



Guidelines on text types used on language B paper 2 HL/SL

General comments

This document is intended to provide some guidelines to help the teaching of text types for the different language B courses.

It is understood that different types of texts will have different interpretations in the many different languages, but some standard aspects have been put together with the intention of clarifying some of the most confusing elements. The suggestions in this document should be used in conjunction with the latest paper setting instructions and with the corresponding sections of the *Language B guide* (February 2002).

It is important to note that though there is an effort to define text types by referring to their specific features, examples often consist of a mix of different types (for example, an anecdote within an email, recommendations in a magazine article). This is often the case in “real life” but also in IB examinations because of the need to contextualize paper 2 tasks.

There is also difficulty distinguishing the prescribed communicative purposes and text types; one text type often contains different communicative purposes.

It is very difficult to define text types, and teachers often do not teach by text type, as this is too restrictive. However, the examination papers focus on text type. The whole of criterion B for paper 2 is aimed at communicative purposes and we cannot eliminate this.

One or two tasks may ask students to imagine being someone other than a teenager, but these must remain within the students’ sphere of experience, for example, a nurse or a journalist, not a senior citizen.

Text types

Description: factual

Set of instructions

A set of instructions in its broadest sense can be interpreted as recommendations and/or suggestions.

Features:

- Formal or informal depending on context
- Often with a particular order
- Very factual
- Step by step
- Description of a process



- May be included within another text type: email, speech, brochure
- Discourse markers included where appropriate

It might be possible that some students write only one sentence, followed by bullet points. There may be a key point at the beginning of a paragraph, followed by expansion of the key point.

Examples:

- Speech to first year students on how to write a formal essay
- Email sending advice to a friend

Suggestions

Suggestions and recommendations may not have a particular order.

Examples:

- A Japanese penfriend is visiting your culture. Include suggestions on how to behave during the first visit to a stranger's house, what to bring as presents, how to behave.
- A survival guide for parents of teenagers, *How to handle teenagers*, published in the school magazine.
- Advice on healthy living.
- A group of young people in different countries whose aim is to reduce world poverty. Write the practical aims of the group, what activities you do, how individuals could participate in this.

Description: evocative (HL)

Pamphlet or brochure

A pamphlet or brochure could also be considered as a "factual" description. In this way the task would also be suitable for SL.

Features:

- Creative use of language
- Attention to presentation, for example, eye-catching titles
- Some language rules may be broken
- Some factual information included
- High proportion of adjectives and adverbs
- Use of rhetorical devices

Example:

You have a summer job in the tourist office. Write a brochure for visitors to your region describing the main attractions. At SL the pamphlet/brochure would be expected to include mainly factual details; at HL, evocative details should be expected.



Profile of a person

In some languages a written profile could be used in the same way as a portrait.

Features:

- Based on one or several interviews
- May include narration
- May be presented as a newspaper or magazine article, or as a speech introducing someone
- May be formal or informal

Examples:

- Profile based on an interview of a celebrity
- Teacher or employee leaving or retiring

Most are written in the third person singular, but they can include quotes.

Narration: factual

Statement to police

Features:

- Chronological order of events
- Emphasis on facts not opinions
- Person writing statement should identify himself or herself
- Concise, to the point
- People involved
- Place
- Time

Example:

You were in Japan and something happened to you. Write your statement to the police about the incident, including what happened, where you were, who was involved.

Narration: imaginative

Anecdote

Features:

- The telling of a short story
- Small incident
- Amusing or striking



- Usually informal
- Has a beginning, middle and end, but does not need to be sequential
- Normally associated with spoken language, but in paper 2 can be in the form of an email

Example:

You were walking around the market in Germany and had a very interesting experience at one of the stalls. Write an email about your experience at the market.

Written interaction

Informal letter

- Addresses—not required
- Some form of greeting required
- Date—optional
- Punctuation—some required
- Paragraphing—necessary, but no prescribed number, depends on task set (emails have fewer paragraphing issues)
- Closing salutation necessary
- Name and signature
- Contractions and abbreviations acceptable
- “Smileys” and/or similar emoticons acceptable
- Words in text message (SMS) form not acceptable
- Strictly no swear words; extreme or inappropriate language to be penalized

“Idiomatic” language is acceptable; in fact good use of idiomatic expressions should be rewarded. Language that is so informal as to be considered inappropriate should be discouraged.

Formal letters

Features:

- Addresses—optional
- Date—recommended (according to conventions of the language)
- Greeting
- Standard formulaic introduction where applicable. This will vary from language to language. For example, French and Spanish use set forms of salutation that are very formal and very different from forms commonly used in English.
- Closing salutation



- Appropriate sign off
- Use of paragraphs
- Formal register; no slang or other informal language allowed
- In English, avoid contractions

Explanation: factual

Report

There is no clear definition of a report.

- It may or may not have headings/sections.
- It may or may not be addressed to anyone, as long as this is not confused with the formal letter style.

Bullet points are acceptable as long as they do not inappropriately replace continuous prose. The aim is for students to show their ability in the language.

Argument

Talk, speech

Talk

- Generally more informal.
- Relates to the presentation of information, although this is not necessarily exclusive.
- There may be references to an audience.
- There should be appropriate greetings and closing remarks.

Speech

- Generally formal with emphasis on persuasive argument (for example, wedding speech, leaving speech, political speech).
- May be backed up by factual information.

The correct use of rhetorical devices should be rewarded under criterion B.

Letter to a newspaper

This is a very language-specific form and it is necessary to conform to the conventions of the target language.

- In British English, the letter to a newspaper may be a subversive form associated with irony and wit. This may not be appropriate to language B.
- A letter to a school newspaper is more appropriate.
- In Arabic, a letter to a national newspaper would take the form of a letter of complaint, while a letter to a school would be an article/essay form.



- In Japanese, the letter takes the form of a personal story with the point made only in the last sentence. It is very indirect and never uses phrases such as “I think” or “in my opinion”.
- In Finnish, a letter to a newspaper has a very clear structure, similar to that of an essay:
 - statement of problem
 - justification
 - example
 - suggested solution(s).

The use of the correct cultural form and the communicative value of the writing should be rewarded.

Analysis and critique

Review of film, book or play

- A review should not retell the plot, but should include an amount of information appropriate to the task; include the genre, for example.
- Opinion and evaluation should be given, concluding with a recommendation (which may be implicit).

The following Internet sites provide a variety of film reviews that might be used as models or as resources for the classroom.

- www.rottentomatoes.com (Mostly in English, a few in Spanish and Portuguese)
- www.imdb.com (English)
- www.labutaca.net (Spanish)
- www.mad-movies.com (French)

Diaries/journals

Diary

A diary is intimate and introspective, not meant to be read by anyone else but the writer. A diary is used to express feelings and is reflective and often emotional. The language of a diary will reflect some of these aspects.

Journal

A journal usually consists of entries where a certain activity is recorded and might be read by other people, other than the writer. Entries in journals usually have dates. The tone is formal, and while there is narration and description, a certain amount of personal reflection should be expected and even rewarded.

Interviews/dialogues

In English, an interview should be reported; a transcription of the interview will not achieve high marks. This is a characteristic of English and must not be applied in other languages.



Newspaper/magazine reports

News stories should have a headline or at least a very clear title; there should be some sort of lead. These reports should be well organized and should clearly make references to the people involved, the time and place.

In Finnish, students are expected to write their name after a news story.

Leaflet/brochure/pamphlet

For the purpose of paper 2 these names are interchangeable. The text types will have the same characteristics.

Editorials

An editorial includes comments on recent news. It should be topical and should express a very clear opinion.

Digital texts

Emails and blogs will be accepted as legitimate types of texts to be used on paper 2.

The characteristics of these types of texts do not differ too much from informal letters and diaries; therefore, the same requirements apply.

In the same paper there will not be one activity requesting an informal letter and another one requesting an email.

This does not mean that emails and/or blogs are obligatory text types for paper 2.

Final recommendation

The language is expected to be appropriate to the situation. Informal language is expected in certain tasks and good use of idiomatic expressions will be accepted and rewarded in some cases; however, use of slang or inappropriate language may be penalized.