leaves the reader with a feeling of satisfaction that they look for at the end of a feature.

Structural features

- A line or phrase somewhere in the text that is the justification or paragraph outlining what your feature will be about – the rest of the piece should 'hang' on it – like a central thread
- Anecdotes and min-stories within the story
- Use of the **quest structure**

Parts of your feature to consider in your overall structure

- Introduction
- Justification
- Background
- Main narrative
- Mini stories
- Ending/ closure

Links and transitions

The most common are:

- However, nonetheless, notwithstanding, nevertheless
- Having said that, even so etc.
- And/ But

Careful to use these subtly- and don't overdo it!

Good luck with writing your own feature. Remember to refer to some of these things that you have learnt as you write your one page reflective piece.

Still need inspiration? Have a look at some of these extracts from different types of published travel writing:

https://www.bookbrowse.com/excerpts/index.cfm/book_number/531/driving-over-lemons

<https://www.thebookseller.com/feature/touching-void-extract-338974>

<http://tim parks.com/non-fiction/italian-neighbours/>

