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Writing a scientific review article

Briefing sheet 1

The task

The _____ magazine is devoting next month's issue to
the subject of _____.

We are inviting students to send fascinating scientific articles.
Below are the format and timetable for articles:

Length of article: 1-2 pages, 1.5 spaces between lines.
Fonts: Main title - Arial 14 point, centred
Sub-title - Arial 12 point, centred
Names of the author, institute and class - Arial 12 point,
left justified
Article text - Arial 12 point, not justified

Right / left margins: 2.5 cm

Bibliography: Attach bibliographic details of sources of information used.

Submission date: Within one week of the date of publication of this invitation.

In order to judge the articles, the paper has drawn up a list of criteria:

a Structure

- the article includes introduction, body and conclusion
- the article title is formatted as above
- there is a clear and logical progression of writing

b Content

- the article presents content that is relevant to the subject
- the scientific content is correct and accurate
- the introduction provokes interest and encourages the reader to read on
- use has been made of the appropriate articles and the relevant information from them

c Language

- the sentences are concise and clear
- the sentences are written in flowing language
- the sentences are written correctly in terms of language and punctuation



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Briefing sheet 2

In this activity you will write a review article which will be commented on by an Editorial Board.

Your brief

Study some scientific articles. Discuss:

- the intended audience
- the impact of pictures, diagrams and colour
- the word count, the sections, use of bold text
- the title and author's details
- the use of information boxes.

What do you think is the target audience for the articles?

You are to write an article for a magazine aimed at students of your age. What do you propose would be an interesting article, that is relevant to your study? How many sections would you need? What pictures do you have in mind? How many words?

An Editorial Board should be formed by the class and you need to submit a brief written proposal for your article to the Editorial Board. In your proposal, say how you imagine the article will look and what will be the main content. The Editorial Board will provide initial comment on all proposals. You then complete a first draft of your article as homework.

1 Use several sources of relevant information and write the first draft of your article, including images, within the time agreed.

2 In the second lesson, the Editorial Board reviews the first draft of every submitted article, using the comment sheet provided.

3 It might be useful to discuss the features of a good article, as a class.

4 Redraft your article for inclusion in a class mini-magazine.



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Briefing sheet 3

A letter from the Editorial Board

Article title: _____

Written by: _____ Date: _____

We have read your article, and this is our feedback:

The article is accepted for the newspaper as is. Slight changes are required before the article is accepted
by the magazine (the changes are marked in the body of the article) The content of the article is good, but it is not presented clearly and the
reading does not flow. Please rewrite the article in accordance with the
attached comments and resubmit it for review. The article is too thin on content - please supplement the article and
resubmit it for review. **Comments:**

Name(s) of reviewer(s): _____ Date: _____



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Writing a scientific review article**Briefing sheet 4****How to improve your drafted work**

- 1 Decide whether you prefer editing in hard copy or on screen. Hard copy may allow more of an evaluation of the large-scale changes needed, such as moving large chunks of text around. But, having done this, you may find it easier to make the changes you think are needed electronically.
- 2 Look back at the brief you were given. Have you addressed the question(s)? Have you given an overview as well as detail? Have you got the balance right - with the right amount of emphasis on what you think is really important?
- 3 Collect, consider and act upon comments from teachers or other students about your work. Incorporating reviewers' comments is part of a professional writer's work; comments should be very gratefully received!
- 4 Check that there is no plagiarism.
- 5 What sort of piece are you writing? Who is your audience? Make sure that your approach is right for this.
- 6 Review the structure of the entire text. Move sentences or whole paragraphs so ideas link together through the document.
- 7 If your piece includes diagrams or other images, check that you have referenced them correctly if they are not your own work. In any case, ensure that they add to what you have to say, and that you refer to them accurately in the text.
- 8 Upgrade your work by considering individual statements and arguments. Can they be strengthened? Could you provide more evidence to back them? Is any data provided summarised effectively? Are there any alternative interpretations of the data? Have you provided references to sources you are using or quoting? (see plagiarism above).
- 9 Make sure headings reflect the structure of your piece and way ideas are presented. Make sure they are at the correct level.
- 10 Check that scientific terminology is used correctly



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Briefing sheet 4

11 Improve the quality of the text. Read aloud to help highlight phrases which are unclear due to problems with the way ideas are expressed or with punctuation. Often short sentences are more effective than long ones. This stage should produce text which is clear, concise and correct. Check for grammatical errors and clumsy repetition of words or phrases, and for mistakes in punctuation and spelling.

12 Have you been given any instructions about the formatting of your work, such as typefaces or type sizes? If so, make sure you follow this.