Textual features relevant to the second objective of Dimension 2 are described below. These are features that teachers may like to draw on to further build students’ fluency and accuracy of expression in their writing and speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual feature</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreement of noun and pronoun (see referent strings below)</td>
<td>The general principle is that the pronoun must agree with its referent noun in person, gender and number (also termed pronoun referencing). In inclusive English, it is now permitted to use the plural pronoun “their” when referring to a singular noun that is not specific. This is a recent convention in the English language. The use of the plural decreases the opportunities for error. Context and purpose should be the determining factor in making the choice between using plurals or the inclusive plural for the singular noun. Example: Every student is changing their enrolment. All students are changing their enrolments. Each worker should be aware of their responsibilities. Workers should be aware of their responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood (see tone below)</td>
<td>In grammatical terms the four categories are: • statement (indicative mood) • question (interrogative mood) • command (imperative mood) • wish (subjunctive mood).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>The distinction of singular and plural in terms of numerals, amount, person and collective nouns. Consistent use of the singular or plural in the writing of a sentence or paragraph is important for clear expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph (see clause and sentence under Grammar and language structures)</td>
<td>Paragraphs contain the main ideas within a larger text and their arrangement provides structure. A topic sentence is placed strategically within each paragraph and helps readers to recognise the main or significant idea. Using different types of sentences to create interesting and purposeful paragraphs makes writing and speech clearer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td>In grammatical terms, the three categories of person are: • First: referring to the speaker (I) and normally to a group of people containing the speaker (we) • Second: referring in the singular to the addressee (you) and in the plural to a group (you) containing the addressees but not the speaker • Third: referring to one or more entities (he, she, they) other than the speaker or addressee(s).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preposition at the end of the sentence | This has to do with the use of the relative pronoun *who*, *whom*, *whose* and the recognition of the degree of formality of the expression to which it applies. Context and purpose should be the determining factor in making the choice of where to place the preposition.

The phrasal verb (verb followed by a preposition, e.g. *stay on*) does not allow for using a relative pronoun at all.

Example: *The people decided to stay on*.

“Wh” questions offer possibilities for both formal and informal phrasing.

Example:

What does that stand for?
To whom does this belong?
Whose bag has been left out?

For many years respected academics in the field of grammar have advised that if the final preposition sounds idiomatic and natural, then it should be at the end of the sentence.

Example: *What are you going to cut down on?* Shifting the preposition away from the end of this sentence will do little for clarity.

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Referent strings (see agreement of noun and pronoun above) | Strings of pronouns and words that refer to each other throughout a text.

The term “unattached phrase” refers to phrases or incomplete clauses that begin with the participle (dangling or unattached participle) or infinitive form of the verb, and do not connect to the rest of the sentence, i.e. the phrase or clause is misplaced or left “hanging”.

Example:

Wrong: *Being able to drive the car, the trip was shorter than walking.*
Wrong: *To see the sun rise, the ocean is a great place to be at dawn.*

Reading work for the connection of ideas and thoughts in terms of referring words strengthens clarity and removes awkward expression.

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Reflexive pronouns | These pronouns refer back (reflect back) to an earlier pronoun in a sentence, e.g. *She told me about it herself*.

They can be used in three ways:

- They are used to emphasise either solo or group actions or events.
  
  Example: *They rebuilt the village themselves. He poached the eggs himself.*

- They are sometimes used for emphasis.
  
  Example: *I told him myself, just yesterday.* (Beware of tautology)

- They are not used in the objective case.
  
  Example:
  
  He gave it to me. (Correct)
  He gave it to myself. (Wrong)
### Split infinitive

The term refers to placing an adverb or adjunct between the “to” and its verb, e.g. *The children wanted to constantly play marbles*.

The generally accepted principle is to avoid splitting the infinitive unless the placement of the adverb or adjunct in the middle sounds idiomatic and natural or reads naturally.

Example:

*The children wanted to play marbles constantly.*

*The children constantly wanted to play marbles.*

Meaning shifts as the adverb or adjunct is shifted.

A perennial problem appears when the adverb to be used is “only”. The principle here is to think about where “only” works best to express intended meaning, i.e. place the adverb “only” as near as possible to the word it modifies.

Example:

*She wanted to only read the book.*

*She wanted only to read the book.*

*Only she wanted to read the book.*

*She wanted to read the book only.*

*She wanted to read only the book.*

*She only wanted to read the book.*

### Subject-verb agreement

There are three sets of rules:

- a singular subject takes a singular verb; a plural subject takes a plural verb
- agreement when there is more than one subject
- when subject and verb are separated by other information in the clause.

Example:

- When the subject is a collective noun, e.g. *The team is winning*.
- The following are always singular: *each, every, one, everyone, everybody, anybody, anyone, none, no one* — but the need to use inclusive language allows for these words to take a singular verb and a plural pronoun, e.g. *Everybody is bringing their friends*.
- The following are always plural: *some, majority, minority*, and summation nouns such as *scissors, binoculars*, e.g. *The majority have no idea*.
- Correlatives: *either…or, neither…nor* — depend on the number of the second noun, e.g. *Either that car or those animals are to go; Neither those toys nor that drum is to go*.
- Aggregate nouns such as *data, media, news* may be either singular or plural. Plural form of the verb is used when the idea of plurality is evident, e.g. *Media are a part of modern life*. 

| **Tense** | Tense describes time — past, present, future — and is used consistently across a text. It is indicated by verbs whose primary use is to locate the process in time relative to the time of the utterance. The “primary use” qualification is needed because there may be secondary uses that do not have this intent. For example in the sentence, *If you loved me, you would help me*, the past tense does not indicate past time but suggests that you do not (or may well not) love me. A tensed verb is a verb inflected for tense. Example: *take, takes, took* as in *They take care*, but not *They should take care*. Tensed verbs are not to be confused with the present participle, e.g. *taking* and the past participle, e.g. *taken* of a verb. |
| **Tone** (see mood above) | The tone of a work is produced mainly by the writer’s diction or choice of words, but stylistic choices concerning syntax, line or sentence length, imagery and so forth may also contribute. The tone of a work can gradually shift through the course of the text — for example, from *sarcastic* to *ironic*, or from *angry* to *remorseful*. Tone is an element used frequently in poetry to convey feeling and emotion, and set the mood for the work. |
| **Transitive and intransitive** | A transitive verb is followed by a direct object. Example: *He drove the car.* If there is no object, the verb is intransitive. Example: *Have you eaten yet?* Many verbs can be transitive or intransitive depending on the construction. Example: *He left the room. He left.* The past tense of the verb “to leave” is transitive in the first sentence and intransitive in the second. |
| **Use of “however”** | The clue to using *however* is to be found in the ways the punctuation accompanies the use and grammatical function of *however* in the particular sentence. There are two ways to use the word “however”: • as a strong contrasting link between two ideas • as a subordinating conjunction. Examples of contrasting link: *The bus was ancient; however, it still drove well.* *The bus was ancient; it still drove well, however.* *The bus was ancient; it still, however, drove well.* When used as a contrasting link, there is a punctuation mark before and after *however*, acting as a boundary or even status marker to enhance effect or style. Examples of conjunction: *However ancient the bus was, it still drove well.* *The bus still drove well however ancient it was.* |
| **Use of “one”** | “One” is an impersonal pronoun, used to indicate human behaviour or practice in a general way that distances the writer.  
This impersonal pronoun is rarely used in formal writing now, but the old rule applies if it is used: there must be consistent use of the pronoun “one” throughout the sentence or paragraph to maintain the identity of the subject (one).  
Example: *If one must use the impersonal pronoun, one must use it throughout the sentence, or else one may confuse one’s reader.* |
| **Use of “that” and “which”** | Each word is a relative pronoun.  
If the clause introduced by the relative pronoun is removed and the meaning of the sentence does change, then *that* is the correct word.  
Use *that* if the group of words intentionally limits the set of things being written or talked about (restrictive meaning).  
If the clause introduced by the relative pronoun can be removed and the meaning of the sentence does not change, then *which* is the correct word.  
Use *which* if a group of words adds information to the sentence in the sense of parenthesis (non-restrictive meaning) and indicate the clause with commas.  
Example: *Dogs that bark all day drive me crazy.*  
*Dogs, which make good companions, come in all shapes and sizes.*  
*Classes that are held on Tuesdays finish early.*  
*Leap years, which have 366 days, contain an extra day in February.* |
| **Use of “who” and “whom”** | *Who* is nominative (subject) and informal in style  
Example: *Who did you see? Who was she talking to?*  
*Whom* is accusative (object) and more formal in style. It usually comes after a preposition.  
Example: *I met her parents, both of whom were teachers.* |
| **Wh-words** | A cover term for the interrogative and relative words spelt with initial “wh” together with *how* – *what, when, where, which, who, whom, whose, why.* |