

**Learning objective:** Introduce the idea that we need to make conscious choices about language when answering exam questions in order to address the assessment objectives for writing.

**Lesson objective:** To have the opening lines to an exam style question.

**Starter:**

Explain to students that as I've never been here before I would really like to know a bit about their school to help me make an informed choice about whether or not to send my children here.

Give students the following task (also on the attached paper if there is a photocopy available) and give them two minutes just to start the task – encourage them with phrases such as, 'Just write down the first sentence if you can. Write down the first thing that comes into your head to answer this.' etc:

**Task:** Describe your school for a brochure for parents who are considering sending their children here.

Remember to include:

- What you like about it;
- What the buildings and facilities are like;
- Why you think parents should send their children here.

**Introduction:**

Stop pupils after two minutes. Ask if anyone is willing to read out their first sentence. If not, ask how many students have started, 'My school is ...' or have got the words, 'my school' in the first sentence or two or have launched straight in with 'It's ...' without an introduction.

**Development:**

Explain that the task is very similar to ones that come up on the GCSE English paper. Ask students to imagine they are the examiner for a moment: they've got 500 scripts (exam papers) to mark, they've just finished number 499 and every single one so far has started with a variation on, 'My school is ...' How do they think the examiner feels?

Let's go back to our pieces of writing and think what we need to do to them to make them stand out from the other papers in the pile.

The first thing we need to do then is consider: PAL – Purpose; audience; language. What is the purpose of this piece of writing – what have you been asked to do? (Describe) Who is the audience (be it examiner in this made up piece)? (Parents) What sort of language do you need for this? Rather than thinking in terms of whether this should be formal or informal, think about the type of impression you want to make on parents straight away. Do you want them to feel positive about your school; you want them to know that the emphasis here is on learning; you want them to feel that this is a community; anything else? Share ideas – encourage students to add their own ideas: what do they think parents will want to read first?

Move on from the type of impression we want to give parents to – How are we going to create that through our writing? If possible ask students to give some examples of words that will fit into this impression we are trying to convey but otherwise offer them some examples (available on the next sheet if photocopier available):

When you

go to / walk into /step through / (anything else you can think of?)

the door / the classroom / the world of ... / (anything else you can think of?)

people / parents / you / (anything else you can think of?)

immediately feel

okay /satisfied / welcome / (anything else you can think of?)

and can see that everyone is

hanging about / waiting for lessons / learning / engrossed in learning  
(anything else you can think of?)

For each one of these choices that we've made open to me (justify) why they are the best choices?

**Plenary:**

What do we need to remember when answering these types of questions? (Open-ended but such answers as: PAL; the importance of language; fitting our language to our purpose and audience etc).

If time: students have another go at re-writing the opening three sentences of the task (could also be a homework task).

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**Thinking about PAL**

Look at the different possible opening lines of a school brochure aimed at parents who are considering sending their children to your school.

Read through and choose the language that you think best fits the audience and purpose:

When you

go to / walk into /step through / *(anything else you can think of?)*

the door / the classroom / the world of ... / *(anything else you can think of?)*

people / parents / you / *(anything else you can think of?)*

immediately feel

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hanging about / waiting for lessons / learning / engrossed in learning / *(anything else you can think of?)*

For each one of the words and phrases that you've chosen explain (justify) why they are the best choices.

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For each one of the words and phrases that you've chosen explain (justify) why they are the best choices.