Vocabulary: Uses and effects of words

Raising Skills
English Language
Online Study Course

Understanding the purpose of text

What is a text?

All texts have:

- a **writer** (the person writing the text)
- an **audience** (the person or people reading the text)
- a **purpose** (the reason for writing: to describe something, to persuade people to do something, to explain reasons for something, to tell the reader what to do or how to do it)

Text types

In reading assessments, you have to read texts.

In most cases, you will be told what kind of text you are reading, for example:

- Read this article
- You read this webpage
- You read a report
- You received this letter

You know the type of text, and you are the reader.
Can you work out what the writer is trying to do?

Looking at the type of text

You can use your knowledge of the text type to gain some understanding.

For example, if the text is an email, you might read it because it has been sent to you by a work colleague or a friend. You would read it at your computer (at work or at home) or perhaps on your phone.

Consider **why** and **where** you would read the following:

- an article
- a report
- a webpage
- a letter

PEARSON

Using vocabulary clues

You can use knowledge of the types of words writers include to gain some understanding of purpose:

Follow the **instructions** on the label carefully. You **must** ask your doctor or pharmacist whether there are any foods that you are **not allowed** to eat while taking this medication.

You know that the purpose is to instruct, because of the key word 'instructions'. You also know that verbs ('doing' words) like 'follow', 'must' and 'allowed' suggest rules and directions.

The tone of the text also tells us it is a formal set of instructions, rather than an informal one.

Using words as clues

The simplest way to work out the purpose and meaning of a text is by looking for vocabulary clues.

Knowing key types of words will help you to:

- understand the writer's message
- understand a range of text types
- Improve your ability to write for a purpose.

P Pearson