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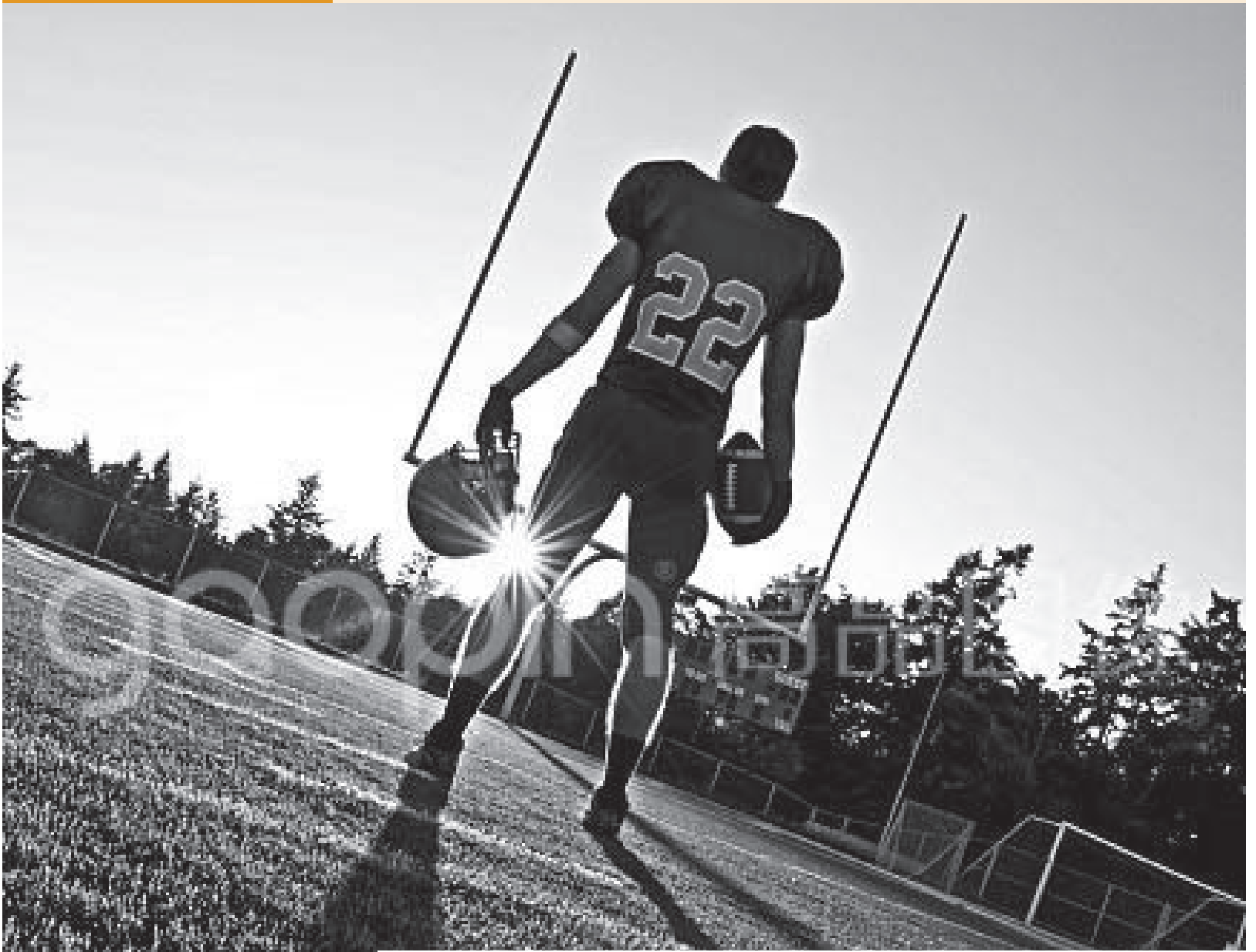
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Unit

# 1

## Definition

—Insane football fans



### Learning objectives

- 1) Write formal and extended definitions
- 2) Develop a definition essay with details and examples
- 3) Provide a necessary definition for a specific audience

**D**efinition is frequently employed in communication. In conversation, we often stop to ask, “What do you mean by that?” Then, our interlocutor has to define some terms or concepts in order to make what is said understood. In written communication, we also need to clarify a term or a notion in order to convey our meaning. The term or notion can be defined very briefly, as in a dictionary, or in an extended way through a paragraph or even an essay.

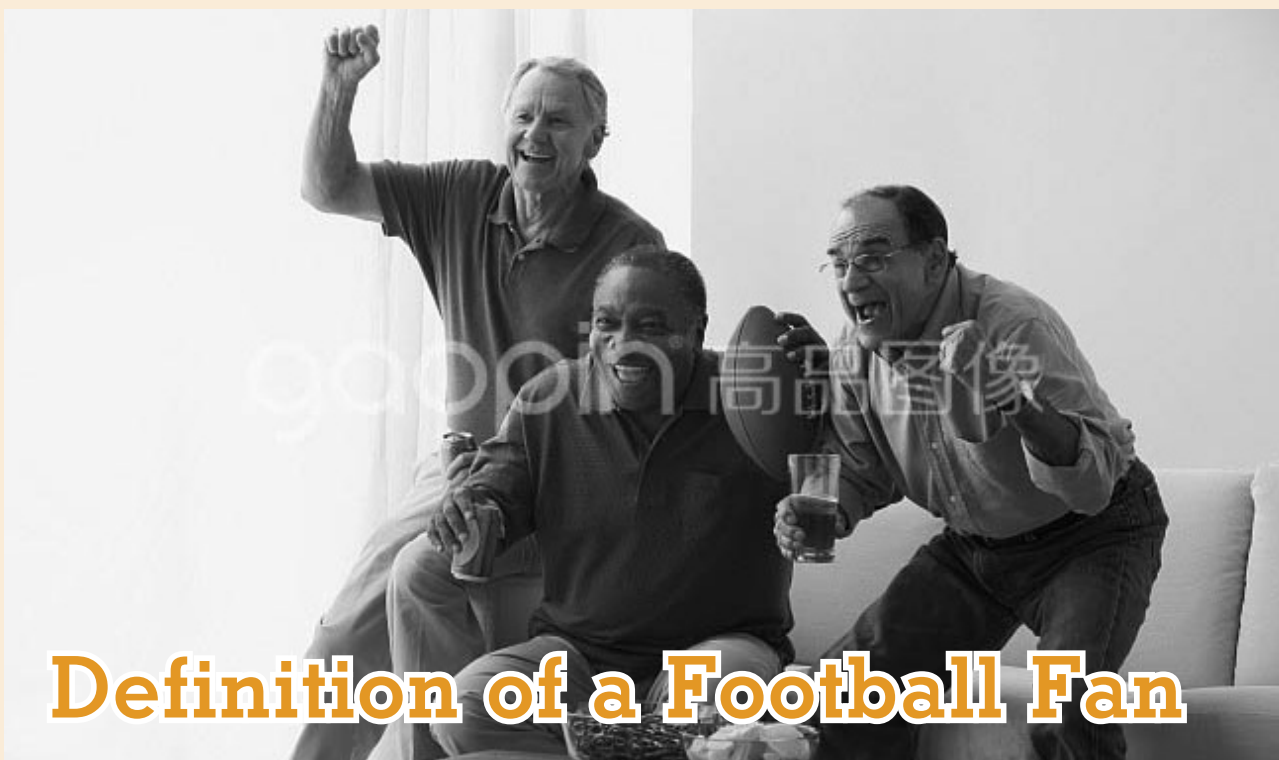
## WARM-UP ACTIVITY

When you have a WeChat talk with a pen pal in America who says he is a football fan, do you know what he means by “football”? Discuss in your group.

List at least three differences between American football and the kind of football which is popular in China—soccer as American people call it. Share your knowledge with the other members in your group.

Are you a big fan of any sport, team, or player? What do you do to show your admiration and devotion? Are you sure all your behavior is rational? Yes? Oh, what a true fan you are!

Would you like to know how true fans are seen by other people? Read the following essay written by an American university student named Brian. He attempts to define fans of American football, which is one of the most popular games in his country.



## Definition of a Football Fan

- 1 What is a football fan? The word “fan” is an abbreviation of “fanatic,” meaning “an insane or crazy person.” In the case of football fans, the term is appropriate. They behave insanely; they are insane about the past; they are insanely loyal.
- 2 Football fans wear their official team T-shirts and warm-up jackets to the mall, to the supermarket, to the classroom, and even—if they can get away with it—to work. If the team offers a giveaway item, the fans rush to the stadium to claim the hat or sports bag or water bottle that is being handed out that day. Football fans just plain behave insanely. The fact that fans spend the coldest months of the year huddling on icy metal benches in places like Chicago proves it. In addition, football fans decorate their houses with football-related items of every kind. To them, team

bumper stickers belong not only to car bumpers, but also to fireplace mantels and front doors. When they go to a game, which they do as often as possible, they also decorate their bodies. True football fans not only put on their team jackets and grab their pennants but also paint their heads to look like helmets or wear glow-in-the-dark cheeseheads. At the game, these fans devote enormous energy to trying to get a “wave” going.

- 3 Football fans are insanely fascinated by the past. They talk about William “Refrigerator” Perry’s 1985 Super Bowl touchdown as though it had happened last week. The passion they show recounting Franco Harris’s “immaculate reception” makes you wonder if they realize his playoff-winning catch occurred in 1972. They excitedly discuss the sixty-three-yard field goal kicked by Tom Dempsey—a man with no toes on his right foot—as though it were news, instead of having happened in 1970. And if you can’t manage to get excited about such ancient history, they look at you as though you were the insane one.
- 4 Last of all, football fans are insanely loyal to the team of their choice, often dangerously so. Should their beloved team lose three in a row, fans might begin to react negatively as a way to hide their broken hearts. They still obsessively watch each game and spend the entire day afterward reading and listening to the postgame commentary in newspapers, on TV sports segments, and on sports radio. Furthermore, this intense loyalty makes fans dangerous. To anyone who dares to say to a loyal fan that another team has better players or coaches, or to anyone wandering near the home cheering section wearing the jacket of the opposing team, physical damage is a real possibility. Bloody noses, black eyes, and broken bones are just some of the injuries inflicted on people cheering the wrong team when fans are around. In 1997, one man suffered a concussion at a game in Philadelphia when Eagles fans beat him up for wearing a jacket with another team’s insignia.
- 5 From February through August, football fans act like any other human beings. They pay their taxes, take out the garbage, and complain about the high cost of living. But when September rolls around, the colors and radios go on; the record books come off the shelves; the devotion returns. For the true football fan, another season of insanity has begun.

# POST-READING DISCUSSION

Definition plays an important role in essay writing. Take the sample essay as an example. The title of this essay is "Definition of a Football Fan," but for us Chinese readers, what should be defined first is football in the United States. Over there, football is a game in which two teams of 11 players, wearing helmets and thickly padded uniforms, aim to advance an oval ball across opponents' goal lines to score. Outside the United States, the game is referred to as American football to avoid confusion with soccer, which is also called football in many other countries including China. Without this definition, it is impossible for us to comprehend the article.

## 1 A brief discussion on the structure of the essay

- 1 Complete the thesis-topic outline of the sample essay by identifying the thesis in the introduction paragraph, the topic sentence in each body paragraph, as well as the thesis restatement, and copying them in the corresponding blanks of the following table.

The outline of the sample essay	
Thesis statement	
Topic sentence 1	
Topic sentence 2	
Topic sentence 3	
Thesis restatement	

- 2 Share your knowledge on the following questions in your group.
  - 1) Is this 5-paragraph essay a typical closed-form essay? Why or why not?
  - 2) Where is the topic sentence located in each body paragraph?
  - 3) Can you find a wrap-up at the end of each body paragraph? Where is it (if you have identified it)?
  - 4) Where is the thesis restatement (if you have identified it)?
  - 5) What is the function of the last paragraph?
  - 6) What is the author's definition of football fans in the United States?

The last question seems fairly easy. Since this is an essay of definition, the author's opinion must be conveyed by the thesis statement. Someone may think so, but is that the case? We will return to this question at the end of the Post-reading Discussion.

## 2 Extend a definition

A formal definition is a concise statement of the meaning of a word or a phrase, like those found in a dictionary. Typically, a formal definition includes three parts, as shown in the table below.

Word	Category	Characteristic
A lecture	is a formal talk	given to a large group, often used for teaching.
An assignment	is a task	often given to students, for teaching or assessment.

What about the following statements? Can they be classed as formal definitions?

- A pencil is an instrument for writing and drawing.
- A pen is for writing and drawing with ink.

Very often an author may find that a formal definition from a dictionary is of limited help, because he or she would like to take a stance or present an attitude about the word or phrase being defined. Then an extended definition should be worked out by the author. Such extension involves one's own opinion, and often appears in the form of a paragraph or an essay. Dictionary definitions are merely informative, but most extended definitions are written to change people's mind about the thing being defined.

As a definition essay, the sample essay begins with a question: "What is a football fan?" Then, an etymological definition of "fan" is given: "The word 'fan' is an abbreviation of 'fanatic,' meaning 'an insane or crazy person.'" Does the author really agree with this definition?

In fact, every sport has its own fans, and it is hard to imagine that all these fans are insane or crazy people. But the author admits: "In the case of football fans, the term is appropriate." That is to say, these fans are really insane.

Following this explorative hook, the thesis blends into the introductory paragraph naturally. It states the main idea of the essay, and implies the organizational structure—three topics for further development in the body: "They behave insanely; they are insane about the past; they are insanely loyal." By highlighting the author's ideas with one word—"insane," coherence is realized in the remaining parts of the essay.

## 3 Use specific details to support the extension

Everyone is entitled to give an extended definition when writing an essay. It is often the case that his or her definition informs by bringing the readers to a fresh appreciation of something familiar or taken for granted. The concept of "insane" used in the sample essay is an example.

**1** Look up the definition of “insane” in a dictionary. Then think about the following questions.

- 1) How insane are football fans during the football season according to the author?
- 2) Does the author really think of football fans as insane people? Give evidence.
- 3) The paragraph below is written by an English learner in China with a similar topic sentence to that in Paragraph 2 of the sample essay. What do you think of his way of developing the topic sentence?

Football fans behave insanely indeed. From the very beginning of the season, they immerse themselves in the mad tide in support of their favorite team. At any moment and any place, they try all kinds of ways to show their fervor, never worrying that their peculiar look and deeds will astonish others, or that the hard weather they encounter will threaten their health. They adorn every corner of their home, their clothes, or even their body with traces of their passion for the team they choose to back. They bring a wild atmosphere to the whole community throughout the season, with burning zeal day by day, without any trail of tiredness and wane. They know their craze is absolutely necessary in building up the momentum for their team to win.

- 4) Compare the above paragraph with Paragraph 2 of the sample essay. Which do you prefer and why?

**2** Read the underlined part of the Chinese learner’s paragraph and find out sentences depicting the same phenomenon in Paragraph 2 of the sample essay. Then complete the table below.

	The Chinese learner’s paragraph	Paragraph 2 of the sample essay
Sentences	They adorn every corner of their home, their clothes, or even their body with traces of their passion for the team they choose to back.	
Comment on the effect on readers		These sentences depict vividly fans’ actions. They present a series of living pictures to readers, making it easier for readers to share the author’s ideas and give their own response such as “Oh, that’s simply insane!”



Rhetorically, what the Chinese learner's paragraph uses is fairly generalized illustration, while what the sample essay's paragraph uses is specific details. In recent years, many English learners in China have become aware of this difference. They have realized that native English speakers often use specific details to support their arguments instead of using generalized illustration. Lively images accompanied by specific details have a better chance of grabbing readers' attention and tend to win readers' support for an author's argument.

Specific details are also utilized in other paragraphs of the sample essay. For instance, in Paragraph 4, where the topic sentence contains two topical ideas: a) Football fans are insanely loyal and b) Football fans are dangerously loyal, details are provided to support the ideas.

- 3 Examine the development of the two topical ideas in Paragraph 4, and identify what specific details are employed to support them.**

## 4 Face a definite audience

Specific details embrace specific examples. With vivid examples, an essay of definition becomes friendly to readers. Let's turn to Paragraph 3 of the sample essay, which has three examples:

- William "Refrigerator" Perry's 1985 Super Bowl touchdown
- Franco Harris's "immaculate reception"
- the sixty-three-yard field goal kicked by Tom Dempsey—a man with no toes on his right foot

For almost all American readers, William Perry, Franco Harris, and Tom Dempsey are great heroes in football history. Their supreme performances mentioned in these examples have become part of America's national memory. However, many Chinese readers do not know much about them.

- 1 Gather information about these players on the Internet, and then share your findings in your group.**
- 2 The following pieces of American-football-related jargon are mentioned in the sample essay. Tell as much as you know about them to the others in your group.**

Super Bowl    touchdown    cheesehead    reception    field goal

Obviously, this essay is written for American readers. If it is for audience like us living in another cultural environment, what adaptation should the author make?

There may be different suggestions, but one thing can never be ignored, i.e. adding a definition to any unfamiliar concept for the target audience.

At first, we need to consider whether a word, a phrase, or a celebrity's name really needs to be defined for the target audience; then, we have to consult dictionaries or other sources to make sure the definitions we want to use are relevant, accurate, and appropriate. The concept "touchdown" in rugby (popular in Britain), for example, is different from that in American football. Besides, we should also consider whether our definitions are too complex or too simple, and whether the style of the original essay will be affected by adding these definitions. Specifically, the word "cheesehead" refers to a hat shaped like a piece of cheese which is worn by fans of Green Bay Packers NFL football franchise. Will this definition be awkwardly long if we insert it after that word near the end of Paragraph 2 of the sample essay?

Furthermore, we may as well think about our usual writing. We can turn to the advice an American student gives in the comment on the student essay "What Makes Stars Shine" in Unit 2: "consider who your audience is"; "asking yourself how much specific knowledge your audience has about the topic"; "when you keep your audience in mind, you think about what examples are best to use to help them understand your argument, and you cater your argument and even your writing style to them." What the American student reminds us of is the weakness of many Chinese learners' English essays—lack of reader awareness and examples.

Before we end the discussion, let's return to Question 6 on Page 5: What is the author's definition of football fans in the United States? According to the thesis statement and the body paragraphs, we can summarize it by saying that the author just wants to tell us that football fans are insane people. But when we read the first two sentences of the last paragraph, we suddenly find that the author moves on to stress other aspects of these football fans—they live a normal life all the year round except during the football season. We come to see that this essay actually defines a football fan as a person who behaves insanely indeed during the football season of a year, but not insanely at all during the rest of the year.

The first two sentences of Paragraph 5 should be regarded as a response to the thesis statement rather than a thesis restatement, because it does not paraphrase the thesis statement but gives it an important supplement by revealing the normal behavior of these fans before and after the football season. Accordingly, in this definition essay, a definition of football fans is completed by the combined effect of the thesis statement at the end of the first paragraph and the response to the thesis statement at the beginning of the last paragraph. In this way, the author devotes the entire essay to exploring the meaning of a concept and showing the readers a new way of looking at it.

## YOUR TURN TO PRACTICE

**1** Complete the following formal definitions with suitable category words. The first one has been done as an example.

- 1) A barometer is a scientific instrument designed to measure atmospheric pressure.
- 2) A trade union is a/an \_\_\_\_\_ that represents the rights and interests of workers.
- 3) A volcano is a/an \_\_\_\_\_ with an opening through which lava, cinders, gases, etc. come up from below the earth's surface.
- 4) A peacock is a large \_\_\_\_\_ with long blue and green tail feathers which can be spread out like a fan.
- 5) A plumber is a/an \_\_\_\_\_ whose job is to fit and repair water pipes and water tanks in buildings.
- 6) A computer is an electronic \_\_\_\_\_ for storing and analyzing information, making calculations, or controlling machinery automatically.

**2** Decide whether the following statements are effective topic sentences in paragraphs of definition, and give your reasons.

- 1) Feminism is not man hating.
- 2) Death is not an end but a new beginning.
- 3) A tourist visits foreign places; a traveler experiences them.
- 4) Addiction is not simply a physical phenomenon but a psychological one as well.
- 5) The dictionary says that *counterfeit* means "to copy something exactly in order to deceive people."
- 6) When your gas gauge reads "Empty" or "E," you are out of gas.
- 7) Many people feel that to be truly "educated" in today's world, one must have at least a passing acquaintance with computers and how to use them.
- 8) A word processor is a machine used to process words.

**3** Read the following definition paragraphs, and decide which rhetorical modes (e.g. narration, classification, illustration, etc.) have been adopted to support each definition. The first one has been done as an example.

- 1) Anabolic steroids offer help in suppressing autoimmune diseases. For example, modified steroids help relieve the symptoms of Addison's disease by specifically regulating fat, carbohydrate, and protein metabolism. To help overcome severe allergies and arthritis, for instance, adrenocorticotrophic hormone is used as an anti-inflammatory to alleviate the symptoms. By taking prescription steroids, patients may enjoy life without having uncontrollable pains in joints as well as constant fatigue.

Rhetorical modes used: illustration

- 2) It is said that, "If we educate a man's mind but not his heart, we have an educated barbarian." The term "educated barbarian" is not self-contradictory. A real educated man, through years of education, should fall in love with the humanities, and regard learning as a reward. An educated barbarian, on the contrary, has been in college for years, could win prizes, but still cannot appreciate knowledge.

Rhetorical modes used: \_\_\_\_\_

3) The proscenium arch is a style of stage construction that frames the performing area as if with a picture frame. Its development has been labeled as the beginning of modern stage, because the frame-like structure, for the first time, literally separated the audience from actors. The separation physically and psychologically enhanced the impact of performance.

**Rhetorical modes used:** \_\_\_\_\_

4) What is love? Love can be defined as a strong liking for someone or something. Love is affectionate feelings for different people including husband, wife, children, friends, co-workers, and so on. However, the love for each of these is completely different. Love is usually strong between a husband and a wife but the type of love is different from the love for a child. Love can be romantic or it can be described as lust. Yet, without love, what would life be like?

**Rhetorical modes used:** \_\_\_\_\_

5) Assertiveness means standing up for your rights—politely but firmly. My friend Teresa is assertive. Once when we were in a restaurant and her hamburger was well-done instead of rare, Teresa signaled the waiter and nicely asked if she could return the excellent but well-done burger for one that was a bit rarer. I braced myself for an argument, but the waiter just replaced the burger. Another time as we stood in line for movie tickets, a guy cut in front of Teresa. She tapped him on his shoulder, smiled, and said, “I see there was a gap that looked as if it were the end of the line, but it’s really back there.” The guy stared at her and said, “I’ll just stay here. You don’t mind, right?” She answered, “Well, yes, I do mind.” She then made sure the people behind us were listening and said, “And you’re not being fair to all these other people, either.” The guy left. Assertiveness helps you get what you want and deserve without creating a scene.

**Rhetorical modes used:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 4 The following are introductory paragraphs from two different essays. As you read, underline the thesis statement in each paragraph, and then write appropriate topic sentences of the body paragraphs based on the organizational structure each thesis statement implies.

**Introductory paragraph 1**

Being a mature student does not mean being an old-timer. Maturity is not measured by the number of years a person has lived. Instead, the yardstick of maturity is marked by the qualities of self-denial, determination, and dependability.

**Topic sentences:**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

## YOUR TURN TO PRACTICE

### Introductory paragraph 2

True patriotism is wishing our country well. It does not require chest thumping, flag waving, fiery speeches, or parades. We use the word incorrectly when we confine it to showing-off acts. It is not boasting, but service; not hatred, but love; not loud, but quiet. Quiet, loving, and service are what a patriot has to offer.

Topic sentences:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

- 5 The right column of the table below lists some connective expressions frequently used. Work in groups and take turns to make sentences using these expressions.

Definition strategy	Connective expressions frequently used
Stipulating meaning	this means, consider, if
Negation	this does not mean, is not, no
Introducing a synonym or a restatement	that is to say, i.e., namely, to put it another way, who, which, that, in other words

- 6 Read the following paragraphs carefully. Complete them, maintaining a similar style of writing. Then exchange drafts with one or two classmates. Give feedback on each other's work.

### Paragraph 1

#### *Street-smart*

For me, being street-smart means knowing how to protect my possessions. Friends of mine who are not used to city life insist on wearing all their jewelry when they go downtown. I think this is asking for trouble, and I know better. I always \_\_\_\_\_

Another thing that surprises me is how some of my friends wave their money around. They always seem to be standing on the street, trying to count their change or stuff dollars into their wallets. Street-smart people make sure to \_\_\_\_\_

A street-smart person will also carry a backpack, a purse strapped cross the chest, or no purse at all. A person who is not street-smart \_\_\_\_\_

Again, these people are asking for trouble.

## Paragraph 2

### *Wealth*

Wealth is quite often defined as a great quantity or store of money or property of value. However, wealth can also be a great quantity of many other things acquired, not just material items. There are those who \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

They have acquired many priceless memories. There is the man who \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Perhaps the most wealthy man of all is the man who \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

This alone can bring great happiness, which no amount of money can buy. Wealth is so much more than a great store of money. It can be any possession that is priceless to its owner.

# Major Assignment

Choose a term such as “a good cook,” “a healthy lifestyle,” “responsibility,” “intelligence,” and “happiness” and write an essay of about 500 words to define it. You should show your own understanding of it and use different rhetorical modes to develop and support your ideas in your essay.

## SUGGESTED STEPS OF YOUR WRITING TASK

1  
STEP

### Brainstorming

- Choose a term you are familiar with which needs an elaborate explanation.
- Look up and read the dictionary definition of the term, and think about what you should do to extend the definition based on your own experiences and understanding.
- Decide who your audience will be and how much they may already know about the term. Keep in mind that you are trying to influence readers in order that they can understand the concept from your point of view.

2  
STEP

### Outlining

- Define the term in your own words in the thesis statement based on your personal feelings and experiences.
- Choose three or four perspectives to support your thesis statement and develop each perspective into a topic sentence. Make sure each paragraph clearly reflects your stance.

3  
STEP

### First draft

- Write your first draft based on the outline, following the structural requirements of open-form or closed-form writing.
- Make sure each part/paragraph in the body is dedicated to a specific perspective, and each topic sentence is supported by specific examples or other details. Cite what your readers are acquainted with, and give proper definitions to those concepts which may not be familiar to them.
- Use transitional expressions to help the text flow smoothly from point to point.
- Draw a conclusion by summarizing the points and writing a natural so-what.

#### 4 STEP

### Peer review

- Exchange your first draft with one or two classmates.
- Carry out a peer review by completing the table on the next page, and then have a discussion with your peer reviewer(s).

#### 5 STEP

### Revision and proofreading

- Revise your writing by referring to the comments made by your peer reviewer(s).
- Check the spellings, collocations, and word usage.
- Make sure your essay is neatly organized.
- Add structural and rhetorical markers to the left side of your essay.

#### 6 STEP

### Submitting your work to your teacher

#### 7 STEP

### Further revision

- Improve the coherence of your arguments and the quality of your language based on your teacher's feedback.



## Suggested Focuses for Peer Review

Title of the writing: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Standard	Evaluation scale	Focused comments
<b>Length and succinctness</b>		
The writing is appropriately long and without redundancy.	1   2   3   4   5	
The writing is neat, legible, and presented in an appropriate format.	1   2   3   4   5	
<b>Content</b>		
The subject matter is well selected and its extended definition is persuasively presented for a specific target audience.	1   2   3   4   5	
The thesis is clearly presented.	1   2   3   4   5	
Each topic sentence in the body clearly indicates the author's stance.	1   2   3   4   5	
Each topic sentence is supported with specific details.	1   2   3   4   5	
Concepts unfamiliar to the target audience are clearly defined.	1   2   3   4   5	
<b>Organization and style</b>		
The writing follows the basic format of argumentative writing.	1   2   3   4   5	
Connectives are effectively used to make sure the writing is coherent.	1   2   3   4   5	
<b>Language</b>		
The writing is free of misspellings; sentences are punctuated accurately without run-ons or fragments.	1   2   3   4   5	
The language flows naturally with effective wording.	1   2   3   4   5	

**Note:** 1=fail; 2=unsatisfactory; 3=pass; 4=good; 5=excellent

**Global suggestions for revision:** (to be written on a piece of paper)

## What Is a Good Cook?

by Miao Yongzhi ( 缪永智 )

**HOOK**  
(DESCRIPTION)

As people's standard of living has dramatically improved, the word "foodie" has enjoyed an increasing amount of popularity. Many people are now paying more attention to food, and people even have created the saying "We are what we eat" based on the saying "We are what we read." To many foodies, what matters most may not be how cozy the dining environment is but how delicious the dishes being served are. Thus, good cooks are warranted. This leads us to wonder precisely what makes a good cook. A good cook, like workers in any other field, should not only have passion for cooking and demonstrate fantastic talent in producing tasty dishes but also be sufficiently innovative to break the routine in order to create something new.

(CAUSE & EFFECT)  
THESIS STATEMENT

**TOPIC 1**  
SUPPORT (QUOTE)  
(EXPANSION)

To qualify as a good cook, one needs a passion for cooking. It has been pointed out by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a well-known German writer, that mere curiosity adds wings to every step. Indeed, provided that a cook is fascinated with his occupation, he will tend to spend more time exploring his work regardless of the sweats and pains. Day by day, he will become increasingly adept at handling his job. Mai Jiacheng, a dessert cook from Malaysia, is a typical example. With his strong passion for producing innovative cakes, he has created more than 50 types of cake in his career, satisfying the tastes of various customers. On the contrary, if a cook is reluctant to be dedicated to his work, he will end up finding cooking a tedious job. In the end, cooking to him will be what daily routine is to the workers by the assembly line, instead of a process that brings joy and delight. In short, with the presence of passion, a cook's capability of preparing dishes will be remarkably enhanced; this is considered to be a prerequisite of being a good cook.

(COMPARISON & CONTRAST)

WRAP-UP

**TOPIC 2**  
SUPPORT (QUOTE)  
(EXPANSION)

In addition to enthusiasm for cooking, one needs to be naturally gifted in this specific field. Nietzsche, a German philosopher, regarded a true genius as one who devotes his time to the area he is talented in. This indicates that people are born with the potential of being geniuses in some particular areas. For cooks, likewise, given that they realize they are endowed with the ability to produce a feast almost effortlessly, they are not far away from being gifted cooks. According to Wu Zeyong, a commentator on Zhihu, the talent of a chef lies in the unique understanding of every ingredient and the amazing ability to use it successfully. During his trip to Hong Kong, he visited one of the Michelin-starred restaurant, Tim Ho Wan, and asked about the methods applied to the dishes and the herbs used to adjust the taste. To his surprise, the chefs answered almost every question he raised about methods and herbs in a professional manner. He then commented that if one was not talented enough to gain a brilliant understanding of all the seasoning and herbs and to know how to use them effectively in different dishes, he could never be a top chef.

(QUOTE)

(EVIDENCE)

WRAP-UP

**TOPIC 3**  
SUPPORT  
(EVIDENCE)

Apart from a love and a gift for cooking, innovation plays a crucial role as to whether one proves to be a good cook or not. Dating back to the 1930s, a noodles-seller named Li Bao invented a special way of cooking noodles—Re Gan Mian. He was known for his delicious home-made noodles and thus a great number of people had to queue up to get

a bowl of them. To accelerate the process of making noodles, he stewed the noodles until almost cooked, quickly cooled them down, and in the meantime applied oil to the noodles. This undoubtedly shortened the time to make noodles. In addition, to improve the taste, he repeatedly experimented with sesame paste in the noodles until he successfully adjusted the taste. This, with no dispute, improved the taste of the noodles. Compared with average cooks who only repeat the same things over and over again without adding anything new, good cooks have keen eyes, detecting what is really needed to cater to the customers. Chefs will closely scrutinize the consumer's reactions at the first bite and balance carefully the combination of the ingredients, to see if any change could be made to better the dishes. Instead of going through the routine, good cooks are more likely to be flexible enough to adjust to changes and to be creative. Despite the fact that their creativity may lead to failures occasionally, it is their painstaking endeavor to make something new that creates brand-new varieties of dishes catering to the consumers.

(COMPARISON &amp; CONTRAST)

WRAP-UP

(CAUSE &amp; EFFECT)

THESIS RESTATEMENT

SO-WHAT

In conclusion, enthusiasm, talent, and innovation are three core elements contributing to a good cook. Next time you go to a restaurant and find yourself quickly conquered by the delicious taste of a new dish, do not take it for granted. It is the crystallization of a good cook's perspiration, inspiration, and exploration.

## Transnational peer review

The globalization of English education brings opportunities for Chinese students to have online conversations with their peers in the universities of English-speaking countries. All the student essays in this book have been reviewed by American students. The book sums up the American students' helpful feedback for each essay and presents it in the form of Internet postings as shown below.



### An American student's comment:

Hello, my name is Nathan, and I'm a sophomore at Millersville University. I am studying to become a teacher, but in the past I considered becoming a chef. I still enjoy cooking as a hobby, so your topic greatly interested me!

### The author's response:

Great! So glad to meet you, Nathan!





**The American student's comment:**

Glad to meet you, too! Overall, your essay is very good. Especially, the last sentence of your first paragraph, "A good cook, like workers in any other field, should not only have passion for cooking and demonstrate fantastic talent in producing tasty dishes but also be sufficiently innovative to break the routine in order to create something new," is a very good way to structure your essay. By doing this, the readers understand the main points of your essay well. The rest of your paragraphs then reinforces the idea in the readers' mind and makes your points memorable for the readers. Moreover, you are concise, creative, and are able to pull all your thoughts together in the final paragraph.

As for improvement, I think that you should be more specific with rhetorical modes like illustration.

**The author's response:**

Thank you for your encouragement and advice. I have got similar suggestions from my classmates and added some specific examples to each paragraph. Should I add more examples?



**The American student's comment:**

I like your examples about the contribution of a passionate cook to dessert making and those Hong Kong chefs' knowledge of all seasoning and herbs. These are stories of good cooks. You could also compare and contrast good cooks to bad cooks with more specific details in Paragraphs 2 and 3. What happens when cooks do not have passion or talent? In Paragraph 4, you have a great example of this by explaining that average cooks do not innovate, while good ones do.

**The author's response:**

Then how about language improvement?



**The American student's comment:**

You have very few grammatical or usage errors, and they are minor ones that don't affect understanding. One thing that I noticed is that in the third sentence of Paragraph 2, you should use "regardless of the sweat and pain required" instead of "regardless of the sweats and pains."

## 修辞层面

## 巧写定义

论说文中涉及的重要概念，往往要先给出定义，文章才能有针对性地展开。所以，定义是一种重要的修辞模式。写定义，不必每次都写...means...。我们不妨回顾一下英语阅读时常用的猜测生词词义的技巧，反过来用到写作上，就能摸索出不少各具特色的提示定义的方法。

阅读时，同学们可能会借助上下文提供的线索来猜词义。写作时，建议同学们在使用新学到的词语时，也适当地给出一些相关信息，让读者能够自己弄清楚这些词的意思，从而更好地欣赏同学们的作品。具体做法介绍如下：

## 方法一：释义法

你可以运用在句中插入释义的方法使句子摆脱...means...或...is...句型的严肃和呆板；如果此时定义不是句子的重点，这种方法还可以防止句子重点落在定义上，避免喧宾夺主，如：Gaining the help of a mentor, that is, a wise and trusted adviser, is helpful when you begin a new job. 又如：Ethics—the standards of conduct and moral judgment accepted by society—have a strong influence on business communication.

假如你在描述某人的个性时，用了unsociable这个词，那么在该词之后，可以给它加一个释义，如：John is unsociable, that is, he is not interested in meeting people or going to social events. 这样读者能更好地把握 John 的个性。

假如你写了这样一个句子：The harbor is protected by a jetty. 读者不一定明白 jetty 的含义。可以把 jetty 之后的句号改为一个破折号，再补上一个短语，也就是把原句写成：The harbor is protected by a jetty—a wall built out into the water. 这样，读者看了你介绍的新知识，豁然开朗。

## 方法二：重述法

当你在介绍一名马拉松运动员时，如果只写：He was a marathoner. 显得句子简单，内容单薄。若去掉 marathoner 之后的句号，再补上一个定语从句——who would run kilometers and not be weary. 效果就不同了。

在描写一个人的外表时，如果你只写：He had a wan look. 效果就不如在其后加上这样一句好：He was so pale and weak that we thought he was ill.

## 方法三：给出相关知识或信息

如果只写：I hit my head on the lintel. 读者或许会问：“lintel 是什么？”如果给出相关知识：The door was so low that I hit my head on the lintel. 那么 lintel 的意思就一目了然了。

同样，如果只写：I sat behind him on the pillion. 读者或许会问：“pillion 是什么？”如果给出相关知识：Mark got on the motorbike; I sat behind him on the pillion; we roared off into the night. 那么 pillion 的意思也就明晰了。

如果只写：Carl had a strange phobia about taking tests. 那么该句对 Carl 的考试恐惧感的描述就不够具体。如果给出相关信息：Just before the exam, Carl's hands shook and sweated so much that he could not hold a pen. His heart beat fast and his stomach ached, even though he knew the subject very well. He really had a strange phobia about taking tests. 读者读了之后，就会在脑海里浮现出一幅 Carl 考试紧张的画面。

方法四：比较与对比法

假如你要描述热气球的上升过程，只写：The hot-air balloon took off. 读者只好自己想象这一过程。如果你在此之后补上：It was as buoyant in the air as a cork in water. 你的描述就形象得多。

如果你在描述某人的情绪化时，只写：Her mood seems to fluctuate. 其效果则不如后面这句形象生动：Her mood seems to fluctuate, just in the same way that the tide ebbs and flows.

由此可见，在表达一定内容的时候，作者首先要想方设法用上新学的词语，然后把自己想象成一名读者，看看读者需要使用什么技巧来运用上下文提供的线索，理解所读的作品。在必要的地方，可使用不同的定义方法来充实自己的文章，实现和读者的沟通。

有人觉得，写定义是词典编撰者的事，一般人是没有资格参与的。其实，词典中收录的只是定义的一种，是某个词汇、词组经长期约定俗成，已有共识的定义，称为正式定义（formal definition）。平时人们交流思想，用到一个词，大多是基于平时对该词的理解。有时候听话人对那个词的理解不一样，就可能感到费解。这时，听话人并不会刻意去查词典，而是会问说话人：“你说的那个词是什么意思？”说话人的回答就是他自己对那个词的定义。这个定义也许和词典上的定义不一样，但毕竟消除了听话人的困惑，彼此可以继续交谈了。这样的定义称为延伸定义（extended definition），它反映了说话人的主观认识，听话人若是不同意，则可以反驳。由此可见，给词汇下定义并不是词典的专利，它也是我们每个人经常在做的事，是言语交流中不可或缺的一环。然而，当听话人换成了读者时，不少人就会忽略这个重要环节。只要自己心里明白的话语，写下来就有了成就感，全然不去想读者会不会感到费解或产生误解。而读者往往没有办法联系上作者，不可能找到作者去问一声：“你写的那个词是什么意思？”这显然是写一篇为人称道

定义布局与  
读者意识

的好文章要难于茶余饭后侃侃而谈的一个原因。基于此，写作界的学者们特别设定了一种修辞模式——定义 (definition)，和分类、流程与步骤、例证、比较与对比、因果等模式并列，可见其重要性非同小可。

穿插于文章中的定义，可以是源自词典的正式定义（也称逻辑定义），也可以是自撰的延伸定义。自撰的定义可以很简单，简至一句半句；也可以很详尽，详至成段成篇。文章中哪些概念的定义要简，哪些则要繁，哪些地方该给出定义，哪些则无必要，要按什么依据来安排呢？依据就是：“我的文章是写给谁看的？”用专业一点的说法，就是作者的读者意识。

本单元的范文“Definition of a Football Fan”，是作者用自己的母语，写给那些对美式橄榄球文化耳濡目染的本国同胞看的。如果这位作者想到自己的文章还会有不熟悉美式橄榄球的异国读者阅读，他恐怕要多费些心思，对文中的一些文化概念，包括词汇和名人轶事，增加定义。首先，对 football 这个词就要定义一番，才会避免在与异国读者的交流中出现“我说的 football 不是你说的 football”的尴尬。当然，许多用母语写出的文章，作者的读者定位就是自己的同胞，异国读者选来作外语阅读材料，往往要借助编辑添加的一些注释。

如果是用自己的第二语言写文章，在读者意识上则尤其不能马虎。随着互联网的发展，我国学生和英语国家的学生有机会就彼此的英语作文开展网上互评。这时候，异国的学生读者真有机会来询问作者“你写的那个词是什么意思”了。例如，有个中国同学在自己的作文中用到了 pagan 一词。中国人读西方的古典文学作品，都把这个词理解为相对基督教徒而言的异教徒。可当代美国是个多文化、多宗教共处的国度，那里的读者对这个词的理解有所不同。于是这位美国同学便询问：“中国学生的文章的读者是西方读者还是会说英语的中国人，或是两者皆包括？”这反映了一个普遍问题，那就是有的同学潜意识里觉得自己的英语文章就是写给会英语的本国人看的，对英语国家读者所处的文化氛围缺少了解，对方没读懂，自己也不认为有什么责任。另有一位中国同学的读者意识就比较强。她的作文标题是“Have you been ‘zhai’ today?”一位美国教师在网读了这篇文章，对文中的语码混用技巧大为赞赏，她发帖评论道：“I think one of the things that you did very well was to define your topic. In fact, I like that you retained the word ‘zhai’ and then defined it specifically for your audience in the second paragraph, as opposed to using an English synonym. I think it helps keep this idea culturally contextualized in your piece.”“zhai”是汉语词“宅”的发音。“宅”对于在网络文化盛行的东方诸国的年轻一代而言，是一种新出现的流行生活方式。这位中国同学不企求另找一个词义相近的英语词来取代这个“zhai”字，而是用了整段篇幅来对其下专门定义。她的这一沟通策略成功跨越了语言文化的疆界，使自己的文章为不同类型的读者所接受。我们由此可以得到启发，既然是用英语写文章，心中一定要装着



英语国家的读者，对于具有文化差异的概念，一定要在文章中给出明确的定义。

## 语言层面

俗话说：百闻不如一见，视觉冲击会给人的心灵以更加直接的震撼，比讲述更容易让人获得感悟，辨明事理。写文章不是放录像，好像不可能传递视觉信息。其实不然，形象生动的具体描述就可以刺激右脑的形象思维，让文字内容转化成动态的视觉形象，让读者有眼前在一幕幕“过电影”的感觉。

本单元的范文在这方面就非常“范”。在每个主体段落中，作者的论点都为视觉效果强烈的具体描述（包括穿插其中的实例）所簇拥，让读者有如闻其声、如临其境、如见其人之感。以第四段中的第二个分主题为例：Furthermore, this intense loyalty makes fans dangerous. 在这个表述观点的句子后面，就再没有空泛的说辞，句句都是对具体事实生动、鲜活的描述：To anyone who dares to say to a loyal fan that another team has better players or coaches, or to anyone wandering near the home cheering section wearing the jacket of the opposing team, physical damage is a real possibility. Bloody noses, black eyes, and broken bones are just some of the injuries inflicted on people cheering the wrong team when fans are around. In 1997, one man suffered a concussion at a game in Philadelphia when Eagles fans beat him up for wearing a jacket with another team's insignia. 读者大脑里过了这一幕幕“电影”，必会产生对作者观点的自发共鸣。

这篇范文还告诉我们，即使是在本族文化语境之下，不同的人对某一概念也会有不同理解，有时候也需要像这样写出一篇完整的文章来阐述自己的定义。在相当长的篇幅中，怎样把自己的定义写得头头是道，令人信服，有两个重要技巧。一是表述不能松散，段落衔接要紧凑，观点要一以贯之；另一个就是前面所强调的，不要空口讲理，要多摆具体事实，让形象跃然纸上，让逻辑清晰呈现。例如，有人要给 clean 下个定义，便提笔写道：

Clean means not only being free from dirt or filth but also being neat and orderly. That is, being clean is more than just not being dirty. Furthermore, clean is pleasing; it is an emotional quality beyond the physical requirements of sanitation.

如果你是该作者所面向的读者，你读后会觉得对 clean 一词产生了很深入的理解吗？恐怕不会。因为虽然语言写得不错，但其内容却太抽象、太空泛了。要修改的话，不妨再写长些，增加点具体的例子，来点形象的描述，带上点轻快的口吻，如以下斜体部分所示：

笔下何以生  
花：令形象  
跃然纸上



Clean means not only being free from dirt or filth but also being neat and orderly. That is, being clean is more than just not being dirty. *A kitchen that is clean, for instance, has a certain shine. It does not only mean that there are no coffee grounds in the sink or that there is no empty milk carton on the counter. Clean means that all the kitchen items have been put back where they belong; the food is in the cupboard or refrigerator; nothing is lying around collecting dust.* Clean is pleasing; it is an emotional quality beyond the physical requirements of sanitation. *If looking at the kitchen doesn't make you smile, it's not clean.*

防微杜渐：切忌论而不断

无论是全文的中心论点句还是一段话的主题句，讲究的都是话题 (topic)+断言 (assertion)。例如，有篇文章的中心论点句是：The only things a student needs to travel through Europe are a backpack, a Eurail pass, and a credit card. 从这个句子里可以看出，话题是“学生赴欧旅行”，而作者的断言是“只需带上背包、全欧火车通票和信用卡就行了”。这个断言是明晰的，也是可以引起争议的，比如有人认为手机也是必带的，就可以写文章反驳。

有些同学比较谦和，总觉得这样的“断言”有失恭谨，于是把前面的句子改成：I think that the only things a student needs to travel through Europe might be a backpack, a Eurail pass, and a credit card. 这样一来，立论的语气就变成了商榷的语气，自己无言可断，别人也无法同意或反对了。

所以，写论说文一定要有自己的论断，在中心论点句和各段的主题句里，忌用 I think、I believe、I feel 等结构，同时要慎用 may be possible、might、in some cases、sometimes 等含保留语气的词汇手段，不要写出像 It may be possible that John will win the competition sometime. 这样论而不断的中心论点句或主题句。

## My Recent Writing Companions



Congratulations! You've completed this unit! You must have made the acquaintance of many new writing companions in this unit. Write them down in the corresponding boxes below. Do not forget to revisit them constantly, and more importantly, to call them out to enhance your own writing whenever possible.

### Words & phrases

### Sentence structures

### Writing skills