

# THE FOLIO

N5 English

# What do I need to know?



- The Folio comprises 30% of the marks for National 5 English, which equates to almost a third of the marks available for the whole course. In other words, it is well worth working very hard in this area as it will help to improve your English grade.
- You don't know what the close reading exam will be like so you have little control over it. Equally, you have no control over the questions that will be chosen for the Scottish Texts and Critical Essay sections. You **do** have control over your Folio however and your Folio pieces should therefore be the best pieces of writing you have produced to date.

# What is a Folio?

- Your folio is a collection of two of your best pieces of writing, which will be sent to the SQA for external assessment.
- Each essay must be no more than 1000 words. You should aim to write as close to 1000 words as possible in each piece of writing.
- You must include one piece of writing from each of the genres below:
- Broadly creative writing: this can take the form of either imaginative writing or personal/reflective writing.
- Broadly discursive writing: this can be broken down into persuasive writing, argumentative writing and report writing.

# The Rules



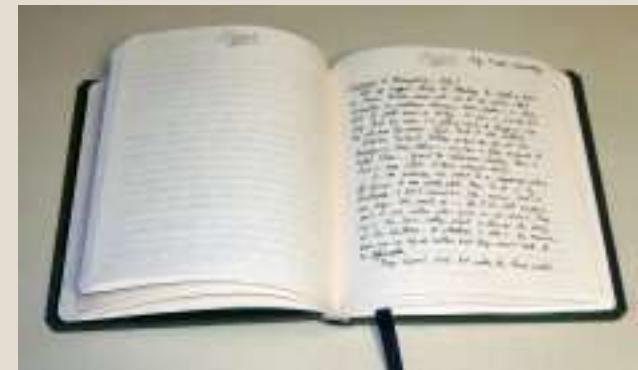
- You have been, or will soon be, issued with a copy of the Teaching and Assessment Calendar for this session. On it, you will see the dates when each draft of each Folio piece is due. After submitting a detailed plan, each draft will be marked twice by your teacher. Given that your teacher is only able to mark two drafts of your essay, it is essential that you put as much effort as possible into ensuring that each draft is your very best work. The third and final draft you submit will be the draft that is submitted to the SQA.

# Taking a closer look...



- Your teacher will inform you which folio piece you are required to tackle first. The slides that follow will give you more detailed information on the requirements of each folio piece. Your teacher may also show you exemplars of writing in each genre.
- The most important thing to remember is that the folio is an independent unit of work which means that most, if not all, of your folio work will be completed at home. It is **your** responsibility to manage your time effectively and ensure that each plan and draft of your folio pieces is submitted on time. Given that the folio is worth 30% of your overall grade, it is crucial that you take it seriously and do your very best.

# Personal/ Reflective Writing



# What is Personal/Reflective Writing?

Personal writing aims to describe how you have reacted to a specific event in your life. Your essay will convey information to the reader and it will show your feelings about the event. In fact, depth of feeling is really important to this form of writing. So, you will explore your own feelings and reactions in this kind of writing. To do this well, you need to describe your feelings in a very real and meaningful way. This will show self-awareness. Often, this form of writing will also expose your own personality to the reader and show some insight into the experience. In other words, you are exploring your own feelings to reveal something new about the experience that you maybe didn't notice when it first happened.

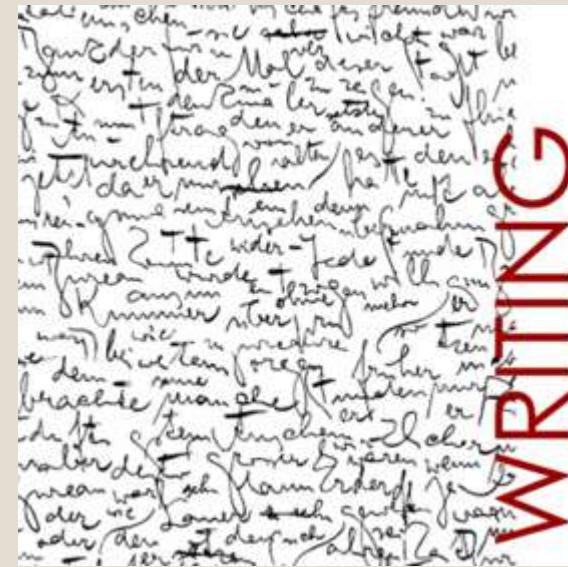
# What are the features of this type of writing?

- Strongly personal – will focus on a single incident / event / occasion
- Involves the reader – Use of the first person
- Tells a story – Use of emotionally charged language
- Conveys information – Creation of atmosphere through effective word choice
- Describes the incident / event / occasion – Use of implicit versus explicit feelings
- Shows the writer's personality – Meaningful exploration of feelings
- May use humour – Description of key aspects of the event is important
- May be chronological or make use of flashback



# Possible Personal/Reflective Topics

- An experience that changed me...
- I couldn't live without...
- My biggest fear...
- My first love...
- My...means more to me than anything...
- I remember when...
- My favourite place...
- A landmark moment for me was...
- A significant friendship in my life...
- It all went wrong for me when...
- An important relationship in my life...
- The greatest achievement of my life so far...



# Some advice

- However you begin your essay, do NOT begin with the words ‘In this essay I will write about a time when...’. Try to be much more stylish than this.
- In order to do well, you must express your thoughts and feelings in a genuine, meaningful way. Simply describing something that happened in your life is not enough to do well at National 5. It is how well you explore your thoughts, feelings and reactions that counts.
- Try to vary your word choice and use language to make a real impact on your reader. Aim to use more sophisticated vocabulary than simply using words like ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘nice’, ‘sad’.



# DISCURSIVE WRITING



# What is discursive writing?

- You could write a **persuasive piece** in which you argue **EITHER** in favour of **or against** a particular issue. You lay out all the arguments and try to convince your reader to agree with your point of view.
- You could write an **argumentative essay** in which you look at both sides of an issue.

# If I decide to write a persuasive essay, how will I structure it?

- The opening paragraph will put across the main point of view being presented in your essay
- The main body paragraphs will give either opinions supported by facts or facts supported by opinions
- The most important argument will be first, followed by the next strongest argument etc...
- The conclusion will summarise and re-state the opening position and sum up the issues

# What are the features of persuasive writing?

- Can be either formal or informal
- Exaggeration
- Emotional language
- Figurative language
- Can be in the first person
- Repetition
- Rhetorical Questions
- Linking words



# Possible persuasive topics

- The youth of today has more to offer society than the older generation.
- There is too much pressure on young people to succeed academically; there are other ways to succeed.
- Social networking sites make us less social in the real world.
- As a society, we have become less interested in religion and this is a good/bad thing.
- Tattoos are a very bad idea.
- Size zero models should be banned from the fashion industry.

## Possible persuasive topics (cont.)

- We have every reason to be optimistic/pessimistic about our future.
- Young people today are unfairly/quite rightly portrayed by the media.
- We depend too much on technology. If technology failed, then...
- More has to be done to encourage the use of digital media in schools, including mobile phones.
- The police should be allowed to bear arms in the UK.
- Gun control laws in the US need to be changed.

If I decide to write an argumentative essay,  
how will I structure it?

- 1. Introduction to topic
- 2. Advantages
- 3. Disadvantages
- 4. Conclusion: does one outweigh the other?

# What are the features of argumentative writing?

- Gives information about both sides of a topic
- May use technical or specialised vocabulary
- De-personalised style, written in third person
- Formal tone (avoid abbreviations)
- Use of linking words/phrases



# Possible argumentative topics

- We have become a society obsessed by weight
- TV shows such as The X Factor and Britain's Got Talent have discouraged young people from finding success through hard work
- Technology creates many benefits in society but there is a high price to pay for them
- The older generation has really messed things up for the young
- Money. Money. Money. It's all we think or care about today.

## Possible argumentative topics (cont.)

- As a society, we have become less caring
- Virtual learning environments (VLEs), such as Moddle, Edmodo and GLOW, are changing the way we learn for the better
- Teenagers must now allow the economic climate to get them down. They must become more involved in politics.
- With obesity among the young becoming a huge problem, it is time we looked at alternatives to our usual diet.

## Still struggling? Consider these ideas...

- A transactional essay that gives information on the discipline system used in your school
- An argumentative essay that explores the topic of social media
- A persuasive essay on why all pupils should use smartphones in class
- A report on the time allocated to PE in Scottish schools
- A persuasive essay on what needs to be done to improve Scottish football
- An argumentative essay on ‘is Scotland a truly multicultural society?’

# Some more...

- A persuasive essay on why you shouldn't go to university
- An argumentative essay on single-sex schools
- A report on the different languages used in Scotland today
- An argumentative piece on Scottish independence
- A persuasive essay on the benefits of renewable energy
- An argumentative essay on the influence of religion on our lives

# Where do I start?



- Choose a topic that you're genuinely interested in
- Then, decide upon how you will present information on this topic (persuasive or argumentative)
- Research, research, research! Keep a note of all of your sources (every website you look at, every book you consult)
- Put together a detailed plan which clearly outlines how you will structure your essay. How will you present your arguments? What information will be presented in each paragraph? The more detailed your plan is, the better.
- When you have received feedback on your plan, either conduct more research if necessary or else begin writing. Remember, you're aiming to write as close to 1000 words as possible.
- Each draft you submit should give the word count and a list of the sources you used

# Can my Discursive Essay count as my AVU?

Despite the fact you may be working towards National 5 English, it is important that you complete the National 4 Added Value Unit too. Completing this unit means that you will automatically achieve N4 English should you fail the N5 course. Thankfully, the discursive folio piece can double-up as the AVU if you do it properly.

The first thing you need to do is fill in the N4 AVU logbook before and during your research (your teacher will give you a copy of this to complete). This is really important. Secondly, when you have finished writing your discursive essay, on a separate page you should write several hundred words evaluating two or three of the websites you consulted while researching your chosen topic. You may wish to consider: the layout of the site; the language used; how reliable each site was; how frequently it was updated; whether there were videos and/or photographs etc.

Make sure that you give your teacher two copies of your discursive essay. One copy should be accompanied by your evaluation of your sources and your logbook. Your teacher will keep this as evidence that you've completed the AVU. The other copy should just be your discursive essay and this is the copy that will be sent to the SQA to be assessed as part of your folio.