

Stanley's ultimate guide to:

RIVETING RECOUNTS

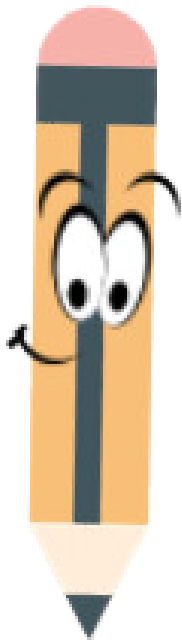
Writing about an experience

**Step
Write
up**

Stanley's riveting recounts checklist

Past tense
First person
5W introduction and hook
Emotive language/ personal opinion
Time adverbials
Conjunctions to sequence and explain
Varied sentence structure
Ambitious vocabulary
Paragraphs (TIPTOP)
Show not tell
Character/ setting description
Conclusion – a summary which expresses and opinion

Recounts tell us all about
past events in
chronological order.



Key features

Past tense

Recounts involve writing about **something that has already happened**.

This means we will be using the past tense and must stay consistent with this.

Don't forget your ed suffixes but remember that irregular verbs have different past tense forms. **BEFORE**



It's all about me!

First person

When we write in the first person, we add ourselves into the writing by describing how we felt and what we were doing.

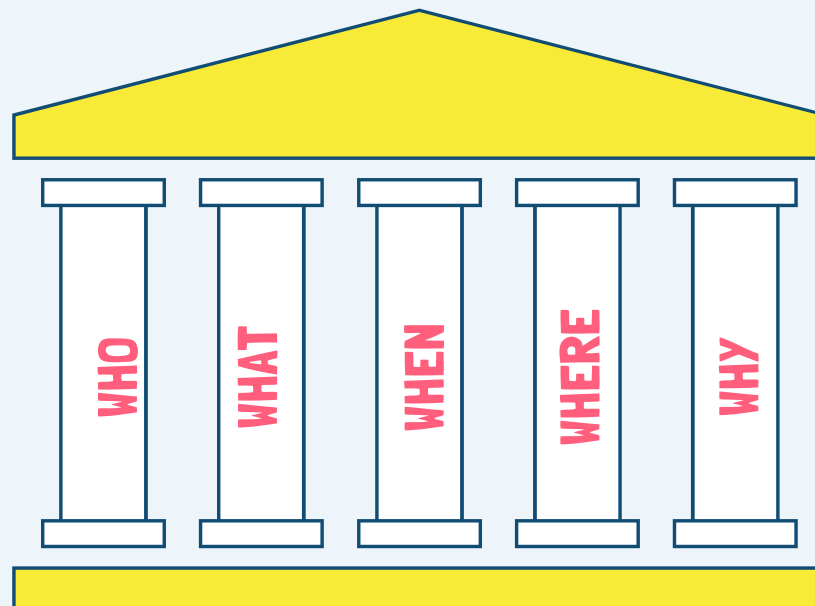
We use pronouns such as:

I, we, us, our and mine



5Ws and Hook

Remember to consider the five pillars of recount writing:



Emotive language

We need to use words that have a strong emotional impact on the reader.

Emotive language allows your reader to become more invested in your writing and engage more deeply.

E.g. furious, incensed, innocent, toxic, devastated, abandoned

Time adverbials



We write recounts using chronological order. This means we write events in the exact order they occurred.

Time adverbials are a very useful way of structuring recounts.

E.g. then, next, before, afterwards, first, meanwhile, during, a few minutes later, finally

Key features

Show not tell

SNOT is a writing technique that enables the reader to experience a story through actions, thoughts and feelings rather than a factual description.

e.g.

I was angry = **Stamping my feet and clenching my fists, I turned away abruptly.**



Engage your reader in your recount.



Conjunctions

These are words we use to link sentences and show the relationship between an event (cause) and its outcome (effect). They enable us to vary our sentence structure to include complex and compound sentences.

e.g. so, because, due to, as, as a result, because, consequently, yet, therefore, hence

Focus sentences

1) **3_ed sentence** – 3 related adjectives + main clause

e.g. frightened, terrified, exhausted, I sprinted towards my house.

2) **ing-ed sentence** – ing word + location + comma + ed word + incident

e.g. Approaching the shop, I halted as I noticed something very peculiar.

3) **emotion comma sentence** – emotion word + comma + main clause

e.g. Terrified, I froze instantly to the spot.

4) **the more, the more sentence** – the more + emotion + comma + action

e.g. The more upset I became, the more the tears streamed down my face.

5) **outside (inside) sentence** – outward action + inside action (inside brackets)

e.g. I smiled and shook the lady's hand . (Inside, however, I was a raging inferno.)



Description

It is important to paint a picture of the scene/ people involved in our reader's head.

The best way of doing this is by using ambitious adjectives and figurative language.

e.g.

Faster than a speeding bullet, I sprinted home, hoping I would be in time.



Conclusion

The final paragraph of a recount should include an overall evaluation of the event using personal opinion. This is where we tell the reader how we feel about what happened.

e.g.

Overall, it had been...

Although I felt exhausted, I'd had a brilliant time.

Fingers crossed, I would never have another day like that!

When did it happen?

At first,
This morning,
Before long,
During,
Afterwards,
At that moment,
All of a sudden,
In the meantime,
Eventually,
Later



Diary entry

The Best
Present Ever



How did it happen?

Without warning,
Awkwardly,
Silently,
Cautiously,
Carefully,
Abruptly,
As fast as I could,
Excitedly,
Maliciously,
Curiously

5Ws and Hook



You will never believe what
happened today.
Today was the best day of my life.
Have you ever had an unforgettable
day?
I don't know where to begin.
Today was the beginning of a whole
new chapter.
I will never forget this day.

Informal phrases

By the way...
You'll never believe this but...
Guess what happened!
The thing is...
I won't even go there
Anyway,
Besides,
Perhaps...
I wonder if...
Can you believe it?

How did you feel?

hopeful, lucky, nervous, frantic,
frustrated, angry, terrible, positive,
tired, bored, annoyed, irked

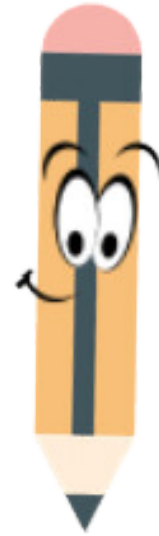
I clenched my fists.
I jumped up and down.
My face turned tomato-red.
My heart skipped a beat.



Nouns

neglect, energy, cardboard, disability, amputee, friendship, computer, gaming, gift, mother, phone call, ball, controller, console, tenacity, shame, crutches, smile, turnaround, companion, compassion, heart, tongue, puppy, resilience, love relationship, embarrassment, fear, understanding

Diary entry



Use lots of great vocabulary!

Verbs

neglect, bound, whimper, bark, adapt, wag, scratch, realise, convince, persuade, roll, tumble, fetch, gawp, glance, tempt, amputate, unpack, fidget, change, sigh, notice, laugh, stumble, shudder, giggle, shift, hop, support, blossom, answer, run, play

WAGOLL (What a good one looks like)

You will never believe what happened to me today! Without doubt, it was the happiest I have been since the accident.

2nd April 2024

While I waited for mum to get home from work, I decided to play on my computer. As I sat on our plush sofa, I wondered how mum would feel if she saw me. She hates me gaming all the time! Lately, all she does is accuse me of being addicted to the console. Although I tried to protest and deny it, I knew deep down that it was true. I was addicted. Who could blame me after what happened? Letting out a long sigh, I was interrupted by a deafening creak – there was mum (proud as punch), standing at the doorway with an enormous cardboard box in her arms. Glancing at the controller in my hands, she gently placed the box down on the table. Surprisingly, she didn't nag me but instead just calmly pulled the plug out, nodded at the box and smiled at me encouragingly.

All of a sudden, there was a loud shrill ringing; mum left the room to answer the phone before heading upstairs with it. I stared at the box. Why was mum so keen for me to open it? Suddenly, the box made a loud barking sound. Jerking back in shock, I realised that the box was not empty! Without warning, a paw emerged, then a fluffy, golden head and there, before me, was the cutest puppy I had ever seen. This was the best thing that had happened to me – ever!

But then, to my horror... I realised that it only had three legs. Disgusted, I threw it away from me and onto the floor. On reflection, I feel deeply ashamed of myself: no one had ever treated me like that because of my disability. As I seized my controller, ready to continue my game, I accidentally kicked a ball across the room. Tail wagging enthusiastically, the puppy charged clumsily after it and promptly fell flat on his face. He didn't give up though and continued his mission, with determination, until he retrieved that ball. Chocolate-brown eyes full of hope, he nudged the ball towards me and sat waiting. How could I resist?

To cut a long story short, the next thing I knew, I was hollering up the stairs to mum that I was off out into the garden to play fetch with my new best friend. If he could overcome adversity, so could I. As I sit here writing this evening, I know this day will be a real turning point for me and I am now feeling optimistic about the future.

Adjectives

transfixed, irritated, curious, apprehensive, disgusted, playful, determined, similar, adorable, cruel, stuck, energetic, spiteful, displeased, hostile, wary, doubtful, wide-eyed, ashamed, relentless, hopeful, optimistic, fearless

Points of View

First person

The person writing the story writes from their point of view or perspective.

We see the story through "their eyes."

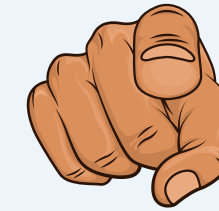
We use pronouns such as:
I, me, we, our, mine, are



Second person

The narrator directly addresses the reader using the pronoun "you".

This is often the case in instruction or explanation texts.



We use the words:

you, you'll, your and you're

Third person

Limited – the narrator knows only the thoughts and feelings of one person in the story

Omniscient – the narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in the story.



Informal phrases

By the way...
You'll never believe this but...
Guess what happened!
The thing is...
I won't even go there
Anyway,
Besides,
Perhaps...
I wonder if...
Can you believe it?

How did you feel?

hopeful, lucky, nervous, frantic,
frustrated, angry, terrible, positive,
tired, bored, annoyed, irked,
ecstatic

Biting my fingernails
Fidgeting
Heart pounding like a drum
Fingers crossed



Nouns

neglect, energy, cardboard, disability,
amputee, friendship, computer,
gaming, gift, mother, phone call, ball,
controller, console, tenacity, shame,
crutches, smile, turnaround,
companion, compassion, heart, tongue,
puppy, resilience, love relationship,
embarrassment, fear, understanding

Points of View

Verbs

neglect, bound, whimper, bark, adapt,
wag, scratch, realise, convince,
persuade, roll, tumble, fetch, gawp,
glance, tempt, amputate, unpack, fidget,
change, sigh, notice, laugh, stumble,
shudder, giggle, shift, hop, support,
blossom, answer, run, play

WAGOLL (What a good one looks like)

Have you ever had a completely unforgettable day? Well, last Monday, was probably the most successful day for me ever as a mum; I'm so proud that I could burst!

After weeks of deliberating, I finally decided to gift Harry a dog to aid his recuperation after the accident. I have been so worried about him and his pessimistic outlook. And, I didn't choose just any old dog; I chose a very special three-legged one.

It all started when Harry was playing his what's it called? Wolf Attack 2? Anyway, he was gaming, which was normal in this house, and I gave him the box with the dog inside. My fingers were crossed behind my back and my heart was pounding like a bongo drum. Slyly, I then faked a work call and hid upstairs to watch the show.

After a while of gaming, still, he finally peeped inside the box and Harry's eyes lit up like beacons. He was over the moon. However, he soon realised it was disabled and threw it harshly aside! My heart sunk –it seemed utterly hopeless. Deflated, I went to my study to get some work done.

Unfortunately, I then did have a work call, a real one. This means that I missed what happened next but during the call my mind kept wandering back to Harry and the pup. It was very quiet downstairs... Just as the call ended, I heard Harry yell, "I'm going outside mum." Yes! I can't tell you what this meant to me. He hadn't let for house for three months! Pounding furiously, my heart felt as if it were about to explode with joy. When I glanced outside, I glimpsed the dog and Harry playing fetch with the ball. Pure joy shone from both their faces. A match made in heaven if ever there was one.

Since that day, Harry has constantly been asking when he can go outside – even in the pouring rain. It's like he's a completely different boy and I can see the light at the end of the long, dark tunnel we have been in. Finally, the future looks bright again.

Adjectives

transfixed, irritated, curious,
apprehensive, disgusted, playful,
determined, similar, adorable,
cruel, stuck. energetic, spiteful,
displeased, hostile, wary, doubtful,
wide-eyed, ashamed, relentless,
hopeful, optimistic, fearless,
anxious, nervous

Historical

Features of a newspaper report

Newspaper name

Headline

Reporter's name

Intro paragraph (5Ws)

Past tense

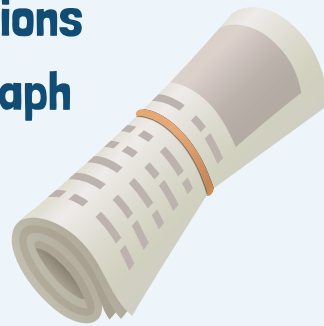
Chronological order

Third person

Directed and reported speech

Pictures with captions

Concluding paragraph



Newspaper Report



Interesting facts

Capacity: 3537 passengers plus crew

Weight: 46, 328 tons

Length: 269 metres

Fuel: 825 tons of coal a day

Top Speed: 23 knots

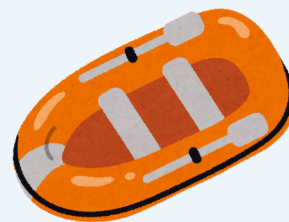
20 lifeboats – only enough to hold half the passengers

1517 people died but only 306 bodies were recovered

Paint was still wet when the first passengers boarded

Edward Smith (the captain) planned to retire afterwards

First ship to contain a heated swimming pool



Nouns

Titanic, unsinkable, flooded,
lifejacket, New York, Southampton,
First class, Second class, Third
class, survivors, wreckage, crow's
nest, anchor, Atlantic Ocean,
iceberg, captain, band, hull,
disaster, tragedy, collision, voyage,
lifejacket, warning, pandemonium,
chaos, rescue,

5Ws

Who – passengers, Captain Edward
Smith, John Jacob Astor, Thomas
Andrews

What – RMS Titanic, ice warnings,
lifeboats, iceberg, RMS Carpathia

When – Launched 10th April 1912
Hit iceberg 14th April 1912
Sank 15th April 1912

Where – Built in Belfast
Launched from Southampton
Headed for New York
Hit iceberg in North Atlantic Ocean

Why – unsinkable ship did sink,
not enough lifeboats, travelling too
quickly, hit iceberg, freezing water



Historical

Adjectives

anxious, astonished, panic-stricken, frenzied, terrified, courageous, freezing, hyperthermic, colossal, tragic, unsinkable, agonising, compassionate, deafening, incomprehensible, helpless, lost, abandoned, stunned, sharp, jagged, mountainous, ominous, vast, immense, incredible

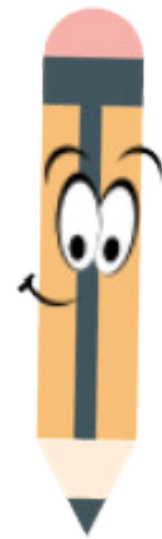
Conclusion

The final paragraph of a newspaper report should summarise what has been written and predict what may happen next.

It is acceptable to use the present or future tense in this part of the report.

e.g.

Lessons need to be learned after this appallingly tragic event to ensure that it can never happen again.



Not such an "unsinkable ship"

Headlines

A catchy headline is incredibly important in a newspaper report.

It helps to generate interest in the article – it should grab the reader's attention.

It needs to inform without giving too much information away.

e.g.

TITANIC SINKS: 1500 DIE!
1500 PERISH IN ICY WATERS!
TERROR ON TITANIC!



Verbs

protected, commanded, exclaimed, screamed, insisted, mourned, boarded, gasped, evacuated, hindered, collided, separated, sprinted, huddled, flowed, smashed, sailed, expressed, drowned, froze, escaped, survived, endured, persisted, withstood, suffered, confronted, rescued, salvaged, struck, sank, disappeared

Quotes

"Many brave things were done that night but none more brave than by those few men playing minute after minute as the ship settled quietly lower and lower in the sea." Lawrence Beesley (survivor)

"I cannot conceive of any vital disaster happening to this vessel. Modern ship building has gone beyond that." Captain Edward Smith

"Striking the water was like a thousand knives being driven into one's body. The temperature was 28 degrees, four degrees below freezing." Charles Lightoller (Second Officer)

"The sounds of people drowning are something that I can not describe to you, and neither can anyone else. Its the most dreadful sound and there is a terrible silence that follows it." Eva (survivor)

Memorable Moment

Introductory paragraph

Must include: hook and 5Ws

e.g.

I will never forget the moment in my life
when time stood still.

I vividly remember it like it happened
yesterday, every detail, every word, and
every emotion that occurred in that
moment; the moment that changed my life
forever.



Use your
imagination!

Paragraph 2

Must include: first person, past tense, time
adverbials, emotive language and show not
tell

e.g. From the second I stepped through the
heavy, oak front door, I sensed a feeling of
anguish. The usual "Hey, how are you?" from
my parents (who were normally bright and
chipper) remained absent. There was just the
gruesome sound of silence. Walking up to my
room, I heard my dad holler for me to come
into the dining room.

Paragraph 3

Must include: first person, past tense, time adverbials,
emotive language and show not tell

e.g. Without hesitation, I sped from my room into where he sat, his
eyes bloodshot and as glossy as glass. What could have happened?
It took him a moment to steady himself but he finally settled and
spoke the words. Words that are now etched in my head forever.

"Jack is missing." For almost a week, no one had heard from Jack,
my dad's younger and vulnerable brother. Those three words sent
a shockwave throughout my entire body that I cannot even begin
to translate.

Paragraph 4

Must include: range of clauses, high-level
vocab, time adverbials, emotive language,
show not tell, direct speech

Voice cracking, my dad proceeded to tell
me that he and my uncle, Chris, had been
out in Guildford frantically searching for
him. Having checked all the places he
usually frequented, they had come back
from their search empty-handed. After
my dad finished explaining all of this to
me, he asked,
"Are you alright?"

Paragraph 5

Must include: summarising, personal opinion and a
powerful ending

I could not respond; the words simply wouldn't come out of my
mouth. Instead, a torrent of tears began to gush down my
cheeks. At the age of just ten, the magnitude of all that had been
thrown at me was incomprehensible. I was far from alright.

After taking some deep calming breaths, I sluggishly traipsed to
my room, somehow knowing that life was never going to be the
same again...

Memorable Moment

WAGOLL (What a good one looks like)

I will never forget the moment in my life when time stood still.



I vividly remember it like it happened yesterday, every detail, every word, and every emotion that occurred in that moment; the moment that changed my life forever.

From the second I stepped through the heavy, oak front door, I sensed a feeling of anguish. The usual “Hey, how are you?” from my parents (who were normally bright and chipper) remained absent. There was just the gruesome sound of silence. Walking up to my room, I heard my dad holler for me to come into the dining room.

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After taking some deep calming breaths, I sluggishly traipsed to my room, somehow knowing that life was never going to be the same again...

REMEMBER

If you are asked to write about a personal experience in an exam or assessment, it is acceptable to embellish the truth and even make something up!

You are being judged on your writing not on whether you are telling the truth; feel free to use your imagination!

REMEMBER

Avoid starting all your sentences with boring pronouns and determiners.

Use **ISPACE** to vary your sentence openings.

Ing word, **S**imile, **P**reposition, **A**dverb, **C**onjunction, **E**d word

Disastrous day

Remember the key features

Past tense
First person
5W introduction and hook
Emotive language/ personal opinion
Time adverbials
Conjunctions to sequence and explain
Varied sentence structure
Ambitious vocabulary
Paragraphs (TIPTOP)
Show not tell
Character/ setting description
Conclusion – a summary which expresses an opinion



What a disaster!

Useful questions before you start

- What are you going to tell your reader?
- What information do they need?
- What are the key events?
- Why did these events occur?
- What were the reactions to the events?
- How will you order the events?
- How will you conclude your recount?

Paragraphs

Aim for five paragraphs
(6 minutes per paragraph)

- (1) Introduction and hook
- (2) Key event 1
- (3) Key event 2
- (4) Key event 3
- (5) Conclusion

Use **TIPTOP** = new paragraph for
change of time, place or topic

REMEMBER

You have thirty minutes to show off as many of your writing skills and author techniques as you can.

Try and include some of the **focus sentences** that we have been working on and remember to challenge yourself with **ambitious vocabulary and punctuation**.

Disastrous day

WAGOLL (What a good one looks like)



Have you ever just had “one of those days” when nothing seems to go right? I certainly have; let me tell you all about it.

The day started when I woke from a dream with a sudden jolt in my warm, comfy bed. Glancing at the clock, I saw it read Saturday 6th April 2024, 6.42 AM. “Why can’t I sleep?” I thought to myself, tossing over crossly onto my tummy. As I listened to the birds chirping outside, I realised the rest of the house must be sleeping soundly still. Abruptly, my door burst open on its hinges, the light from the landing flooded my bedroom and a familiar, excited voice shrieked, “Wake up! Today is the day!” How could I possibly forget? We were going to the beach!

After a quick breakfast at 7.30 AM (just a coffee for Dad) my sister, Laura, and I dashed enthusiastically around the house, grabbing everything we needed: sunhats, swimming costumes, spades and sandwiches for our lunch. Dad carefully packed our picnic in the large, rectangular cool box whilst Mum programmed the Satnav for Camber Sands beach. Shivering, I felt a rush of excitement flow through my body as we got our things ready by the front door. However, in our hurry to get out of the house, nobody noticed that the car keys were left sitting quietly (minding their own business) on the kitchen table...

At 9.30 AM, after half an hour of waiting for Grandpa to hobble around with a spare key, we finally set off towards Bournemouth Beach. As I settled down into my seat, my sister cheered as we pulled away from the drive, and instantly burst into a round of ‘are we nearly there yet?’ (which was a little bit annoying but I didn’t mind). I was eager to get there as quickly as possible, yet I still drifted off into a gentle sleep. All of a sudden, the car lurched forwards, rudely interrupting my snooze. Whining loudly, it coughed and spluttered and then became still. We had broken down!

Over two hours later, we were still stranded at the side of the road. I was getting grumpier by the minute and my stomach started to rumble. Everybody was feeling a bit fed up as we waited for our car to be fixed. Dad had a brilliant idea and suggested we eat our picnic at the side of the road. He rummaged in the boot for the cool box, throwing aside beach balls and towels. Elated, he extracted it from behind a bat and ball set, but the lid was nowhere to be seen. Gingerly, we peered inside the lidless container: crushed, crumbling sandwiches smothered bruised, battered bananas; sweet, strawberry yoghurt was spattered up the sides; and rancid rice pudding dripped off dented doughnuts (my favourites). A bottle of lemonade rolled out from under a towel and landed on the floor besides my sister’s feet. Without thinking, she scooped it up and carelessly undid the lid. A tidal wave of sticky, fizzy fluid spurted out the top and covered me, head to toe. Mum gasped and Laura let out the tiniest giggle. No picnic for us!

Next, came the rain. Heavy, thunderous rain from angry, black, stormy clouds above our heads. As we stood freezing in our shorts (I was still covered in lemonade at this point), it hammered down upon us relentlessly. Dejected, we nearly gave up all hope of rescue when orange, flashing lights appeared in the distance across the murky horizon. After hours of waiting, we eventually piled onto the rescue truck’s seats and headed miserably for home.

When we finally arrived back at our house, Mum slowly turned the key in the lock and we traipsed through the door. To my surprise, there lay a huge pile of glistening doughnuts waiting for us on the kitchen table! Maybe, this wasn’t the WORST day after all even if we never did make it to the beach.

Today was definitely one of the most disastrous journeys I’ve ever been on, particularly when I got covered in sticky lemonade. Although, the best part of the day was finding the delicious doughnuts when we got home!

Grammar, spelling and punctuation

Spellings

Aim to spell at least **80%** of your words correctly.

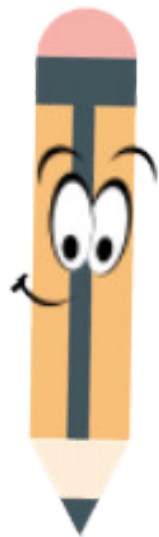
Key words **MUST** be spelt accurately.

Look out for **homophones!**

e.g. to, two, too
there, their, they're
where, wear, were

their
there
they're

It is all about **ensuring**
that your writing
makes **sense**.



Punctuation

Your writing should include varied punctuation.

Basics:

capital letters, full stops, apostrophes for contraction and possession and commas for fronted adverbials.

Try and experiment with:

brackets
ellipses
colons
semi-colons
dashes
question marks
exclamation marks



Make sure your handwriting is neat, legible and joined if possible. It would be such a shame to write an incredible piece of description that no-one can actually read!

Tense consistency

Stick to the **same tense** throughout your writing. Don't be tempted to flit between the past and present.

As we are writing a recount, we need to stay consistently in the past tense throughout.

Grammatical sense

Sentences are written correctly when they are grammatically sound.

Read each sentence back to yourself before writing the next one.

Make sure that your main clause, after your fronted adverbial, makes sense on its own.

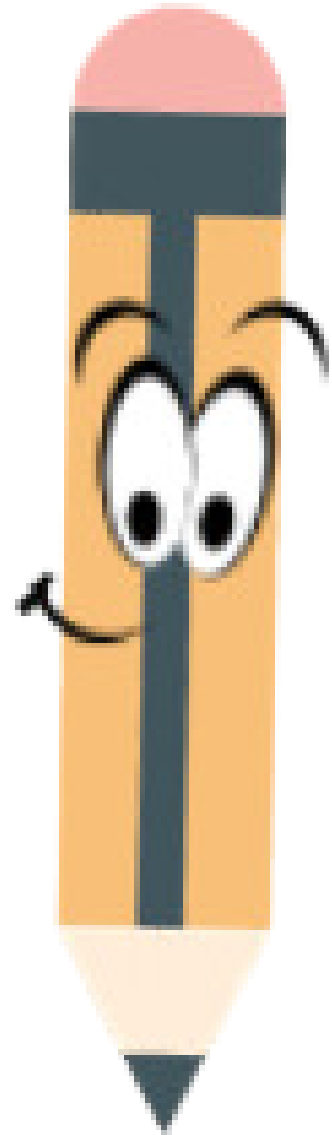
Be careful with your was and were – make sure you have verb-subject agreement e.g. if the subject is plural, the verb must be plural too.

Stanley produced this guide with a little help from Ali, who is an English and 11–Plus specialist teacher of 25 years and counting!

Ali currently teaches ten creative writing classes a week. You can email her at alison@goldenbrainacademy.com

We hope that you have found this pack useful.

Look out for all of Stanley's Ultimate Guides at: <https://goldenbrainacademy.com/step-write-up/>



**Step
Write
up**