

WRITING STYLE CHOICES



- Understand the effect of writing style choices
- Write a blurb and a journal entry
- Demonstrate audience awareness

Name these sports







- How would you define 'extreme sports'?
- What examples can you think of?
- What kind of people participate in them?
- What makes these sports attractive?
- Which ones would you consider doing or refuse to do?



CHANGING GENRES

In Extended Response to Reading task

- You may need to use material in a text in a specific way.
- You need to be familiar with the following response genres and aware of their purpose:
 - formal letter
 - news report
 - formal report
 - journal
 - magazine article
 - speech
 - interview
- When approaching a task, pay attention to instructions about the audience and specific content.

**Your response
might require
modification
of the
structure and
style of the
original
passage**

So you need to change vocabulary, sentence structures and text structure, rather than simply reuse points from the passage in the same order or in the same words. Questions sometimes ask you to change voice and viewpoint, and to write as if you were a character referred to in the passage.

The style of a piece of writing is determined by its:

- **Aim**-what is the purpose of the writing?
- **Voice**-what kind of character is the speaker/ persona?
- **Audience** –what do we know about their age, interests and expectations?
- **Vocabulary**- how formal is the situation, relationship or subject?
- **Tone**-is the emotion and mood appropriate?
- **Sentence structure**- should sentences be simple, **compound** or complex, or a mixture?

These are all aspects to consider when you are asked to write or to comment on a piece of writing.

Read the following passage, which is a newspaper review of a non-fiction book about a historical Arctic tragedy.

The big chill

Arctic explorers are a breed apart, inevitably drawn, it would seem, by tragedy and the poetry of a 'good end'. Consider Shackleton. Having narrowly survived the loss of his ship, the *Endurance*, when it was crushed by ice in the Weddell Sea, he later died aboard the *Quest*, another Antarctic no-hoper, in 1922. Scott, of course, perished ten years earlier just a few miles from his base camp, having failed by a whisker to be the first to reach the South Pole. Amundsen, who beat his rival by just a couple of days, went on to die in an Arctic air crash.





Good chaps, each and every one of them. But what was it all about? In *The Ice Master*, an appropriately chilling account of the voyage of the *Karluk*, lead-ship of a doomed Arctic expedition in 1913-14, the motivation of those taking part seems to have been foolhardy at best. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, a Canadian of Nordic extraction, was an anthropologist and ethnologist who, for reasons best known to himself, believed that under the Arctic ice there lay a Lost Continent, a kind of wintry Atlantis, the discovery of which would make him famous. In reality, of course, there is no missing landmass; the Arctic Ocean is just what its name implies. But to the impatient Stefansson, the fact that there was, literally, no solid ground for his belief was defeatist talk.

Hiring a steely skipper, Captain Bob Bartlett, Stefansson ordered the Karluk to sea from Victoria in British Columbia on June 17th 1913. Few of his men had real Arctic experience. The 'scientists' on board knew very little of the trials ahead. The ship itself was a retired whaler, made of wood, staggeringly unsuited to its new purpose.

The crew, it transpires, had an eerie premonition of their fate. Stuck fast in the Alaskan floes, they were 'transfixed' by the diaries of George Washington De Long, another of their breed, who had died, along with all his men, in 1881. De Long's ship, the Jeanette, had been crushed by ice in almost exactly the same reach of the Arctic Ocean as the Karluk. One hundred and forty days passed before cold and starvation claimed the last of the expedition's victims.

Jennifer Niven, formerly a screenwriter, assembles her characters with all the skill of an experienced novelist.

Both of the principals are carefully drawn. There is Bartlett, an energetic, skillful mariner, big in every way, with a booming voice and a love for literature and women. Stefansson, by contrast, comes across as an egotist of monstrous proportions. Charming, silver-tongued and handsome, he cared little for those under his command.

Locked together on the diminutive ship, the crew of the Karluk watched and listened in horror as the frozen sea closed in around them. The staff and officers gathered nightly in the saloon for Victrola concerts, choosing from among more than 200 records. As the gloom grew ever deeper, the lure of the library, with its terrible account of the fate of the Jeanette, increased by the day.

Stefansson cracked first. Loading up a dog-sledge, he and several others headed off into the night, ostensibly to hunt for food. Others would go to pieces later. Matters came to a head on January 10th when, with a thunderous roar, the ice broke through the ship's hull, forcing the captain to give the order to abandon ship.

In all, 16 men were to die, but Bartlett emerged as the true hero of the hour. Niven's account - always alive to the nuances of human strength as well as weakness - is at its strongest as she recounts his ghastly journey through the Arctic winter in search of help, and his equally determined quest for his lost crewmen when he at last found sanctuary in Siberia. Those who survived long enough for him to find them numbered a lucky 13, including two Eskimo girls and one of the scientists, McKinlay, who ever after regarded his captain as 'honest, fearless, reliable, loyal, everything a man should be'.

Stefansson, needless to say, survived as well. Having spectacularly betrayed his comrades, he went on to map and discover several Arctic islands. Collecting a medal for his achievements, he made no mention of the Karluk, its crew or the men who were lost.

Adapted from an article by Walter Ellis, The Sunday Times, 19th November 2000.

Homework

1. Read the passage again then answer the following questions in the notebook.

- a)** Why do you think book reviews are published in newspapers?
- b)** Who do you think writes book reviews, and why?
- c)** Who do you think reads them, and why?
- d)** Who do you think benefits from the reviews, and how?
- e)** Who do you think would be interested in reading *The Ice Master*?

2. Publishers promote their new books by printing blurbs (brief descriptions of the type and content of the book) on their back covers. It is a rule that a blurb must not reveal what happens in the end, as this would deter readers. Write a blurb for *The Ice Master*, using three short paragraphs. Your aim is to appeal to your audience and persuade them to buy the book:

- Refer to the background of the expedition and its participants.
- Describe the crisis situation the book deals with.
- Refer to specific incidents which make the book sound exciting.

A blurb is the short descriptive account of the book that goes on the back cover.

3. Find all the dates and time references in the article. Then list the events in chronological order (the order in which they occurred), together with their date or duration, in a grid like the one shown below. This will give you a sense of the overall time scheme, which will help you later. An example has been given.

Event	Time
The Jeanette crushed	1881

Enjoy
your
reading
and
writing.

