

Cambridge Checkpoint English 7

and speech is used to make the characters and encounters seem more vivid, although it is not likely that the writer would be able to remember every word spoken in a conversation which took place many years before. See also the key point on autobiographical writing on page 12.



In this extract from *Cider with Rosie*, Laurie Lee gives a snapshot of his first day at a village school.

The morning came when my sisters surrounded me, wrapped me in scarves, tied up my bootlaces, thrust a cap on my head, and stuffed a baked potato in my pocket.

'What's this?' I said.

'You're starting school today.'

'I ain't. I'm stopping 'ome.'

'You are.'

'Boo-hoo.'

I arrived at the school just three feet tall and fatly wrapped in my scarves. The playground roared like a rodeo and the potato burned through my thigh. Old boots, ragged stockings, torn trousers and skirts, went sailing and skidding around me. The rabble closed in; I was encircled; grit flew in my face like



shrapnel. Tall girls with frizzled hair, and huge boys with sharp elbows, began to prod me with hideous interest. They plucked at my scarves, **spun me round like a top**, screwed my nose and stole my potato.



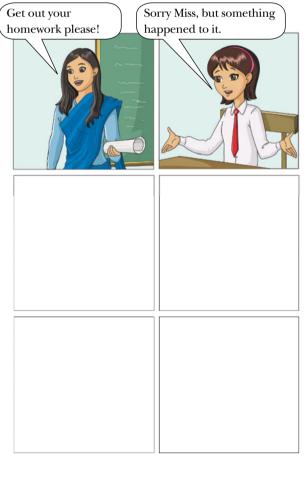
a In pairs, decide how Text 4B is similar to and different from Text 4A. Make notes on the situation, the narrator, the setting, the atmosphere and the language in both texts. You could use a table like the one on the next page to organise your notes in your notebook.





	Similarities	Differences
Situation		
Narrator		
Setting		
Atmosphere		
Language		

- **b** Look at the similes in Text 4B, which are in bold. Copy and complete each one using an image of your own.
 - The playground roared like . . .
 - ii Grit flew in my face like . . .
 - iii They spun me round like . . .
- c Collect all your ideas together. Decide with the class which are the best substitute similes, and why. Now compare them with the ones in the text and discuss which are better, and why.
- Draw this comic strip in your notebook. What could go in the empty frames? Complete the last four frames by drawing simple stick figures and giving them speech in bubbles, as in the first two.
- When you wrote the speech bubbles in the last activity, you did not have to think about using correct punctuation around the speech because it was in a comic strip. In story writing, however, you do need to use speech marks. In this activity, you will be looking at the direct speech in Text 4B and how it is punctuated.
 - a In pairs, study the dialogue in Text 4B and notice how it is set out and punctuated. In pairs, decide on what you think are the rules for how direct speech is presented within a narrative.
 - b Rewrite the dialogue in Text 4B as reported speech, inserting the necessary speakers and verbs. Remind yourself of the rules by looking back at the key point on speech in stories on page 43.







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- c Now imagine that there is more dialogue in Text 4B. Imagine that:
 - i one of Laurie's sisters told him he needed to go to school to learn things
 - ii Laurie replied that he could learn things by playing in the garden
 - iii his mother told him that he would be late if he didn't hurry up.

Write the direct speech. Look at the key point about the position of the speaker in direct speech and include examples of all three possible positions in your sentences – before the speech, in the middle of the speech, and after the speech.

Key point



Speaker position in direct speech

- The speaker can be given first, before the speech, to introduce it: She explained, 'I will do it later, when I've finished my work.'
- Alternatively, the speaker can be given after the speech: 'I will do it later, when I've finished my work,' she explained.
- Direct speech can also be split, with the speaker given in the middle of the speech: 'I will do it later,' she explained, 'when I've finished my work.'



What is a teacher?

To a mind of flint, the teacher must be iron, and strike sparks. To the empty pitcher, the teacher becomes a well. To the fallow mind, a planter of seeds. To the cluttered mind, a gardener to weed, shape, and clear a space for growing.

To the lens, the teacher is light, and to the mind of light, a lens. To the sleeper, the teacher is the wake-up call of birds at sunrise. To clay, the teacher is potter, sculptor, and trainer in self-shaping. To the wanderer, the teacher is a knowing guide. To the developed mind, the teacher is colleague, listener, friend.

To all, the teacher is a mirror that shows not only the self but the path and its choices, the task and its demands – the difficulties, the joys. To all and from all, the teacher is a learner, a person – and a prism through which the ordinary continuously reveals itself to be miraculous.

Gerald Grow





- 8
- **a** Look up the definition of the word *teacher* in a dictionary. Do you think it conveys enough meaning or is there something missing? What would you add to it, if anything?
- **b** Look at Text 4C, which is a collection of figurative definitions of a teacher. Read the text then think of some other metaphors and similes which you would use to define a teacher.
- Now write your own piece in the same format as Text 4C, beginning each sentence with 'To . . . '



First day at school

A millionbillionwillion miles from home Waiting for the bell to go. (To go where?) Why are they all so big, other children? So noisy? So much at home they Must have been born in uniform Lived all their lives in playgrounds Spent the years inventing games That don't let me in. Games That are rough, that swallow you up.

And the railings.
All around, the railings.
Are they to keep out wolves and monsters?
Things that carry off and eat children?
Things you don't take sweets from?
Perhaps they're to stop us getting out
Running away from the lessins. Lessin.
What does a lessin look like?
Sounds small and slimy.
They keep them in the glassrooms.
Whole rooms made out of glass. Imagine.

I wish I could remember my name Mummy said it would come in useful. Like wellies. When there's puddles. Yellowwellies. I wish she was here. I think my name is sewn on somewhere Perhaps the teacher will read it for me. Tea-cher. The one who makes the tea.

Roger McGough





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- a In pairs, look at the use of apostrophes in the poem in Text 4D and in the dialogue in Text 4B. How are they being used?
- **b** Text 4D is a poem written by an adult but from the viewpoint of a child starting school. Make a list of the ways in which you think the child's viewpoint is shown in the poem (see the key point on page 8).
- c Add some more observations and reflections that you think the child in the poem might have made while standing in the playground before going into school for the first time about the teachers on duty, the kind of games being played, the uniform, for example. You can play with word sounds and make up words too, as the poem does.

Key point



Apostrophe of omission

Texts 4B and 4D both contain contractions. It is common in informal dialogue between people who know each other well for contracted verb forms to be used, to reflect the way we speak rather than the way we write, especially if it is a child speaking. It is usually the verbs is and has which are contracted (e.g. he's, she's), or other parts of the verb be or have (e.g. l'm, we've). The negative marker not is regularly reduced to n't (e.g. it isn't, you hadn't). The one or more letters which have been removed in a contracted form are indicated by an apostrophe. Sometimes missing letters and an apostrophe show dialect or regional forms of pronunciation, as in the case of 'ome in Text 4B, which shows that Laurie pronounces home without the 'h' sound.



The writer Roald Dahl attended a boarding school and looked forward to going home for the vacations. This is an extract from his autobiography *Boy*.

Towards the end of December, my mother came over on the paddle-boat to take me and my trunk home for the Christmas holidays. Oh the bliss and wonder of being with the family once again after all those weeks of fierce discipline! Unless you have been to boarding-school when you are very young, it is absolutely impossible to





appreciate the delights of living at home. It is almost worth going away because it's so lovely coming back. I could hardly believe that I didn't have to wash in cold water in the mornings or keep silent in the corridors, or say 'Sir' to every grown-up man I met, or get flicked with wet towels in the changing-room, or eat porridge for breakfast that seemed to be full of little round lumpy grey sheep-droppings, or walk all day long in perpetual fear of the long yellow cane that lay on top of the corner-cupboard in the Headmaster's study.



- 10
- **a** Read Text 4E and summarise in one sentence why Roald Dahl did not like being at his boarding school.
- **b** In pairs, discuss and make notes on how contrast is used to create the setting and atmosphere of school in this passage.
- c List the details which are effective in making the school seem unpleasant.
- Imagine that you are Roald Dahl at his boarding school. Write a letter home to an adult in your family, of about one page, saying how much you are looking forward to going home for the holidays. Look at the tip about writing a semi-formal letter before you start. In your letter:
 - expand on the ideas in Text 4E, developing them with further details of your own
 - include references to teachers and other students
 - say what you are looking forward to enjoying when you get home.



For Activity 11 Semi-formal letter writing

Although you are writing to someone in your family, you will not speak to them in the way you would to a friend your own age. Try not to be too complaining or emotional, as you do not wish







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to upset them or give the impression that school is completely unbearable. You may therefore wish to use a light-hearted tone, as Roald Dahl does in Text 4E when he calls the porridge 'sheep-droppings'. Letters of this kind are usually a mixture of reflections, descriptions and references to events.



Monday: Hurray, end of term tomorrow! Can't wait for the holidays to start so that I can forget all about school and homework and just do what I want every day, get up when I like, and eat when I like. I'll spend the first day riding my bike or I'll go and visit my consins. I know I'll get bored after a few days, but until then I am going to play, play, play.

Tnesday: Last day was fun; we had a party and played games and watched DVDs in lessons. Then something terrible happened at the end of the day: our form teacher gave us a sheet of homework assignments to be done over the holidays! I can't believe how long the list is. Sometimes I really don't like teachers!

Wednesday: Had to get up at the same time as usual, so that I could get some reading done before going out to play. I wish I was still in primary school. My little sister and brother don't get any homework so their holidays really are holidays!







- a Read Text 4F. What do you notice about the kind of sentences used in diary entries? Why do you think long and complex sentences are not normally used?
- b Imagine that you have just been told that you can't go home from school today. The school has been put into a week's quarantine (isolated to prevent the spread of disease) because a student has been diagnosed with an infectious illness. Make some notes of your immediate thoughts and feelings.
- **c** Write a diary entry, of about a page, to reflect how you feel about this situation.
 - i Give your reflections about not being able to go home.
 - ii Predict what you think is going to happen during the coming week.
 - iii Describe some fellow students and teachers, and how they are reacting.

Key point



Writing a diary

Diary style consists of either simple sentences (sentences containing one verb) or compound sentences (ones which use *and*, *but*, *so* and *or* to connect verbs). This makes the writing seem simple and even childlike, but as you usually write a diary for yourself, there is no need to use complex grammar; the aim is simply to record what happened and what you thought and how you felt about it. Diary entries:

- include a mixture of narrative, description and reflection
- are written from the viewpoint of the first person, using the pronoun /
- refer to events that have happened recently
- refer to the people in the diary writer's life, and what they have said and done
- reveal the writer's secrets, hopes and fears
- contain direct speech to record dramatic or important utterances.



- a Think about all the texts you have read in this unit and decide on an idea for a story about school. It could be a 'first day' memory, or a story about any event which happened in or around school. Decide whether it will be a sad or an amusing story.
- **b** Plan your story. Use the tip about planning to help you.
- c Now draft your piece of writing. It should be about two pages. Look at the key point on narrative writing on the next page to help you.







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For Activity 13b Planning a story

- Make a spider diagram, mind map or flow chart to organise the ideas you will use to create the plot and atmosphere of your story.
 It is important to know before you start writing your story how it is going to end, so make sure you know where your story is going.
- Decide on the characters and setting, and make notes next to them of some details which you can use to describe them.
- Finally, write some direct speech for some of the characters in your story to say.

Key point



Narrative writing

Many stories are based on a real incident which the writer has turned into an amusing or emotional experience. Bear the following points in mind when writing your own stories.

- You can build your story around something which did actually happen to you, or to someone you know. Alternatively, you could choose something you have read about as the basis of your story. In either case, exaggerate the incident to make it more amusing or dramatic.
- It is not a good idea to try to include a lot of characters or events in a story of a few pages. Select and focus on two or three of each, with one main one.
- Strong emotion will engage the reader, so consider using fear or confusion as the feeling in the story. To create the right atmosphere, choose appropriate vocabulary to match the feeling. It is better not to try to mix comic with serious.
- Consider the viewpoint. You can use first person (I) or third person (he or she), but you need to think what difference your choice will make. The emotion can be more powerful when I is used, as this gives the impression it is a true account and makes the reader sympathetic (as you saw in Text 4A). On the other hand, the writer can tell us more about what is going on in the heads of all the other characters if the third person is used, as in 'The teacher thought he looked lost and lonely, and felt sorry for him'.







- The simplest narrative openings begin with a description of the setting or a character, so you could describe the building first, or you could start by describing a particular character before going on to describe the place.
- Include dialogue at the key moments in your story, as direct speech will help to convey the characters, and also to add drama. For a more subtle effect or for variety, use some reported speech as well as or instead of direct speech.
- Your story will be more effective if it has a strong ending, so think carefully about your last sentence and how to make it sound final.



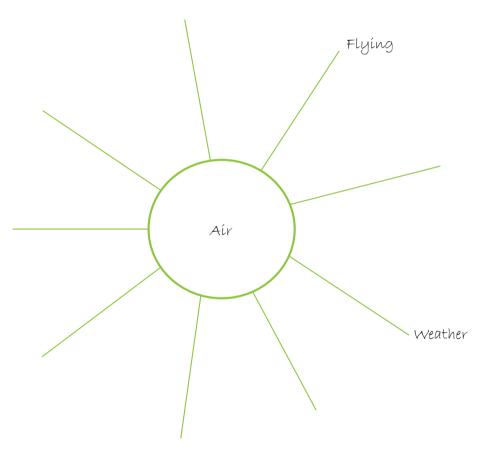


UNIT 5 Up in the air

In this unit you will reflect on the things that you see in the air above you. You will have the opportunity to do some more summarising, paraphrasing and vocabulary building, as well as practising sequencing and paragraphing, sentence separation and use of commas.

Activities

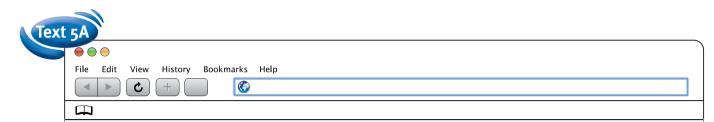




- a Make a spider diagram for the word 'Air', collecting all the things you can think of which depend on or take place up in the air, and all the things you associate with it.
- **b** Now organise your spider diagram into a mind map of related ideas, and give each group a subheading, such as 'Weather' and 'Flying'.
- **c** Make a list of all the different types of weather and sky effects, for example hurricanes, rainbow, sunset.







Kites

Kites were used approximately 2800 years ago in China, where materials ideal for kite building were readily available: silk fabric for the sail material; fine, strong silk for the flying line: and resilient bamboo for the lightweight framework. Ancient and medieval Chinese sources list the use of kites for measuring distances, testing the wind, lifting men, signalling, and communication for military operations. The earliest known Chinese kites were flat (not bowed) and often rectangular. Later, tail-less kites were developed. Kites were decorated with mythological motifs and legendary figures; some were fitted with strings and whistles to make musical sounds while flying.

After its introduction into India, the kite further evolved into the fighter kite known as the *patang* in India, and annual kite running competitions are held every year on the day of Makar Sankaranti. In Afghanistan, kite running is an ancient tradition, and it is **regarded** as an art as well as a sport; the aim of the kite runners is to cut the string of the kites belonging to their **opponents** with the string of their own. It is exciting and fun, but can also be dangerous, as kite runners can fall or run into things while they are involved in mid-air duels with rivals.



The period from 1860 to about 1910 was the golden age of kiting. Kites started to be used for scientific purposes, especially those to do with weather forecasting and photography; reliable manned kites were developed, as well as power kites. Then the invention of the powered aeroplane diminished the interest in kites, and since then they have been used mainly for recreation. You can see them being flown every evening in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, nearly three thousand years after they were first invented, in all shapes and forms, including eagles.

However, children nowadays do not fly kites as much as in previous times. The rival attractions of computer games have reduced the appeal of all outdoor activities, and there are fewer large spaces where kite flying can safely be done, thanks to the increase in the number of tall buildings and overhead power cables in so many countries.





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- a Think of four short subheadings which you could add to Text 5A, one before each of the four paragraphs, to summarise its content. Write the subheadings in your notebook.
- **b** Look at the ten words in bold in the passage. Which words of similar meaning could you replace them with? You may need to use a thesaurus for this task. Write your replacement words in your notebook.
- c Explain in your own words the meaning of the following phrases from Text 5A:
 - duels with rivals
 - the golden age
 - thanks to the increase
- For this activity, you need to find ideas in Text 5A to answer three specific questions. Select the points you would use in a summary about the following topics and list the points as brief notes.
 - a the building of kites
 - **b** the use of kites
 - **c** the history of kites

Key point



Selecting summary points

- Identify and underline the essential information needed to answer the question; do not include anything irrelevant, and ignore minor details, repetitions and examples.
- When you transfer the points to your own list or plan, change the phrases into your own words where possible, and try to reduce the number of words being used.
- Always paraphrase figurative language, such as 'the golden age of kiting' in Text 5A, to show that you have understood it.
- You may need to use the material in more than one part of the question, if it is relevant.





Text 5B

9-year-old balloonist bids for record

A 9-year-old boy from Albuquerque, New Mexico, is preparing to make history by becoming the youngest Bradley has been training

but not nervous about the prospect. He will take off in about 7 weeks' time.

Bobby's parents are when he was 14. trained pilot to fly solo in Troy and Tami Bradley, a hot air balloon. Bobby who are well known in young Bobby Bradley seems the ballooning community totally comfortable piloting for this moment since he as two of the best in the the balloon and should was just 4 years old. He world. They have won have no problems. He says, has more experience than some of the biggest races 'I've always wanted to fly some professional pilots, ever staged, and Troy solo, and I've had plenty of and admits that he's excited co-piloted the first ever time to train.'

balloon to journey from North America to Africa, making his first solo flight

Judging by interviews,





- Select the key points contained in the news report in Text 5B. Then reorganise the information into just one sentence in your notebook.
- b On a copy of the text, circle the commas used in Text 5B. Working in pairs, discuss and list the different purposes for which they are being used.
- c Read the key point about commas and then copy the following text into your notebook, adding the commas where necessary.

Although some wind is needed to fly hot air balloons they can't fly if there is too much wind. Balloons need cool stable calm winds to operate most effectively so early morning as the sun rises and when the winds are at their calmest is the best time. Also a lower temperature means it is easier to get the balloon off the ground without using so much gas and this means the balloon can be flown for longer.

Key point



Commas

Commas are needed within sentences to separate the items in a list or the different grammatical parts. You can choose whether to put a comma before a clause beginning with and, but, so and or (simple connectives), but usually we do put one if the sentence is already long, or if the new clause (a group of words containing a verb) is long, or if it contains a new idea.

