

# UK 2019 General Election – reading tasks

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-49826655> (Nov 1 2019)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## A Really Simple Guide to the General Election 2019



**The UK's main parties are gearing up for a general election on 12 December.**

These national votes, to choose a government to run the country, are supposed to be held every five years.

But this would be the third since 2015.

### What is an election for?

A total of 650 people will be chosen as members of Parliament (MPs), to decide laws and policies.

Members of Parliament are elected by voters to represent the interests of their constituency in the House of Commons. Most belong to a political party, but some do stand as independents. There are 650 MPs in the House.

MPs are elected to the House of Commons, one of two chambers of Parliament in London, where the government is based.

### What do voters care about more, the NHS or Brexit?

Detailed proposals for everything from the economy to defence and policing are set out before any general election in their **manifesto**.

These come from the UK's political parties - groups of people with similar political beliefs who come together to try to win power.

The issues UK voters care most about have changed a lot, according to the polls.

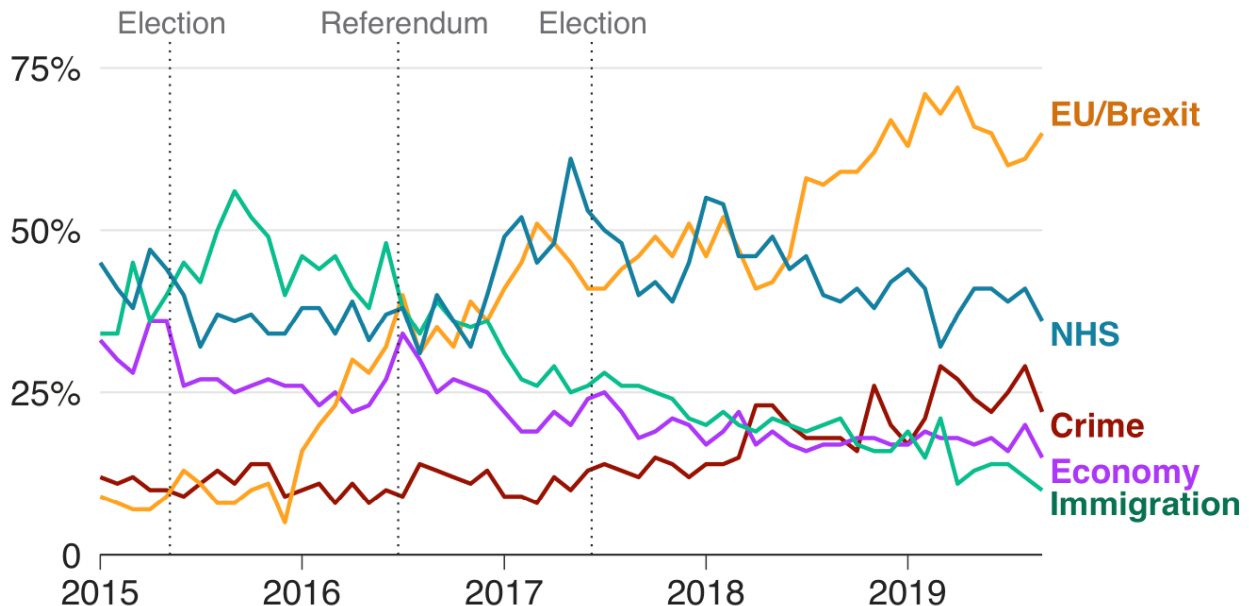
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## What do people feel are the most important issues facing Britain today?

Brexit has become a major issue since EU referendum



Source: Ipsos Mori Issues Index

BBC

The National Health Service (NHS) and immigration were the things that most concerned voters in 2015.

The European Union (EU) was of far less interest.

Now, however, Brexit - the UK's departure from the EU - is by far the biggest issue.

## Why have an election now?

Nearly three-and-a-half years after the UK voted for Brexit in the 2016 referendum, it has not happened.

Politicians are divided: some want the UK to leave the EU as soon as possible, some would prefer another referendum, and others to cancel Brexit altogether.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson doesn't have enough MPs to easily pass new laws.

He hopes an early election will increase the number of Conservative MPs, making his Brexit plans easier to achieve.

The next general election was due to be in 2022, but Parliament has now agreed to hold an early election.

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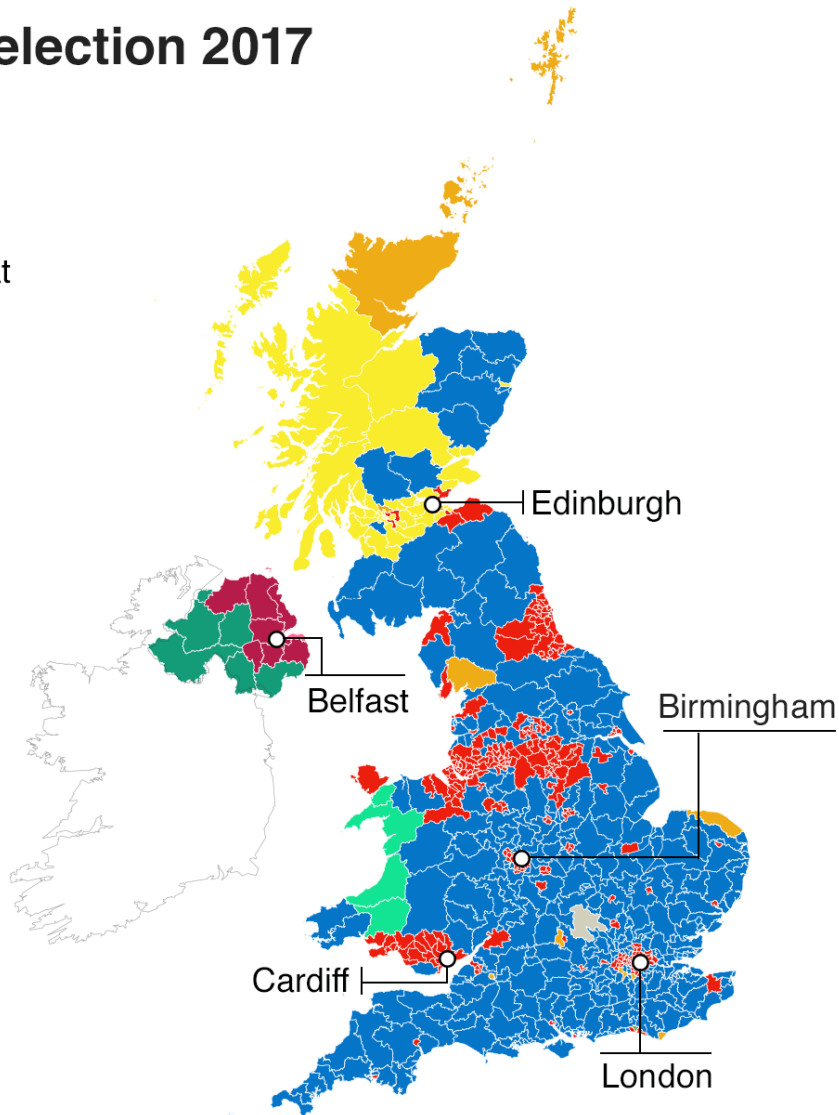
## How does voting work?

In a general election, the UK's 46 million voters are invited to choose an MP for their area - one of 650 constituencies.

Anyone aged 18 or over can vote, as long as they are registered and a British citizen or qualifying citizen of the Commonwealth or Republic of Ireland.

## UK general election 2017

- Conservative
- Labour
- SNP
- Liberal Democrat
- DUP
- Sinn Fein
- Plaid Cymru
- Green
- Independent
- Speaker



BBC

Older people are more likely than younger ones to vote. At the 2017 general election, 59% of 20- to 24-year-olds voted, compared with 77% of 60- to 69-year-olds.

Voting takes place at local polling stations, set up in places such as churches and school halls. Voters put a cross on the ballot paper beside the name of their chosen candidate and drop it into a sealed ballot box.

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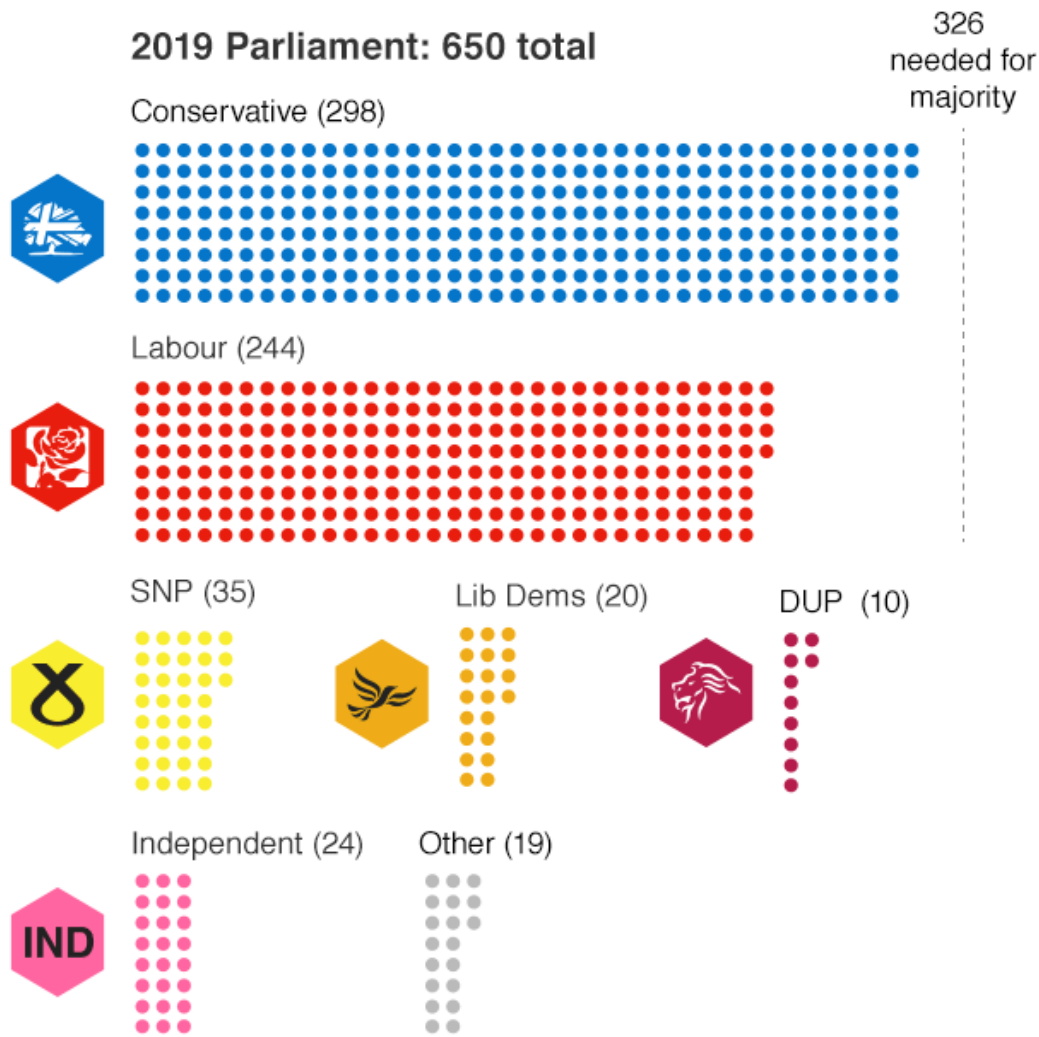
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## How are the winners chosen?

The candidate with the most votes in each constituency is elected to the House of Commons.

To win, they simply need more votes than anyone they are standing against. They could receive fewer than half of the votes in their constituency.

## How the parties stand



Other: Sinn Féin (7), The Independent Group for Change (5), Plaid Cymru (4), Green Party (1), Speaker (1), Vacant (1)

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Most MPs represent a political party but some stand for election as independent candidates.

Any party with more than half the MPs (326) in the Commons usually forms the government. Parties with well below 50% of the national vote can take power as a result of the UK's voting system.

If no party has a majority of MPs, the one with the most can form a coalition - or partnership - with one or more other parties to gain control.

The prime minister is not directly voted for by the public. He or she is chosen by the winning party's MPs and appointed by the Queen, who is duty bound to follow their advice.

## What happened at the last election, in 2017?

Every election since 1922 has been won by either the Conservative or Labour parties.

They were again the two biggest parties in the 2017 vote but neither had enough MPs to form a majority government. The Conservatives were the biggest and they partnered with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in order to win votes in the Commons.

Since the election, the Conservatives and Labour have both lost MPs, while the Liberal Democrats have made gains.

## General election 2017 in numbers



**326** Seats needed for a majority

**318** Conservative Party seats won

**262** Labour Party seats won

**35** Scottish National Party seats won

**68.7%** Voter turnout

Theresa May stayed as prime minister but lost her majority

Source: BBC general election coverage 2017



Parliament's second chamber is the House of Lords.

Its members are not elected but are appointed by the Queen, on the prime minister's advice.

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## Who can stand for Parliament?

Most people over 18 on polling day can stand as a candidate - as long as they are a British citizen or a qualifying Commonwealth or Republic of Ireland citizen resident in the UK.

They must also pay a £500 deposit, which will be lost if they do not get at least 5% of the votes in their constituency.

Candidates must meet certain conditions - prisoners, civil servants, judges and members of the police and armed forces cannot stand.

## When do we find out the result?

On general election day, voting takes place between 07:00 and 22:00. The results are declared through the night and the following day.

When the overall result is known, the leader of the winning party, if there is one, visits Buckingham Palace to ask the Queen for permission to form a new government.

Once they have that, which is a formality, they return to the traditional home of the prime minister 10 Downing Street.

Often they will stand outside to deliver a speech about their party's plans for the coming years.

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1. What is the purpose of the text?

A	To entertain	
B	To educate and inform readers about the election	
C	To persuade readers to vote	
D	To instruct MPs	

2. According to the article, what issues interested voters **most** in 2015?

3. What issue interests them **most** now?

4. According to the chart on page 2, what are the other issues that concern voters?

5. Which party held most seats in Scotland in 2017?

6. Who chooses the Prime Minister?

7. a) Which party did the Government partner with in 2017? b) How many seats does that party have?

8. Who is entitled to vote?

9. What happens if no party wins a majority of seats?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



10. Explain how the subheadings help you as a reader in this piece?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. “He or she is chosen by the winning party's MPs” is part of a sentence from the text. Explain why the apostrophe has been used between the y and s in the word “party’s”.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 12.a) According to the text, how many votes does a **candidate** need to win a seat?  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b) Under which subheading did you find this information?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 13. How many **seats** are needed for a majority?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 14. On what date will we find out the results of the election?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 15. The word “**manifesto**” has been used on page 1 of this piece. Using a dictionary or thesaurus, give another word/phrase for **manifesto** which would fit the meaning of the sentence as used on page 1.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 16. There are quite a few layout/presentation features in this text – name **three** and explain how they help the reader.



## Answers and suggested marks.

Maximum marks = 28. Suggested pass mark (if used for formal assessment): 20/28.

1. What is the purpose of this text: *B: To educate and inform readers about the election. [1]*
2. According to the article, what issues interested voters **most** in 2015?  
*The National Health Service and Immigration [2]*
3. What issue interests them **most** now? *Brexit [1]*
4. According to the chart on page 2, what are the other issues that concern voters?  
*NHS, Crime, Economy and Immigration [4]*
5. Which party held most seats in Scotland in 2017? *SNP [1]*
6. Who chooses the Prime Minister? *He or she is chosen by the winning party's MPs. [1]*
7. a) Which party did the Government partner with in 2017? b) How many seats does that party hold?  
*It partnered with the DUP (Democratic Unionist Party). They have 10 seats. [2]*
8. Who is entitled to vote? *Anyone aged 18 or over can vote, as long as they are registered and a British citizen or qualifying citizen of the Commonwealth or Republic of Ireland. [1]*
9. What happens if no party wins a majority of seats? *If no party has a majority of MPs, the one with the most can form a coalition - or partnership - with one or more other parties to gain control.[1]*
10. Explain how the subheadings help you as a reader in this piece?  
*Each section contains the answers to the questions posed in the subheading or the information posed by the subheading. There are a lot of facts and information and the subheadings break it down a bit. [2]*
11. "He or she is chosen by the winning party's MPs" is in a sentence from the text. Explain why the apostrophe has been used between the y and s in the word "party's":  
*It is there to show that the MPs belong to the winning party. It is a possessive apostrophe. [1]*
12. a) According to the text, how many votes does a **candidate** need to win a seat?  
*They simply need more votes than anyone they are standing against. [1]*  
b) Under which subheading did you find this information?  
*How are the winners chosen? [1]*
13. How many **seats** are needed for a majority? *326 [1]*
14. On what date will we find out the results of the election? *Friday 13th December [1]*
15. The word "**manifestos**" has been used on page 1 of this piece. Using a dictionary or thesaurus, give another word/phrase for **manifesto** which would fit the meaning of the sentence as used on page 1:  
*Examples: Policy statement/mission statement/programme. [1]*
16. There are many layout/presentation features in the text. Name three and explain how they help the reader.[6 – 1 for each named feature, 1 for each correct explanation].

Feature	Explanation
<b>Pictures/images</b>	<i>Show an important object or idea from the text. To attract the reader's attention. (Do not accept 'give you an idea of what the article is about').</i>
<b>Headline</b>	<i>Sets out what the article is about. The main idea of the entire text.</i>
<b>Subheadings</b>	<i>Helps you to locate information. Tells you what that section of the text is about. (see also Q10)</i>
<b>Graph</b>	<i>To present complicated statistical / mathematical information (in a quick and easy-to-understand way). This explanation also applies to the map – see below.</i>
<b>Map</b>	<i>To show constituencies and who won them in 2017. See also graph above.</i>
<b>Key for map</b>	<i>To show which party won in which constituency</i>
<b>Chart / pictogram / infographic</b>	<i>Shows how the parties stood relative to one another in 2017 in an easy to grasp /understand visual way.</i>
<b>Picture / diagram of Mrs May</b>	<i>Shows the numbers of MPs elected when she was PM in 2017 in a visual, quick and easy-to-understand manner.</i>

## Teaching notes

I saw this guide on the BBC website and thought it would be suitable for my Level 1 learners. This text clearly has a limited shelf-life but is very topical and gives us a chance to discuss democracy as part of British values. It is quite a detailed comprehension and I have included some new style Level 1 Reformed Functional Skills reading questions e.g. explaining apostrophe use. Whilst not expressly a Level 2 text, it does give a chance to discuss issues of fact, opinion and bias.

### Subject content - FUNCTIONAL SKILLS ENGLISH 2018 (effective from September 2019)

#### Purpose and learning aims of Functional Skills English

**Functional Skills English** specifications enable students to develop confidence and fluency in, and a positive attitude towards, English. They should be able to demonstrate their competence by using English in real-world situations as well as demonstrating a sound grasp of basic English knowledge and skills. They need to provide assessment of students' underpinning knowledge (i.e. spelling) as well as their ability to apply this in different contexts.

**Entry Levels:** a qualification to demonstrate the ability at an appropriate level to read, write, speak, listen and communicate in English and provide the basis for further study at Levels 1 and 2. Students should, with some direction and guidance, be able to apply these (Entry Level) English functional skills to informal and some formal contexts, in familiar situations.

**Levels 1 and 2:** a qualification for work, study and life. Achievement of the qualification demonstrates the ability at an appropriate level to read, write, speak, listen and communicate in English, and apply these skills effectively to a range of purposes in the workplace and other real-life situations. Students should be able to communicate with confidence, effectiveness and an increasing level of independence, in a range of formal and informal contexts.

✓ = **content** covered in this resource, although this will vary with the student group and how the resource is used by the teacher (✓✓ = key learning objective). → or ← = not covered in detail in this resource but annotated to show progression across levels. Consult the source below for a full list of descriptors at all levels. *Content at each level subsumes and builds upon that at lower levels.*

**Source:** *Subject content functional skills: English. DfE (Feb 2018),*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-english>

This resource also covers many Adult Literacy and Adult ESOL Curriculum elements

- <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf1286> (Adult Literacy)
- <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf1194> (Adult ESOL)
- 

An **editable Word version** of this resource is available, on a one to one exchange basis for your own resource contribution. If you wish to become a registered contributor, please contact Maggie using the site contact link. Thank you. 😊

## Reading content descriptors

'Reading' within FS English qualifications is defined as the independent understanding of written language in specific contexts. This can be demonstrated through the use of texts on screen or on paper.

### Learning aims for reading

**E1, 2 & 3** Acquire an understanding of everyday words and their uses and effects, and apply this understanding in different contexts. Read with accuracy straightforward texts encountered in everyday life and work, and develop confidence to read more widely. **L1-2** Read a range of different text types confidently and fluently, applying their knowledge and understanding of texts to their own writing.

Entry Level 3 (E3)	Level 1 (L1)	Level 2 (L1)
<p>E3.8 Read correctly words designated for E3 →</p> <p>E3.9 Identify, understand and extract the main points and ideas in and from texts →</p> <p>E3.10 Identify different purposes of straightforward texts ✓ Q1</p> <p>E3.11 Use effective strategies to find the meaning of words (e.g. a dictionary, working out meaning from context; using knowledge of different word types) →</p> <p>E3.12 Understand organisational features and use them to locate relevant information (e.g. contents, index, menus, tabs and links) →</p>	<p>L1.9 Identify and understand the main points, ideas and details in texts ✓✓ Q2, 3, 6, 7a, 8, 9, 12a, 13, 14</p> <p>L1.10 Compare information, ideas and opinions in different texts</p> <p>L1.11 Identify meanings in texts and distinguish between fact and opinion</p> <p>L1.12 Recognise that language and other textual features can be varied to suit different audiences and purposes.</p> <p>L1.13 Use reference materials and appropriate strategies (e.g. using knowledge of different word types) for a range of purposes, including to find the meaning of words. ✓Q15</p> <p>L1.14 Understand organisational and structural features and use them to locate relevant information (e.g. index, menus, subheadings, paragraphs) in a range of straightforward texts ✓✓ Q4, 5, 7b, 10, 12b, 16.</p> <p>L1.15 Infer from images meanings not explicit in the accompanying text</p> <p>L1.16 Recognise vocabulary typically associated with specific types and purposes of texts (e.g. formal, informal, instructional, descriptive, explanatory and persuasive)</p> <p>L1.17 Read and understand a range of specialist words in context</p> <p>L1.18 Use knowledge of punctuation to aid understanding of straightforward texts ✓Q11</p>	<p>L2.11 Identify the different situations when the main points are sufficient and when it is important to have specific details ←</p> <p>L2.12 Compare information, ideas and opinions in different texts, including how they are conveyed</p> <p>L2.13 Identify implicit and inferred meaning in texts</p> <p>L2.14 Understand the relationship between textual features and devices, and how they can be used to shape meaning for different audiences and purposes ←</p> <p>L2.15 Use a range of reference materials and appropriate resources (e.g. hyperlinks, glossaries, legends/keys) for different purposes, including to find the meanings of words in straightforward and complex sources ←</p> <p>L2.16 Understand organisational features and systems and use them to locate relevant information in a range of straightforward and complex sources ←</p> <p>L2.17 Analyse texts, recognising their use of vocabulary and identifying levels of complexity, formality and bias</p> <p>L2.18 Follow an argument, identifying different points of view and distinguishing fact from opinion</p> <p>L2.19 Identify different styles of writing and writer's voice</p>

### Scope of study – learners should read texts that include:

straightforward texts that instruct, describe, narrate and explain.	straightforward texts on a range of topics and of varying lengths that instruct, <b>describe, explain</b> and persuade. ✓✓	a range of straightforward and complex texts on a range of topics and of varying lengths that instruct, <b>describe, explain</b> and persuade. ✓✓
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