



Narrative Writing

VARP Mini-Unit · Day 2

Register and Purpose

Today we complete the VARP framework — two essential tools that every strong writer uses before putting a single word on the page.

Bell Ringer

Think About It

You need to ask for an extension on an assignment. Would you say the same thing to each of these people?

Your Best Friend

"Hey, any chance I can turn that in tomorrow? I totally forgot."

Your English Teacher

"Would it be possible to have one more day to complete the assignment?"

The Principal

"Good morning. I was hoping to respectfully request an extension, if that is at all possible."

You likely chose very different words each time — and that difference is exactly what today's lesson is about. Share your ideas with a partner before we begin.



Learning Objectives

By the end of today's lesson, you will be able to:

01

Define Register

Understand what register means and why it matters in writing.

02

Explain Levels of Formality

Recognize informal, neutral, and formal writing — and when to use each.

03

Define Purpose

Understand why every piece of writing exists for a reason.

04

Identify Purpose in Text

Read a passage and determine what the writer wants the reader to do, think, or feel.

05

Apply the Full VARP Framework

Use all four elements together as a pre-writing strategy.

Completing the Framework

What Is VARP?

Yesterday we explored Voice (who is speaking?) and Audience (who is reading?). Today we add the final two pieces that make the framework complete.

V — Voice

Who is speaking or narrating?



A — Audience

Who is reading or listening?

R — Register

How formal should the writing be?



P — Purpose

Why are you writing?



When all four questions are answered, you are ready to make deliberate, confident choices as a writer.

VARP Element 3

Register

The level of formality you choose for your writing.

What Shapes Your Register?

Register is not a random choice — it is determined by the context of your writing. Ask yourself:

→ **Your Audience**

Is your reader a friend, a teacher, or a stranger?

→ **Your Relationship**

How well do you know the reader?

→ **The Situation**

Is this a casual conversation or a formal occasion?

→ **Your Purpose**

What are you trying to achieve?



Register in Action

Levels of Formality — The Same Idea, Three Different Ways

Informal

"Hey, can we chat?"

Relaxed, conversational — used with close friends or peers you know well.

Neutral

"I need to talk to you."

Direct and clear — suitable for most everyday situations.

Formal

"Could we please discuss this matter at your earliest convenience?"

Polished and respectful — used in professional or academic contexts.

Discussion: All three sentences communicate the same basic idea. With your partner, decide which situation best fits each level. What clues in the language helped you decide?

VARP Element 4

Purpose

The reason you are writing — what you want your reader to do, know, think, or feel.

The Key Question to Ask Yourself

"What do I want my reader to do, know, think, or feel as a result of reading my writing?"

Every piece of writing exists for a reason. Purpose is not accidental — skilled writers choose their purpose deliberately and then make every decision (word choice, tone, structure) in service of that goal.

When you know your purpose, your writing becomes focused, intentional, and effective.

Common Purposes

Writers write for many reasons. Here are the most common purposes you will encounter — and need to use — in your own writing:



Entertain

Engage the reader through story, humor, or suspense.



Persuade

Convince the reader to adopt a particular point of view.



Describe

Create a vivid picture using sensory detail and imagery.



Inform

Share facts, data, or knowledge clearly and accurately.



Advise

Offer guidance, suggestions, or recommendations.



Explain

Break down a concept so the reader can understand it clearly.



Many pieces of writing have more than one purpose — for example, a speech may both inform and persuade.

Guided Practice

What's the Purpose?

Your teacher will provide several short texts. For each one, work through the following questions:

1 Identify the Purpose

Is the writer trying to entertain, inform, persuade, advise, describe, or explain? Could there be more than one purpose?

2 Find Your Evidence

What specific words, phrases, or features of the text helped you decide? Point to the text — don't just state your opinion.

3 Be Ready to Explain

You may be called on to share your thinking with the class. Practice explaining your reasoning clearly and in complete sentences.



Activity

One Situation — Four Decisions

Scenario: You witnessed an unusual event at school. Before you write a single word, you must complete the full VARP framework.

1

Voice

Who are you in this piece? A student? An eyewitness? A journalist? A storyteller?

2

Audience

Who will read this? A friend, your teacher, the school newspaper, or someone else?

3

Register

How formal should your language be? Casual, neutral, or highly formal?

4

Purpose

Why are you writing this? To inform, entertain, persuade, or something else?

Write a brief explanation of why you chose each answer. Your VARP choices should all connect logically to one another.

Bringing It Together

The Complete VARP Framework

Before every writing task — in class, on a test, or in the Cambridge exam — ask yourself these four questions. Strong writers don't skip this step. It only takes a minute, and it makes everything else easier.



Who is speaking?

Establish your Voice before anything else.



Who is reading?

Know your Audience so you can write directly to them.



How formal should I sound?

Choose a Register that fits the situation.



Why am I writing?

Define your Purpose so every word serves a goal.



Cambridge Connection

Cambridge writing tasks always provide a context — a scenario, a form type, and a reader. Students who use VARP before writing consistently make better choices throughout their response.



Narratives

Establish a consistent Voice and Register that suits your narrator and audience.



Articles & Reports

Adopt an informative or persuasive Purpose with a formal Register.



Speeches & Letters

Match Register to your audience — formal for officials, warmer for community groups.



Descriptive Writing

Use a creative Voice and vivid language to serve the Purpose of engaging the reader's imagination.

Writer's Toolbox

Your Pre-Writing Checklist

Use this checklist every time you sit down to write. If you can answer all four questions confidently, you are ready to begin.

1

Voice

Who am I in this piece of writing? What perspective am I writing from?

☐ I have identified my Voice.

2

Audience

Who is reading this? What do they already know, and what do they expect?

☐ I have identified my Audience.

3

Register

How formal should my language be? Does my word choice match the situation?

☐ I have chosen an appropriate Register.

4

Purpose

Why am I writing this? What do I want my reader to do, think, know, or feel?

☐ I have defined my Purpose.

☐ If you can check all four boxes — you're ready to write!

Exit Ticket

Answer each question in complete sentences before you leave today. Your responses show what you've learned — be specific and use examples where you can.

1

What is Register?

Define register in your own words. What factors influence the level of formality a writer chooses?

2

What is Purpose?

Define purpose in your own words. Give at least two examples of common writing purposes.

3

Why does VARP matter?

Explain why it is important to identify all four parts of VARP before you begin writing.



Looking Ahead

Narrative Writing Begins

Tomorrow we begin reading *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant — a classic short story with rich narrative choices to explore. As we read, we will apply our full VARP framework to analyze the author's decisions.

Voice

Who narrates the story, and how does that shape what we know?

Audience

Who did Maupassant intend to reach with this story?

Register

What level of formality does the author use, and why?

Purpose

What does Maupassant want us to feel or understand?

We will also begin exploring plot structure through Freytag's Pyramid — connecting story events to rising action, climax, and resolution.