

## Evaluating texts

### Introduction

Evaluating a piece of writing (a text) is about judging whether the communication is effective. In this activity, you will learn how to evaluate a text.

You will learn how to:

- decide whether a text has achieved its purpose
- decide whether a text is suitable for its intended audience
- compare different texts
- write an evaluation of a text.

To complete this activity you need to be able to recognise the purpose and audience of a text. If you think you would like help in this, ask your tutor for the resource **Understanding the purpose of a text**.

**Cancellation rights**

You usually have the right to cancel without giving any reason. You must tell the trader in writing (by fax, letter or email). If you want to cancel there's a form that you can use on the inside back cover of this leaflet. How long you have to cancel an order depends on when you received the required written information. The cancellation period starts as soon as the contract has been agreed and ends:

- for goods – after seven working days counting from the day after the day the goods are delivered
- for services – after seven working days counting from the day after the day the contract is agreed (though you may not have the right to cancel if you've agreed to the service starting earlier).

If you do not receive the required written information at the right time, you may have extended cancellation rights. If you think this is the case, contact Consumer Direct (see contact details at the back of this leaflet).

If you cancel an order, the trader must refund your money as soon as possible and in any case within 30 days at the latest. You may be required to send back the goods and pay the costs of doing so (if you were told about this as part of the written information). You must take reasonable care of the goods while they are in your possession, package the goods carefully and send them back to the trader using a reliable delivery service.

You **don't** have the right to cancel if the order is for:

- goods or services where the price depends on fluctuations in the financial markets which cannot be controlled by the trader
- goods made to your own specification or clearly personalised, such as custom-made blinds or curtains. But this exception does not apply to upgrade options such as choosing alloy wheels when buying a car or opting for add-on memory when ordering a PC
- goods that by their nature cannot be returned
- perishable goods like fresh foods or fresh cut flowers
- newspapers, periodicals or magazines
- gaming, betting or lottery services
- audio or video recordings or computer software that you have unsealed.

**e-Hammer help / new buyers' guide / your rights as a distance buyer**

**Welcome to e-Hammer.**  
We want all our members to experience a safe and enjoyable online shopping experience. Thanks to our strong buyer-defence programme 99% of e-Hammer transactions are smooth and fault-free.  
In the unlikely event that you experience difficulties it is important that you understand your rights as a distance buyer.

**\*Key Facts**

- e-Hammer sellers must provide clear information about the goods or services.
- Products and services must always be delivered within thirty days unless you have agreed otherwise with the seller.
- As a buyer you have a cooling-off period that begins as soon as your order has been made. During this time you can withdraw from the contract for any reason. This period begins as soon as you order from e-Hammer and ends seven working days after the day of receipt of the goods.
- When you have notified the seller in writing or another durable medium that you wish to cancel the contract, the money must be refunded within 30 days of your initial payment.

\*Some e-Hammer products are exempt from all or part of the Regulations.

- Read the introduction and the 'learn how to' examples carefully before you try the practice questions.
- When you have finished, check your answers with the ones provided on pages 11–12.
- If you are not sure about your answers, check with your tutor.

## Evaluating texts

### Learn how to evaluate a text

Evaluating a text means deciding whether or not it has successfully put across its message and achieved its purpose. To evaluate a text, follow the steps below.

1. Identify the purpose and intended audience of the text *and consider this carefully when you ask yourself the questions in step 2 below.*
2. Ask yourself if the text has:
  - an appropriate format
  - a clear layout or structure
  - the correct amount of detail
  - presented both sides of an argument or is biased
  - appropriate images or diagrams that are there for a reason
  - suitable vocabulary and sentence structure, making it easy for the intended audience to read and respond to.
3. An evaluation is backed up with **evidence**, so you must give reasons for the decisions you made in step 2.
4. Summarise your thoughts on whether the text has achieved its aim or purpose. You might also include other comments such as the reliability of the source and whether you trust the writer. For example, a text from a government web site or a reputable insurance company is likely to be more reliable than information on a personal blog or a message board.

**Read Text 1 on page 4 and look at the sample evaluation on page 5. Then try the practice task on page 6.**

*For a challenge, why not write your own evaluation of Text 1 before looking at the sample evaluation. Use the checklist on the next page to help you plan your evaluation.*

## Evaluating texts

### Evaluation checklist

- ☐ Purpose?
- ☐ Appropriate format?
- ☐ Clear layout or structure?
- ☐ Correct amount of detail?
- ☐ Presented both sides of an argument (if needed)?
- ☐ Appropriate images or diagrams?
- ☐ Suitable vocabulary and sentence structure?

### Conclusions

- ☐ Is it fit for purpose?
- ☐ Does it suit the intended audience? How would they respond?

## Evaluating texts

### Text 1

45 Silversurf Avenue

Sheffield

S11 4DU

7 May 2011

Snap Shot Sales (E-Hammer online store)

Customer Service Dept

Unit 4A, Westside Industrial Estate

TA16 7PR

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am returning the attached item as advised in the return policy displayed on your e-Hammer online store.

I purchased the maxi-pixel camera (model no. 5679XC) on 4 May 2011 from your online Snappy-Sales store. Despite following the set-up instructions I am afraid that the camera does not function correctly and loses charge after taking only three or four photographs.

I have purchased items from you before and have never had any problems with your products, which I have always found to be of good quality and excellent value for money.

I would be grateful if you would send me a replacement camera and refund my postage of £6.45.

Yours faithfully

*Martin Pressbutton*

Martin Pressbutton

## Evaluating texts

### Sample evaluation of Text 1

Planning notes (using the evaluation check list from page 3.)

- ☒ Purpose *To inform. The writer is returning a faulty camera. His aim is to get a replacement camera and to have his postage refunded. He has also used subtle persuasion (flattery) in paragraph 3 to help achieve his purpose.*
- ☒ Appropriate format *Yes - a formal letter.*
- ☒ Clear layout or structure *Good use of paragraphs in a logical order.*
- ☒ Correct amount of detail? *Yes - name and address, date of order, name and model of camera, but maybe he should have included his order or invoice number?*
- ☐ Presented both sides of an argument (if needed) *Not needed.*
- ☐ Appropriate images or diagrams that are there for a reason *No need for images.*
- ☒ Suitable vocabulary and sentences *Yes, formal and appropriate language used throughout - 'purchase', 'I am afraid' (rather than 'I'm afraid'), 'I would be grateful', 'yours faithfully', etc. all make it suitable for the intended audience (customer service dept of an online store). A bit repetitive the way every paragraph starts with 'I' so the style could possibly be improved?*

### Evaluation and conclusion

*The purpose of this text is to return a faulty camera ordered from an online store. The text uses the standard layout for a formal letter. The writer clearly states his purpose in the opening paragraph. The content of this paragraph also implies that the writer is fully aware of his rights (as he has read the return policy). In the second paragraph he clearly explains the reasons for returning the camera. In the closing paragraph, the writer firmly states what he expects to happen next.*

*The writer has included all the necessary information such as his name and address and camera details (although it might have been useful to include his invoice or order number). The formal vocabulary and tone help to create a business-like letter with a clear message.*

*All these points have helped to create a well-written letter that should successfully achieve its purpose and is suitable for its intended audience (the customer service department of an online camera store) who are likely to respond positively and replace the camera and the postage costs.*

**Evaluating texts**
**Practice**

You have a friend who wants to buy a camera from an online auction site. He has never bought anything online before. He is worried about his rights if something goes wrong or if he does not like the camera.

Look at Texts 2 and 3 on the following pages. Which text would you direct your friend to and why?

**a.** Complete the table below to help you decide. Some parts have been filled in for you.

	<b>Text 1</b>	<b>Text 2</b>
Source?	<i>e-Hammer</i>	<i>UK government</i>
Purpose?	<i>To inform new buyers of their distance selling rights</i>	
Format?		<i>Leaflet</i>
Layout and structure?		
Correct amount of detail?		
Biased or gives both sides of an argument?		
Images and diagrams?	<i>Logo makes it look business-like.</i>	<i>The smiling woman makes you think it is easy to cancel an order. Is that appropriate?</i>
Easy to read and understand?	<i>No, not all of it. What does durable medium mean?</i>	
Suitable for intended audience?		
Possible audience response?		<i>Reader might use the form mentioned (at the back of the leaflet). Or they might contact Consumer Direct for more information.</i>

**b.** Write a short evaluation of the text you have chosen.

I would direct my friend to Text \_\_\_\_ because:

(Use a separate sheet of paper.)

## Evaluating texts

### Text 2

#### e-Hammer help / new buyers' guide / your rights as a distance buyer



#### **Welcome to e-Hammer.**

We want all our members to experience a safe and enjoyable online shopping experience. Thanks to our strong buyer-defence programme 99% of e-Hammer transactions are smooth and fault-free.

In the unlikely event that you experience difficulties it is important that you understand your rights as a distance buyer.

#### **\*Key Facts**

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- Products and services must always be delivered within thirty days unless you have agreed otherwise with the seller.
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- When you have notified the seller in writing or another durable medium that you wish to cancel the contract, the money must be refunded within 30 days of your initial payment.

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## Evaluating texts

### Text 3

#### Cancellation rights

You usually have the right to cancel without giving any reason. You must tell the trader in writing (by fax, letter or email) if you want to cancel (there's a form that you can use on the inside back cover of this leaflet). How long you have to



cancel an order depends on when you received the required written information. The cancellation period starts as soon as the contract has been agreed and ends:

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If you cancel an order, the trader must refund your money as soon as possible and in any case within 30 days at the latest. You may be required to send back the goods and pay the costs of doing so (if you were told about this as part of the written information). You must take reasonable care of the goods while they are in your possession, package the goods carefully and send them back to the trader using a reliable delivery service.

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- perishable goods like fresh foods or fresh cut flowers
- newspapers, periodicals or magazines
- gaming, betting or lottery services
- audio or video recordings or computer software that you have unsealed.

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Extracted from a 20-page leaflet, *Shopping from Home: Your distance shopping rights explained*. The Office of Fair Trading ([www.oft.gov.uk](http://www.oft.gov.uk))



## Evaluating texts


### Check your skills

Use Text 4 on the next page to answer the questions.

1. This text is a(n):
  - a. formal letter.
  - b. scam letter.
  - c. poster.
  - d. insert in a Sunday paper.
2. The main purpose of the text is to:
  - a. inform.
  - b. instruct.
  - c. entertain.
  - d. persuade.
3. The main way in which the text achieves its purpose is by using:
  - a. the correct format for a formal letter.
  - b. lots of pictures.
  - c. emotive language.
  - d. arrows as bullet points.
4. The writer hopes that having read the text the reader will:
  - a. read the small print at the bottom of the letter.
  - b. telephone the hotline by 31 December.
  - c. telephone the hotline within three days.
  - d. ignore the text.
5. An appropriate response from a careful reader would be:
  - a. to pass the letter to a friend.
  - b. to phone the hotline to find out more information.
  - c. to discard the letter.
  - d. to think about what prize they want.

## Evaluating texts

### Text 4



Dear Mr Jones

# CONGRATULATIONS!!!


You have won a **TOP PRIZE!!**

Well done Mr Jones. You were entered in our amazing **£150,000** competition and I'm very happy to inform you that you were one of the very few lucky people to have drawn a **GUARANTEED** top prize.

The value of your prize will be worth **AT LEAST £2,000!!**


Your special code **'Lucky cat'** matches one of the following fantastic prizes:

- **£150,000 CASH**
- **£40,000 CASH**
- **£20,000 CASH**
- **£2,000 CASH\***
- **Holiday worth £2,000**
- **New conservatory**



To find out exactly which super prize you've won, call our 24 hour prize winner's hotline: **0908 301 979**

Sadly, we can only reserve your prize for 3 days, so please **CALL NOW!**  
 Closing date 31 December 2011. \* Prize consists of a book of vouchers offering savings worth £2000. Vouchers must be redeemed within 30 days of receipt.  
 £16.99 delivery charge applies for receipt of vouchers.



## Evaluating texts

### Answers

#### Practice (page 6)

- a. The answers in the table are sample answers only – your answers will not be exactly the same. If you are unsure about any of your answers, talk to your tutor.

	Text 1	Text 2
Source?	<i>e-Hammer.</i>	<i>UK government.</i>
Purpose?	<i>To inform new e-Hammer buyers of their distance selling rights.</i>	<i>To inform the general public about their distance shopping rights.</i>
Format?	<i>A web page.</i>	<i>Leaflet.</i>
Layout and structure?	<i>Shaded background makes it look attractive. Uses paragraphs but the key information is in a small font (compared to the persuasive information - see 'bias' below).</i>	<i>Clear heading (in a different colour). Uses bullets and paragraphs to break up text. Same font used throughout. Narrow page width makes it easy to read (scan?).</i>
Correct amount of detail?	<i>The 'cooling off period' description is confusing. Doesn't give detail about which products are exempt.</i>	<i>The '7 day cancellation period' is explained in a slightly clearer way than in Text 1. Gives details of exemptions from the 7 day cancellation period.</i>
Biased or gives both sides of an argument?	<i>Mixes informing buyers of their rights with persuading them that e-Hammer buyers rarely have problems. E.g. it says 99% transactions are smooth and fault-free. So this text is biased.</i>	<i>Not biased. Purely factual.</i>
Images/diagrams?	<i>Logo makes it look business-like.</i>	<i>The smiling woman makes you think it is easy to cancel an order. Is that appropriate?</i>

## Evaluating texts

Easy to read and understand?	No, not all of it. What does 'durable medium' mean? What does 'buyer-defence' mean?	Yes, addresses the reader directly and the meaning is generally clear.  It is helpful that it includes a cancellation form on the back cover.
Suitable for intended audience?	Does provide some useful information but is not as easy to read and understand as Text 2.	Yes - useful clear information for distance buyers.
Possible audience response?	Not sure how the reader will respond. There are no links to further help and it doesn't really give the reader clear instructions on what to do if they have a problem. The title (New buyers' guide) is perhaps a little misleading although there might be further information on other pages of the web site.	Reader might use the cancellation form mentioned or they might contact Consumer Direct for more information.

- b. Your evaluation should draw together all the points you have made in the table. You should have decided to direct your friend to Text 3. If your points in the table are very different from those above, discuss them with your tutor. Refer to the sample answer on page 5 for ideas on how to write up an evaluation.

### Check your skills (page 9)

1. b. scam letter.
2. d. persuade.
3. c. emotive language.
4. c. telephone the hotline within three days.
5. c. to discard the letter.