



5.13

Writing scientific articles for different audiences

Students revisit the skill scientific writing, this time with a focus on writing for a more general audience. This is akin to the sort of writing found in newspapers, magazines and some websites.

Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate an appreciation of the different language and writing style required for articles for different audiences
- write a summary article on a difficult A-level topic which is aimed at an audience of GCSE students
- communicate scientific ideas to individuals whose understanding of the underlying science is not as extensive as their own.

Time required

Allow 20 minutes introduction in class plus homework.

Outline of the activity

The task requires students to write an article for an audience of GCSE science students. You may wish to review again the differences between a scientific article and a scientific paper. Students should also consider the difference a GCSE audience will make to the style and of their writing. With the class you may wish to construct success criteria for the activity. An example is listed below.

A good GCSE Science article should be between 500 and 1000 words long and include:

- an explanation of the background of the topic
- why the topic is important to them
- sentences and paragraphs concise and punchy
- topic sentences at the beginning of paragraphs
- language a GCSE student would be familiar with
- helpful images.

1 Start by issuing copies of an article (or several articles) written for a general audience on a science-related topic.

2 Ask the students ‘How does the content and style differ from the scientific articles we have looked at previously?’

3 Issue the student briefing sheet. There is space on the sheet for students to make notes when you outline the topic and run through your requirements - you can tailor the guidance to the topic / specification you are teaching. The task of writing the article can then be set as a homework.

Students first write an article on an A-level topic for GCSE students. The main body of the article should be written so as to be accessible to all GCSE students. Students then write a ‘Science in-depth’ section at the end presenting the A-level aspects of the science, still using language appropriate to the audience.

Then students summarise the article in 100-150 words (with one diagram / illustration) to explain the significance of the topic to primary school students. This will involve the students using a range of skills that they have developed during the LSS activities.

If possible, part of the assessment should include showing the article written in part 1 to some GCSE students, particularly those who have expressed an interest in studying A-levels. These articles could be combined with posters from Activity 6.7 Preparing a scientific poster to form part of an ‘A-level taster day’ for GCSE students interested in further study.

Tips and strategies

No attempt has been made to write a guidance sheet specifically for an advanced-level topic owing to the wide variation in the requirements of the different exam boards in this area.

