

## Chapter Five

### Writing to Explain



What truly  
wonderful Word  
Weaving! You  
really are turning  
into the most  
accomplished  
young Word  
Weaver you know.  
You are zipping  
through the  
course so very  
quickly, and now  
I see you are  
ready to learn

about another job that words can do!

Before we start, however, I ought to warn you that if you have been controlling your words properly, they will be pretty bored by now. Like I said in the last chapter, they really don't like writing to inform; the main problem is that so few of them are used. This is because you aren't allowed to be imaginative when you're writing to inform, and just have to use the most boring straightforward words. Words really don't enjoy writing to inform.

However they should be getting pretty bouncy now, because we are going to learn about ANOTHER job that words do, and this means USING MORE WORDS!! This time we are going to learn about **WRITING TO EXPLAIN**.

Once again, before I tell you what **WRITING TO EXPLAIN** means, you try to tell me in your own words what you think it means to **EXPLAIN** something.



I don't know what you put, but you probably said that when you are **EXPLAINING** something you are showing someone **HOW** or **WHY** something happens. You might have said you are going into a bit more detail and perhaps that you give reasons about why something is done in a particular way.

To show you what I mean let's go back to the egg boiling, shall we (my version of egg boiling, that is!). This is what I wrote when I said that I was trying to **INFORM** someone about how to boil an egg:

Fill a pan with water and place an egg carefully in the pan. Put the pan on the stove and bring the water to the boil. When it has boiled for 3 minutes take the egg out of the pan with a spoon and put it in an egg cup. Enjoy!

If I wanted to **EXPLAIN** how to boil an egg, I would include all the **information** but go into a bit more detail about the reasons I did things. This would be an example of the same paragraph but with a bit more **explanation** about why I did things and more detail about what to do,

Choose a smallish saucepan and half fill it with water. I suggest a small saucepan because you don't waste fuel and half filling it means you leave room for the bubbling water when it boils. When the water boils, carefully place an egg in the pan. You can use a spoon to put the egg in the pan so you don't scald yourself. It is a good idea to use a timer because it's easy to know when it has boiled for 3 minutes. When the timer pings, take the egg out of the pan with a spoon. Enjoy!

Can you see the difference? You might find when you are **writing to explain** that you use the word 'because' a lot. This is because when you **write to explain**, you are often giving reasons for things. You will definitely be going into more detail than when you are simply **writing to inform**.

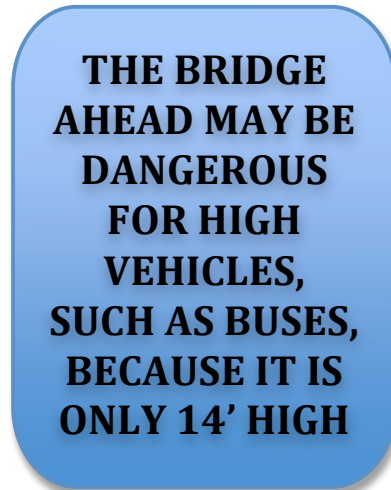
There are times when it's important to **inform** and times when it is important to **explain** and times when it's good to do a bit of both. Here are some examples of writing to **inform**, writing to **explain** and writing to **inform AND explain**. You decide which is the best way of writing for the job that has to be done!

1) *You're driving along in your doubledecker bus and suddenly see a low bridge. You're not sure if your bus will get under the bridge. Which is the most useful sign?*

a)

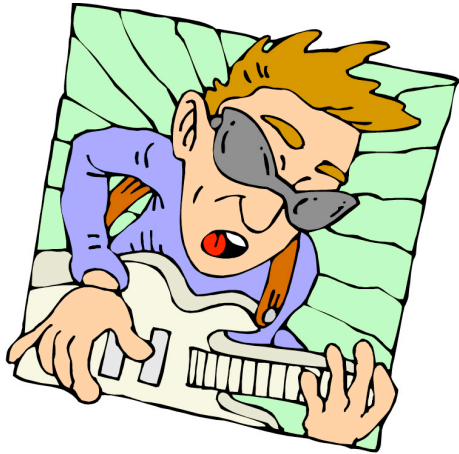


b)



It's pretty obvious isn't it? You're going to need the information about the height of the bridge pretty darned fast if you don't want your upper deck passengers to be taking the scenic route!

2) A friend has asked you which guitar is the best - electric or acoustic. Which is the best reply?



- a) Electric.
- b) Acoustic.
- c) There's no right answer, because it depends what you prefer. Acoustic's quieter and you get more complicated sounds out of finger picking. But electric's good, too, because it's loud and sounds really rock and roll. One way to decide is to listen to music on YouTube for both electric and acoustic and see which you like best. Another things you could do is go to a music shop and try them out and see which you take to.

3) *The weather man is giving tomorrow's forecast.  
Which is most helpful?*

It's gonna rain,  
man.

You can expect  
some unsettled  
weather  
tomorrow  
because a  
ridge of low  
pressure is  
slowly making  
its way across  
from the South  
East and will  
reach us  
around noon.





I hope these examples help to remind you that to **EXPLAIN** something means to give reasons and to go into a bit more detail about it. Sometimes you need reasons and a bit more detail, and sometimes you don't!

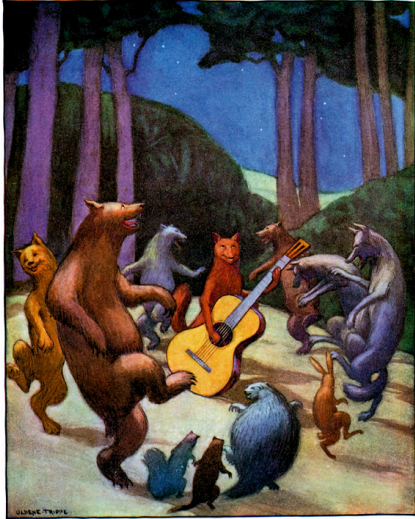
Very well done, young Word Weaver! I haven't seen such wonderful Word Weaving at such a young age since my great, great nephew Doodlebum won the

freestyle Semi-colon medal (junior class) in 1342. In fact I think you are now ready to start practising with a little bit of your own **WRITING TO EXPLAIN**.

Before you start, it's important to tell you know that when you are writing to **explain** you obviously have to give a bit of **information**, too, but that's OK. Writing to **explain** something doesn't mean you don't give ANY **INFORMATION**, because that would be daft! No, you give some **information** but go into a bit more detail and give reasons, too.

Ready to begin? Fantastic! When you have finished these exercises, photocopy them and put them to one side to send to me with Assignments 4,5 and 6.

1) Explain how to choose and buy a guitar (or something else that is related to your hobby. A pony? A skateboard? Keeping pets? A set of water colours? A computer?).



THE MERRYMAKERS

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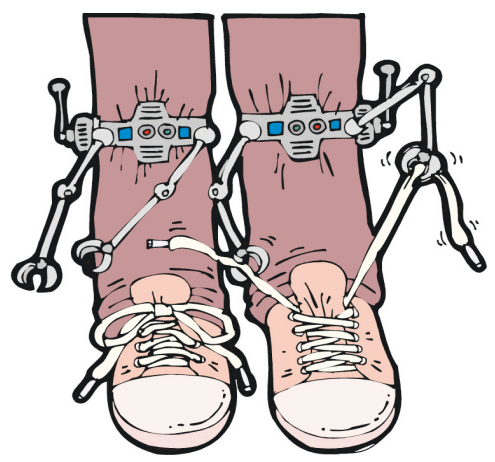
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2) Tell me what a shoe lace is (inform me, in other words) then explain how to tie them (this is just a bit of fun. Don't tie yourself up in knots about it!)



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Fantastic Word Weaving! Very well done!

So, just to recap... when you are writing to **inform** and **explain** you need to use fairly straightforward words. This isn't the time to open up your adjective box and start spreading adjectives thickly onto your sentences with a buttery knife! Which isn't to say that you can't use an occasional adjective here and there, to help with your explanations, but the rule of thumb is **KEEP IT SIMPLE AND TO THE POINT!**

Writing to **inform** and **explain** can be great fun, though, especially if you have to make a poster or a leaflet about something. Words really get excited when they know you are going to be putting some pictures in with your Word Weaving!

Here's an example of a leaflet about Dinedor Outdoor Centre which give **information** and **explanation** about what it is for. Notice how the first paragraph gives **information** and the second gives an **explanation**. Notice, too, that the headings don't say **INFORMATION** and **EXPLANATION**, do they? They take the form of questions that might be asked by someone looking for **information** and some **explanation**. This is a good way to design a leaflet.

## Dinedor Outdoor Centre



### **Where is it and what does it offer?**

Dinedor Outdoor Centre is situated high on a hillside just 4 miles from the centre of Hereford, near the site of an ancient Iron Age fort. The centre is open all year round and groups are especially welcome. Dinedor has a well-equipped kitchen and sleeping accommodation both in the house and in permanent tipis. There is equipment for camping and other outdoor pursuits.

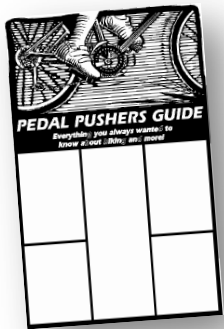
### **Why would I enjoy it?**

Dinedor is a great place to visit because of the sheer variety of what's on offer. Also, because we can tailor a programme to suit your group's needs your trip is guaranteed of success. Activities include archery, team building, camping and other organized sports. You like the peacefulness, too, with 360 degree of Herefordshire views and 11 acres of ancient woodland to enjoy. Our prices are very competitive, so give us a ring!

Can you see how both the paragraphs in the leaflet included some **information**, but the second paragraph which was answering the question 'Why would I enjoy it?' gave reasons and **explanations** (I hope you spotted that word 'because')?

## Assignment Five

Now it's your go! All those words will be bouncing around in their boxes, dying to get out, so I want you design your own leaflet. You can illustrate it or include photos if you want, but I want your leaflet to be about something fun to do in your area, such as an outdoor centre or a swimming pool. Include two paragraphs: one giving **information** and one **explaining why it is fun.**



You can either write it in these blank pages or you can design it on loose leaf paper or on a computer! But the main thing is:

- 1) Write a paragraph giving information
- 2) Write a paragraph giving explanation about WHY it is so good!

*(title)*

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*(picture)*



*(Inform)*

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*(Explain)*

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*(Another picture here?)*