



1 Where these phrases help in PSLE English

PSLE English Language (0001) has four papers. Paper 1 (Writing) has two parts. In Situational Writing you write a short functional piece, such as a letter, email or report, to suit the purpose, audience and context of a given situation. In Continuous Writing you write a composition of at least 150 words on a given topic, based on at least one of three pictures. Paper 4 (Oral Communication) has Reading Aloud and a Stimulus-based Conversation with the examiners on a topic based on a photo. The two oral parts are not linked by theme. Source: SEAB PSLE English Language syllabus examined in 2026.

Paper 1 and Paper 4 at a glance (SEAB syllabus examined in 2026)

Component	What SEAB sets	Sections of this list to use
Paper 1, Situational Writing (14 marks)	One short functional piece, such as a letter, email or report, for a given situation	Section 12 for formal and informal phrases
Paper 1, Continuous Writing (36 marks)	One composition of at least 150 words, based on at least one of three pictures	Sections 4 to 11 for feelings, people, settings, action, suspense, openings, endings and connectors
Paper 4, Reading Aloud (15 marks)	Read aloud one passage to suit the purpose, audience and context of a given situation	Not a phrase task. Read the passage clearly and with expression.
Paper 4, Stimulus-based Conversation (25 marks)	A conversation with the examiners on a topic based on one photo	Section 13 for opinions, reasons and personal examples

- Paper 1 (50 marks) is worth 25% of the total and lasts 1 h 10 min. Paper 4 (40 marks) is worth 20% and lasts about 10 minutes: 5 minutes of preparation time and about 5 minutes of examination time.
- SEAB assesses Paper 1 on writing that suits purpose, audience and context with accurate and appropriate vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and on relevant ideas organised and expressed in a coherent and cohesive way.

2 Start here: 12 phrases to learn first

If you only have time for a few, learn these twelve first, one or two from each part of the list.

Twelve phrases from across the list

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
my mouth went dry	Nervousness just before speaking or performing	As the emcee called my name, my mouth went dry.
I let out a long sigh of relief	Relief that a problem is over	I let out a long sigh of relief when I found my wallet under the seat.
furrowed her brow	Confusion or worry	Mum furrowed her brow as she read the letter from school.
the hawker centre was buzzing with activity	A busy, lively place	At noon, the hawker centre was buzzing with activity.
dark clouds gathered overhead	A storm on the way	Dark clouds gathered overhead as we packed up our picnic mat.
Just then,	Introducing a sudden event	Just then, the lights in the hall went out.
The seconds dragged on.	Waiting that feels very long	Nobody spoke. The seconds dragged on.
The moment I stepped into	Starting in a new place	The moment I stepped into the new classroom, thirty pairs of eyes turned towards me.
Looking back, I realise that	Reflecting from a later time	Looking back, I realise that my friend was trying to protect me.
Moments later,	A short time after	Moments later, the ambulance arrived.
I would be grateful if you could	A polite request	I would be grateful if you could reply by 15 May.
I remember a time when	Starting a personal example	I remember a time when my class cleaned up East Coast Park.

3 See the phrases at work

Here is one moment written twice, first plainly and then with five phrases from this list working together.

The same moment, told and then shown

Version	Paragraph	What changed
Tell (plain)	On Saturday, my family went to the hawker centre for lunch. It was very crowded and noisy. After eating, I wanted to pay for my drink, but my wallet was gone. I felt very scared and worried. I looked everywhere for it. Then an old uncle came over and gave it back to me. He had found it under a table. I was very happy and relieved. I thanked him.	The events are all there, but the writer names the feelings ('very scared', 'very happy') instead of showing them, and every moment moves at the same speed.
Show (improved)	At noon, the hawker centre was buzzing with activity. I finished my bowl of laksa and reached into my pocket to pay for my sugar cane juice. It was empty. I patted every pocket twice, but I could hardly think straight. I checked under our table, then under the next one, while Mum asked the auntie at the drinks stall if anyone had handed in a blue wallet. The seconds dragged on. Just then, an elderly uncle in a faded cap shuffled over, holding something out to me. It was my wallet. I let out a long sigh of relief and thanked him twice before he waved me away with a smile.	Five phrases from this list do the work. 'The hawker centre was buzzing with activity' sets a busy scene, so a lost wallet feels harder to find. 'I could hardly think straight' shows the panic instead of 'I felt very scared and worried'. 'The seconds dragged on.' slows the story at the worst moment. 'Just then,' marks the turning point. 'I let out a long sigh of relief' replaces 'I was very happy and relieved'. Small details, such as the laksa and the faded cap, make it believable.

4 Describing feelings

Show the feeling through the body, the face or an action, then let the reader work out the emotion. Pick the phrase that matches how strong the feeling really is.

Fear and nervousness

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
a chill ran down my spine	Sudden fear when something strange happens. Common, so use it once at most.	When the corridor lights flickered off, a chill ran down my spine.
I stopped walking and listened	A fresher way to show sudden fear	When the corridor lights flickered off, I stopped walking and listened for footsteps.
my mouth went dry	Nervousness just before speaking or performing	As the emcee called my name, my mouth went dry.
my palms were clammy	Nervous waiting	My palms were clammy as I queued outside the exam hall.
I froze on the spot	Shock so strong you cannot move	I froze on the spot when the stray dog bared its teeth at me.
butterflies in my stomach	Mild nervousness before an important or exciting event. Common, so use it once at most.	I had butterflies in my stomach before my first CCA performance.
I checked my costume for the third time	A fresher way to show nerves before an event	Before my first CCA performance, I checked my costume for the third time and still could not stand still.
my knees went weak	Fear that makes you unsteady	When I peered down from the top of the climbing wall, my knees went weak.
I held my breath	Tense waiting for news or a result	I held my breath as Mrs Tan read out the names of the winners.
my stomach tightened into a knot	Dread about something that is about to happen	My stomach tightened into a knot when I remembered the homework I had not done.
I could hardly think straight	Panic when things go wrong quickly	With the bus pulling away and my wallet gone, I could hardly think straight.
I bit my lip	Trying to stay calm or quiet while worried	I bit my lip and tried not to look at the cracked vase.

Joy, relief and pride

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
a broad grin spread across my face	Joy at good news	When I spotted my name on the list, a broad grin spread across my face.
I was walking on air	Happiness that lasts for a while afterwards. Common, so use it once at most.	For the rest of the day, I was walking on air.
I hummed the whole way home	A fresher way to show lasting happiness	I hummed the whole way home and even offered to wash the dishes.
I could not stop smiling	Quiet, lasting happiness	Even on the bus ride home, I could not stop smiling.
a wave of relief washed over me	Relief after fear or worry. Common, so use it once at most.	When the doctor said Grandma would be fine, a wave of relief washed over me.
my shoulders finally dropped	A fresher way to show relief	When the doctor said Grandma would be fine, my shoulders finally dropped and I noticed how tightly I had been gripping the chair.
I let out a long sigh of relief	Relief that a problem is over	I let out a long sigh of relief when I found my wallet under the seat.
a weight had been lifted off my shoulders	Relief after owning up or finishing a hard task. Common, so use it once at most.	After I told Dad the truth, I felt as if a weight had been lifted off my shoulders.
I slept properly for the first time that week	A fresher way to show relief after owning up	After I told Dad the truth, I slept properly for the first time that week.
I stood a little taller	Pride in yourself	As Coach placed the medal around my neck, I stood a little taller.
beamed with pride	Someone else's pride in you	Mum beamed with pride as I walked off the stage.
it was worth every drop of sweat	Pride after hard work pays off	Our team came in second, and all that training was worth every drop of sweat.

Anger, sadness, guilt and surprise

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
I clenched my fists	Anger that you hold back	I clenched my fists as the older boys laughed at my brother.
my face grew hot	Anger or embarrassment	My face grew hot when the whole class turned to stare at me.
I bit back an angry reply	Choosing not to say something rude	I bit back an angry reply and walked away.
my heart sank	Sudden disappointment. Common, so use it once at most.	My heart sank when I saw the red marks all over my test paper.
I stared at the red 12/40 until the numbers blurred	A fresher way to show disappointment	When Mrs Tan returned our test papers, I stared at the red 12/40 until the numbers blurred.
a lump formed in my throat	Sadness when you are trying not to cry	A lump formed in my throat as we waved goodbye to our form teacher.
tears welled up in my eyes	Sadness that is about to show	Tears welled up in my eyes when I saw my torn drawing on the floor.
I could not meet her eyes	Guilt or shame in front of someone	When Mei Ling asked who had taken her pencil case, I could not meet her eyes.
a pang of guilt	A short, sharp feeling of guilt	I felt a pang of guilt as Ahmad searched his bag for the notes I had borrowed.
my conscience would not let me rest	Guilt that lasts until you act	That night, my conscience would not let me rest, so I decided to own up.
my jaw dropped	Great surprise. Common, so use it once at most.	My jaw dropped when I saw the whole family waiting behind the door.
I stood there with my school bag still on	A fresher way to show great surprise	When I saw the whole family waiting in the living room, I stood there with my school bag still on, unable to say a word.
I stared in disbelief	Surprise at something hard to believe	I stared in disbelief at the hundred-dollar note on the pavement.
I was caught off guard	An unexpected question or event	I was caught off guard when the principal asked me to speak at assembly.

5 Describing people

Choose one or two details that matter to the story instead of describing a character from head to toe.

Appearance

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
a lanky boy with a mop of untidy hair	A tall, thin and untidy character	A lanky boy with a mop of untidy hair slid into the seat beside me.
a frail old man leaning on a walking stick	An elderly person who may need help	A frail old man leaning on a walking stick waited at the traffic light.
her eyes twinkled behind her round spectacles	A kind or cheerful older character	Her eyes twinkled behind her round spectacles as she handed me the prize.
dressed in a crisp, freshly ironed uniform	A tidy, careful character	Dressed in a crisp, freshly ironed uniform, Wei Jie was always the first to arrive in class.
a burly man with a stern face	A strong, serious or scary character	A burly man with a stern face blocked the doorway.
his shirt was drenched in sweat	After running or working hard in the heat	By the end of the race, his shirt was drenched in sweat.
her hair was tied in a neat ponytail	A simple detail for a girl or woman	Her hair was tied in a neat ponytail that swung as she ran.
deep lines were etched on his face	An older or tired character	Deep lines were etched on his face from years of working at the stall.

Actions and expressions

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
furrowed her brow	Confusion or worry	Mum furrowed her brow as she read the letter from school.
shrugged	Not knowing or not caring	When I asked where the ball was, Jun Kai just shrugged.
flashed a warm smile	Friendliness	The new girl flashed a warm smile at everyone in the room.
rolled his eyes	Annoyance or boredom	My brother rolled his eyes when I told the same joke again.
nodded eagerly	Keen agreement	The children nodded eagerly when the teacher mentioned the zoo trip.
wagged her finger at	Scolding or warning	The librarian wagged her finger at us for talking too loudly.
fidgeted with the strap of her bag	Nervousness	Siti fidgeted with the strap of her bag as she waited to be called.
scratched his head	Puzzlement	Dad scratched his head as he stared at the instructions.
spoke in a trembling voice	Fear or sadness while talking	The little boy spoke in a trembling voice as he asked for his mother.
glared at	Anger shown through the eyes	The driver glared at the cyclist who had cut in front of him.

6 Describing settings and weather

A setting can quietly set the mood. Grey skies and empty places suit tension, while bright, busy places suit happy scenes.

Weather and places

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
the sky turned a gloomy grey	A mood change before trouble	By recess, the sky had turned a gloomy grey.
dark clouds gathered overhead	A storm on the way	Dark clouds gathered overhead as we packed up our picnic mat.
the rain came down in sheets	Very heavy rain	The rain came down in sheets, and the water in the drains began to rise.
a flash of lightning lit up the sky	A dramatic moment in a storm	A flash of lightning lit up the sky, followed by a loud clap of thunder.
the sun beat down on us	A hot day outdoors	The sun beat down on us as we waited for the parade to start.
the air was thick and humid	Sticky Singapore weather	The air was thick and humid, and my shirt clung to my back.
a cool breeze rustled the leaves	A calm, pleasant moment	A cool breeze rustled the leaves as we sat on the park bench.
puddles dotted the pavement	The scene after rain	Puddles dotted the pavement as we walked to the MRT station.
the hawker centre was buzzing with activity	A busy, lively place	At noon, the hawker centre was buzzing with activity.
commuters were packed shoulder to shoulder	A crowded MRT train or bus	During the evening rush, commuters were packed shoulder to shoulder on the train.
the void deck was deserted	An empty, quiet place that feels uneasy	It was late at night, and the void deck was deserted.
the classroom was in chaos	A noisy, disorderly scene	When the teacher stepped out, the classroom was in chaos.
a dim street lamp cast long shadows	A dark, tense night scene	A dim street lamp cast long shadows across the empty car park.
the playground was bathed in golden evening light	A peaceful, happy ending scene	By the time we left, the playground was bathed in golden evening light.

7 Actions and movement

A precise verb often does the work of a whole phrase. Instead of 'walked' or 'ran', choose a verb that shows how and why the character moves.

Strong verbs for movement

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
dashed towards	Running fast with a purpose	I dashed towards the bus stop as the bus pulled in.
tiptoed past	Moving quietly so as not to be heard	I tiptoed past my parents' room so that I would not wake them.
scrambled to my feet	Getting up quickly after a fall	I scrambled to my feet and checked my knees for cuts.
lost my footing	Slipping or tripping	I lost my footing on the wet staircase and grabbed the railing.
darted behind a pillar	Hiding quickly	When I heard footsteps, I darted behind a pillar.
trudged home	Walking slowly when tired or sad	After losing the match, we trudged home in silence.
sprang into action	Reacting quickly in an emergency	When the old lady fell, my sister sprang into action.
lunged forward	A sudden move to catch or grab something	I lunged forward and caught the glass just before it hit the floor.
staggered backwards	Losing balance after a shock or push	The boy staggered backwards when the ball hit him.
edged closer	Moving slowly and carefully towards something	I edged closer to the box to see what was moving inside.
snatched the bag	Grabbing roughly and quickly	A man on a bicycle snatched the bag from her hand.
rushed to her side	Hurrying to help someone	I rushed to her side and helped her pick up the oranges.

8 Sounds

A sound is a quick way to pull the reader into a scene or to signal that something is about to happen.

Sounds and silence

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
a deafening crash	Something heavy falling or breaking	A deafening crash came from the kitchen.
a piercing scream	Someone in danger or shock	A piercing scream rang out across the playground.
the screech of tyres	A near accident on the road	The screech of tyres made everyone at the crossing turn.
the steady patter of rain	A calm or sleepy mood	I fell asleep to the steady patter of rain on the window.
a low rumble of thunder	A storm in the distance	A low rumble of thunder warned us to leave the pool.
muffled voices	Sounds heard through a wall or door	I heard muffled voices coming from the staff room.
a faint rustle	A small sound that builds suspense	There was a faint rustle in the bushes behind us.
the shrill ring of the school bell	The start or end of a school scene	The shrill ring of the school bell signalled the end of recess.
the room fell silent	A sudden stop in noise after a shock	The moment the principal walked in, the room fell silent.
a sickening thud	Someone or something hitting the ground hard	He fell from the monkey bars and landed with a sickening thud.

9 Building suspense

Slow the story down just before the turning point. Short sentences and small details make the reader want to know what happens next.

Phrases for the turning point

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
Just then,	Introducing a sudden event	Just then, the lights in the hall went out.
Out of nowhere,	Something appears unexpectedly	Out of nowhere, a cyclist swerved onto the footpath.
Without warning,	A sudden change with no sign before it	Without warning, the shelf tipped over.
Something did not feel right.	A short sentence to create unease	The gate was open and the house was dark. Something did not feel right.
I had a nagging feeling that	A worry the character cannot shake off	I had a nagging feeling that I had left something behind.
There was no turning back.	The moment a choice is made	I stepped onto the stage. There was no turning back.
Before I could react,	Things happen too fast to stop	Before I could react, the ball smashed through the window.
The seconds dragged on.	Waiting that feels very long	Nobody spoke. The seconds dragged on.
Slowly, the door creaked open.	Revealing something bit by bit	Slowly, the door creaked open, and a small face peeped out.
I did not know it yet, but	Hinting at trouble ahead without giving it away	I did not know it yet, but that small lie would soon cost me a friend.

10 Openings, endings and reflection

A strong opening drops the reader into the action, a sound or a line of speech. A strong ending shows what the character learnt or how they changed, in a sentence or two, without preaching.

Openings

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
CRASH. The sound came from	Opening with a sound that makes the reader ask what happened	CRASH. The sound came from the kitchen, and then the house went silent.
"Has anyone seen ...?"	Opening with a line of speech that sets up the problem	"Has anyone seen my wallet?" Dad called, patting his empty pockets.
The moment I stepped into	Starting in a new place	The moment I stepped into the new classroom, thirty pairs of eyes turned towards me.
I had always believed that	Starting with a belief the story will change	I had always believed that I was too shy to make friends, until the school camp.
It all started with	Starting with a small cause	It all started with a crumpled note on my desk.
It was the last day of	Opening on a day that is about to change	It was the last day of the school holidays, and I had not touched my workbook.
The clock read	Opening with time pressure	The clock read 7.25 a.m., and I was still in my pyjamas.
Everyone had gone home except	A quiet, lonely opening	Everyone had gone home except me and the school cleaner.
Of all the mistakes I have made,	Opening with reflection before the story	Of all the mistakes I have made, the one at the swimming complex still makes me cringe.
Had I known what would happen,	Opening with a hint of regret	Had I known what would happen, I would never have opened that cupboard.

Endings and reflection

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
From that day on,	A lasting change in behaviour	From that day on, I always checked the stove before leaving the house.
I learnt the hard way that	A lesson from a mistake	I learnt the hard way that rushing through my work only leads to careless mistakes.
Looking back, I realise that	Reflecting from a later time	Looking back, I realise that my friend was trying to protect me.
I will never again	A promise not to repeat a mistake	I will never again leave my homework to the last minute.
The experience taught me the value of	Naming the lesson simply	The experience taught me the value of honesty.
I made a silent promise to	A private decision at the end	As Grandpa slept, I made a silent promise to visit him every week.
Whenever I pass by	A memory linked to a place	Whenever I pass by the old playground, I remember that afternoon.
As I drifted off to sleep that night,	A calm, closing moment	As I drifted off to sleep that night, I smiled at how the day had turned out.
I was glad that I had	Feeling good about a choice	Although I was scolded, I was glad that I had told the truth.
I finally understood why	Realising why someone acted as they did	I finally understood why Dad always double-checked the gate at night.

11 Time connectors and transitions

Connectors move the reader smoothly from one moment to the next. Vary them so that not every sentence begins with 'Then' or 'After that'.

Moving through time

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
Moments later,	A short time after	Moments later, the ambulance arrived.
In the blink of an eye,	Something happens very quickly. Common, so use it once at most.	In the blink of an eye, the puppy was gone.
By the time I turned around,	A fresher way to show something happening very quickly	By the time I turned around, the puppy was gone.
Meanwhile,	Two things happening at the same time	Meanwhile, my brother was searching the other end of the market.
After what seemed like forever,	Waiting that feels very long. Common, so use it once at most.	After what seemed like forever, the doctor came out of the room.
I had read every poster on the wall twice	A fresher way to show a long wait	By the time the doctor came out of the room, I had read every poster on the wall twice.

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
By the time	One event finishes before another	By the time we reached the hall, the concert had started.
As soon as	One action follows straight after another	As soon as the bell rang, we raced to the canteen.
No sooner had ... than	A formal way to say one thing happened right after another	No sooner had I sat down than the teacher called my name.
Later that evening,	Moving to a new scene the same day	Later that evening, I told Mum everything.
The next morning,	Moving to the following day	The next morning, there was a note on my desk.
Eventually,	After a long time or many tries	Eventually, the kitten crept out from under the car.
At that very moment,	Stressing exact timing	At that very moment, the door swung open.
While I was	Something interrupts an action	While I was crossing the road, I heard someone call my name.
Before long,	Soon after, without much waiting	Before long, the whole class had joined in the search.
Hardly had ... when	A formal way to show that something happened almost immediately after another event	Hardly had we started the game when it began to pour.

12 Situational writing

Read the task carefully. Find the Purpose (why you write), Audience (who reads it, which sets a formal or friendly tone) and Context (the situation and the details you must include). Use formal phrases for a principal, a company or someone you do not know, and friendly phrases for a friend or relative. Cover every point the task asks for.

Formal letters and emails

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
Dear Mr Lim,	Opening when you know the person's name	Dear Mr Lim, I am the class chairperson of 6 Integrity.
Dear Sir or Madam,	Opening when you do not know the person's name	Dear Sir or Madam, I am writing about the lost item I reported last week.
I am writing to	Stating your purpose in the first sentence	I am writing to invite you to our school's Sports Day.
I would like to inform you that	Giving news or information	I would like to inform you that the class party has been moved to Friday.
I would be grateful if you could	A polite request	I would be grateful if you could reply by 15 May.
Could you kindly	A shorter polite request	Could you kindly let me know if the venue is available?
I would like to apologise for	A formal apology	I would like to apologise for the noise my friends and I made in the library.
Please accept my sincere apologies	A stronger formal apology	Please accept my sincere apologies for the trouble caused.
I would like to thank you for	Thanking someone formally	I would like to thank you for your prompt help when I was injured.
I would like to suggest that	Giving a suggestion or recommendation	I would like to suggest that the event be held in the school hall instead.
The event will be held on	Giving the date, time and place clearly	The event will be held on 12 July at 9 a.m. in the school hall.
Should you have any questions,	Offering more help before closing	Should you have any questions, please contact me by email.
I look forward to your reply.	A polite closing line	Thank you for your time. I look forward to your reply.
Yours sincerely,	Closing a formal letter or email that began with a name	Yours sincerely, Nur Aisyah (Class Chairperson)
Yours faithfully,	Closing a formal letter or email that began with Dear Sir or Madam	Yours faithfully, Ryan Lee (Class 6 Kindness)

- In a real letter or email, the greeting (such as Dear Mr Lim,) and the sign-off (such as Yours sincerely,) each go on their own line. The examples here run them on to save space.

Informal letters and emails

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
How have you been?	A friendly opening	Hi Kai Wen, how have you been? I miss our chats at recess.
I couldn't wait to tell you about	Sharing news with a friend	I couldn't wait to tell you about our class trip to the Science Centre.
Guess what?	Building interest in a friendly way	Guess what? Something funny happened at the swimming carnival last Saturday.
I really appreciate	Thanking a friend or relative	I really appreciate the birthday card you sent me.
Sorry I couldn't make it to	A friendly apology	Sorry I couldn't make it to your party. I was down with a fever.
Hope to hear from you soon.	A friendly closing line	Hope to hear from you soon. Take care.
Best wishes,	A warm sign-off for a relative or friend	Best wishes, Hui Min
Your friend,	A sign-off for a close friend	Your friend, Arjun

- The greeting (such as Hi Kai Wen,) and the sign-off (such as Best wishes,) each go on their own line in a real letter or email.

13 Oral: Stimulus-based Conversation starters

In the Stimulus-based Conversation you talk with the examiners about a topic linked to a photo. These starters help you give a clear opinion, back it up with a reason and add a personal example. Keep your answers natural, as in a real conversation.

Opinions, reasons, examples and extending your answer

Phrase	When to use it	Example sentence
In my opinion,	Giving your view clearly	In my opinion, every student should learn to swim.
I feel that	Giving a gentler view	I feel that the boy in the photo is enjoying himself.
I strongly believe that	Giving a firm view	I strongly believe that we should not litter in parks.
I partly agree, because	Showing you can see both sides	I partly agree that every child should have a phone, because it helps in an emergency, but it can also be a distraction in class.
This is because	Giving a reason straight after your view	This is because swimming can save lives.
One reason is that	Introducing your first reason	One reason is that recycling reduces the waste sent to Semakau Landfill.
Another reason is that	Adding a second reason	Another reason is that volunteering helps us understand others better.
The main reason I say this is that	Stressing your most important reason	The main reason I say this is that cycling is something my whole family enjoys together.
I remember a time when	Starting a personal example	I remember a time when my class cleaned up East Coast Park.
This photo reminds me of	Linking the photo to your own life	This photo reminds me of my first day at primary school.
For example, last year	Giving a recent example	For example, last year my cousin and I sold cookies for charity.
Something similar happened to	Sharing a story about someone you know	Something similar happened to my neighbour when her cat went missing.
On the other hand,	Looking at the other side	On the other hand, some people may not have time to exercise.
If I were in that situation, I would	Imagining what you would do	If I were in that situation, I would ask an adult for help.
I have not tried it, but I imagine	Answering about something you have not done	I have not tried rock climbing, but I imagine it would be exciting.
Could you repeat the question, please?	Politely asking when you did not hear clearly	Sorry, could you repeat the question, please?

14 Use phrases well

A phrase list is a toolbox, not a script. These habits keep your writing natural.

Five habits

Tip	What to do	Example
Vary them	Use each phrase only once in a composition and mix phrases with your own words.	Do not write 'my mouth went dry' twice. The second time, show the nerves through an action, such as checking your notes again.
Do not force them	Only use a phrase if it fits the moment and the strength of the feeling.	Dropping a pencil does not need 'a chill ran down my spine'.
Match the register	Keep formal phrases for formal readers and friendly phrases for friends.	Write 'I would be grateful if you could' to a principal, not 'Can you help me out'.
Keep tenses consistent	Most compositions are in the past tense. Change the phrase to match.	Write 'my mouth went dry', not 'my mouth goes dry', in a past-tense story.
Keep it believable	Choose details a Primary 6 pupil would really notice in Singapore.	A hot, crowded MRT train is more convincing than a snowy forest you have never seen.