

## 12. Writing stylistically

Writing style refers to the way a piece of writing is written, rather than the subject of the writing. Style refers to the use of language that makes a text distinctive. Style is shown in four ways.

- **Word choice or diction:** This refers to the type of words used in common speech or specific vocabularies often chosen to represent social groups.
- **Syntax:** This refers to the rules of grammar which determine how phrases, clauses and sentences are written in a particular order.
- **Figurative language:** This refers to different techniques, such as metaphor, simile, personification and rhetoric used to create particular thoughts or associations. They also incite complex readings of the text, for example through ambiguous or ironic language.
- **Sentence organisation:** This refers to the type of sentence used, for example simple, compound or complex, and how they are arranged. For example a simple sentence follows a complex sentence for contrast or a sentence is repeated for emphasis.

The way that your ideas come together in a particular form is also part of the style of writing. For example if a writer used poetic language and includes poetry in their writing or they write poetry prose (where the writing is prose - ordinary language usage - but poetic language is used).

Whatever style you choose, it needs to reflect your personality and individual perspective on life.

Below is a recount of an experience as a child written as poetry prose. Read the modelled response, take note of the effective writing skills and complete the writing activity below.

### *Modelled response: The Laundry*

*I only wanted to keep my brother away from those two sisters, the ones who locked him in the laundry in the depths of the backyard, looking vacantly at each other as one pinched under my arm, the other tearing the leg off my doll to toss it over the fence. They stood at attention like soldiers when an adult arrived. I read their Golden Books under the withered tree on the concrete path, sailed along the ocean in a tug boat, went fishing with big bear and baked cakes with mother hen. When I turned the page, it smiled back. But these girls, great in their minds, would coax me to play with their dolls, chalkboards, sharp pens. When they scribbled in their books and blamed me, I clenched my nails into my fists, held my breath and counted backwards from ten. I knew this as injustice slicing the spirit and that next they would graffiti more books if I made a sound or objected. Instead the laundry door thumped like a horn blowing. And I was forced to write 'I will not graffiti', a hundred times over, starting again when I wrote repetitively individual words instead of sentences. These sisters, who had shut my brother in to keep me out, doubled up in laughter. But when they unlocked the laundry door, releasing their aloneness as my brother cried blue murder, they cried out for their mother, not quite sure what would be done to them, and held each other through the loneliness of their power.*

### **Effective writing skills**

- The language is poetic and the piece could easily be written as a poem.
- The sentences flow on from one another, although grammar rules often do not apply to represent the chaotic nature of the thoughts experienced by the writer during the incident.

## Activity 18: Point of view in life writing



*Time: minutes*

1. Think about an incident in your life where you experienced injustice. Jot down your ideas about this incident before you begin writing.

a. What happened?

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b. Who was involved? What did they look like?

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c. When did the incident occur?

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d. Where did the incident occur?

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e. Why did the incident occur?

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f. What did you see around you and others?

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g. What did you imagine during this incident to make it better?

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2. When you are ready, free write about this incident as poetry prose. This means that it's a mix between a poem and normal writing. Concentrate more on the ideas flowing, rather than the correctness of the grammar and punctuation.