



A TRIBUTE TO NEW YORK

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http://usuario.tiscali.es/a_tribute_to_newyork/



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1) INTRODUCCIÓN TEÓRICA A LA UNIDAD DIDÁCTICA

Lo que tienes en tus manos surgió del trabajo –o de parte del trabajo, realizado para presentar a la última convocatoria de acceso a cátedras en Navarra (año 2002), y aunque este trabajo ya cumplió su cometido original, he de reconocer que tanto esfuerzo me costó, que pensé que quizás a ti también te pudiera servir.

Parte del trabajo que había que realizar para la memoria era una unidad didáctica dirigida a un curso determinado. Esto lo podrás ver con algunas variaciones y correcciones en la unidad didáctica que se titula *A Tribute to New York*, o en la versión web que también presenté en su momento: http://usuario.tiscali.es/a_tribute_to_newyork/. En pocas palabras, es una unidad para 1º de bachillerato (aunque también puede utilizarse a lo largo de 1º y 2º) concebida como una viaje por algunos de los sitios más emblemáticos de la ciudad de Nueva York, a través de la cual pretendía enseñar a mis alumnos¹ las principales estrategias de comprensión y expresión escrita.

La parte inicial, la fundamentación teórica sobre por qué y cómo enseñar esas estrategias, es la traducción y glosa sobre los apuntes que tomé y utilicé para presentarme a la prueba oral, la prueba en que cada aspirante tenía que desarrollar un tema libremente elegido del currículo de su especialidad. Decidí hacer mi exposición oral sobre esta fundamentación teórica porque sentía que la unidad didáctica que había escrito necesitaba y merecía una explicación sobre las decisiones de tipo práctico que había tomado al realizar la unidad. Al poner ambas cosas en común, como estoy haciendo aquí, pretendía responder a las preguntas curriculares de qué, cómo y cuándo enseñar; y qué, cómo y cuándo evaluar la comprensión y expresión escritas.

La razón última –o primera, de por qué elegí estos temas es que siempre he tenido la impresión de que estas dos estrategias (*Reading* y *Writing* a partir de ahora, que en inglés es más corto) se han llevado la peor parte del movimiento comunicativo. Nunca se les ha dedicado tanto tiempo ni tanta atención en clase como a otras estrategias o a otros aspectos didácticos.

A menudo, cuando andamos justos de tiempo, dejamos las actividades de *Reading* y *Writing* para casa, como si fueran algo que los alumnos tienen que saber hacer, en lugar de ser algo que les tenemos que enseñar a hacer. La realidad nos muestra, sin embargo, que *Reading* y *Writing* son muy difíciles, especialmente si lo hacemos en un idioma extranjero.

¹ Siempre tendré a mis alumnas y a mis colegas mujeres en mente también, pero he decidido utilizar sólo la fórmula en masculino porque si no, lo podrías comprobar, se haría un poco pesado repetir tantas veces lo de “os/as” (y os aseguro que lo digo por experiencia, ya que no hay nadie más concienciada que yo).

1.1) SOBRE *READING*

A menudo hemos oído decir que vivimos en la sociedad de la información, lo cual es indudablemente cierto. Estamos completamente abrumados por toda la información que nos rodea, especialmente información escrita (impresa, en la red, etc.). Pero no es menos cierto que la información sin una cierta capacidad de interacción crítica por nuestra parte no sirve para casi nada, ya que sin esta interacción la información no se convierte en conocimiento. La capacidad de leer con comprensión nos convierte en miembros activos de nuestra sociedad alfabetizada, y mucho más que eso, como veremos².

Teniendo en mente a mis alumnos de secundaria, me atrevería a decir que la capacidad de leer con comprensión es probablemente la mejor herramienta de que los podemos proveer durante el periodo de su escolarización, y por tanto éste es o debería ser el principal objetivo del sistema educativo. Sin lectura comprensiva es imposible tener acceso al conocimiento de todas las demás asignaturas. Incluso es posible afirmar que sin lectura comprensiva es imposible desarrollar habilidades cognitivas más elevadas como la capacidad de reflexión, la conciencia o el espíritu crítico.

Por eso creo que enseñar lectura comprensiva a los alumnos no es algo que tenga que restringirse al ámbito de los profesores de lengua española ni a la etapa de educación primaria. Leer de forma comprensiva debería ser una asignatura transversal y “longitudinal”, o sea que debería ser una prioridad a lo largo y ancho de toda la etapa educativa.

Por supuesto que cuando concebí mi unidad didáctica no estaba pensando que mis alumnos de bachillerato no supieran leer. Lo que sin duda estaba pensando es que siempre se les puede enseñar a leer mejor.

² Como he mencionado anteriormente, esta parte inicial tiene su origen en las notas que preparé para mi exposición oral. No pretendo plagiar ideas de nadie ya que, en realidad, mi única labor ha sido la de ponerlas en común, porque las ideas son de otros. Las referencias están al final, aunque puedo adelantar desde ahora mismo que para hablar de *Reading* y *Writing* mis principales fuentes fueron Wallace, Smith, Cassany y Hedge. Explico esto porque, por darle una cierta fluidez a la exposición, no quiero repetir continuamente eso de “como dice...”, aunque en argumentos puntuales lo haré.

1.1.1) EL LECTOR Y EL PROCESO DE LECTURA

Durante mucho tiempo se pensó que leer consistía en descodificar los símbolos escritos, extrayendo de esta forma el significado del texto.

Más recientemente muchos psicolingüistas han defendido, sin embargo, el argumento inverso, la idea de que en vez de extraer significado de un texto, el lector tiene que llevar significado al texto para ser capaz de leer. Como dice Frank Smith en una cita muy evidente “es el cerebro el que ve, los ojos simplemente miran”. Veamos entonces cómo tiene lugar el proceso de lectura comprensiva.

Toda mi percepción sobre el proceso de lectura cambió, y todo mi interés en este tema surgió cuando leí la siguiente cita, “...reading starts before we even look at the page”³, a cuya autora tuve la suerte de conocer en el *Ealing College of Higher Education* de Londres durante el curso 1990/91, y cuya paradoja espero ser capaz de explicar. La cita de Wallace resume muy bien la idea que intento explicar, es decir que el proceso de lectura comprensiva es una interacción entre lo que el lector lee y lo que ya conoce respecto a ese tema.

En la vida real, cuando leemos algo siempre tenemos un propósito inicial que nos lleva al proceso de lectura. Además, nosotros hemos elegido la fuente de lectura o al menos conocemos el origen del texto escrito. Y además también llevamos a ese proceso de lectura toda la experiencia y conocimiento acumulados en nuestra vida, incluyendo nuestro conocimiento del lenguaje.

Todo este conocimiento y experiencia acumulados están perfectamente organizados en la “tela de araña” de nuestra “memoria a largo plazo” en forma de esquemas (*schemata*, como se denominan en la literatura). Esto es lo que Frank Smith denomina “la teoría del mundo en nuestras mentes”.

Partiendo de estos esquemas mentales y de todo el conocimiento previo que tenemos, antes de que el proceso lector comience podemos predecir gran parte de los que nos vamos a encontrar en el texto: el tipo de texto que es, el tipo de lengua que va a contener, el tipo de contenidos que vamos a encontrar, etc.

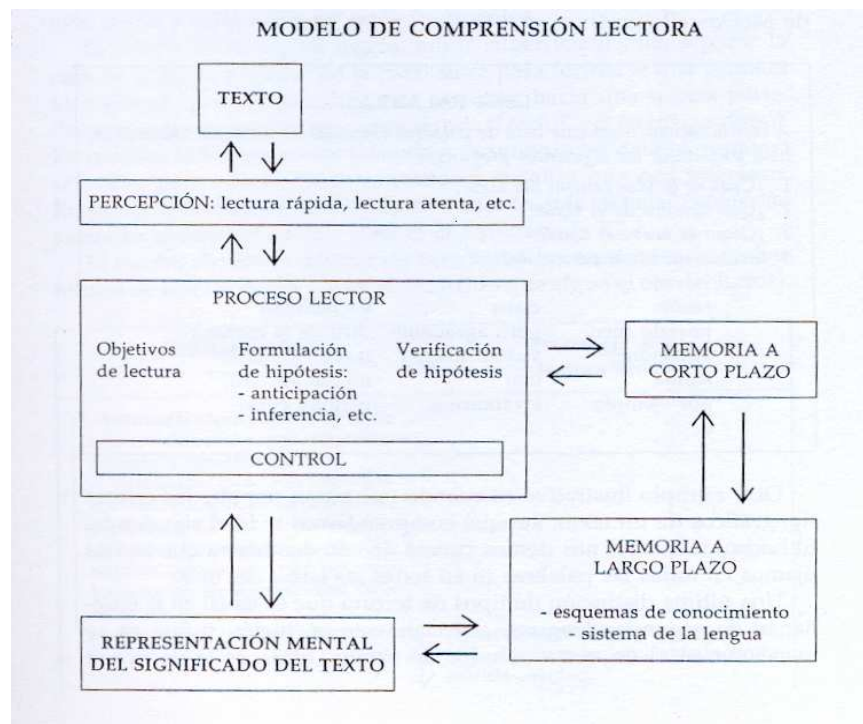
Una vez que el proceso ha comenzado, automática e inconscientemente empezamos a comprobar las predicciones iniciales y a confirmar nuestras hipótesis, o a modificarlas, y en consecuencia, a hacer nuevas predicciones.

El proceso termina cuando la interacción acaba y nosotros hemos incorporado el conocimiento que hemos adquirido a lo largo de ese proceso en nuestra “telaraña” de conocimiento.

Cassany explica esto mismo de forma más simple y clara con una metáfora: leer es como comparar dos fotos del mismo paisaje, una es la foto que tenemos en la mente y otra la foto que vemos en el texto. El proceso de comparación de ambas fotos producirá una foto nueva, más precisa y más detallada, que sustituirá a la foto que previamente teníamos en la mente.

E ilustra el proceso de la siguiente manera:

³ Catherine Wallace, *Learning to Read in a Multicultural Society*, Prentice Hall, 1988.



A partir de nuestros esquemas mentales podemos predecir el tipo de texto, el tipo de lengua, el tipo de contenido, etc. que vamos a encontrar. La predicción es fundamental.

Cuando leemos, nuestros ojos exploran el texto en fijaciones sucesivas, concentrándose no en letras o palabras, sino en unidades de significado superiores, grupos de palabras, que nos transmiten mayor cantidad de significado. Una vez más, “es el cerebro el que ve, los ojos simplemente miran”. La información visual no es suficiente. Necesitamos entender la lengua relevante, necesitamos cierto conocimiento del tópico principal y una habilidad general en el proceso lector.

Este proceso lector no ocurre siempre de la misma manera. Hay diferentes formas de leer según diferentes necesidades de lectura: lectura de un texto completo, de forma reflexiva o con una intensidad media, y lectura selectiva (*skimming* y *scanning*).

Así pues, un lector que es capaz de leer de forma comprensiva:

1. Se centra en unidades superiores: fragmentos de texto, frases.
2. Lee buscando significado.
3. Es selectivo y reflexivo.
4. No lee siempre de la misma forma, se adapta a cada situación de lectura.
5. Lee de forma rápida y eficaz.

Por tanto, para poder enseñar a nuestros alumnos las estrategias de *Reading*, tenemos que entender claramente cuáles son los diferentes tipos de conocimiento que el lector lleva al proceso de interacción lectora y cómo funciona el proceso en sí. Esto nos permitirá diseñar actividades que provean a los alumnos del conocimiento que les falta, o que les permita activar el conocimiento que ya tienen. O actividades diseñadas para

animarles a la lectura, o para comprobar que realmente el proceso de lectura ha sido comprensivo.

1.1.2) IMPLICACIONES PARA EL AULA

Siguiendo una vez más a Wallace y a sus clases magistrales en el *Ealing College of Higher Education*,

Readers bring to the text:	which enable them WHILE READING to:
<p>1. A purpose</p> <p>2. A knowledge of the language system, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ sentence structure ✓ connection in texts ✓ vocabulary <p>3. A knowledge of the world, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ genre ✓ topic ✓ culture-specific knowledge <p>4. Opinions</p> <p>5. Some general reading ability, largely developed through reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➡ Read flexibly and selectively ➡ Predict word classes ➡ Make relevant connections across texts, e.g. reference, logical connectors, etc. ➡ Anticipate organisation and content of text ➡ Relate content words to general topic ➡ Interpret appropriately events and behaviour ➡ Evaluate ➡ Anticipate by activating previous information ➡ Predict, thus facilitating

	<p>interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Infer unknown meaning by using contextual clues ➤ Read between the lines: sarcasm, irony, ideology, etc. ➤ Self-evaluate his / her reading process and adapt to each situation: skim, scan, re-read, etc.
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Vemos arriba que para poder imitar los procesos por los que pasa un lector eficiente, los alumnos de inglés como lengua extranjera necesitan:

1. Un conocimiento del sistema lingüístico: el lector tiene que conocer las convenciones de la lengua inglesa y también tiene que saber que el significado no reside en palabras aisladas. Las palabras pueden tener distintos significados y diferentes funciones gramaticales. Así, por ejemplo, tienen que ser conscientes de:
 - a. La estructura de la oración en inglés: Para poder predecir el tipo de palabras que van a encontrar al leer los alumnos necesitan conocer las características del texto al nivel de la oración y más allá de la oración. Esto les permitirá, por ejemplo, saber que sólo en una de las dos oraciones que siguen *like* es un verbo:
 - i. I *like* eating fish and chips.
 - ii. He acted *like* a mad man.
 - b. El significado implícito en estructuras como: *-s* (plural o tercera persona del singular del presente simple) o *-ed* (pasado simple o participio de pasado).
2. Un conocimiento de las convenciones del discurso: conectores y otros elementos de cohesión, cómo funciona el sistema de referencia, etc.
 - a. Elementos de referencia: Entender cómo funciona el sistema referencial (referencia a elementos que ya han aparecido en el texto y a elementos que aparecerán después) es fundamental: *one*, *this*, el uso de *the*, etc. Igualmente es muy importante entender el concepto de co-referencia.
 - b. Principales conectores, su función y el significado que entrañan.
3. Un conocimiento del mundo:

- a. “Esquemas” genéricos (para predecir la organización general del texto). Un género particular tiene un contenido y una estructura característicos: ensayo científico, artículo de periódico, carta de queja, novela, etc.
 - b. “Esquemas” temáticos (para poder conectar las palabras a través del texto, construyendo así significado). El lector utiliza estos esquemas para centrarse en el contenido y para poder predecir de qué tratan las situaciones que se describen.
 - c. “Esquemas” socioculturales: El lector categoriza la información según sus propias categorías socioculturales. Esta es la principal carencia de los alumnos de un idioma extranjero, el conjunto de actitudes, creencias, sentimientos, etc. que los hablantes nativos llevan a la interacción lectora. Muchas veces los alumnos no entienden un texto, no porque no entiendan la lengua, sino porque carecen del conocimiento sociocultural necesario indispensable para entenderlo.
4. Una cierta habilidad lectora: ésta se desarrolla en gran medida a través del propio proceso de lectura. Se compone de las siguientes capacidades fundamentales:
- a. Anticipación: Para activar el conocimiento, la motivación y las expectativas previas.
 - b. Predicción: Ser capaz de predecir lo que vamos a encontrar en el texto facilita la interacción con él.
 - c. Inferencia: Capacidad de “rellenar” los vacíos que encontramos en la comprensión del texto utilizando sobre todo la información contextual.
 - d. “Leer entre líneas”: Capacidad de entender la ironía, el sarcasmo, la ideología implícita en el texto, etc.
 - e. Continua auto-evaluación del proceso de lectura: un buen lector sabe cuando tiene que releer algo, o volver atrás para confirmar que lo había entendido bien, o leer más deprisa o más despacio, o leer para obtener una comprensión global, o para encontrar una información determinada, o, en suma, cuándo usar qué destrezas o subdestrezas de comprensión escrita.

Así pues, si lo que necesitamos los profesores de inglés es reproducir en nuestros alumnos las características de un buen lector, podemos ayudarles diseñando para el aula actividades del los siguientes tipos:

1. Actividades de *pre-reading* destinadas a:
 - a. Aumentar la confianza de los alumnos en su capacidad lectora.
 - b. Proveerlos de un motivo para leer.
 - c. Aumentar su motivación hacia la lectura.
 - d. Prepararlos ante las dificultades lingüísticas que puedan surgir.
 - e. Prepararlos ante las dificultades conceptuales y culturales.
 - f. “Construir” en ellos un conocimiento “esquemático” ya que necesitan tener información sobre el contexto en que el texto fue creado: social, educativo, etc., o sobre la fuente de la que procede el texto, etc.

- g. “Activar” el conocimiento “esquemático” que ya tienen, recordarles lo que ya saben y conocen. A menudo los alumnos ya tienen un conocimiento previo, pero necesitan que se les recuerde.
- h. Predecir el tema, las ideas, etc. del texto a partir del título, imágenes, disposición tipográfica, etc.
- i. Y, en general, intentar establecer relaciones entre el tema del texto y el mundo de los alumnos haciéndolo cercano y personalizado.

Algunos ejemplos de las actividades mencionadas arriba podrían ser:

- ✓ Preguntas para las que el alumno tiene que encontrar la respuesta en el texto.
- ✓ Actividades dirigidas a enriquecer o clasificar el vocabulario.
- ✓ Actividades dirigidas a analizar los diferentes significados de una misma palabra.
- ✓ Actividades que permitan explicar el significado de palabras complicadas o palabras clave.
- ✓ Hacer una lista de las palabras que los alumnos creen que van a encontrar en el texto.
- ✓ Trabajar con textos secundarios si se cree que se necesitará información adicional sobre el tema.
- ✓ Leer la primera frase o el primer párrafo y predecir la continuación.
- ✓ Escribir toda la información previa que conocen sobre un tema a través de un esquema, un mapa conceptual, etc.

2. Actividades de *while-reading*, orientadas a:

- a. Activar el conocimiento de la lengua: ayudarles con el sistema referencial, la co-referencia, etc.
- b. Predecir la continuación del texto, para lo cual la sintaxis y el significado son los instrumentos más útiles.
- c. Animar a los alumnos a reflexionar sobre lo que están leyendo.
- d. Leer buscando significado.
- e. Enfrentarse a vocabulario desconocido, sobre todo a los lectores ansiosos que se bloquean si no entienden todas las palabras.
- f. Desarrollar su competencia para “rellenar” los significados que no alcanzan a través del contexto, palabras conocidas relacionadas, etc.
- g. Trabajar con el significado a distintos niveles: ideas principales, el punto de vista del autor, etc.
- h. Activar el conocimiento del mundo.
- i. Ayudar a los alumnos a reflexionar sobre sus propias estrategias de lectura.

Con actividades como:

- ✓ Textos con los párrafos cortados y desordenados.

- ✓ Preguntas de opción múltiple.
 - ✓ Preguntas de respuesta libre.
 - ✓ Preguntas de respuesta cerrada.
 - ✓ Actividades de *cloze*.
 - ✓ Discutir y comentar las incertidumbres sobre significado.
 - ✓ Actividades en las que hay que utilizar el contexto y la similitud con palabras conocidas para deducir el significado de palabras desconocidas.
 - ✓ Actividades para trabajar las palabras clave.
3. Actividades de *post-reading*.
- ✓ Escribir un resumen del texto.
 - ✓ Ponerle un título.
 - ✓ Preguntas de opción múltiple.
 - ✓ Preguntas de respuesta libre y de respuesta cerrada.
 - ✓ Escribir una carta, una descripción, una opinión, etc. relacionadas con el texto.

1.1.3) EVALUACIÓN

Cassany considera que hay cinco aspectos básicos sobre **qué** evaluar.

- Sobre el uso del texto escrito:
 1. La actitud hacia el proceso de lectura.
 2. La habilidad para enfrentarse a las fuentes escritas: saber qué, cómo y dónde obtener información en un texto escrito.
- Sobre el proceso de lectura:
 3. La percepción del texto: número de fijaciones, velocidad lectora, etc.
 4. El grado de comprensión del texto: saber cómo inferir y anticipar la información, saber cómo integrar la información extraída del texto; ser capaz de recordar el significado de lo que se ha leído, etc.
 5. Ser capaz de controlar el propio proceso de lectura, de acomodarse a cada situación de lectura, de autocorregir los errores de comprensión que se vayan produciendo, etc.

Y respecto a **cómo** evaluar habla de la observación, cuestionarios, análisis de las actividades (por ejemplo algunas de las actividades que han sido mencionadas, como preguntas de respuesta libre, *cloze tests*, preguntas de opción múltiple, etc.) y textos.

Tradicionalmente lo único que se ha evaluado ha sido la parte número 4, el grado de comprensión del texto. Yo creo que es también muy interesante evaluar los otros aspectos mediante un proceso de observación, entrevistas personales, etc. para poder dar una respuesta individualizada a los alumnos respecto a cómo se está desarrollando su habilidad lectora.

1.2) SOBRE *WRITING*

Si, como vimos, el proceso de comprensión escrita era muy complejo, el proceso de expresión escrita lo es todavía más. Sólo tenemos que pensar en nosotros mismos para entender esto: ¿con qué frecuencia escribimos y con qué frecuencia leemos? ¿Cuál es nuestra actitud hacia una tarea que implica leer y hacia una que implica escribir?

Escribir es complejo porque escribir no es simplemente “como hablar pero por escrito” (Hedge). Y no lo es porque cuando escribimos carecemos de la interacción con el interlocutor, porque tenemos que acertar con el nivel de formalidad que necesitamos, porque no podemos dejar sitio a la ambigüedad, porque tenemos que escribir con un alto grado de organización, porque tenemos que utilizar la sintaxis y la puntuación de forma comprensible, y porque no podemos usar algunos de los recursos que usamos cuando hablamos, como el lenguaje corporal, el énfasis, etc. Así pues, cuando escribimos, estamos solos nosotros y el texto.

Y paralelamente escribir es absolutamente necesario. En nuestra sociedad altamente alfabetizada ser un ciudadano activo implica que seamos capaces de escribir con cierta propiedad: si necesitamos solicitar un trabajo, si tenemos que quejarnos de algo, etc.

Así, para introducir el apartado de *Writing* quiero hacerlo a través de otra cita que cambió mi percepción respecto a la enseñanza de la expresión escrita:

In many English language classrooms the pattern has been to set the written work, perhaps with some discussion beforehand, and then to mark the incoming pieces of writing. In other words, the traditional focus has been on the product. Research now seems to suggest that we could be as much concerned with responding to the student *writer* as to the student's *writing*.

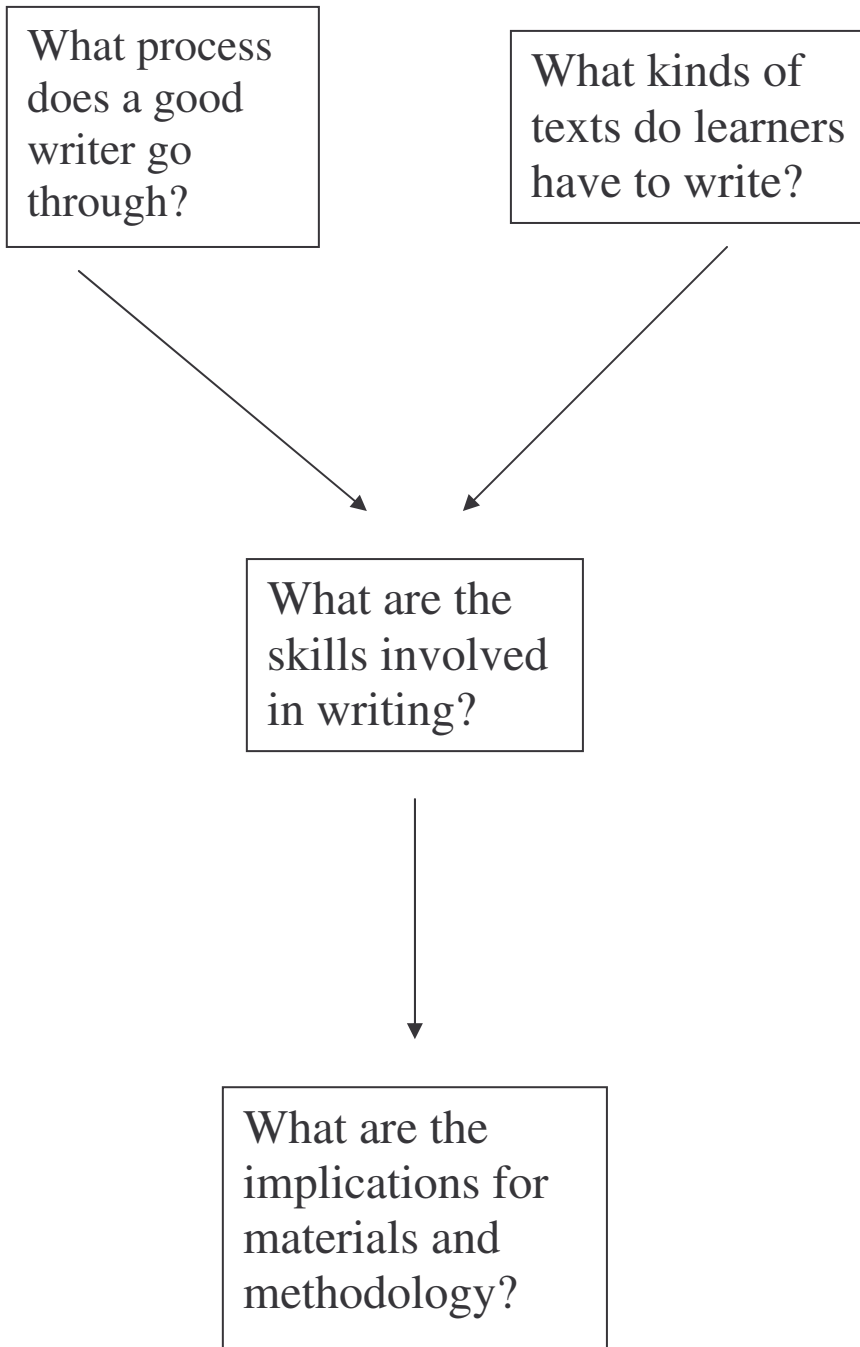
Tricia Hedge, *Writing*, OUP, 1988

Esta cita se refiere al enfoque procesual de la expresión escrita que había en Gran Bretaña y en Estados Unidos en los años 70. La idea inicial era simplemente que si podíamos definir con claridad el proceso por el que pasaba un buen escritor al escribir, sería más fácil enseñar a los alumnos a escribir imitando ese proceso, en lugar de tomar como modelo los textos ya terminados con el propósito de imitarlos. En el esquema de Hedge que aparece en la siguiente página podemos observar esa idea.

Este enfoque estaba dirigido inicialmente a los hablantes nativos de la lengua inglesa cuando escribían en su propia lengua. Fue posteriormente cuando se “exportó” a la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera.

PROCESS

PRODUCT



Analizando ya más detenidamente el proceso de escritura por el que pasa un buen escritor, Hedge habla de dos aspectos complementarios en ese proceso: *authoring* y *crafting*. Con *authoring* se refiere a la percepción que el autor del texto tiene de sí mismo como escritor y con *crafting* a la percepción que tiene del texto como algo que tiene que ser compuesto, algo que tiene que ser creado (muy importante, como dijimos, es la idea del proceso de construcción).

Los dos aspectos tienen lugar simultáneamente y en algunos casos se solapan. Después de este esquema creado por mí sintetizando la lectura de Hedge, intentaré explicar el proceso en orden cronológico –qué ocurre antes de empezar a escribir y qué ocurre una vez que el proceso de escritura empieza, para explicar después las implicaciones que éste tiene para el aula.

What skills do good writers demonstrate?

1. Authoring

- a. Having something to say
- b. Being aware of the reader
- c. Developing the ideas

PRE-WRITING

2. Crafting

- d. Organising the content clearly and in a logical manner
- e. Manipulating the script
- f. Using the conventions, e.g. spelling, layout
- g. Getting the grammar right
- h. Developing sentence structure
- i. Linking ideas in a variety of ways
- j. Having a range of vocabulary

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1.2.1) EL PROCESO DE EXPRESIÓN ESCRITA: *AUTHORING* Y *CRAFTING* –¿QUÉ HACE UN BUEN ESCRITOR?

1. *AUTHORING*:

- a. Tiene algo que decir: un sentido de propósito.

Cuando un escritor experto comienza su proceso de escritura tiene una idea muy clara de la función de ese escrito. Esa función influirá en todas las demás decisiones que tome, como organización, lengua, etc.

- Implicaciones para el aula ¿Qué debería hacer el profesor?
 - ✓ Dar a las actividades de expresión escrita un propósito comunicativo, real o figurado.
 - ✓ Dar a los alumnos la oportunidad de practicar distintas formas y funciones de *Writing*.

- b. Tiene al lector en mente: un sentido de audiencia.

En la vida real, el acto de escribir es siempre consecuencia de algún tipo de demanda real, y la persona que escribe tiene a un lector o tipo de lector real en mente. Sin esta relación de roles entre el escritor y el lector es imposible mantener el nivel de formalidad necesario.

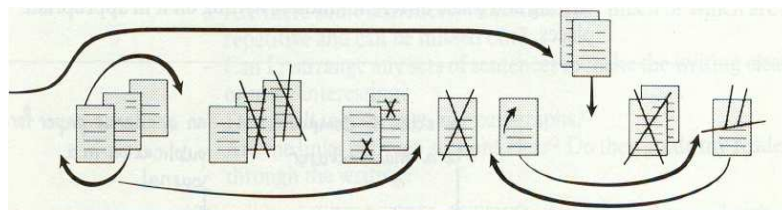
- Implicaciones para el aula ¿Qué debería hacer el profesor?
 - ✓ Desarrollar en sus alumnos un sentido de audiencia (real o simulado) intentando responder a las siguientes preguntas:
 - ¿Quién va a leer lo que yo escriba?
 - ¿Qué necesito decir?
 - ¿Cómo puedo decirlo de forma no ambigua y accesible a mis lectores?
 - ✓ Variar la audiencia y dar a las tareas de *Writing* un sentido comunicativo.
 - ✓ Perseguir un nivel de formalidad apropiado a los receptores y un nivel de corrección aceptable.
 - ✓ Utilizar a la clase como posible audiencia de lo escrito.

- c. Desarrolla sus ideas: un sentido de dirección.

Un escritor experimentado pasa un proceso de desarrollo muy consciente. El proceso no es lineal. A menudo los borradores se interrumpen y la persona que escribe se para a releer y mejorar lo que ya ha escrito.

Los primeros borradores se concentran más en **qué** decir (contenido), mientras que los últimos lo hacen en **cómo** hacerlo de la forma más efectiva (forma).

Hedge lo ilustra así:



- Implicaciones para el aula ¿Qué debería hacer el profesor? (Las técnicas son de Cassany).
- ✓ Concienciar a los alumnos sobre el proceso de composición e iniciar en él a los alumnos:
 - Producir, generar ideas:
 - *Brainstorming*.
 - Explorar el tema:
 - Estrella: preguntar qué, cómo, cuándo, por qué, etc.
 - Cubo: describir, comparar, relacionar, analizar, aplicar y argumentar.
 - Buscar los conceptos clave.
 - Otras estrategias:
 - Escritura libre, dejar fluir la tinta.
 - *WIRMI: what I really mean is...*
 - Tomar notas.
- ✓ Guiar a los alumnos a través del proceso de composición y revisión.
 - Organizar las ideas:
 - Esquemas decimales.
 - Mapas conceptuales.
 - Componer:
 - La arquitectura de la frase.
 - Elección apropiada de vocabulario.
 - Orden apropiado de los elementos en la frase.
 - Longitud apropiada (la memoria a corto plazo puede retener un máximo de unas quince palabras).
 - Sintaxis apropiada.
 - Corrección.
 - Estructura del párrafo. Los escritos efectivos muestran una clara planificación de los párrafos –cada párrafo tiene una frase que introduce el tema, y a ésta le siguen otras frases que lo desarrollan:
 - Los conectores lógicos ayudan al lector a relacionar las ideas de forma significativa.
 - Cohesión interna: puntuación, conjunciones, pronombres, determinantes, relaciones léxicas y lógicas, anáfora, elipsis, referencia y co-referencia, etc.
 - Uso apropiado de la puntuación.

- Revisar y mejorar:
 - Hacer nuevos borradores.
 - Revisar y corregir (esto, como hemos visto en el esquema de Hedge, no es algo que ocurre al final, sino a lo largo de todo el proceso).
 - Aspecto físico, uso de las convenciones (organización, ortografía, etc.):
 - Ortografía.
 - Uso de márgenes.
 - Utilización de las convenciones de presentación.
 - Sangrado o espaciado entre párrafos.
 - Letra clara o utilización de un procesador de textos.
- ✓ Responder al esfuerzo del alumno de forma inmediata –o al menos conseguir que no pase mucho tiempo hasta que se dé esta respuesta / corrección.
- ✓ Desarrollar tareas de expresión escrita, creando una atmósfera apropiada.
- ✓ Proveer a los alumnos de buenos modelos de escritura.
- ✓ Integrar la corrección y calificación dentro del proceso de escritura, dando así a la revisión la importancia que merece.
 - No corregir todo, sino sólo lo que el alumno puede aprender en un momento determinado.
 - Corregir cualquier parte del proceso, no sólo el resultado final: borradores, esquemas, etc.
 - Dejar que los alumnos revisen las correcciones del profesor en clase y asegurarse de que las entienden.
 - Negociar y elaborar con ellos un sistema de corrección.
 - Concentrarse no sólo en la superficie del proceso de composición (ortografía, sintaxis, etc.), sino también en otros aspectos globales como coherencia, etc.
 - Decirles no sólo lo que tienen mal, sino también lo que tienen bien.
 - Corregir en clase, mientras el alumno está escribiendo, integrando así la revisión dentro del proceso de composición, ya que el alumno está más motivado para ser corregido.
- ✓ Dar a los alumnos *feedback* positivo sobre cómo están desarrollando su habilidad como escritores.
- ✓ Analizar con ellos textos terminados para ver:
 - Qué características tiene un buen escrito.
 - Cómo y en qué un escrito se diferencia de otro.

- Cómo varían la organización y los aspectos de cada texto según el propósito del autor.
- ✓ Animarlos a leer en inglés. Por alguna razón, los buenos escritores siempre parecen empezar el proceso con “los esquemas necesarios y apropiados” en mente.
- ✓ Realizar tareas que se centren en diferentes aspectos de la composición por separado.
- ✓ Y viceversa, practicar también al nivel textual.

2. CRAFTING:

Hemos mencionado un sentido de propósito, audiencia y dirección como componentes del *authoring*, de la percepción que quien escribe tiene de sí mismo como autor. Pero escribir también tiene, como hemos mencionado antes, un componente de *Crafting*, que consiste en unir las ideas y desarrollarlas a lo largo de oraciones, párrafos y estructuras superiores, usando los elementos lingüísticos necesarios para darles cohesión, utilizando correctamente los signos de puntuación, eligiendo el vocabulario apropiado y, en general, organizando las ideas en la forma de un fragmento de discurso coherente.

Esto no ocurre de forma aislada y separada de la destreza de *Authoring* que hemos visto antes, sino que tiene lugar al mismo tiempo. A lo largo del proceso de escritura, el autor no sólo es consciente de su papel de autor, sino que también tiene una percepción del texto como algo que tiene que ser “creado”, “compuesto” y “orquestrado” por él como artesano.

Los aspectos más importantes del *crafting*, que ya fueron mencionados a lo largo del proceso de *authoring*, son los siguientes:

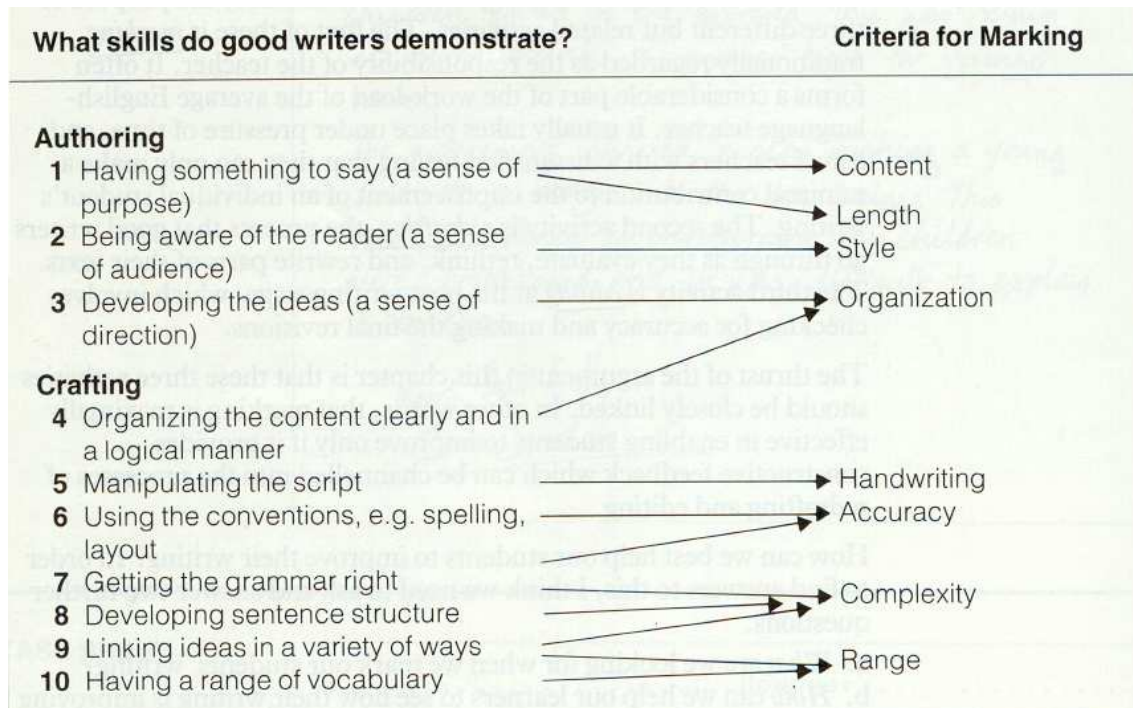
- a. Organizar el contenido de forma clara y lógica.
- b. Manipular el borrador.
- c. Usar las convenciones de ortografía, puntuación, presentación, etc.
- d. Utilizar la sintaxis adecuada y correctamente.
- e. Desarrollar la estructura de las oraciones.
- f. Unir las ideas en una variedad de formas distintas
- g. Manejar un vocabulario apropiado, rico y variado.

1.2.2) EVALUACIÓN

1. EL PRODUCTO FINAL

A la hora de evaluar el producto final debemos analizarlo desde la perspectiva de los elementos que intervienen en la composición, y en los cuales hemos basado la enseñanza de este proceso. No debemos, por tanto, concentrarnos sólo en la superficie (ortografía, sintaxis, etc.), sino también en otros aspectos globales como cohesión y coherencia.

Hedge resume en el siguiente esquema los tipos de destreza que caracterizan a un buen escritor, y los aspectos que deberían buscar en una buena composición un corrector o examinador.



Como instrumentos de evaluación se puede usar la composición clásica, que permitirá al alumno trabajar a un nivel textual. Para ello es muy importante definir claramente las características del texto que queremos: tipo de texto, destinatario, propósito, tema, etc.

Es también muy importante que los alumnos sepan de antemano cómo va a ser corregido y calificado su texto, qué aspectos se van a considerar, qué importancia se le va a dar a cada uno, etc.

Naturalmente un tipo de evaluación tan exhaustivo no es necesario siempre, sino que puede dejarse para tres o cuatro momentos a lo largo del curso. También pueden evaluarse los distintos “productos” puntuales del proceso de composición que hemos visto.

2. EL PROCESO DE COMPOSICIÓN

La evaluación del proceso de composición consiste en evaluar las estrategias que el alumno usa, el proceso cognitivo por el que pasa, su técnicas de composición, etc.

Este nuevo enfoque tiene como objetivo un tipo de valuación más cualitativo. Está basado en técnicas de observación y de recogida de información: observación de la

forma en que trabaja el alumno, análisis de sus notas, esquemas, etc., comparación de los distintos borradores, etc.

El propósito no es tanto ponerles una nota como analizar y hacerles conscientes de sus tendencias, estilo de composición, forma de trabajo, progreso individual, etc. O sea, el propósito es fundamentalmente darles información individualizada sobre cómo están evolucionando como escritores.

1.3) BIBLIOGRAFÍA Y REFERENCIAS

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2) A UNIT OF WORK: A TRIBUTE TO NEW YORK

2.1) Introduction to the unit and level for which it is intended

The unit of work that I have entitled “A Tribute to New York”, which can be seen at the end of this rationale, has been written for *1º Bachillerato*. It has a triple intention: to teach the most useful and necessary reading and writing strategies, and at the same time to do so through cultural contents related to one of the most representative metropolis in the Anglo-American world: New York.

In addition, since we, as *bachillerato* teachers, spend a great amount of time and energy preparing our students for a successful *Selectividad* exam, I decided to write a unit of work that could be considered as a starting point towards that intended goal.

I found myself in a critical position because soon after I decided to work on this unit, in the terms in which I have defined it, I learnt that in just very little time the whole concept and the structure of the *Selectividad*, and consequently the type of tests students take, was going to be changed. I very much welcome the idea of testing oral communication, because I think this will have a very positive backwash effect inside the *Bachillerato* classrooms.

However, although I initially felt somehow discouraged, I still felt that my unit would be very useful because, even if the English test changes very significantly, there are a lot of instances of EGP and EAP (English for General and Academic Purposes) in which students will have to deal with this type of testing, and for which they will have to have mastered some basic reading and writing techniques.

The structure of the unit is more or less the following: each section (except for the letter in section number 1 and the brainstorming that can be seen in annex number 1) follows these steps:

- a) Before reading: these are activities that search for the students’ involvement, that are meant to trigger their previous knowledge and get them involved in the topic (they are usually spoken).
- b) TEXT(S). As much as possible I have used authentic reading materials, the type they would find if they travelled to New York: brochures, travel books, etc.
- c) During and after the reading there are general understanding activities (usually those that are most commonly used in textbooks and *Selectividad* exams: true/false, multiple choice, rephrasing, etc). Aspects such as grammar are not taught in this unit, but due to the fragmented structure of this unit of work –see below– these activities are meant to complement the usual contents of a *1º Bachillerato* syllabus and to provide practice for the *Selectividad* exam. According to the needs of a specific group of students, the teacher can decide to change their order from section to section, to leave them out or to add to them.
- d) And what is most important because it is the real **heart** of my work, along the activity sections, I have tried to build up a core of the most useful and necessary reading and writing strategies.

The last section, “And finally... let’s go to the museum”, is a section where the most useful strategies learnt are revised.

2.2) Time distribution

Since the main purpose of my unit was to provide my students with practice of the most basic reading and writing strategies through cultural contents that would allow them to have a better knowledge of the English-speaking world, I was conscious from the beginning that it would not be feasible to write an ordinary unit, which is conceived to be taught in a linear way, from beginning to end, without stopping, until the desired objective(s) is/are reached. A whole unit on reading and writing conducted in this way would probably make my students hate those skills for the rest of their lives.

Estaire and Zanón gave me some useful ideas in order to solve this problem. The first one was to plan my unit as a journey to a place they might like to visit. The second and most important one was the concept of “fragmented unit”⁴, a unit devised “to function as a complement to their (the students’) normal year’s work... to cover aspects which would otherwise not be dealt with” (or which can be in this way reinforced).

A trip is a fantastic solution for that. The students start with a brainstorming activity, an example of which can be seen in annex number 1, and then they write a letter to the Tourist Information Office or the American Embassy, etc., asking for information about New York. And by the time they start the new section, they may already have received that information.

I suggest that the remaining nine sections are done every three weeks roughly, more or less three per term. This would take the whole of the year. However, the structure it has is very flexible. Depending on the on-going evaluation, and how students are responding to the level of difficulty, variety of strategies that are taught, need for extra reinforcement, etc., etc. the teacher may as well decide to extend it along the two courses of *Bachillerato*, or teach it in a shorter period.

2.3) Temas transversales that are dealt with

Considering that one of the axes of this unit of work is the teaching of some cultural aspects of the English-speaking world, there are various *temas transversales* that have been introduced, in more or less depth depending on the activities and the topics. The main ones are the following:

Moral and civic education: This *tema transversal* is dealt with somehow in all the sections by getting students in contact with another culture and developing their interest in it. But it becomes really important in the sections about the history of New York, the United Nations, immigration and multiculturalism in New York.

Education for peace: This *tema* can be found in the sections about Times Square, the history of New York, the NY City cabs, the United Nations, immigration and multiculturalism.

Consumerism: This *tema transversal* can be found in the sections about Times Square, the theatre, Central Park and the museums.

⁴ ESTAIRE, Sheila and Javier ZANÓN, *Planning Classwork, A Task-Based Approach*, Oxford: Heinemann, 1994, p. 70.

2.4) Cross-curricular areas that are dealt with

The main areas this unit is related to are Geography, History, Religion, Art, Literature and New Technologies. The first three are the most important because it is impossible to talk about New York without dealing with them. I have tried to make some insights into the history of New York, namely its origins and its great importance in the emigration processes that took place mainly in Europe, but also in other parts of the world, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

The institution of the United Nations, dealt with in section number 6, also provides some basic information about 20th century history.

I have also tried to provide students with some basic geographical information about New York. And finally, when dealing with the cultural diversity the city has, I have introduced the topic of religious diversity.

We can also find an introduction to art in the sections about the museums, which can be explored further if the students find it interesting, and to literature.

And finally, some use of the new technologies is also intended if students want to research further into the cultural contents introduced. However, it is not completely necessary.

2.5) Objectives

Following the proposals of the Ministry of Education and the *Gobierno de Navarra* for English teaching in Bachillerato, in this unit of work I have tried to develop in my students the capacity to do the following in English:

1. To use reading strategies that will allow them to read texts of general interest in an autonomous way, to understand their function and discursive organisation.
2. To use written English in order to communicate fluently and correctly through the use of the appropriate strategies.
3. To know the fundamental sociocultural aspects of New York, thus learning how to understand and interpret a culture different from their own, and understanding the relative value of cultural conventions and norms.
4. To value English as a means to have access to other cultures and a means of international communication and understanding in a multicultural world.

Needless to say there will be a great diversity of abilities inside the classroom but the objectives expressed above are the direction in which we have to move. We have to understand that not all students will get equally far, but no objective can be foregone.

2.6) Contents

2.6.1) Communicative skills

(Between brackets the numbers of the sections of the unit in which each is dealt with).

I have subdivided this section into reading skills and writing skills, and in the next section –reflection on language– I have included the test preparation techniques. It is very difficult to draw the line among all of them and to avoid a certain degree of overlapping because, on the one hand, what I have called test preparation techniques are in fact reading or writing skills or subskills sometimes. And on the other hand, some of the receptive skills are in fact an introduction and preparation for active production.

As I explained in the *Introduction to the unit* section a great deal of oral practise is also provided, mainly when introducing each section, in order to trigger the students' previous knowledge of the different topics, which will allow them to interact with the texts in a more successful way. And there is also an introduction to debate techniques in the section about the United Nations. However, I do not want to get into further details with the oral skills because I prefer to keep the focus on the main issues I introduced above: teaching reading and writing strategies through the culture of the English-speaking countries.

Reading skills and subskills	Writing skills and subskills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming (to trigger interaction with text) (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) • Using the dictionary (2) • Guessing the meaning of unknown words from context, related words or cognates (2, 6, 10) • Understanding brochures (3) • Understanding maps (3) • Analysing data (7) • Scanning (3) • Understanding the use of paragraphs (3, 4, 5) • Skimming (4) • Understanding the difference between fact and opinion (4) • Understanding the writer's intention (4) • Understanding textual coherence (5) • Understanding the use of connectors (7, 8) • Understanding the use of reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing formal letters (1) • Writing informal letters (2, 9) • Summarising (2, 3, 9) • Sharing a common code for text correction (2) • Keeping a record of one's most common mistakes (2) • Using paragraphs (3, 4) • Brainstorming techniques (3, 5, 6, 7) • Sorting out ideas (3) • Using paragraphs (4) • Using the right punctuation (4) • Writing an opinion (4) • Exchanging ideas with classroom mates (4) • Textual coherence (5) • Writing an introduction and a conclusion (5, 7) • Writing a description (6, 9, 10) • Using connectors (4, 5, 7, 8, 9)

words (7, 10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignoring difficult words (2, 9, 10) • Understanding key information (8, 9, 10) • Recognising key words (9) • Appreciating literature (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a balanced argument (7, 10) • Writing a sequenced argument (7, 10) • Writing a narrative (9, 10)
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2.6.2) Reflection on language

As I have explained in the introduction, this unit is somehow unusual because it focuses mainly on communicative skills, namely the written skills. It is to be understood that communicative skills cannot take place without *language* itself, but it is very difficult to predict beforehand all the communicative functions, all the vocabulary or all the phonetic aspects that will spring from this unit. I will try, however, to list the ones that are bound to be studied in more or less depth.

2.A. Language functions:

- Expressing opinions
- Expressing hypothesis
- Expressing interests and preferences
- Expressing causes and consequences
- Describing places

2.B. Grammar:

- Passive sentences
- Conditional sentences
- Relative sentences
- Reported speech
- Different types of compound sentences: concessive, purpose, etc.
- Revision of different verb tenses
- Revision of some modal verbs

2.C. Vocabulary:

- Spelling of American words
- Hobbies and interests
- Connectors
- In general, the vocabulary related to the sociocultural aspects listed below

2.D. Phonetics:

- Rhythm and intonation

EAP test preparation techniques	
• Finding synonyms (2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9)	• Multiple choice questions (4, 6, 8)
• Giving long answers (2, 3, 5)	• Finishing sentences with information from the text (5, 7)
• Rephrasing (2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9)	• Guessing meaning from context (6)
• Summarising (2, 4, 7, 9, 10)	• Open questions (6, 7, 8)
• Answering true/false questions (3, 4, 7, 9)	• Completing sentences (7)
• Explaining the meaning of words (3, 6, 7)	

2.6.3) Sociocultural aspects

This is, together with the communicative skills, the other main axis of my unit, and teaching some sociocultural aspects of the English-speaking world has helped me to set the basis for the communicative skills. The main aspects I have dealt with are:

- The conventions of letter writing
- The history of New York
- The theatre
- Recreation
- Fast food
- The United Nations
- Immigration
- The subway
- Religions
- Literature
- Art and museums
- And, in general, as I have repeatedly expressed in other sections of this rationale, this unit will be an attempt to develop in my students an interest in other cultures meant in an interactive way: the interest in the foreign culture will increase their interest in the foreign language and vice versa.

2.7) Evaluation and assessment

My idea for assessing and testing this unit would be to follow these steps:

BEFORE STARTING THE UNIT

1. Before I introduced the unit, I would give them the text *Good Times and Bad Times* (see annex number 2), about Times Square, as homework. I would not give them any further instructions, just about a week to hand it in. After the time was over, I would collect all their texts, I would correct and mark them, and I would keep them. In the second place, I would ask them what difficulties they had encountered, mainly concerning the reading and writing processes. This would allow me to do some previous assessment.

DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIT

2. Then I would introduce the unit and we would start working on it. At the end of each of the nine sections there would be an evaluation process of what had been done/taught/learnt, so that if that was necessary, the following sections could be changed accordingly.

Students would be asked to evaluate the following aspects by means of simple evaluation grids⁵:

Teacher		
Clarity of explanations	Planning of work	Relationship with SS

Section and activities in it			
Interest	Materials	Time available	Level of difficulty

Self		
Progress	Work with classmates(s)	Satisfaction with achieved objectives

Through observation **the teacher** would also evaluate the following:

Students

⁵ Some of the ideas for evaluation have been borrowed from the above-mentioned Estaire and Zanón's *Planning Classwork*.

Motivation	Progress	Reading skills	Writing skills

Section and activities in it			
Adequacy of level	Adequacy of contents	Procedure	Materials

As a complement to the evaluation, students would be encouraged to keep a record of their progress, like this:

Title of section:	Date:
1. What have we done?	
2. What did I like most?	
3. What did I like least?	
4. What could be changed (and how)?	
5. What have I learnt and what am I able to do? Regarding cultural aspects: Regarding reading strategies: Regarding writing strategies:	
6. What do I need to pay more attention to, revise and study?	

AT THE END OF THE UNIT

3. At the end of the unit, we would go through a process of self-, peer- and teacher-evaluation of the whole unit.
4. Also, we have to consider testing (because they are going to be tested on aspects like the ones dealt with). This would have to do mainly with the reading and writing skills. In order to test the reading and writing processes (questions A and E mainly), in the first place, and after all we had studied and dealt with along the unit, we would have to agree on which aspects, and with which criteria, were going to be tested. As an example, I suggest the following:

a) Activity A (Answer the following questions shortly...) – Reading and Writing:

Aspect to be considered	Things that have to be taken into account	Maximum mark	M A R K
Questions a) and b) Reading comprehension	The content to which the question refers has been properly understood.	0.5 each	
Questions a) and b) Written aspects	The students has answered clearly, without repeating sentences from the text, using the appropriate language, spelling, etc.	0.5 each	

b) Activity E (Composition) – Writing:

Aspect to be considered	Things that have to be taken into account	Maximum mark	M A R K
Presentation	Nice handwriting, easy to read. The use of margins is good. It is clean, the lines are parallel, and there are no crossing-outs.	0.25	
Use of language	The language is appropriate. The tone is adequate. The vocabulary is precise and varied. There is no copying or repetition of ideas from the text.	0.75	
Spelling and punctuation	The use of spelling is correct. The use of punctuation and capitalisation is correct.	0.25	
Structure	There is an <u>introduction</u> , an initial paragraph to introduce the topic and to attract the reader's attention. There is a <u>main body</u> , where the topic has been successfully developed. The student has reached a <u>conclusion</u> that follows	1	

	his/her arguments.		
Use of paragraphs	The text is divided into paragraphs. Each paragraph develops an idea, which can be further explained, developed, etc. by secondary ideas. It is easy to see where each paragraph begins and ends.	0.5	
Use of connectors	The right connectors have been used to join sentences and especially paragraphs. The use of connectors is balanced. The student has avoided overuse.	0.25	

5. My idea to test the unit and the progress done along the process would be to give them the text *Good Times and Bad Times* again, the same I had given at the beginning of the process and whose answers I had kept, for them to do it in class, but without anybody's help in this case.
6. The following day, we would go through a double (or even triple) testing process. With the grids above, I would encourage peer testing, where each one would have to correct and mark his/her partner's work. And I would also mark their answers to the test too. Another possibility, as I mentioned above when talking about triple testing, would be to have them correct and mark their own work.
7. And finally, the very last step of all these processes would be to have them compare their comprehension and production at the beginning (first *Good Times and Bad Times*) and at the end (second *Good Times and Bad Times*).

2.8) Methodology

Although the main objective of this unit is the teaching of reading and writing skills, an integration of the four skills has also been pursued. There is a great amount of oral practice and listening comprehension input since all the activities in each section are meant to be done in the target language.

The very much talked about communicative competence is the main goal in my unit. However, I think that for a long time there has been a misconception, or rather a narrow approach to this concept, because in the world of ELT it has been largely considered that communication was only oral communication, and therefore, the written skills were not so much developed. We as language teachers seemed to have the thought that by learning to speak, one also learns to write; and that if one can read in his/her own language, one must be able to read in any other language.

In brief, we could consider then that communicative competence is the desired aim, but more stress has been put on those skills that for several reasons have sometimes received less emphasis.

3) A Tribute to New York – A Unit of Work

3.1) WRITE A LETTER TO

You want to visit New York City on holiday/on a school trip, and you need tourist information such as maps or information about how to get there, etc.

You might also like additional information about the best time to visit the city, or you might like to ask for advice about the most interesting places, festivals, etc.

In groups, and with the help of your teacher, write a letter –or an e-mail– to the American Embassy⁶ or the Official New York City Visitor Information Center⁷ and politely ask for the information you want. The frame below will help you.

Addressee	Sender	Date
<i>Dear Sir/Madam,</i>		
(PURPOSE/REASON FOR WRITING) <i>I would like to visit New York next...</i>		
(REQUESTS) <i>I would be very grateful if you could send me...</i>		
(POLITE FORMULA TO CLOSE LETTER) <i>I look forward to hearing from you.</i>		
<i>Yours faithfully,</i>		
Signature		

⁶ <http://www.embusa.es/>

Embajada de los Estados Unidos de América en España
C/ Serrano, 75
28006-Madrid
Tel.: 91.5872200

⁷ <http://www.nycvisit.com/gift.html>

The Official New York City Visitor Information Center
810 Seventh Avenue, between 52nd and 53rd Streets
New York, NY
EEUU

A formal letter has to be precise and concise, the tone has to be polite and the language has to be formal, which means that contractions should not be used, for example.⁸

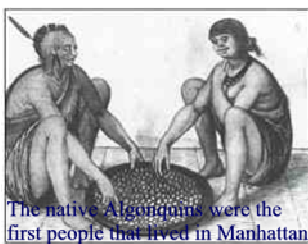
⁸ You will find some good advice in these blue boxes. Make sure that you understand it and pay attention to it.

3.2) THE HISTORY OF NEW YORK

A. Before reading: What do you know about the history of New York? In pairs, answer the following questions:

- Who were the first to populate what we know today as Manhattan?
- What was New York called before it was called New York?
- How many boroughs make up New York and what are their names?
- What epithets do people use to refer to Manhattan?

THE HISTORY⁹ OF NEW YORK¹⁰



The native Algonquians were the first people that lived in Manhattan

From its first sighting almost 500 years ago by Giovanni da Verrazano, New York's harbor was the prize that all of Europe wanted to capture. The Dutch first sent fur traders to the area in 1621, but they lost the colony they called New Amsterdam to the English in 1664. The settlement was re-christened New York and the name stayed, even after the English lost the colony in 1783, at

the end of the Revolutionary War.

The growing city

In the 19th century, New York grew rapidly and became a major port. Ease of shipping spawned manufacturing, commerce was king and great fortunes were made. In 1898, Manhattan was joined with the four outer boroughs to form the world's second largest city. From 1800 to 1900 the population grew from 79,000 to 3 million people. New York City became the country's cultural and entertainment mecca as well as its business center.

The melting pot

The city continued to grow as thousands of immigrants came seeking a better life. Overpopulation meant that many at first lived in slums. Today, the mix of cultures has enriched the city and become its defining quality. Its nine million inhabitants speak 80 languages.

Manhattan skyline took shape as the city grew skyward to make space for its ever-increasing population. Throughout its history, the city has experienced alternating periods of economic decline and growth, but in both good times and bad, it remains one of the world's most vital cities.



Sometimes you have to look up words in a dictionary. Before you do, it is important that you know what part of speech that

⁹ To know more about the history of New York City:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eguides/amerihist/nyc.html>, and for a historical trivia: <http://nyc.gov/html/nyc100/html/historical/trivia/index.html>.

¹⁰ From *DK Eyewitness Travel Guides New York*.

word is; because it will help you browse and find the best definition.

B. Read the text above. Here are some **dictionary¹¹ definitions** of words from the article. Each word has more than one. Choose the definition that fits each of the words in the text best. Do you know what the abbreviations mean?

port /pɔ:t/ **1. n.** a town or place alongside navigable water with facilities for the loading and unloading of ships; **2. n.** the left side of an aircraft or vessel when facing the nose or bow; **3. n.** a sweet fortified dessert wine; **4. Military.** ~*vb.* (tr.) to carry (a rifle, etc.) in a position diagonally across the body with the muzzle near the left shoulder.

king /kɪŋ/ **1. n.** a male sovereign prince who is the official ruler of an independent state: monarch. **2. n.** a person, animal or thing considered as the best or most important of its kind.

prize /praɪz/ **1. n.** a reward or honour for victory or for having won a contest, competition, etc; **2. n.** something given to the winner of any game of chance, lottery, etc; **3. n.** something striven for; **4. vb.** (tr.) to esteem greatly; value highly; **5. vb., n.** a variant spelling of **prise**.

mix /mɪks/ **1. vb.** (tr.) to combine or blend (ingredients, liquids, objects, etc.) together into one mass; **2. vb.** (intr.) to become or have the capacity to become combined, joined, etc.: *some chemicals do not mix*; **3. vb.** to come or cause to come into association socially: *Pauline has never mixed well*; **4. ~n** the act or an instance of mixing; **5. n.** a mixture of ingredients.

Other times you don't have a dictionary, and you have to try to guess the meaning of words. Sometimes you may not know a certain word, but you know a word that is related to it, or of which it is compound, which may be helpful for your guessing.

C. Look at the following words and try to guess their meaning:

Word	Part of speech	Related to	Possible meaning
sighting (line 2)			
ever-increasing (l. 24)			
skyward (l. 23)			
enriched (l. 20)			
ease (l. 11)			
re-christened (l. 7)			
skyline (l. 23)			

¹¹ Adapted from *The Collins English Dictionary*.

And other times there may be words that you can't understand at all. We will deal with this later. Meanwhile, don't worry. You DO NOT HAVE TO understand everything.

D. Find words in the text that mean the same as:

- a) united to:
- b) a squalid area of a city:
- c) looking for:
- d) produced:
- e) a place that attracts many visitors:
- f) continues to be:

E. Write a summary of the text in your own words in about four or five sentences. Show it to your teacher and compare it with the summaries below.

F. Re-read the article. Then read these three summaries. Which one is the best? Why are the other two not so good?

- 1. First sighted by Giovanni da Verrazano 500 years ago, New York belonged first to the Dutch and then to the English before it became independent. Nowadays the city has too many immigrants and therefore, it has lost the charm it used to have.
- 2. First sighted by Giovanni da Verrazano 500 years ago, New York is a multicultural –its nine million inhabitants speak 80 languages– city that hasn't stopped growing and that is full of vitality.
- 3. First sighted by Giovanni da Verrazano 500 years ago and independent from Europe since 1783, New York has grown enormously in the last two centuries. Today it has a very varied population and is an important culture and business centre.

G. Answer the following questions shortly:

- a) Name at least three factors that have influenced New York's prosperity.
- b) Why did Manhattan have to grow upwards?

H. Rewrite the following sentences without changing the original meaning:

- a) In the 19th century great fortunes were made.
Many people _____
- b) The English lost the colony in 1783.
(ago) _____
- c) NY is a multicultural city because many immigrants moved there.
NY wouldn't be _____

I. Follow up. Write about 80-100 words on one of the following topics:

- a) What do you know about the history of your town?
- b) Now that we have already arrived in New York, write an informal postcard to your family or friends telling them about your impressions.

When you are confronted with a writing task like this, which will be corrected and marked by your teacher, you need to share a common code for correction with him or her and the rest of your schoolmates.

J. Match the left and the right columns. This activity and the following will help you establish a common code, whether it is the one proposed –to which you can add other features– or another.

- | | |
|--|--|
| (a) VOC | (1) problems with grammar |
| (b) WO | (2) problems with vocabulary |
| (c) GR | (3) problems with spelling |
| (d) PR | (4) problems with word order |
| (e) ⁽¹⁾ , ⁽²⁾ , etc. | (5) problems with the use of prepositions |
| (f) PT | (6) problems with style |
| (g) ST | (7) problems with punctuation |
| (h) SP | (8) look below for an explanation / advice, etc. |

K. You get your **composition** back from your teacher and this is what it looks like. How should you **correct** it? Do this with your partner. There is a lot you can learn from each other.

SP ...living in a small town has advantages but also some disadvantages.
 GR VOC One problem is that everybody know you. Other problem is that there
 WO GR aren't so many facilities as in cities bigs.

It is useful to keep a personal record of your most common mistakes: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc.

3.3) A NIGHT AT THE THEATRE¹²

Before starting this section, take a look back at the strategies and tips we saw in the previous section(s).

NOW ON BROADWAY

AUGUST 20 – SEPTEMBER 2

<p>TOM SELLECK A THOUSAND CLOWNS (PLAY) PERFS BEG. 7/4. TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$40-\$77.50. RUNNING TIME: 2:50. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ LONGACRE THEATRE, 220 W. 48TH ST. ■ WWW.ATHOUSANDCLOWNS.NET</p>	<p>42ND STREET (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$25-\$90*. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TICKETMASTER: 307-4100 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ FORD CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS ■ 213 W. 42TH ST. WWW.42NDSTREETBROADWAY.COM</p>	<p>THE DINNER PARTY (PLAY) FINAL PERF. 9/1. MON-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2: \$45-\$70. RUNNING TIME: 1:40. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ MUSIC BOX THEATRE, 239 W. 45TH ST. ■</p>
<p>HEATHER HEADLEY, ADAM PASCAL, TAYLOR DAYNE AIDA (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$25-\$90. RUNNING TIME: 2:40. TICKETMASTER: 307-4747 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ PALACE THEATRE, B'WAY AT 47TH ST. ■ WWW.DISNEYONBROADWAY.COM</p>	<p>RENEE TAYLOR, JOE BOLOGNA IF YOU EVER LEAVE ME, I'M GOING WITH YOU (PLAY) MON, WED-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$30-\$65f. RUNNING TIME: 2:00. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ CORT THEATRE ■ 138 W. 48TH ST.</p>	<p>THE FULL MONTY (MUSICAL) TUES-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$30-\$90.* RUNNING TIME: 2:40. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ EUGENE O'NEILL THEATRE, 230 W. 49TH ST. ■ WWW.THEFULLMONTY.COM</p>
<p>CRYSTAL BERNARD, TOM WOPAT ANNIE GET YOUR GUN (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$35-\$85. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TICKETMASTER: 307-4100/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ MARQUIS THEATRE, 1535 BROADWAY ■ WWW.ANNIEGETYOURGUN.COM</p>	<p>KISS ME, KATE (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$65-\$90.* RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ MARTIN BECK THEATRE, 302 W. 45TH ST. ■ WWW.KISSMEKATEONBROADWAY.COM</p>	<p>THE LION KING (MUSICAL) WED-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 1 & 6:30: \$25-\$90. RUNNING TIME: 2:45. TICKETMASTER: 307-4747/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE, 214 W. 42ND ST. ■ WWW.DISNEYONBROADWAY.COM</p>
<p>BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (MUSICAL) TUES-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$30-\$85. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TICKETMASTER: 307-4747/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ LUNT-FONTANNE THEATRE, 205 W. 46TH ST. ■ WWW.DISNEYONBROADWAY.COM</p>	<p>LES MISÉRABLES (MUSICAL) MON-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2: \$20-\$85. RUNNING TIME: 3:00. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ IMPERIAL THEATRE, 249 W. 45TH ST. ■ WWW.LESMIS.COM</p>	<p>ROBERT SEAN LEONARD, REBECCA LUKEK THE MUSIC MAN (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$40-\$90. RUNNING TIME: 2:50. TICKETMASTER: 307-4100/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ NEIL SIMON THEATRE, 250 W. 52ND ST. ■ WWW.THEMUSICMANBROADWAY.COM</p>
<p>BLAST! (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$25-\$90f. RUNNING TIME: 2:00. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ BROADWAY THEATRE, BROADWAY AT 53RD ST. ■ WWW.BLASTTHESHOW.COM</p>	<p>CHERRY JONES MAJOR BARBARA (PLAY) TUES-SAT @ 8; WED, SAT & SUN @ 2: \$40-\$65. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. ROUNDABOUT: 719-9393/GROUPS: 719-9393 ■ AMERICAN AIRLINES THEATRE ■ 227 W. 42ND ST. WWW.ROUNDABOUTTHEATRE.ORG</p>	<p>THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (MUSICAL) MON-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2: \$20-\$85. RUNNING TIME: 2:35. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 239-6262 ■ MAJESTIC THEATRE, 247 W. 44TH ST. ■ WWW.THEPHANTOMOFTHEOPERA.COM</p>
<p>BROOKE SHIELDS, MATT MCGRATH, LARRY KEITH, CAROLE SHELLEY CABARET (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; SAT @ 2; SUN @ 2 & 7: \$40-\$90. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 239-6262 ■ STUDIO 54, 254 WEST 54TH ST. ■ WWW.CABARET-54.COM</p>	<p>MARY-LOUISE PARKER PROOF (PLAY) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$24-\$69.* RUNNING TIME: 2:00. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ WALTER KERR THEATRE, 219 W. 48TH ST. ■ WWW.PROOFONBROADWAY.COM</p>	<p>NATHAN LANE, MATTHEW BRODERICK THE PRODUCERS THE NEW MEL BROOKS MUSICAL (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$30-\$99*. RUNNING TIME: 2:40. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 223-7565 ■ ST. JAMES THEATRE, 246 W. 44TH ST. ■ WWW.PRODUCERSONBROADWAY.COM</p>
<p>CHICAGO (MUSICAL) MON, WED-FRI @ 8; SAT @ 2 & 8; SUN @ 2 & 7: \$42.50-\$90. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ SHUBERT THEATRE, 225 W. 44TH ST. ■ WWW.CHICAGOthemusical.com</p>	<p>RENT (MUSICAL) MON-TUES, THURS-SAT @ 8; SAT @ 2; SUN @ 2 & 7: \$35-\$85. RUNNING TIME: 2:40. TICKETMASTER: 307-4100/GROUPS: 541-8457 ■ NEDERLANDER THEATRE, 208 W. 41ST ST. ■ WWW.SITEFORRENT.COM</p>	<p>THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW (MUSICAL) TUES-FRI @ 8; WED @ 2; SAT @ 5 & 9:45; SUN @ 3: \$49.50-\$95. RUNNING TIME: 2:00. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE THEATRE, 1633 B'WAY ■ WWW.ROCKYHORRORLIVE.COM</p>
<p>CONTACT (MUSICAL) TUE-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$60-\$90. RUNNING TIME: 2:10. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ VIVIAN BEAUMONT THEATRE, 150 W. 65TH ST. ■ WWW.CONTACTTHEMUSICAL.CO</p>	<p>RIVERDANCE – ON BROADWAY (MUSICAL) FINAL PERF 8/26. TUES-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$25-\$85. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TICKETMASTER: 307-4100 GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ GERSHWIN THEATRE, 51ST ST. W OF B'WAY ■ WWW.RIVERDANCE.COM</p>	<p>VALERIE HARPER, TONY ROBERTS, MICHELLE LEE THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIIST'S WIFE (PLAY) TUES-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2; SUN @ 3: \$30-\$70. RUNNING TIME: 2:00. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 800-223-7576 ■ ETHEL BARRYMORE THEATRE, 243 W. 47TH ST. ■ WWW.ALLERGIISTSWIFE.COM</p>
<p>FOSSE STARRING BEN VEREEN (MUSICAL) FINAL PERF. 8/26. MON-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2: \$35-\$85. RUNNING TIME: 2:25. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ BROADHURST THEATRE, 235 W. 44TH ST. ■ WWW.FOSSETHEMUSICAL.COM</p>	<p>STONES IN HIS POCKETS (PLAY) MON-SAT @ 8; WED & SAT @ 2: \$30-\$70f. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200/GROUPS: 800-223-7565 ■ GOLDEN THEATRE, 254 W. 45TH ST. ■</p>	<p>URINETOWN THE MUSICAL (MUSICAL) PERFS. BEGIN 8/27. MON-SAT @ 8; WED @ 2; 15: SAT @ 2: \$25-\$80. RUNNING TIME: 2:30. TELE-CHARGE: 239-6200 GROUPS: 800-223-7576 ■ HENRY MILLER THEATRE, 124 W. 43RD ST. ■ WWW.URINETOWNTHEMUSICAL.COM</p>

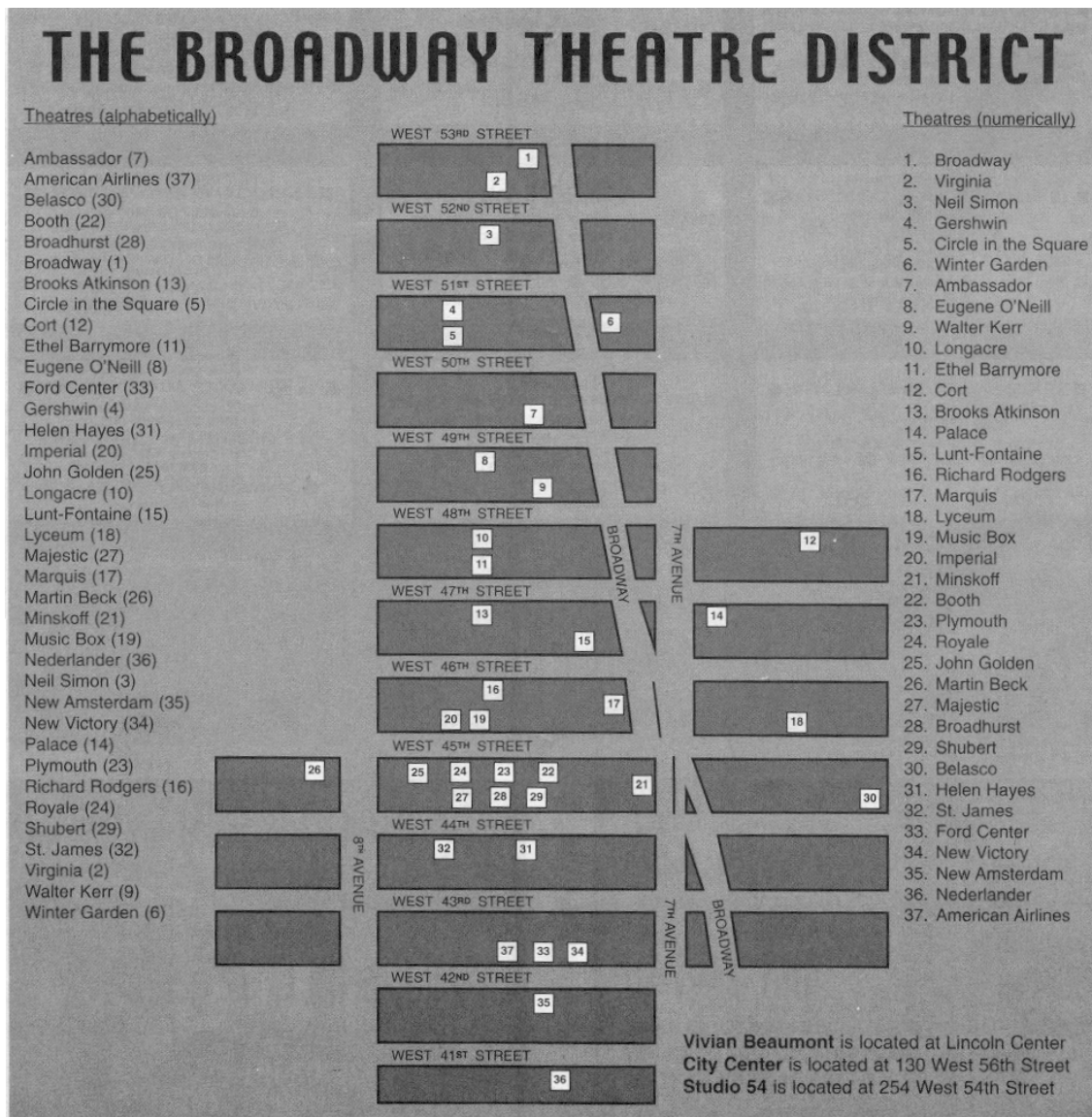
¹² For more information on New York Broadway theatre: <http://timessquare.nyctourist.com/broadway.asp> or <http://www.broadway.com/>. To get there: ☺ lines 1, 2, 3, 9, N and R to Times Sq., or B, D, F, Q, 4, 5 and 6 to 42 St.

On the previous page you have a list of the plays you can see in Broadway. Look at the first ad (the play “A Thousand Clowns”) and answer the following question: What information about the play does each ad provide you with?

A. So you want to catch a Broadway show tonight! You would like to go to a musical but you can’t spend more than \$30.00 for that. Look quickly through the ads and make a list of the possible plays.

You don’t need to read the whole text. Read just enough of each ad to decide whether it is what you want.

B. Now look at the map of the Broadway theatre district. It is 7.30 p.m. and you are standing in Times Square (between 42nd St., 7th Ave. and Broadway). You want to go to the 8.00 p.m. performance. List the plays that you have chosen above according to how near the theatres are from where you are.



CONTACT

C. Before reading the text, discuss in pairs/groups the following questions:

- Do you like the theatre?
- What's the last play you saw?
- What type of plays do you prefer?
- Have you ever acted in one?
- Are you superstitious?
- What superstitions do you believe in?
- Why do you think people are superstitious?
- What may be the origin of those superstitions?

Stage Rites (By Sherry Amanstein)¹³



Theater folks are notoriously superstitious. Backstage, they never whistle or say *Macbeth* (that Shakespeare tragedy is referred to only as "the Scottish play", and the phrase "break a leg" is always substitute for "good luck", lest some terrible misfortune befall the cast, crew, or entire production. Many actors currently appearing on- and off-Broadway take this type of hocus-pocus one step further -they've created their very own rituals, which they follow with religious fervor in the anxiety-filled moments before the house lights dim and the curtain rises. Otherwise, they fear, the show might not go on.

Fifteen minutes prior to every matinee and evening performance of *Contact*, Stephanie Michels, who plays The Girl in the Swing in the three-act dance-theater piece, begins her elaborate good-luck routine in her dressing-room. "I put on a favorite CD, either show tunes or classic rock'n roll, which gives me a kick", she says. "When the stage manager calls 'five minutes', I switch off the music, leave my dressing room, turn right, knock on my two neighbors' doors, and scream 'merde' (the French expletive is a dancers' term for "good luck"). They shout back 'merde' or 'have a good one, Steph'. Then I walk down the hallway and scream 'merde' to my dresser. On the way to the wig room, where I pick up my hat, I pass Mark, the sound guy. If I don't see him, he finds me because he knows I have to pass him."

Waiting in the wings for her cue, Michels leans on a pinball machine (a third-act prop) and does warm-up stretches. "A stage manager gives me and my co-stars,

¹³ Taken from *In New York*, August 2001, a magazine about "what's on" in NYC. You can read it on-line at: <http://www.in-newyorkmag.com>

Sean Martin Hingston and Scott Taylor, Altoids (breath mints)", she continues. "We walk to the curtain, I grab Sean's butt, and Scott grandly offers me his arm. I lift the bottom of my long skirt, jump in place twice, and we walk onstage in the dark. Scott and I whisper *merde* to each other one last time before he sits me down on the swing. Then the lights go up."

- D. Read the text above and summarise** in just one sentence its main topic.
- E.** The text is divided into three **paragraphs**. What is the topic the author has developed in each of them? Would you have done it in the same way?
- F.** Are the following statements **TRUE** or **FALSE**? Give evidence for your answers:
- "Break a leg" is a positive wish in the theatre world.
 - It brings bad luck to say "merde" to an actor or actress.
 - The last five minutes before the play starts Steph lies down and relaxes in her dressing room.
- G. Vocabulary:** The text has been written by an American author. One of the aspects in which American English differs from British English is spelling. Can you list the four words that are spelt differently in this text?
- H. Define** in your own words or **give a synonym**:
- Folks (l. 2):
 - Misfortune (l. 7):
 - Rituals (l. 11):
 - Matinee (l. 16):
 - Co-star (l. 28):
- I. Answer the following questions** in just a few sentences and using your own words as much as possible:
- Name some of the things actors and actresses do or don't do because of their superstitions.
 - Stephanie Michels follows a very complicated ritual before every performance. Name five of the things she **MUST** do every time.
- J. Rewrite** the following sentences without changing the original meaning:
- Scott and I whisper *merde* to each other.
Scott whispers _____
 - Macbeth* is referred to as "the Scottish play".
Theater folks _____
 - Many actors have created their own rituals, which they follow with religious fervor.

Many actors _____

L. Follow up–writing: You are a reporter and you have to write an article of around 100 words for your newspaper on one of the topics below. Choose one but do not start writing straight away. Jot down all the ideas that come to your mind for five minutes. If you don't know how to start a brainstorming process, try to ask yourself *wh- questions* about the topic: who, what, where, when, why, how, how much/many, how often, etc.¹⁴

- a) Theatre or cinema? That is the question.
- b) Which is the last play you saw? Why would you recommend it (or not)?

In a brainstorming process the important thing is to get out of your mind as many ideas as possible –in English or Spanish. Don't worry at this stage about spelling, form, grammar or language. The more ideas you get, the more you can discard later.

If there are some long sentences or long ideas that come to your mind, write them down too. They will also be useful later.

M. With the help of your teacher decide how you are going to **develop your ideas into an article** and **how many paragraphs** it will have. Do not be afraid of discarding some ideas that may seem irrelevant now.

¹⁴ This way of initiating a brainstorming process and others that will be introduced later have been taken from D. Cassany, *La cocina de la escritura*.

3.4) A STROLL IN CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK'S PLAYGROUND¹⁵

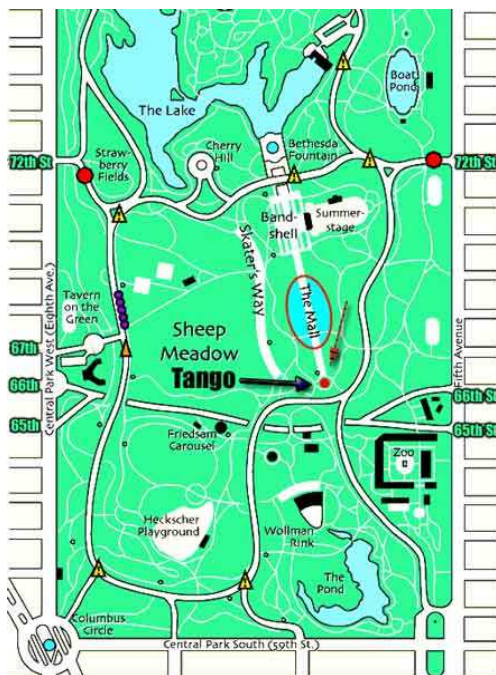
Before starting this section, take a look back at the strategies and tips we saw in the previous section(s).

Before reading. We are going to spend a few hours in Central Park, this beautifully huge recreation ground in the middle of Manhattan, which you surely know from many films. But first, answer the following questions in pairs/groups:

What do you know about Central Park? / What is your idea of Central Park? Try to define it.

For a minute, make a list of all the possible leisure activities that you might practise in Central Park, and share the list with your partner(s).

Read the text quickly (about 2 minutes) to get a general idea and write two or three sentences in which you can **summarise** that idea.



According to a popular travel guide to the city, "there's no question that it's Central Park which makes New York a just-about-bearable place to live".

This splendid 843-acre garden lies right in the heart of Manhattan and is an oasis of calm in a hyper-active city.

It continues to fulfil the role ascribed to it by its creator, namely to provide "tranquillity and rest to the mind".

Central Park isn't even the largest of the thousand parks in New York City.

It is, however, one of the city's major tourist attractions, receiving 14 million visits a year.

Some of its individual events, such as the marathon finale in November and the Shakespeare festival in summer, are world famous in their own right.

According to Commissioner Henry J. Stern, Central Park provides New Yorkers with sport, recreation and contact with nature.



One of the remarkable things about Central Park is that it is as man-made as the skyscrapers that surround it.

As Manhattan's population began to grow in the nineteenth century, some enlightened citizens, led by poet William Cullen Bryant, called for the creation of a large open space as a means of preventing

¹⁵ Adapted from *Speak Up*, number 72, pp. 13-14.

overcrowding.

The development of Manhattan had begun at the island's southern tip and was rapidly spreading northwards.

The area where Central Park now stands (from 59th Street to 110th Street) was then a desolate swampland on the edge of town.

The task of transforming it was entrusted to Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.

The realisation of their "Greensward Plan" involved shifting 10 million cartloads of dirt, planting four million trees and laying 62 miles of pipe.

The project took over 16 years but when it was completed in 1873, the splendid new garden proved to be well worth the wait.



Read the text more carefully. It is a text about the origins of Central Park¹⁶, one of the best-known places in Manhattan. Unfortunately the author has forgotten to arrange the sentences into paragraphs, and the text looks very much like a poem. Can you arrange those sentences into four paragraphs: the first one is an introduction to the topic, the second explains why it is so popular, and the other two deal with its creation.

“A paragraph is made of several related sentences that develop a certain topic. It is an intermediate unity –above the sentence and below the text– with a meaningful value¹⁷”. Try to keep these words in mind. Writers don't use paragraphs at random and neither should you.

Choose the best option:

- a) Central Park is a hyper-active place
 - b) Central Park is in the desert
 - c) Central Park is a quiet place
-
- a) Central Park has skyscrapers all around
 - b) Central Park lies in the middle of New York
 - c) Central Park is a large open space always overcrowded
-
- a) Central Park needed over 15 years to be made
 - b) Central Park was finished in 1873 but the garden around needed 16 more years
 - c) Central Park started to be made in 1873

Find words in the text that mean the same as:

¹⁶ Between 59th St. and 110th St., between 5th Ave. and 8th Ave. 🚇 lines B, C, 1 and 9. For more information: <http://www.centralparknyc.org/>

¹⁷ From Cassany, 2000: 84, my translation.

- a) Deserted, uninhabited:
- b) Guided by rational thought:
- c) Encircle or enclose:
- d) Tolerable, endurable:
- e) Extend:
- f) Filling to excess:

Are the following sentences **true or false**? Don't forget to give evidence for your answer:

- a) Central Park has received 14 million visitors since its creation.
- b) The area where Central Park lies was once the limit of Manhattan.

G. Follow up–writing: Punctuation. One of the things that most severely interfere with understanding is an incorrect use of punctuation. Below you can find a text with a paragraph of the continuation of the history of Central Park. Unfortunately the punctuation has been omitted. Rewrite the text including the marks that have been left out. If you have any doubts, take a look at the chart that follows the text.

olmsted and vaux saw their park as an essentially democratic concept that would contribute to the greater happiness of each... rich and poor young and old jew and gentile for much of its history central park achieved its objectives by the 1970s however it had succumbed to new yorks general problem the park like the rest of the city had become dirty and run down a survey conducted in 1982 showed that central parks buildings and bridges were covered in some 65000 square feet of graffiti the time had come to give the park a facelift and a special commission was created for the job

The most common punctuation marks are:

- Capital letters (**A, B, C**):
 - to begin a new sentence
 - for names of people, places, months, weekdays, etc.
 - for nationalities and languages
 - for titles of books, films, etc.
- Full stop (**.**):
 - at the end of a sentence
- Comma (**,**):
 - to separate different clauses
 - to separate items in a list
- Question mark (**?**):
 - at the end of a question (and only at the end)
- Brackets (**...**):
 - to add extra information
- Inverted commas (**“...”**):
 - to repeat literally somebody’s words

In **informal writing**, you can also use:

- Apostrophe (**'**):
 - for contractions
- Exclamation mark (**!**):
 - to express excitement (only at the end of the sentence)

3.4.B) FANCY A HOT DOG?

Or a burger, or a pretzel¹⁸? New Yorkers are always in a hurry and they love to eat on the street. In a beautiful afternoon in Central Park we are going to do the same. We are going to get a snack and a soft drink from any of the hundreds of stands you can find everywhere.

H. Below you have some extracts from the introduction of a study about fast food in America. **Read just the first paragraph** and answer the following questions:

- What do you know about fast food?
- What do you think about fast food?
- What do you think the author’s opinion about fast food is going to be?
 - a) Positive
 - b) Negative
 - c) Neutral
- What makes you think so?

I. Read the rest of the text. Do you still have the same opinion?

In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food; in 2000, they spent more than \$110 billion. Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher

¹⁸ Pretzels are savoury biscuits, in the form of a knot, salted on the outside. They come from Germany and are very popular in New York.

education, personal computers or new cars. They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music -combined.



hot dog

The fast food industry has been in some cases, such as the malling and sprawling of the West, a catalyst and a symptom of larger economic trends. In other cases, such as the rise of franchising and the spread of obesity, has played a more central role. By tracing the diverse influences of fast food I hope to shed light not only on the workings of an important industry, but also on a distinctively American way of viewing the world.

During the two years spent researching this book, I ate an enormous amount of fast food. Most of it tasted pretty good. That is one of the main reasons people buy fast food; it has been carefully designed to taste good. It's also inexpensive and convenient. But the value meals, two-for-one deals, and free refills of soda give a distorted sense of how much fast food actually costs. The real price never appears on the menu¹⁹.



pretzel

J. Look at the following sentences and analyse them carefully:

- In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food; in 2000, they spent more than \$110 billion.*
- Americans now spend *more money on fast food than on higher education...*
- ...the spread of obesity* has played a more central role.
- That is one of the main reasons people buy fast food; it has been *carefully designed to taste good*.

K. Fact or opinion? Are the following sentences facts or opinions? Write an **F** or an **O** in front of each one:

- In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food; in 2000, they spent more than \$110 billion.
- Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher education, personal computers or new cars. They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos and recorded music -combined.
- During the two years spent researching this book, I ate an enormous amount of fast food. Most of it tasted pretty good. That is one of the main reasons people buy fast food; it has been carefully designed to taste good.

¹⁹ Adapted from *Fast Food Nation*, by Eric Schlosser.

- d) The whole experience of buying fast food has become so routine, so thoroughly unexceptional and mundane, that is now taken for granted, like brushing your teeth or stopping for a red light.
- e) Fast food has proven to be a revolutionary force in America.
- f) A nation's diet can be more revealing than its art or literature.
- g) On any given day in the United States about one-quarter of the adult population visits a fast food restaurant.
- h) Fast food and its consequences have become inescapable.
- i) In 1968, McDonald's operated about one thousand restaurants. Today it has about twenty-eight thousand restaurants worldwide.
- j) The typical American now consumes approximately three hamburgers and four orders of french fries every week.

Did you find it easy? Why (not)? A persuasive writer may make opinions look like facts –especially when it is difficult for the reader to contradict them, or will skilfully use facts to support his/her opinions.

L. Follow up–writing an opinion. Write persuasively around 100 words about one of the following topics. Before you start, don't forget to do some brainstorming and to organise your ideas:

- a) My town is the most beautiful place in the world.
- b) The Spanish omelette is the most wonderful food in the world.

Express your opinion clearly. You can support it with facts. Some useful expressions would be: *In my opinion, the way I see it, I believe, I think that...*; or else you can try to make your composition look more factual, omitting that what you are saying is just an opinion.

When you finish, **exchange it with your partner** and give each other suggestions to make it better.

3.5) NEW YORK CITY CABS²⁰

Before starting this section, take a look back at the strategies and tips we saw in the previous section(s).

In New York there are over 11,000 yellow cabs (taxis), which are as famous as the Empire State Building itself. There are times when every other car on the street is a cab. They will take you anywhere, but they are a bit expensive.

However, if you still decide to take one, don't forget to tip the driver (around 15% of the fare) or s/he might lose his/her up-to-then good manners.

A. Before reading the text, answer the following questions in pairs.

- a) Who do people usually tip?
- b) Do you tip? / Have you ever tipped anyone?
- c) Have you ever been tipped?
- d) What is your opinion about tipping?
- e) If you were in New York and you took a taxi, where would you like to go?
- f) If you were anywhere in the world and you took a taxi, where would you like to go?

B. The text below has six paragraphs, which have got mixed up by accident. Read the text and search for clues that may help you put them **back in the right order**²¹.



1. That's exactly what happened to an elderly woman who left her entire life savings -in cash- in a sack in a yellow cab. After robbers hit her Harlem apartment for the third time, the 71-year-old woman promised that no thieves would get their hands on her money.
2. Officers went to the woman's apartment to tell her the good news and took her to the Central Park precinct, where she retrieved her money and met her Good Samaritan. Tirmizi even refused a reward.
3. New York City cab drivers must think riders would lose their heads if they weren't attached. Every day, passengers leave computers, cell phones, and briefcases behind. But what happens when \$33,000 shows up on the backseat? Well, if it's the customer's lucky day, she gets it back.
4. She figured the best way to guard her cash was to keep it nearby -like within eyesight. That worked for a while. Until the summer evening two years ago she left a leather bag stuffed with \$32,849.05 in a taxi. "Dear God," she said to herself. "I don't have a nickel to my name and I don't know what I'll do."

²⁰ Adapted from *Speak Up*, no. 168, p. 37.

²¹ The right order is 3-1-4-6-2-5.

5. Although the police advised the woman to remain anonymous, stories about Tirmizi's good deed made it into all the media. Incredulous New Yorkers told the tale of the woman, the money and the cabbie all over the city.
6. Fortunately, the driver knew exactly what to do. Qurbe Tirmizi, a 20-year-old Pakistani immigrant, had been on the job for only three weeks. But when he noticed the bag on the backseat he drove straight to the police department and turned in the money. Every penny.



- C. **Look back at the text** and discuss with your partner what clues you used to put the paragraphs in that particular order.

Textual coherence is created by the correct use of connectors, the logical sequence of events, etc. You have to take that into account when reading –and also when writing– if you want to follow the track of the text, or to allow others to follow.

- D. **Once you have ordered the paragraphs**, finish the following sentences in such a way that they make sense according to the information in the text, and using your own words as much as possible.

- a) The 71-year-old woman was carrying all her money on herself because _____
- b) When the taxi driver saw the money _____
- c) New York City taxi drivers think their customers are absent-minded because _____
- d) When the woman realised she had forgotten her money she was extremely worried because _____

- E. **Find words or expressions in the text** that mean the same as:

- a) Somebody who takes a taxi:
 b) Old:
 c) Return:
 d) Get back, recover:
 e) Became famous:

- F. **Rewrite the following sentences** in such a way that they mean the same.

- a) The cab driver was an honest person, and therefore the woman got her money back.
 If the cab driver _____
- b) Every day, passengers leave computers, cell phones and briefcases behind.
 Every day, computers, _____

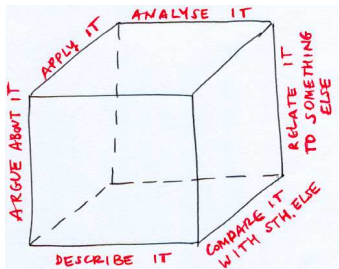
- G. **In groups, discuss the following questions:**

- a) What would you have done if you had been the old lady?
- b) What would you have done if you had been the cab driver?

H. Follow up–writing: Introduction and conclusion: Use the following introductions and conclusions to write around 100 words about:

- a) Have you ever tipped anyone? In my opinion, tipping should be forbidden by law.
...
Therefore, all sorts of tipping should be illegal.
- b) From my point of view, tipping should be a more common custom in Spain.
...
In conclusion, it is a sign of gratitude to tip the professional that has done a satisfactory job.

A good composition should have an introduction –to attract the reader’s attention, and a conclusion –which you have reached from your arguments (and, needless to say, several well-organised paragraphs between them).



If you don’t have very clear ideas about the topic, another way to start a brainstorming process for your composition is to use the “cube” formula. Once you know what are going to write about, for example *tipping*, study the six possible faces it has, which will give you enough to write about for sure.

I. JUST FOR FUN–ROLEPLAY: In groups of three –the lady, the police officer and the cab driver, imagine the situation and play the scene.



3.6) THE UNITED NATIONS

Before starting this section, take a look back at the strategies and tips we saw in the previous section(s).

In NY we are also going to visit the UN²².



- A. **Before reading the text:** What do you know about the UN? In groups of three or four try to ask and answer as many *wh- questions* about the UN as possible (for example: *who* is the Secretary-General? *where* are its headquarters? *when* was it created? *why* was it created? *how* many members has it got? *what* is its main purpose? etc.

The more information you know, remember, exchange, etc. about The United Nations, the more you are likely to understand the following activities about it.

Guardian of the World

Keeping the Peace

Working globally to solve problems which challenge humanity, the United Nations doesn't have an easy time of it but it continues to strive towards fulfilling the basic principles of its Charter.

²² 1st Ave with 46th St. ☺: 4, 5, 6, 7 up to 42nd St-Grand Central Station. Web: <http://www.un.org>. For a virtual tour: <http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/untour/index.html>.

With nearly every nation in the world belonging to it -membership totals 189 countries- the UN has come a long way since it was established on 24 October 1945 by 51 countries. However, although it may have increased in size, its fundamental aims, as laid out in the UN Charter, are the same as 55 years ago.

Its four purposes are to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights, and to be a centre for harmonising the actions of nations.

Six main organs make up the organisation: the *General Assembly* (a kind of parliament); the *Security Council* which has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, the *Economic and Social Council*; the *Trusteeship Council* which supervises Trust Territories preparing for self-government or independence; the *International Court of Justice* which decides disputes between countries; the *Secretariat*, of which Kofi Annan as *Secretary-General* is head; and the UN system which includes independent organisations such as the *World Health Organisation*.

A couple of its success stories are defusing the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 and sponsoring the peace settlement that ended the Iran-Iraq war in 1988.

Man for the People²³

Kofi Annan

Sincere, honest, self-assured and with a great sense of humour, Kofi Annan, the *Secretary-General* of the UN, is a man who keeps watch over human rights, peace and international security.

He took over the post from Boutros Boutros Ghali in January 1997 and had the full support of the US, the richest and most influential UN member. However, he soon proved that he wasn't anyone's pawn.

Today he is empowered to bring to the attention of the *Security Council* matters that he considers threaten international peace and security. Women's equality, providing education for girls, decreasing world poverty and halting the HIV/AIDS epidemic are other issues Annan wants dealt with.

B. Understanding the text: What do you think the following words are likely to mean?

1. harmonising (line 12):
 - a) coordinating
 - b) directing
 - c) opposing
 - d) questioning

²³ Both texts have been taken and adapted from *Speak Up*, number 180, pp 22-23.

2. empowered (l. 32):
 - a) tired of
 - b) obliged
 - c) reluctant
 - d) qualified
3. strive (l. 4):
 - a) something that is easy to do
 - b) something that is hard to do
 - c) something that is fun to do
 - d) something that is interesting to do
4. sponsoring (l. 24):
 - a) signing
 - b) directing
 - c) helping
 - d) forbidding
5. defusing (l. 23):
 - a) something negative like aggravating
 - b) something positive like solving

C. What do you think the following words may mean? Discuss with your partner.

1. self-assured (l. 26)
2. halting (l. 36)
3. membership (l. 6)
4. threaten (l. 31)
5. pawn (l. 33)

You don't have to understand every single word, as long as you understand enough to keep reading. Besides, you *can* understand more than you imagine: there are a lot of words in English that come from Latin and that are very similar to Spanish words. Also, there are words that are similar to other words you already know. And finally, the context is important too.

D. Explain in your own words the meaning of the following words and phrases:

1. challenge (l. 3):
2. belonging (l. 6):
3. aims (l. 9):
4. make up (l. 14):
5. head (l. 19):

E. Choose the best alternative:

- a) The UN has nearly four times more members than at the time of its creation.
 - b) The UN has 189 more member than at the time of its creation.
 - c) The UN has 55 more members than at the time of its creation.
- a) The Secretary General is divided into six main parts.
 - b) The General assembly is divided into six main parts.
 - c) The United Nations is divided into six main parts.

F. **Rewrite** the following sentences in such a way that they mean the same as the original one:

- a) Six main organs make up the organisation.
The organisation _____
- b) Although it may have increased in size, its fundamental aims are still the same.
Its fundamental aims _____

G. **Explain** in your own words what the main purposes of the UN are.

H. **Describe** in your own words the personality of Annan.

I. Follow up–writing a description. **Think of one of your favourite places in your town and write a description of it (around 100-120 words).**

Descriptions usually contain many adjectives. They also have to follow a certain order (for example, depending on the place you describe, from the exterior to the interior, from the bottom to the top, etc.). And it would also be useful to give a personal opinion –why you like the place.

J. **JUST FOR FUN: And now that you know a little more** about the UN and its purpose, how would you feel if you had the chance to participate in a debate²⁴ in the General Assembly²⁵?

²⁴ And this visit is going to be the perfect excuse to introduce students into debate techniques. We are going to organise the group (a group of 25 students, for the sake of argument) as if they were representatives from 25 different countries from all the continents, or from X different countries. For this you can provide them with flags from those countries.

They can decide what they want to debate, and organise themselves the way they want. My proposal is that the class can be divided into three groups: one group will be *in favour*, one will be *against*, and the other one will be *the judges*. The judges will decide the rules: how many spokespeople in each group, how long each group can speak, how often they have to take turns, etc.

My proposal for a debate in the UN would be “development versus solidarity” or “globalisation versus individuality”, although the possibilities are enormous. It would be interesting to provide students with materials, web addresses, etc., so that they could do a little research in advance, and also to videotape the debate and analyse it later.

²⁵ You can visit the following addresses for flags of the world: <http://www.immigration-usa.com/flags/> and <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/> .

3.7) WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS

Before starting this section, take a look back at the strategies and tips we saw in the previous section(s).

A. Before reading, answer the following questions:

1. New York is often referred to as “the melting pot” or “the salad bowl”. What do you think these epithets mean? What do you think their origin is? Why do you think NY was an attractive destination for immigrants? Where do you think most immigrants came from?

2. You probably know some of the immigrants around you. Why do people emigrate? Put the following factors in order of importance, and add any other you consider important. Discuss with your partner:
 - a) search for a better life for children
 - b) religious prosecution
 - c) political prosecution
 - d) lack of jobs
 - e) lack of freedom
 - f) war
 - g) perception of the first world as the “promised land”

3. What are the main problems immigrants encounter when they arrive in a new country? Discuss in groups of 3 or 4. Choose a spokesperson who will share your ideas with the class.

B. See on the right some facts about the immigrants who passed through Ellis Island:

Surprised? Which continent did most immigrants come from? What do you think the main reason for that was?

Wherever they came from, all immigrants had to arrive at the Main Building of Ellis Island. This island lies near the better-known Liberty Island, at the south of Manhattan, and it once was the gateway not only to New York, but to the rest of America too.

They Came from Many Lands	
Below is a breakdown by country of the number of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island from January 1892 to June 1897, and from 1901 to 1931. Exceptions to those years are noted in parentheses.	
Italy	2,502,310
Russia	1,893,542
Hungary (1905–1931)	859,557
Austria (1905–1931)	768,132
Austria-Hungary (1892–1904)	648,163
Germany	633,148
England	551,969
Ireland	520,904
Sweden	348,036
Greece	245,058
Norway	226,278
Ottoman Empire	212,825
Scotland	191,023
The West Indies	171,774
Poland (1892–1897 and 1920–1931)	153,444
Portugal	120,725
France (including Corsica)	109,687
Denmark	99,414
Romania (1894–1931)	79,092
The Netherlands	78,602
Spain	72,636
Belgium	63,141
Czechoslovakia (1920–1931)	48,140
Bulgaria (1901–1931)	42,085
Wales	27,113
Yugoslavia (1920–1931)	25,017
Finland (1920–1931)	7,833
Switzerland	1,103

SOURCE: NPS

There, immigrants were inspected, registered, checked up, and if they did not satisfy the expected standards, deported.

Today Ellis Island is part of the “Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island”²⁶ and houses an immigration museum, where you can learn about the hard lives of the millions of people who left their countries out of despair, and contributed to make New York and America what they are today.

C. Read the following text and choose the best option:



"Our growth as a nation has been achieved, in large measure, nevertheless / since / due to / lastly the genius and industry of immigrants of every race and from every quarter of the world. The story of their pursuit of happiness is the saga of America. Their brains and their brawn helped to settle our land, to advance our agriculture, to build our industries, to develop our commerce, to produce new inventions, and, including / for example / in general / on the contrary, to make us the leading nation that we now are."

-Commission on immigration and naturalization, 1953

A Saga of Fear, Faith and Courage

Basking in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, the newly established Ellis Island Immigration Station answered "the lady's" plea to "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" *when / because / and / but* it officially opened its doors to the world on Friday, January 1, 1892.

Perhaps it was fitting that a 15-year-old Irish girl named Annie Moore was the first to be questioned in the immigration station's second-floor Registry Room, *however / because / consequently / on the other hand* America, like Annie, was in its adolescence

The story of Ellis Island is the chronicle of the more than 12 million immigrants who passed through its doors from 1892 until 1954. These are individual stories of unrelenting hardship, fear of the unknown, and the pain of separation. It is *on the one hand / as well as / since / also* the story of the immigrants' faith and courageous dedication in their pursuit of happiness: This is, *therefore / nevertheless / however / or*, the saga of America²⁷.

Connectors such as *on the contrary, however, or because* help you establish the logical relation between two sentences, or parts of a sentence, or two ideas in general. They also help you predict what comes next.

D. Explain in your own words the meaning of:

²⁶ To get there: 🚶 1, 9, N, R up to South Ferry or 🚶 4, 5 up to Bowling Green. To know more about the Statue of Liberty or Ellis Island: <http://www.nps.gov/stli>, <http://www.ellisland.com> or <http://www.ellisland.org>.

²⁷ All the information in this activity has been taken from "Ellis Island and Statue of Liberty. Historical Highlights", an information brochure published by the National Park Service.

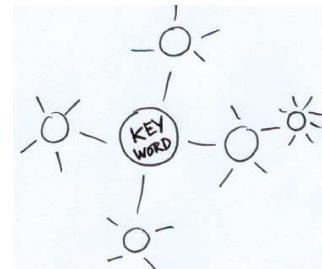
- a) quarter (l. 3):
 b) leading (l. 9):
 c) fitting (l. 16):
 d) chronicle (l. 20):
 e) pursuit (l. 24):
- E.** Are the following sentences **true or false**? Don't forget to give evidence for your answer.
- a) The Ellis Island Immigration Station was opened over a century ago.
 b) In Ellis Island you can find the hard stories of the millions of immigrants who arrived there.
- F. Finish the following sentences** in such a way that they make sense. You can write several endings for each one if you want.
- a) At the beginning of the 20th century NY was an attractive place for European immigrants because _____
 b) There are many reasons why people emigrate. In the first place, _____; in the second place, _____; ...
 c) If the economic situation were very hard in Spain, I would go somewhere else. On the other hand, _____
 d) Most of the immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island were European, for example, _____
 e) Spain is becoming an attractive country for immigrants. In fact, _____
 f) When immigrants first arrive in a new country, life is very difficult. Consequently, _____. Moreover, _____
 g) In conclusion, _____
- G. Look at the text** "They Came from Many Lands" and choose the correct alternative.
- a) *Over / under / exactly* half a million of the immigrants were Irish.
 b) More than *10.000.000 / 10,000.000 / 10,000,000* Europeans emigrated to America from 1892 to 1931, of which more than *two-thirds / two-fifths / three-quarters* were Russian.
 c) *1 in 100 / 1 in 20 / 1 in 2* of the immigrants were English.
- H. Order the following list** of connectors under the headings provided:
- SEQUENCE CONTRAST BALANCE CAUSE AND EFFECT**
- but, consequently, in the third place, on the one hand, as a result, however, for this reason, to begin with, in spite of, finally, on the other hand, owing to, secondly, for this reason, first of all, in consequence, although, besides, because of, moreover
- I. Follow up-writing.** You are a new immigrant in Spain. Choose one of the following topics for a composition and ask your teacher for advice if you need it.

The brainstorming to look for arguments can be done collectively with the whole class or in smaller groups, so that ideas are shared. However the writing should be individual.

- a) You decided to come to Spain after you weighed the advantages and disadvantages of starting a new life here (you might want to develop a **BALANCED ARGUMENT** using connectors such as *on the one hand...*, *on the other hand...*).
- b) You are explaining to your children / friends / neighbours, ... all the reasons why you had to leave your country (you might want to develop a **SEQUENCED ARGUMENT** using connectors such as *in the first place / to begin with / first of all...*, *in the second place / secondly / apart from that / moreover...*, *thirdly / in the third place...*).

Apart from having done some kind of brainstorming and sorted out your ideas, don't forget to write some kind of introduction to the topic and to reach some kind of conclusion too.

Another useful way to get your ideas out is to do a *selective brainstorming*: think of several key ideas, and then concentrate on each of them separately, letting them produce other subordinate ideas. You can arrange all of them in a little mind map like this:



3.8) A RIDE ON THE SUBWAY

Before starting this section, take a look back at the strategies and tips we saw in the previous section(s).

A. Before reading. Look at the title of the activity and the two pictures that accompany the text. What do you think it is going to be about? What information do you expect to find there?

People say that you haven't been to NY if you don't ride on the *subway*. So, you go out of your youth hostel and look for the nearest underground station. But before you do that, answer the following questions and discuss them with your partner:

- a) Have you ever used the underground?
- b) In which Spanish cities can you find it?
- c) What are its advantages and disadvantages?



There are so many sights to see in New York City that not even *the natives* manage to visit all of *them*. But the sad truth is that most tourists never venture beyond the traditional *meccas* like Fifth Avenue and Times Square. If *you* want to grasp the authentic nature of *the Big Apple* and *its* surroundings, you must steer clear of the usual tourist excursions and ride the subway to other neighbourhoods and urban centres to experience the essential atmosphere of *the city*. Without a doubt, the New York subway system is the fastest, cheapest and most efficient means of transportation for exploring the city and *its* environs. We advise all visitors to take *it* at least once: anyone who has never ridden the subway has not seen New York as *it* really is, abounding with contrasts, intense, and fast-paced.

Underground transportation systems usually make newcomers feel a bit uncertain -*it* all seems so complex and mysterious. However, armed with a good map -free of charge in all stations- and taking some minor precautions, you can enjoy both an adventure and a unique tour. The subway is a lot



less complicated than *it* appears and it's a great time-saver for getting around New York. In New York the subway operates twenty-four hours a day, but *it's* unwise to use *it* very late at night and, as one last warning, you should avoid travelling in empty cars. The subway connects four of the five boroughs that

comprise New York City: Manhattan, Queens, the Bronx and Brooklyn. You can reach Staten Island by taking the ferry or by crossing the Verrazano Bridge. One of the most convenient points to begin your tour in Manhattan is Grand Central Station. From *there* you can reach almost any part of the city and *its* outskirts.²⁸

B. In the text above some words have been written in italics. Once you have read it, can you say **what those words in italics refer to?** For example:

- a) *the natives* (lines 1-2): the inhabitants of New York
- b) *them* (line 2): the sights to see in New York
- c)
- d)
- e) ...

Words like *each*, *its*, *this*, etc. make connections between different parts of a text. Sometimes they may refer to a word, phrase, etc. which is “far away”. Other times the connection is not so evident, and one of the words may be an example, an illustration, etc. of something that has been said previously or that will be said later.

C. Below there is a text²⁹ about the Big Apple Greeters³⁰, an organisation of volunteers that will show you around their city on the subway for free. **Read the text attentively.**

During my first visit around the New York City subway my guide was somebody from the Big Apple Greeters. The Big Apple Greeters is a unique organisation that aims to show visitors what life in New York is all about. The Big Apple Greeters is a free public service and all the volunteers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic New Yorkers who love their city. All you need to do is to contact the organisation before your departure and tell the Big Apple Greeters what you are interested in seeing. The Big Apple Greeters will find a suitable volunteer who will spend from two to four hours with you and your companions.

One of the first tasks of the Big Apple Greeters is to help you get around on public transport and the Big Apple Greeters will give you a free Metrocard provided by the New York City Transit Authority. Not only do the Big Apple Greeters make you feel welcome and comfortable, but the Big Apple Greeters also help you to enjoy your stay in what can be a somewhat intimidating metropolis for first-time visitors.

²⁸ Adapted from *Speak Up*, no. 120, pp. 16-17.

²⁹ Adapted from *Speak Up*, number 167.

³⁰ Big Apple Greeters: 1, Center Street; New York, NY 10007, USA. Tel. no.: 001/212/669 28 96. If you want to know more: <http://www.bigapplegreeter.org/>

- D.** Can you understand now how boring reading would be if writers did not know about the existence of reference words? **Can you change the underlined parts** so that it does not look so repetitive?
- E.** Now read the first text again –the one about the subway, **underline the key words / key information** and **write a summary** of about 30 to 40 words.
- F. Find words in the text** that mean the same as:
- Inhabitant:
 - Understand:
 - Dare to go:
 - Foolish:
 - Surrounding area:
- G. Finish the following sentences** in such a way that they make sense, and using your own words:
- Although there are many interesting things to see in New York City, _____
 - To understand the authentic nature of NYC _____
 - If you want to feel New York as it really is, _____
- H. Answer the following questions**, according to your own opinion:
- Why does the author say that it is unwise to use the subway late at night?
 - Why does the author say that in order to grasp the authentic nature of NYC you must get away from the usual excursions?
- I. Are you ready for literature this morning?** While you are waiting for your train to arrive, there is a poem³¹ written on a huge poster that attracts your attention:

Come And Be My Baby

The highway is full of big cars
going nowhere fast
and folks is smoking anything
that'll
burn
Some people wrap their lives
around a
cocktail glass
And you sit wondering
where you're going to turn.

³¹ A text can be selected for different purposes, either it is appropriate to the learners' own culture and lives, or it can help them learn about another culture.

I got it.
 Come. And be my baby
 Some prophets say the world is
 gonna
 end tomorrow
 But others say we've got a week
 or two
 The paper is full of every kind of
 blooming horror
 And you sit wondering
 what you're gonna do.
 I got it.
 Come. And be my baby.

Maya Angelou (b. 1928)³²

Read the poem aloud and discuss in groups the first ideas that come to your mind concerning its meaning.

J. Look more closely at the following lines and choose the best answer:

- a) What would you expect a poem entitled “Come and be my baby” to be about?:
 1. love
 2. loneliness
 3. something else: _____
- b) “big cars going nowhere fast” is likely to mean:
 1. the drivers do not know the way
 2. the roads do not lead anywhere
 3. the drivers are driving without a purpose
- c) “folks is smoking anything that’ll burn” is likely to mean:
 1. they will smoke anything that is inflammable
 2. they smoke “grass”, marijuana
 3. they smoke different kinds of tobacco leaves
- d) “some people wrap their lives around a cocktail glass” is likely to mean:
 1. only drinking makes life meaningful for them
 2. they drink constantly
 3. they like to have a cocktail glass in their hands
- e) What type of life is the poem describing: _____
- f) What do you understand then by the title of the poem: _____

³² For more information: <http://www.mayaangelou.com/> and <http://www.webwedding.co.uk/articles/men/Speeches/poems/bemybaby.htm>.

If you visit the webpages suggested you will find more of Maya Angelou's poems, as well as little comments on them.

H. JUST FOR FUN. Write a poem in English about something that is important for you: your family, your friends, your freedom, your future, justice, etc. and share it with the class.

3.9) WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT, WE ARE ALL ALIKE

Before starting this section, take a look back at the strategies and tips we saw in the previous section(s).

The many million immigrants who came to America through New York are the reason for the cultural diversity that has so much enriched this city turning it into what it is today, the salad bowl you have many times observed in films. We are going to visit just a few places to give you the taste of it.

DO YOU FEEL LIKE GOING TO CHURCH?

A. **Match** the pictures, the data and the concepts in the box with the four religions below³³:

Buddhism

Judaism

Christianity

Islam

rabbi Rome Bible Allah Koran Talmud meditate Mecca
church temple synagogue mosque baptism rebirth Pope



³³ The right matches are: Buddhism – picture A – number 3; Judaism – picture D – number 2; Christendom – picture B (number 4) and picture E (number 1); Islam – picture C – number 5.

1. Saint Patrick's Cathedral: 5th Ave. and 50th St.; 🚶 6, E and F to 51 St.
http://www.newyork.com/visit/attractions/st_patricks.html
2. Central Synagogue: 652, Lexington Ave.; 🚶 51st St, Lexington Ave.
<http://www.centralsynagogue.org/default.php>
3. Mahayana Temple Buddhist Association
133 Canal Street, New York, NY 10002.
4. Cathedral of Saint John the Divine: Amsterdam Ave. at W 112th St. 🚶 1 and 9 to 116 St.. <http://www.stjohndivine.org>
5. Islamic Cultural Center: Lexington Ave. at 96th St. 🚶 6.
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/msa/nycmsa/resources/masajid/ICCNYP.html>

B. Complete the following texts with the words in the box above:

a) BUDDHISM

The Buddhist belief was founded by Buddha in the 6th c. BC. The most important Buddhist _____ is the Schwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon (Burma). Buddhist monks lead a very simple life. They pray, teach, _____ and beg to eat. The Buddhist believes that life is a cycle: birth, death and _____.

b) ISLAM

The Islam was founded by Prophet Mohammed in the 7th c. in what we know as Saudi Arabia today. The _____ is their sacred book. Muslims meet in the _____ to serve _____, and believe that at least once in their life they should go on a pilgrimage to _____.

c) CHRISTIANITY

Christianity roots on the teaching of Jesus Christ. The Old and the New Testament were united in the _____. Through _____ are the new-born babies introduced into the Christian family. Practising Christians go to _____ every Sunday, and some of them go to _____ to see the _____.

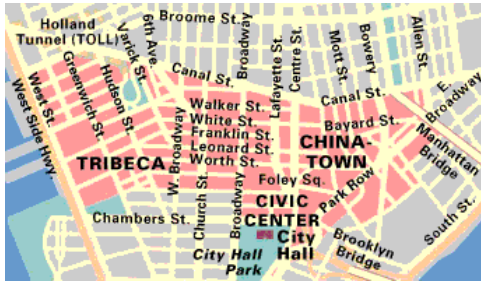
d) JUDAISM

The religion of the Jews was the first to believe in the existence of just one god. The _____ is their sacred book. The Sabbath is devoted to worship in the _____, where the _____ directs the service³⁴.

³⁴ This activity has been translated and adapted from *Stufen International 3. Arbeitsbuch*, p. 52.

OR YOU'D RATHER CELEBRATE THE CHINESE NEW YEAR?

Chinatown is the largest and the most attractive ethnic area in New York. There you can wander to your heart's content and let yourself be fascinated by the hundreds of markets, restaurants, temples, Chinese massage clinics, etc. Find Chinatown in the Lower East Side, around Canal St. 🗺️ N, R, 4, 5 and 6.



<http://www.chinatown-online.com/>.

For a photo tour:

<http://www.nyctourist.com/chinatown1.htm>



Before reading:

- How do you celebrate Christmas and the New Year in Spain? Discuss with your partner.
- How do other people celebrate Christmas and/or the New Year in other countries?

C. Read the following text and answer the questions below (notice there are some words missing)³⁵:



Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is the most ♦ festivity for the Chinese people in America. It is also ♦ Spring Festival or the Lunar New ♦. The exact date on the Western calendar ♦ from year to year. However, Chinese ♦ Year takes place between 1 ♦ and 19 February. On the Chinese lunar ♦ every month begins with the new ♦.

Every year has an animal's name. These ♦ are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, ♦, snake, horse, ram, monkey, ♦, dog and pig. The Chinese believe that a ♦ born in a particular

³⁵ The missing words are: important, called, Year, changes, New, January, calendar, moon, animals, dragon, rooster, person, animal, two, house, useless, misfortunes, Eve, big, part, New, wear, red, relatives, Year, lucky, red, cities, Honolulu, major, masks, parades, festivities, body, accompanied, According, frightens, important, festivities, parade, metres, under, tail, animals, musicians.

year has some of the characteristics of that ♦.

Celebrations in Chinese families last for about ♦ weeks. The celebrations begin with traditional ♦ cleaning, where they get rid of old and ♦ things in order to throw away the ♦ of the past year.

On New Year's ♦ all family members enjoy a ♦, delicious meal. Fish is always ♦ of the dinner because it represents abundance. On ♦ Year's Day all Chinese children ♦ new clothes with bright colours. ♦ is considered a lucky colour. Parents and ♦ give children the traditional New ♦'s gift called "Lai see" (♦ money), which is put into bright ♦ and gold envelopes.

In big American ♦ such as San Francisco, New York, ♦ and Houston, Chinese New Year is a ♦ event with wonderful parades. Most of the costumes and ♦ come from Hong Kong. In these ♦ the lion dancers are always part of the ♦. The lion has a big head and long ♦ made of cloth. The lion dance is ♦ by drums, cymbals and noisy firecrackers. ♦ to ancient tradition the great noise ♦ away evil spirits.

The dragon is the most ♦ figure of the Chinese New Year ♦ and parades. It is considered a lucky figure. A ♦ dragon can be 20 to 30 ♦ long! Sixty or more men move ♦ a long cloth that represents the dragon's ♦.

During the parade children represent the ♦ of the Chinese calendar. There are also acrobats and ♦ in beautiful costumes³⁶.

- a) How do the Chinese celebrate the New Year in America? Write five details about their celebration. Which one do you consider most surprising?
- b) Define the Chinese New Year by choosing 10 nouns from the text (and only nouns).
 1. moon
 2. ...
 3. ...
- c) After what you have read about the Chinese New Year, how would you define it by means of 5 adjectives (whether taken from the text or not).
 1. colourful
 2. ...
 3. ...

D. How would you **summarise the text** in 30 to 40 words?

E. Find words or phrases in the text to match these meanings:

- a) To free oneself of (usually something unpleasant):
- b) Something you give as a present:
- c) A small cardboard container filled with a little with explosive powder:
- d) A ceremonial march or procession:

³⁶ Adapted from *British and American Festivities*, by Gina D. B. Clemen, The Black Cat, 1999.

- e) A percussion musical instrument:

Were you wondering about the ♦? You have read a text where every fifth “meaningful” word (noun, adjective, verb, etc.) had been deleted, and which still was understandable. So, as it seems, you don’t need to understand every single word of the text. Sometimes it’s wiser to ignore difficult words as if they didn’t exist.

F. How many of the deleted words would you dare to **replace, according to the context**? Try to do that before your teacher gives you the list of those words.

G. Are the following sentences **true or false**? Don’t forget to give evidence from the text for your answers:

- a) The Chinese New Year always takes place on February 19th.
- b) Fish, red and dragons, all have positive connotations in the Chinese New Year.
- c) The Chinese New Year is only celebrated in San Francisco, New York, Honolulu and Houston.

H. **Rewrite** the following sentences without changing the original meaning:

- a) I last visited New York in 1998.
It is _____
- b) The father gave some “Lai see” to his daughter and told her. “Don’t spend it all at once!”.
The father asked _____
- c) While I was visiting New York, the Chinese New Year took place.
During _____

I. Follow up–writing. Narrations and descriptions: Choose one of the following topics and ask your teacher for advice if you need it:

- a) Think about the last time you were on holiday and imagine it was yesterday. Write a letter to a friend telling him/her how you spent the day (it would be useful to mark the sequence of events by using connectors such as: then, later, afterwards, etc., and clearly stating the time of your actions by using time expressions such as: when I got up, after we left the hotel, a little while after lunch, before going to bed, etc. And don’t forget that narrations are usually written in the past tense).
- b) You have got a new Chinese penpal. Write a letter or an e-mail to him/her describing how you celebrate the New Year in Spain/in your town³⁷. Remember that descriptions usually contain a lot of adjectives and that you have to follow an order.

³⁷ If you want to find new penpals: <http://www.internationalpenfriends.co.uk/> or <http://www.penfriends.com.au/>

3.10) AND FINALLY... LET'S GO TO THE MUSEUM

Before starting this section, take a look back at the strategies and tips we saw in the previous section(s).

Before reading, answer the following questions:

- a) What museums have you visited in Spain? Which is your favourite? Why do you / don't you like museums?
- b) New York has got over 90 museums –of which about 60 are in Manhattan. How many have you heard about?

Some of the best known are the following: the Guggenheim Museum³⁸, the Metropolitan Museum of Art³⁹, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA)⁴⁰, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum⁴¹, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum⁴², or the American Museum of Natural History⁴³. Today we are going to visit the Guggenheim Museum, the older sibling of our own museum in Bilbao.

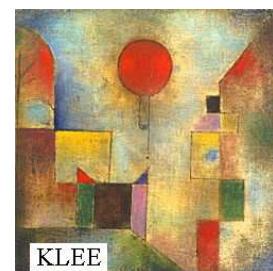


Initially established in 1937 as a **foundation** dedicated to the advancement of **non-objective painting**, the Guggenheim has **expanded** its core holdings - concentrated in early abstraction- to represent the breadth of **Modernism**. The selection of works currently on view highlights familiar **favorites** while also allowing for a presentation of **lesser-known pieces**, many by artists the Guggenheim has collected in depth. Distinct

moments in the history of Modern art are traced throughout these **chronological and thematic installations** ranging from art of the **late 1800s through the 1960s**.

In 1927, **Solomon R. Guggenheim** met **Baroness Hilla Rebay von Ehrenwiesen**, a **German artist** who introduced him to contemporary artistic currents in Europe. Guided by Rebay, Guggenheim began collecting paintings by the **European avant-garde**, focusing in particular on the work of **Vasily Kandinsky**, whose philosophical views regarding the spiritual nature of abstract art were embraced by Rebay.

By the mid 1950s, director James Johnson Sweeney expanded the museum's scope to incorporate more objective



³⁸ 1071, 5th Ave. at 89th St. ☺ 4, 5 and 6 to 86th St. <http://www.guggenheim.org>

³⁹ 1000, 5th Ave. ☺ 4, 5 and 6 to 86th St. <http://www.metmuseum.org>

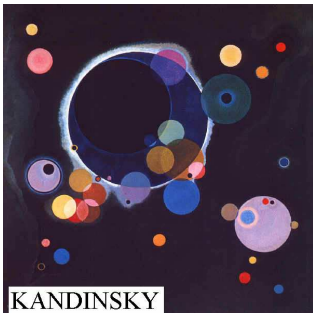
⁴⁰ 11 W, 53rd St. ☺ A, C, E, B, D, F and Q to 5th Ave.-53rd St. <http://www.moma.org>

⁴¹ 2 E, 91st St. ☺ 1,2,3 and 9 to 86th St. <http://www.si.edu/ndm>

⁴² 90, Orchard St. ☺ B, D, F and Q to Delancey St. or Grand St.

⁴³ Central Park West at 79th St. ☺ B, C to 81st St. <http://www.amnh.org>

and figurative art. In addition to pursuing new acquisitions, *he* turned his attention to works from the collection that had rarely been shown. Many of *these* Guggenheim *himself* had purchased early on, including pieces by Albert Gleizes, Franz Marc, and Amedeo Modigliani. *In the following decade*, director Thomas Messer was instrumental in acquiring the German Expressionist portraits on view *here*. And *it* was under Messer's tenure that the bequest of the Thannhauser Collection enriched the museum with a group of late-19th- and early-20th-century works, providing a historical context for *the period already represented in the Guggenheim's holdings*. Paintings by Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh, among others, illustrate the nascent interest in the reduction or breakdown of forms treated *later* by artists such as Piet Mondrian and the Cubists respectively.



KANDINSKY

In recent decades, under the directorship of Messer and his successor Thomas Krens, the museum has augmented its post-war collection to rival the strength of its pre-war masterpieces. The founding non-objective focus of the museum finds its legacy in the emotive canvases of the Abstract Expressionists, while the tradition of the still life represented in the museum's historical collection is radically recast in the examination of quotidian subject matter by artists of the 1960s.

Susan Cross and Vivien Greene. Assistant Curators of the Guggenheim Museum, New York⁴⁴

Read the following text and... glups!

Sometimes you may come across a “very difficult text” like this, but don’t give up yet. We’ll revise some of the strategies we have learnt so far and we’ll see if we make it more understandable.

- C. Read the whole text without stopping at difficult words**, just to get a general idea.
- D. Key information.** In paragraphs 1 and 2 the key information has been **bolded** for you. Do the same in paragraphs 3 and 4. This will let us have a general idea, and it will also allow us to write a summary later.

Remember that it is not necessary to understand every single word. Sometimes it is enough if we understand some key information that will allow us to bridge the gap of what we don’t understand.

⁴⁴ Adapted from the museum guide.

E. Reference words. In paragraph number 3 some words, phrases, etc. have been written in *italics*. In pairs try to clarify what or who they refer to (it may be a person, a time, a place, etc). Some of the references may lead you to other paragraphs.

Another very important strategy is to “follow the track” of reference words.

F. Guessing –or sometimes ignoring– the meaning of difficult words. Here is a list of some of the most difficult words in paragraphs 1 and 2:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) foundation (l. 1): | g) traced (l. 9): |
| b) advancement (l. 2): | h) chronological (l. 9): |
| c) breadth (l. 5): | i) ranging from (l. 10): |
| d) highlights (l. 6): | j) currents (l. 15): |
| e) lesser-known (l. 7): | k) avant-garde (l. 17): |
| f) depth (l. 8): | l) embraced (l. 20): |

However, if we take a closer look, they may not be so difficult as they seem.

Remember that a high percentage of the English vocabulary, especially the type of vocabulary used in the written language, comes from Latin or Greek, and it is, therefore, similar to our own.

a) Take a closer look at these words in context and try to guess their meaning:

- i. foundation (l. 1):
- ii. advancement (l. 2):
- iii. chronological (l. 9):
- iv. currents (l. 15):
- v. embraced (l. 20):

Remember also that other times there may be words that look unfamiliar at first, but that after a closer look, you may discover that you know other words to which they are related.

b) Look at the following words in context, decide what part of speech they are, which words that you know they may be related to, and finally try to guess their possible meaning:

Word	Part of speech	Related to	Meaning
i. breadth (l. 5):			
ii. lesser-known (l. 7):			
iii. depth (l. 8):			

And other times the context may help us guess the possible meaning of some words or phrases –or if not it will give us at least enough general

information to allow us to ignore that particular word.

c) Look at the words of this list in context and try to guess their possible meaning:

i. highlights (l. 6):

part of speech: _____

___ clarifies

___ emphasises

___ renews

iii. avant-garde (l. 17):

part of speech: _____

___ a person

___ a geographical term

___ a pictorial style

ii. ranging from (l. 10):

part of speech: _____

___ extending

___ using

___ buying

G. Do you dare now do the same with paragraphs 3 and 4?

H. Summarise the most important information of the text in around 30 or 40 words:

I. JUST FOR FUN –Find the answers to the following questions as quickly as you can:

- a) How many names of artist can you find in the text?
- b) How many names of directors of the museum?
- c) How many artistic styles and movements?⁴⁵

Do you still think the text was very, very, veeeeeeery difficult?

J. Follow up–writing. Below there are different topics for composition writing. Choose any of them and approach it the way you want. Collective brainstormings are suggested. Write about 125-150 words. Before you do, you are advised to take a look at all the previous information and to follow the suggested steps.

- a) Write an article to the school newspaper describing your trip to New York: what you have visited, what you have liked most/least, etc.
- b) Travelling abroad and meeting new people. What do you think about it?
- c) Museums like the British Museum (London), the *Louvre* (Paris) or the Metropolitan (New York) should return part of their exhibits to their countries of origin.

⁴⁵ Sometimes our students do not only have problems with the English language, but they also have problems with the *contents* of the topics through which we try to teach them English. If we want them to be able to interact more or less successfully with the texts, we might have to provide them with some cultural information.

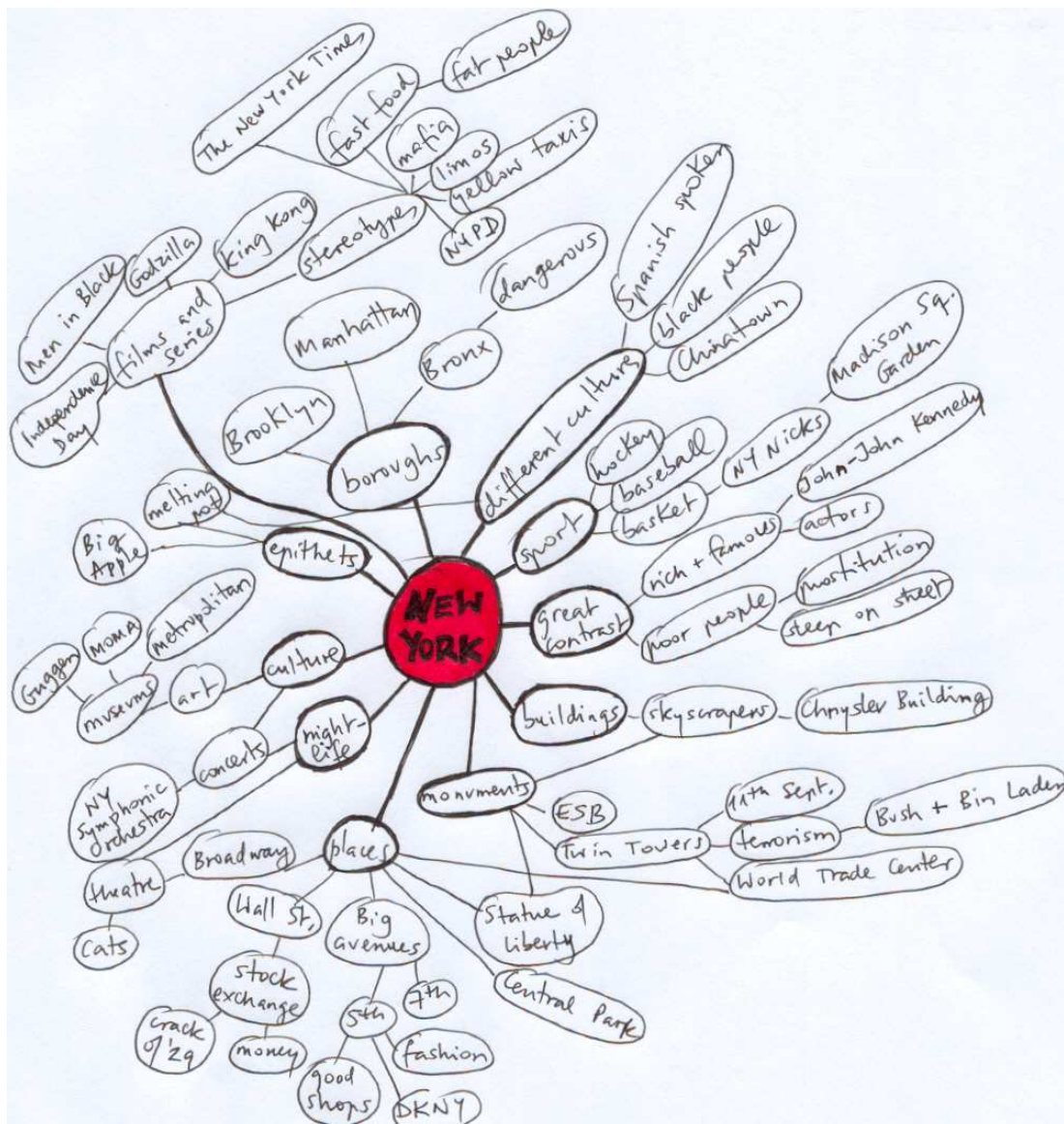
- d) You are a cab driver in New York. How did you spend an ordinary day yesterday?

4) ANNEXES

4.1) BRAINSTORMING

Before we introduce the topic of New York, it is necessary to be aware of what our students know beforehand. As Barr et al. say “reading starts before we even look at the text”. We need to activate their previous knowledge, so that they can interact with the text(s) we will be working with, and therefore, understand them better. As an example, when I started working on this unit, I asked my *bachillerato* students to make a little historic memory exercise: to think about New York before 11th Sept. 2001 for five minutes, in a kind of brainstorming activity. After that we put all the ideas together in a big poster, learning at the same time to arrange ideas in a sort of mind map. The result can be seen below.

This brainstorming and mind map allowed the class to share their previous knowledge and it also allowed me to know what they knew about New York and what I could take for granted. For example, I found out that they know a lot from the stereotypes they get in films. And although some of their concepts were wrong, I think they knew a lot more about New York than I expected them to.



4.2) GOOD TIMES AND BAD TIMES⁴⁶

Times Square, like Wall Street and Fifth Avenue, is one of those New York addresses that is famous the world over. Its main claim to fame is the massive neon billboards that have led historians to argue that modern mass advertising was born there. Yet Times Square is also the heart of New York's theatre district, otherwise known as Broadway.

As if that wasn't enough, the Square is home to The New York Times and this explains its name. Times Square is at the intersection of Broadway and Seventh Avenue and it covers several blocks from 42nd Street northwards. Such was its importance that it used to be known as "the Crossroads of the World".



Those golden days are, however, long since gone. A more accurate description of Times Square in recent years is to be found in the 1990 edition of the Time Out guide to New York: "It's a war zone, a centre for drug pushers and customers, for prostitution, and for the unfortunate homeless whose very existence frightens the politicians so much they refuse to confront the problem." It is also a major centre of the pornographic industry.

Once a neighbourhood has declined so dramatically things can only get better. The Times Square Business Improvement District organisation is working hard to clean the area both physically and morally. A lot of work still needs to be done before Times Square regains its former glory but no one can deny that it is a far better place than it was fifteen years ago.

A. Answer the following questions shortly, and using your own words as much as possible: (2)

- a) What is Times Square famous for?
- b) How has Times Square changed over time?

B. Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE? Give evidence for your answers: (2)

- a) Times Square gets its name from a famous newspaper.
- b) The situation of Times Square is worse today than it was in the past.

⁴⁶ Adapted from *Speak Up*, number 122, p. 32.

C. Rewrite the following sentences in such a way that they mean the same as the ones above: (2)

- a) A lot of work needs to be done before Times Square regains its former glory.
We need _____
- b) Such was its importance that it used to be known as...
It was _____

D. Find in the text words or expressions that mean the same as: (1)

- a) People who sell such forbidden substances as heroine, cocaine, etc.:

- b) District, area of a town or city: _____
- c) To cause fear, to scare: _____
- d) The place where two or several roads meet: _____

E. Write a composition of 100 words about one of the following topics: (3)

- a) Would you like to live in a city like New York? Why?
- b) What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in big cities?

4.3) SOME FACTS ABOUT NEW YORK⁴⁷

- a) Why do people call New York “The Big Apple”? In the 1920s and 1930s, jazz musicians all wanted to work in New York. “There are a lot of apples on the tree,” they said, “but when you take New York City, you take The Big Apple!”
- b) More than twenty million people visit New York every year.
- c) The island of Manhattan is 21.5 kilometres long and 3.7 kilometres wide.
- d) New York City has five boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, The Bronx, Queens and Staten Island.
- e) The city has 10,000 kilometres of streets and 780 square kilometres.
- f) Four hundred years ago, Manhattan Island was the home of the Algonquin Indians.
- g) In 1626, a Dutchman called Peter Minuit paid the Indians about 24 dollars for the island.
- h) By 1647, about 500 people lived in “New Amsterdam”.
- i) In 1790, about 33,000 people lived in New York.
- j) Today more than nine million people live there.
- k) The Brooklyn Bridge opened on 24 May 1883.
- l) In Manhattan the avenues go north and south and the streets go east and west. Most of them have numbers for names.
- m) New York cabs (taxis) are yellow and there are more than 11,000 of them.
- n) Central Park extends from 59th to 110th Streets, between 5th and 8th Avenues.
- o) The Statue of Liberty was a present from the French to the Americans in 1886 to commemorate the first century of the American independence.
- p) You can walk 354 stairs to get to the top of the statue.
- q) New Yorkers say that you can buy everything you want in New York. “Macy’s”, on Broadway and 34th Street, is said to be the biggest shop in the world.
- r) You can eat in New York every night for fifty years and never visit the same cafe or restaurant twice.
- s) In November of every year, 25,000 or more people run through all five boroughs in the world famous New York Marathon.

⁴⁷ From John Escott’s *New York*, Oxford Bookworms Factfiles.

- t) New Yorkers love parades and there is one in some part of the city most months of the year. Two of the biggest are: St Patrick's Day Parade, on 17 March; and Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, on the last Thursday in November.
- u) The Empire State Building, which has 102 floors and is 448 metres high, was between 1931 and 1970 the highest building in the world.
- v) If the sky is clear, you can see 120 kilometres from the top of the ESB.
- w) The World Trade Center was destroyed in a spectacular terrorist attack on 11th September 2001, in which nearly 3,000 people were killed. The Twin Towers were the highest buildings in New York. But you probably know enough of this already.