

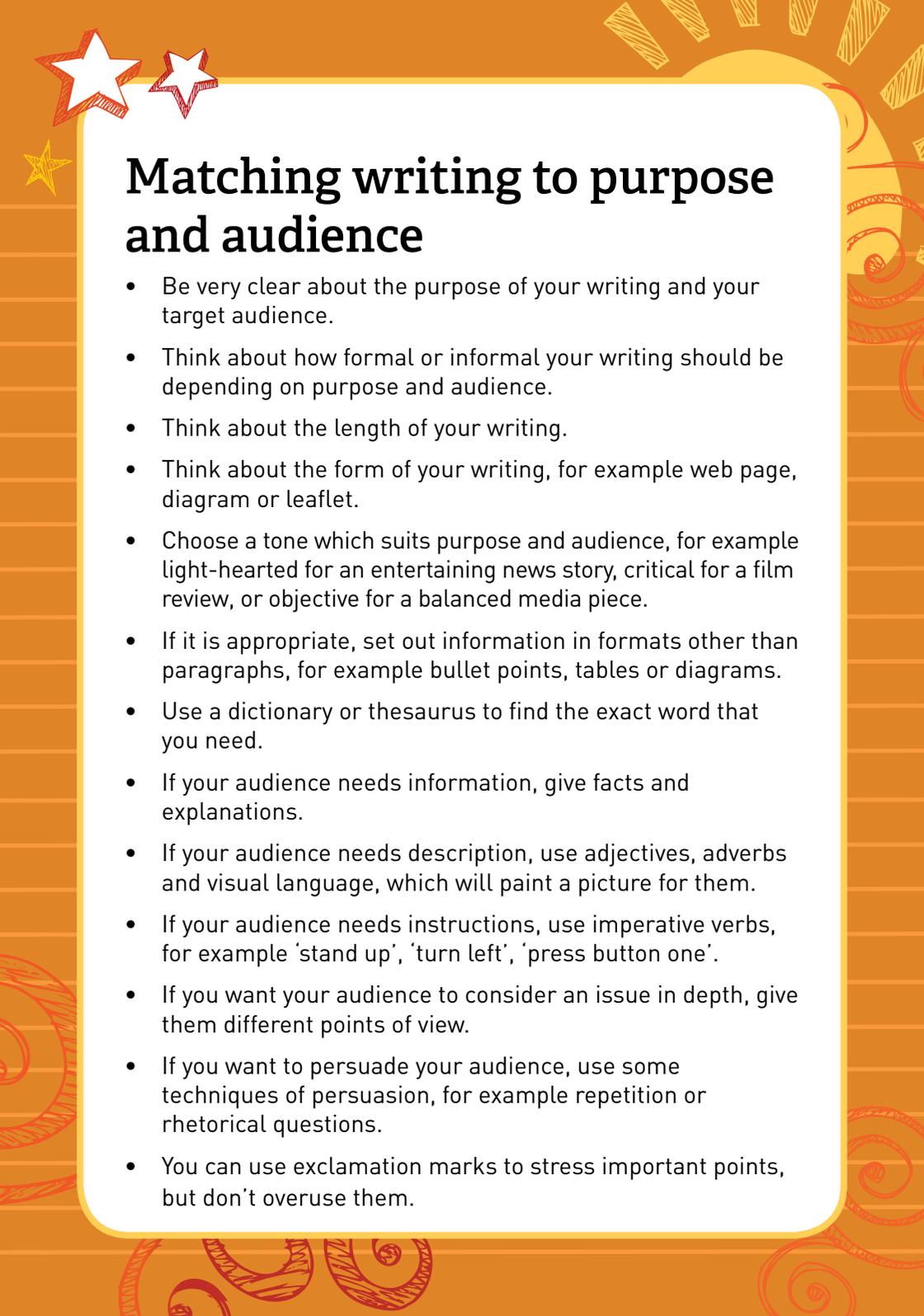
Writing Checklist





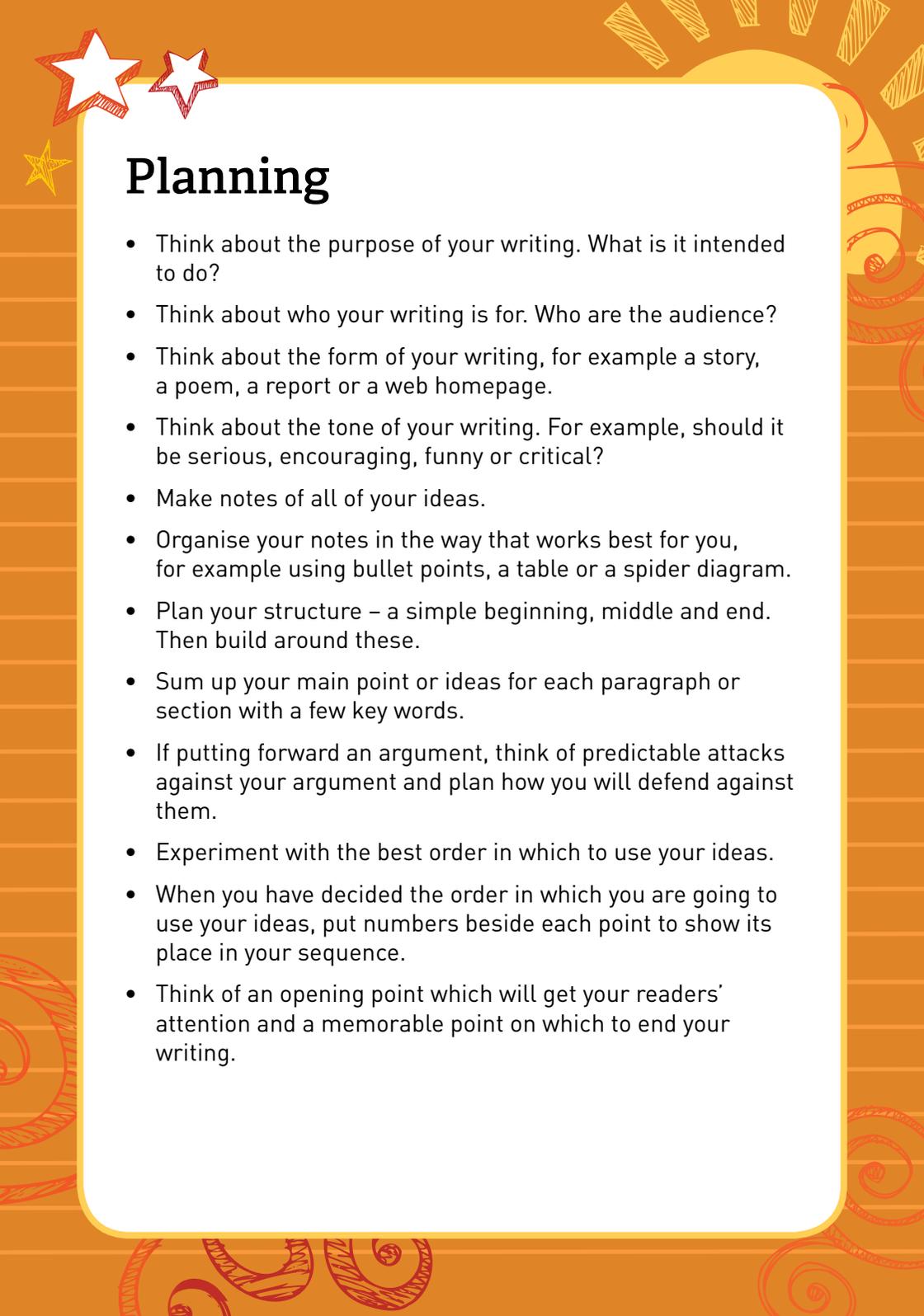
Making your message clear

- Know what your message is and who you are writing for.
- Think about the best way to set out your message, for example using paragraphs, bullet points or images.
- Consider using capital letters, bold, italics or underlining to stress key points, but don't overdo this.
- Decide whether it is appropriate to state your overall message at the start of your text: this may not be appropriate if you want your message to become clear gradually.
- Think about the best order in which to present the different parts of your message.
- Use a topic sentence in each section, with additional detail after or around it.
- Use a dictionary and thesaurus together to choose the vocabulary that best expresses your message.
- Choose and use vocabulary that suits your audience. For example, a message about online safety aimed at young children will use more simplistic language and shorter sentences than the same message for adults.
- Use examples to illustrate your message if appropriate.
- If making an argument, use phrases which clearly promote your viewpoint, for example 'It is obvious that...', 'It is beyond doubt that...' and 'I believe strongly that...'
- Ask a friend to give you feedback on how clear your message is.
- Conclude your writing by summarising your overall message, perhaps with a final memorable comment.



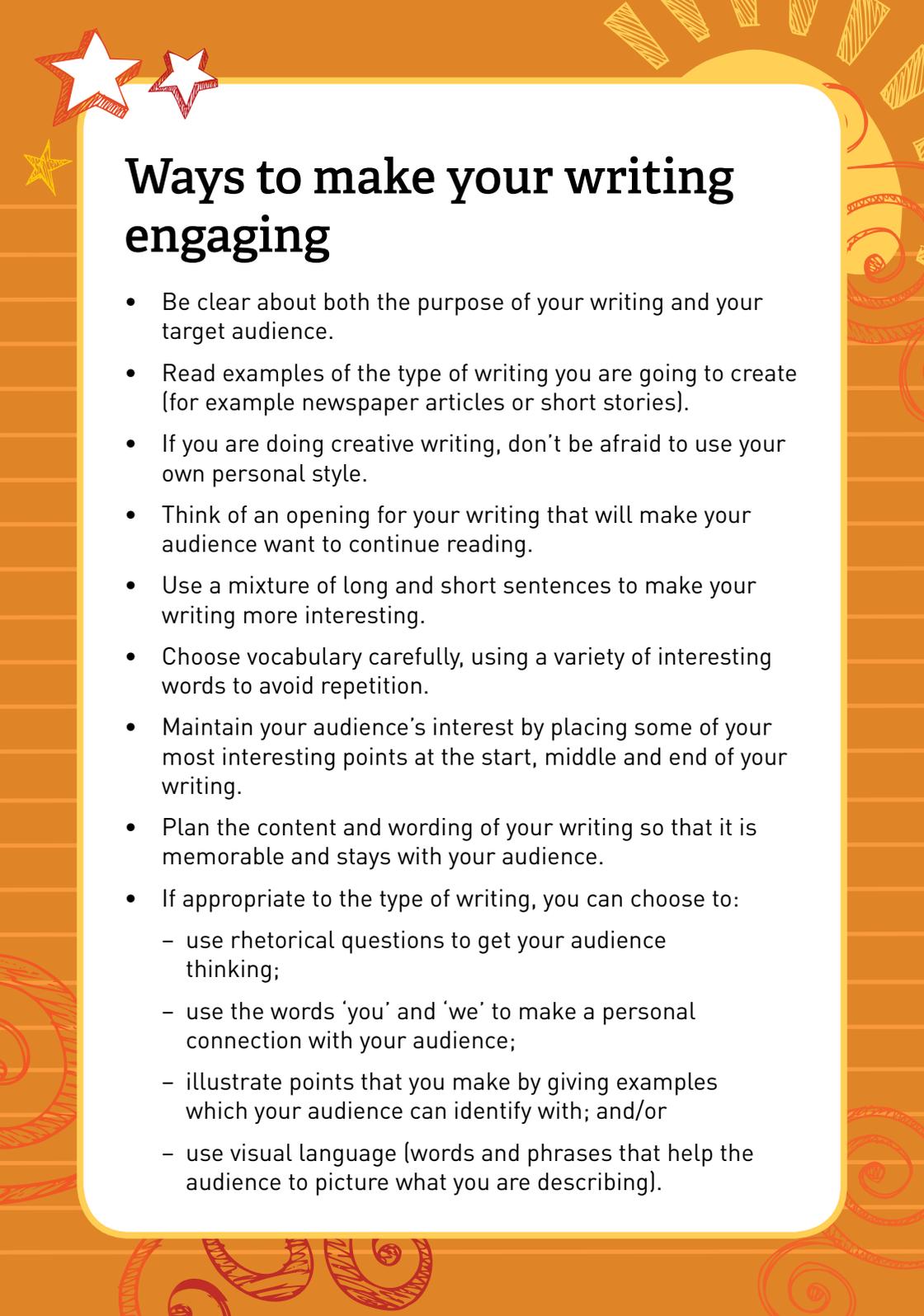
Matching writing to purpose and audience

- Be very clear about the purpose of your writing and your target audience.
- Think about how formal or informal your writing should be depending on purpose and audience.
- Think about the length of your writing.
- Think about the form of your writing, for example web page, diagram or leaflet.
- Choose a tone which suits purpose and audience, for example light-hearted for an entertaining news story, critical for a film review, or objective for a balanced media piece.
- If it is appropriate, set out information in formats other than paragraphs, for example bullet points, tables or diagrams.
- Use a dictionary or thesaurus to find the exact word that you need.
- If your audience needs information, give facts and explanations.
- If your audience needs description, use adjectives, adverbs and visual language, which will paint a picture for them.
- If your audience needs instructions, use imperative verbs, for example 'stand up', 'turn left', 'press button one'.
- If you want your audience to consider an issue in depth, give them different points of view.
- If you want to persuade your audience, use some techniques of persuasion, for example repetition or rhetorical questions.
- You can use exclamation marks to stress important points, but don't overuse them.



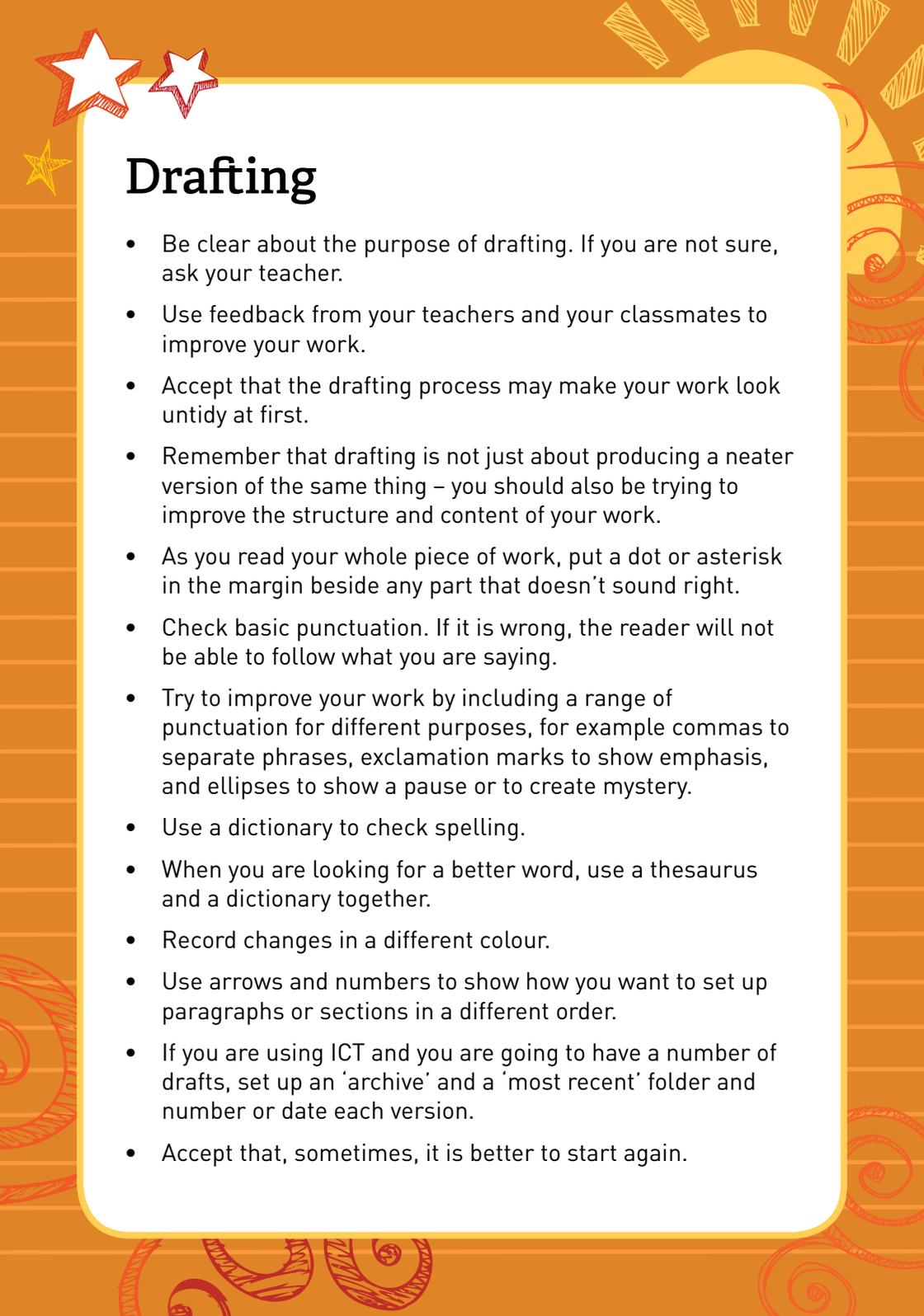
Planning

- Think about the purpose of your writing. What is it intended to do?
- Think about who your writing is for. Who are the audience?
- Think about the form of your writing, for example a story, a poem, a report or a web homepage.
- Think about the tone of your writing. For example, should it be serious, encouraging, funny or critical?
- Make notes of all of your ideas.
- Organise your notes in the way that works best for you, for example using bullet points, a table or a spider diagram.
- Plan your structure – a simple beginning, middle and end. Then build around these.
- Sum up your main point or ideas for each paragraph or section with a few key words.
- If putting forward an argument, think of predictable attacks against your argument and plan how you will defend against them.
- Experiment with the best order in which to use your ideas.
- When you have decided the order in which you are going to use your ideas, put numbers beside each point to show its place in your sequence.
- Think of an opening point which will get your readers' attention and a memorable point on which to end your writing.



Ways to make your writing engaging

- Be clear about both the purpose of your writing and your target audience.
- Read examples of the type of writing you are going to create (for example newspaper articles or short stories).
- If you are doing creative writing, don't be afraid to use your own personal style.
- Think of an opening for your writing that will make your audience want to continue reading.
- Use a mixture of long and short sentences to make your writing more interesting.
- Choose vocabulary carefully, using a variety of interesting words to avoid repetition.
- Maintain your audience's interest by placing some of your most interesting points at the start, middle and end of your writing.
- Plan the content and wording of your writing so that it is memorable and stays with your audience.
- If appropriate to the type of writing, you can choose to:
 - use rhetorical questions to get your audience thinking;
 - use the words 'you' and 'we' to make a personal connection with your audience;
 - illustrate points that you make by giving examples which your audience can identify with; and/or
 - use visual language (words and phrases that help the audience to picture what you are describing).



Drafting

- Be clear about the purpose of drafting. If you are not sure, ask your teacher.
- Use feedback from your teachers and your classmates to improve your work.
- Accept that the drafting process may make your work look untidy at first.
- Remember that drafting is not just about producing a neater version of the same thing – you should also be trying to improve the structure and content of your work.
- As you read your whole piece of work, put a dot or asterisk in the margin beside any part that doesn't sound right.
- Check basic punctuation. If it is wrong, the reader will not be able to follow what you are saying.
- Try to improve your work by including a range of punctuation for different purposes, for example commas to separate phrases, exclamation marks to show emphasis, and ellipses to show a pause or to create mystery.
- Use a dictionary to check spelling.
- When you are looking for a better word, use a thesaurus and a dictionary together.
- Record changes in a different colour.
- Use arrows and numbers to show how you want to set up paragraphs or sections in a different order.
- If you are using ICT and you are going to have a number of drafts, set up an 'archive' and a 'most recent' folder and number or date each version.
- Accept that, sometimes, it is better to start again.