IN THE CLASSROOM

Building literacy capabilities for Geography

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Making ALARM (thanks Max Woods) friendly for Geography: MEET, IDEAL and Bubbles.

MEET and IDEAL paragraphs

Acronyms like PEEL have long been used to guide student writing, however without direct explicit instruction students may still feel overwhelmed with putting information together.

MEET *is* PEEL, with a stronger emphasis on making the acronym stand for directive statements that tell students what to do explicitly. By revising the use of acronyms to incorporate a clearer direction it supports students to organise their ideas prior to writing.

IDEAL is more explicitly linked to the ALARM Matrix, however, builds on the explicit nature of directing students through writing.

Don't know ALARM? Alarm, an introduction – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnZ2TiBh-QY

Bubbles

When focusing on issue-based writing in Geography, students with lower literacy levels benefit from following an ALARM style guided approach moving from low to higher order writing. Using acronyms can work to guide students through this process, building responses in tables too, however, can be overwhelming.

This scaffold aims to further target the steps of the collecting information, then deal with the linking of ideas. Plus, it's fun?

HSC Minimum Standards: Writing

Students seeking to achieve their HSC must attain a tier 3 in the HSC Minimum Standards tests. Numeracy and reading provide students with feedback, however writing which is marked in a similar way to NAPLAN writing tests, does not provide students with any feedback in order to seek improvement. The scaffold here is an adaptation of the criteria students will be tested upon in the Writing section for the Minimum Standards and can potentially be used as a peer marking activity amongst students.

It should be noted that students are asked to write creatively, however, stimulus material such as a photograph of an ecosystem, urban landscape or development issue as a part of a summative task nearing the end of the topic where students can be asked to write creatively but not limited to using content knowledge as well. Often students who do not feel confident to write academically can express their understanding of content through more informal discussions or writing styles.

Examples might be:

- **Stage 5 – Human Wellbeing**
  - Compose a piece of writing about the importance of human wellbeing.
  - Suggested stimulus: photograph of a homeless person (face hidden)

- **Stage 6 – Ecosystems at Risk**
  - How would you convince someone they should save this environment?
  - Suggested stimulus: photograph of a landscape

- **Stage 6 – Urban Places**
  - Pick a location you can see in the photograph of the city where you would want to live
  - Why would you want to live there?
  - Suggested stimulus: cityscape / photo of slums vs formal housing

Writing with structure within a paragraph (MEET)

Make your main idea clear upfront

What idea do you want to you want the reader to know?

Try to use key words from the question.
If needed, use a descriptive or evaluative term.

Expand on your main idea with examples and evidence

Give a word description and some *evidence (data or examples)*

E.g. The Amazon rainforest has tall trees *reaching up to 100m*.

Sentence starters:

For example
This is shown by
Evidence for this is

Explain what effects there are likely to be

Explain by showing the effect/s your evidence has. Use *linking phrases*

E.g. Cutting down tall trees *leads to* habitat loss and species extinction.

Sentence starters:

This means
Because of this
As a result

Tie back your main idea

Summarise the main point again using key words and a *firm tone*.

E.g. *It is clear* that the loss of tall trees in the Amazon has negative consequences for the environment.

Sentence starters:

It is clear that
It can be concluded
We can therefore see

Writing with structure within a paragraph (IDEAL)

Each paragraph has a standard format which surrounds the main idea you are presenting:

- **I**dentify and define your idea/argument upfront
  - ✓ Each paragraph should have one core idea related to the question.
  - ✓ This first topic sentence may also include an evaluation or show your direction of an argument.

- **D**escribe your point in general detail – characteristics and features
  - ✓ Provide a description which shows you understand the theory behind the idea

- **E**xplain your point with examples – names and numbers if appropriate
  - ✓ Use examples to show you can apply the idea to real world case studies

- **A**pply the key verb and key terms
  - ✓ Ensure that you have connected your idea to the key words in the question (e.g. sustainability) and write in a structure that meets the verb (see table below)

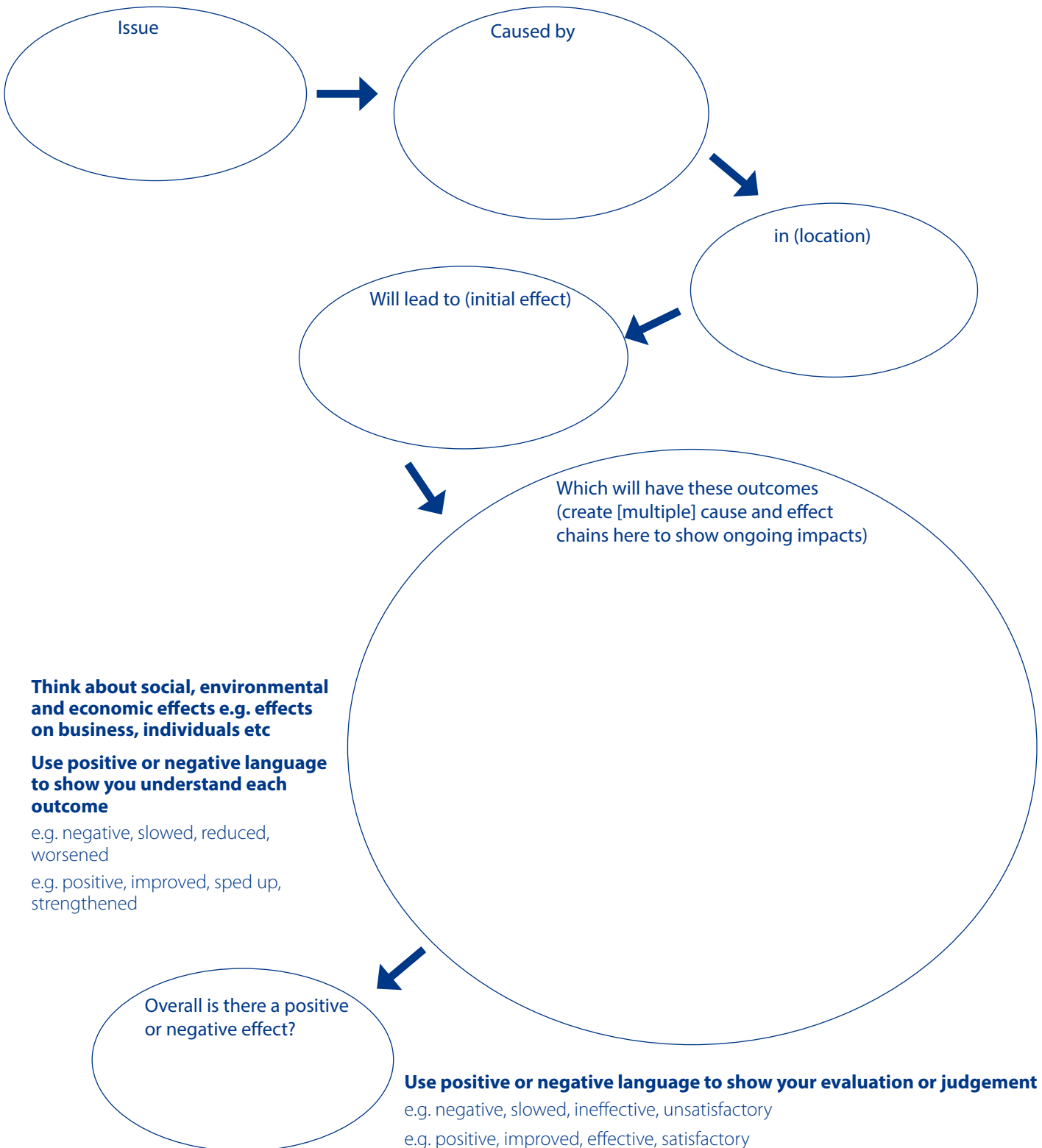| EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	EVALUATE	JUSTIFY
Show the initial effects of your idea	What are the ongoing effects of what will or could occur next (at least 2 in a chain) OR The relationships with other ideas	Make a judgement about your point/ example or its effects	Give reasons AND evidence to prove your point
THINK: What happens as a direct result? Have you used a linking phrase/term?	**THINK:** What will happen in the future based on my idea? Are these effects positive or negative?	**THINK:** Were they positive or negative/successful not successful? Did they improve, work towards or uphold your key idea?	**THINK:** What evidence supports your idea? Is my argument responding to the question asked?

- **L**ink back to the question and conclude this idea/argument
  - ✓ Use words from the question to show how you have answered it directly from by referring to this idea in this paragraph.
  - ✓ You may wish to start your concluding sentence with a high modality starter e.g. "As has been demonstrated…" or "It can therefore be concluded…"

Bubble Response Building

Fill in the bubble to help build a response to the question below. When you have mapped out some individual ideas you will stitch them together in proper sentences.

For each of the arrows you could use a linking phrase to join ideas together and show how they are related. Examples are: caused, has the consequence, led to, resulted in, had the impact of, as a result etc.

QUESTION:

Issue

Caused by

in (location)

Will lead to (initial effect)

Which will have these outcomes (create [multiple] cause and effect chains here to show ongoing impacts)

Think about social, environmental and economic effects e.g. effects on business, individuals etc

Use positive or negative language to show you understand each outcome

e.g. negative, slowed, reduced, worsened

e.g. positive, improved, sped up, strengthened

Overall is there a positive or negative effect?

Use positive or negative language to show your evaluation or judgement

e.g. negative, slowed, ineffective, unsatisfactory
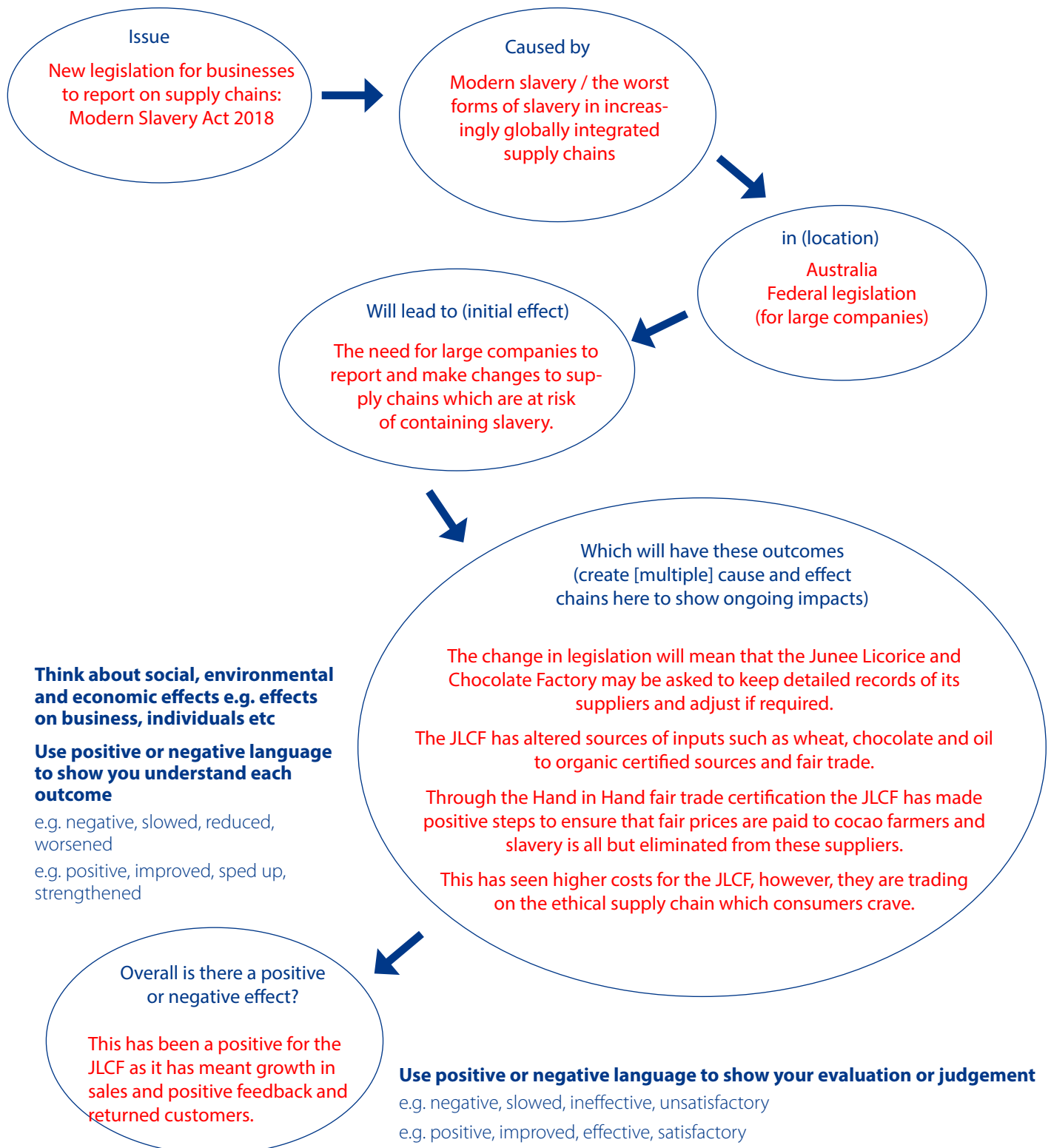
e.g. positive, improved, effective, satisfactory

Bubble Response Building

WORKED EXAMPLE

QUESTION: Evaluate ONE external linkage on an economic enterprise you have studied.

Issue

New legislation for businesses to report on supply chains: Modern Slavery Act 2018

Caused by

Modern slavery / the worst forms of slavery in increasingly globally integrated supply chains

in (location)

Australia
Federal legislation
(for large companies)

Will lead to (initial effect)

The need for large companies to report and make changes to supply chains which are at risk of containing slavery.

Which will have these outcomes (create [multiple] cause and effect chains here to show ongoing impacts)

The change in legislation will mean that the Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory may be asked to keep detailed records of its suppliers and adjust if required.

The JLCF has altered sources of inputs such as wheat, chocolate and oil to organic certified sources and fair trade.

Through the Hand in Hand fair trade certification the JLCF has made positive steps to ensure that fair prices are paid to cocao farmers and slavery is all but eliminated from these suppliers.

This has seen higher costs for the JLCF, however, they are trading on the ethical supply chain which consumers crave.

Think about social, environmental and economic effects e.g. effects on business, individuals etc

Use positive or negative language to show you understand each outcome

e.g. negative, slowed, reduced, worsened

e.g. positive, improved, sped up, strengthened

Overall is there a positive or negative effect?

This has been a positive for the JLCF as it has meant growth in sales and positive feedback and returned customers.

Use positive or negative language to show your evaluation or judgement

e.g. negative, slowed, ineffective, unsatisfactory

e.g. positive, improved, effective, satisfactory

HSC Minimum Standards Writing Assessment criteria

What are you looking for?	Examples of what to look for	How well would you score this response? 1 = not so good 5 = very well done				
A clear message and theme in the response	• Does the response match up with the topic?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Is the message in the response clear?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Does the response have a few different ideas (more than one or two)?	1	2	3	4	5
A logical structure and good use of paragraphs	• Are paragraphs are used for new ideas?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Do the ideas appear to be written in the right order?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Has there been editing of the writing to fix issues?	1	2	3	4	5
A range of terms are used to show a wide vocabulary	• Are words used that connect to the topic/theme?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Are a wide range of terms used? / Is repetition avoided?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Are language devices used to help the reader engage in the response? Examples of language devices: *Alliteration, rhyme, allegory, metaphor/simile, onomatopoeia.*	1	2	3	4	5
A sound understanding of grammar	• Are there many grammatical errors? / Do most sentences read well or sound like they make sense?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Is the same tense used throughout the response?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Are pronouns used instead of names when appropriate?	1	2	3	4	5
Varying sentence types are used to engage the reader	• Are simple (short to the point) and more complex sentences used throughout? Example of a simple sentence: *Burning coal pollutes the atmosphere.* Example of a more complex sentence: *Burning coal, which releases toxic gasses such as CO_2, pollutes the atmosphere.*	1	2	3	4	5
Correct punctuation	• Are basic rules of punctuation followed? Examples of punctuation: *Commas, full stops, brackets, exclamation points, semicolon, question mark.*	1	2	3	4	5
Correct spelling	• Are common words spelled correctly?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Are more complex or less common words spelled correctly?	1	2	3	4	5
	• Do spelling errors look like they are easy ones to make?	1	2	3	4	5