Context, Purpose and Audience Assignment

*This is the beginning of the book, Pride and Prejudice, written by Jane Austen and published in 1797:*

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do you not want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? How can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no newcomers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not."

*This is another extract from* Pride and Prejudice*. Lydia is a 15 year old girl who is telling her sister about how much fun she had that morning:*

…Lydia, in a voice rather louder than any other person’s, was enumerating the various pleasures of the morning to anybody who would hear her.

“Oh, Mary,” she said, “I wish you had gone with us, for we had such fun! As we went along, Kitty and me drew up all the blinds, and pretended there was nobody in the coach; and I should have gone so all the way, if Kitty had not been sick; and when we got to the George, I do think we behaved very handsomely, for we treated the other three with the nicest cold luncheon in the world, and if you would have gone we would have treated you too. And then, when we came away, it was such fun! I thought we never should have got into the coach. I was ready to die of laughter. And then we were so merry all the way home! We talked and laughed so loud, that anybody might have heard us ten miles off.”

**Context -** the circumstances that form the setting for a text, and in terms of which it can be fully understood. This includes: ideas, beliefs, experiences and values present at that time and place.

**Audience –** The people who read the text who have ideas, beliefs, experiences and values specific to them. These ideas, beliefs, experiences and values are shaped by their culture, gender, education, age, income and enthusiasms.

**Purpose -** the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists.

**Context Questions**

1. Why might there be such an emphasis on marriage in the first extract?
2. What is unusual to us about how the married people address each other?
3. Why do you think Mrs Bennett is so keen for Mr Bennett to visit Mr Bingley?
4. Note the words ‘merry’ and ‘handsomely’ in Lydia’s spiel. What differences are there in how these words are used then and today?
5. What kinds of things did Lydia enjoy doing? Are these the types of things 15 year old girls would enjoy doing today? What do you think has changed?
6. Considering the answers to the above context questions, what is the impact of context on the way a text is written?

Audience Questions

1. Who do you think the audience of *Pride and Prejudice* might originally have been? Why do you say that?
2. With a partner, compose a series of text messages on your device about making plans to go out and have a good time. Write 3 text messages each. Who is the audience for your texts?
3. What are the major differences you can think of between these 2 audiences?
4. What differences can you see in the way the 2 texts are constructed because of the 2 different audiences? Make direct links between the construction and the audience. Think about things like how formal or informal the writing is, the text structure/order of ideas, the style of vocabulary chosen, topics discussed and use of punctuation.

Purpose Questions

1. What was the motivation for you to write the text messages in the last section (besides I told you to)?
2. Why might Jane Austin have written her novel?
3. What impact has messaging had on the way we use language and punctuation? Would you ever use semicolons in a text message? Why or why not (think purpose, audience, context)?
4. What differences can you see in the texts’ construction because of the 2 different purposes? Think about things like how formal or informal the writing is, the text structure/order of ideas, topics discussed and the style of vocabulary chosen.

Using Semicolons Revision

Semicolons are a full stop and a comma combined, and they do some of the work of both of these punctuation marks. They signal the end of what could be a complete sentence, but continue the idea into the next sentence as well. The semicolons in Lydia’s speech are used to separate parts in a long sentence. They make it easier to understand her very long sentences.

Semicolons join two independent clauses which could be stand-alone sentences. Remove the semicolon from each sentence below to create two stand-alone clauses. You can use a full stop or a conjunction (and, but, if etc) but NOT a comma.

Also for each of the sentences, write down the effect that using a semicolon has on the meaning of the sentence. How do the two sentences relate to each other?

1. You should not have teased me; you knew I trusted you.

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1. Freedom allows people choices; oppression denies those choices.

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1. Critical thinking requires more than remembering, understanding and applying; it requires analysis, evaluation and creativity.

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Creating Texts

Learning Intention: To appreciate how texts are constructed. They are constructed differently for different purposes, audiences and contexts.

Project 1 – Adapting Language to Contexts and Audiences

This task is to produce 2 different versions of an Instagram profile page and messaging: an 18th century version and a modern version

These texts will both be the same form and for the same purpose – communicating casually with friends - but because you are writing an 18th century version as well as a modern version, and therefore have different contexts and audiences, you will have to write using different vocab and language styles and different sentence structures.

For the 18th century one you will have to use the example texts to find vocabulary and sentence structure choices. You can also do research of your own on use of language at that time. For your modern one you will include non-standard spellings and sentence structures.

Aim for about 150 words for each profile page/message interchange. Create your 18th century profile for Lydia or a male equivalent and your modern one for yourself. You can copy and paste appropriate pictures for both – Lydia would be dressed for her time etc.

Important – don’t miss this bit:

Now explain how context and audience have impacted the writing choices in both versions using examples from your texts.



Project 2 – Adapting Language to Purposes and Audiences

For this project you will be creating 2 texts by swapping forms between blogs and encyclopedia entries. This means the texts are on the same topic but are produced for different purposes and audiences. This will primarily impact the formality of the texts.

Formal Style: It is used when writing for professional or academic purposes

* Less personal than informal language.

Formal language uses:

* Complex, academic language relevant to the topic at hand.
* Full and complex sentences
* Nominalisation
* Correct and complex grammar, spelling and punctuation
* Impersonal/objective language

It does not use:

* Colloquialisms/idioms
* Contractions/abbreviations
* First person pronouns such as “I” or “We”
* Second person pronouns such as “you” or “your”
* Emojis

Informal Style: It is used when communicating with friends or family either in writing or in conversation. It is used when writing personal emails, text messages and in some business correspondence.

* More casual and spontaneous than formal language

It can use:

* First and second person pronouns
* Colloquialisms/idoms
* Contractions/abbreviations
* Simple and partial sentences
* Non-standard grammar, spelling and punctuation
* Emojis
* Subjective/personal language

Part 1: Encyclopedia to Blog

Create a blog by using the information from an online, or book, encyclopaedia. This is an example of formal written style language being transformed into casual spoken style language. Aim for 200 words in your blog.

1. **Start by doing some research…** 
   * Read the blogs listed below to get ideas on how you will need to write your own blog:

<http://www.singletracks.com/blog/category/downhill/>

<http://touristmeetstraveler.com/>

<http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/>

* 1. **Do some blog analysis…**
* Choose one of the blogs above and highlight an article to:
  1. Identify examples of subjective and personal language use
  2. Identify examples of simple or non-standard sentences use
  3. Identify examples of contractions/abbreviations and colloquialisms/idioms used
  4. Identify examples of non-standard punctuation and spelling use
  5. Identify examples of first or second person pronoun use

1. **Decide on a text you will convert to blog form…**

* You will need to convert the formal information text, so it sounds like a blog. This means changing any formal features into informal features.

1. **Write your blog to a teenage audience…**

* Think about audience and choose language to suit your audience.
* Use pictures that will suit your audience.

Part 2: Blog to Encyclopedia

This task entails turning the blog below about garden snails into a 200 word encyclopedia entry. This is an example of casual spoken style language being transformed into formal written style language. Use formal writing features to replace the informal ones.

1. **Start by highlighting the facts about snails in the blog that would actually appear in an encyclopedia**
2. **Expand the facts into sentences**
3. **Look up technical language about all the animals and classifications of animals in the facts**
4. **Make the sentences and language more formal**

Important - don’t miss this bit:

When you have finished, comment on the differences in language use (sentence construction, density of sentences, style) and vocabulary you see ***and*** **why** they are so different.

Blog Example:

**Snail Sighting!**

#snaillove#gardenanimals

Hi crazy nature-loving fans! It’s another day with the natural world duo, Al and Dani. So earlier today, we were chatting away, as people do and we saw this snail on the ground, just crawling along. Now I don’t mean to sound big headed, but I know a few cool snail facts. Did you know snails are gastropod mollusks? No, that doesn’t mean they’re gassy mussels!

‘Gastropod’ is an example of a class. In Biology things are classified in complicated ways. A gastropod is a family of animals including snails and slugs – you know, the slimy, squishy ones that wriggle around in your garden. This includes both the land and sea types.

Then they’re also mollusks. ‘Mollusk’ is an example of a phylum – another one of those complicated Biology classifications. Mollusk makes me think of seafood (yuk!), things like mussels and octopuses. It really just means animals that don’t have skeletons. But they generally have some hard bits like shells, or for octopuses, a beak. Snails have a hard shell to protect them, that they can hide in if danger comes.

**Rubric**

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| **Success Criteria** | **Well Above Expectation** | **Above Expectation** | **At Expectation** | **Below Expectations** |
| In answering the Context, Audience and Purpose questions the student can explain clearly the significance of context, audience and purpose for text construction | Very through answers with a clear and detailed explanations | Answers are fairly clear but explanation is not sufficiently detailed and thorough | Answers to questions are basic and not always clear; there is a lack of explanation | Answers are vague and lack clarity and explanation |
| Student can effectively incorporate experimental vocabulary and sentence structure usage into their work | 10 or more examples of 18th Century vocabulary or sentence structure included in Lydia’s Instagram profile; 10 or more examples of non-standard spelling, punctuation and sentence structures in your Instagram profile | Between 7 and 9 examples of 18th Century vocabulary or sentence structure included in Lydia’s Instagram profile; 7 to 9 examples of non-standard spelling, punctuation and sentence structures in your Instagram profile | Student has included 5-6 examples of 18th Century vocabulary or sentence structure included in Lydia’s Instagram profile; 5-6 examples of non-standard spelling, punctuation and sentence structures in your Instagram profile | Fewer than 5 examples of 18th Century vocabulary or sentence structure included in Lydia’s Instagram profile; fewer than 5 examples of non-standard spelling, punctuation and sentence structures in your Instagram profile |
| Student can explain the impact of context and audience on the construction of a text | Clear and thorough explanation with examples effectively used to support assertions | Fairly clear and thorough explanations with some well used examples to support assertions | Answer is basic and not always clear or well explained; examples are used but only partially effectively | Answer is vague, lacks clarity and explanation and examples are not used or not effectively used |
| Student can effectively convert a formal written text to a casual spoken style text and vice versa | Blog is entirely colloquial and bears no resemblance to the original in syntax or structure; encyclopedia is entirely formal and sounds genuine | Blog is fully colloquial, but some vocabulary choices or structural choices echo the original text; encyclopedia is almost all formal and has the ring of genuineness about it | Blog is generally using colloquial language, although at times there are close echoes of the original text in the sentence structure or vocabulary; encyclopedia is partially formal and has some relationship to the genuine article | Blog still has some formal elements of structure and considerable vocabulary crossover; encyclopedia is mainly informal and doesn’t really sound like the genuine article |
| Student understands the differences between informal and formal English and can explain the impact of audience and purpose on texts | Explanation includes 8 or more examples of differences and insightful reasoning on why texts are different based on audience and purpose | Explanation includes 6-7 examples of differences and some insight into why the texts are different based on audience and purpose | The explanation includes 4-5 examples of differences and basic reasons for differences identified related to audience and purpose | Explanation has fewer than 3 examples of differences and the basic reason for these differences is not clearly identified |