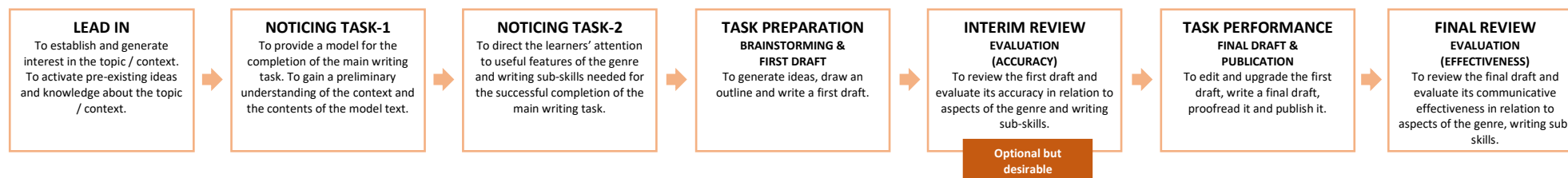


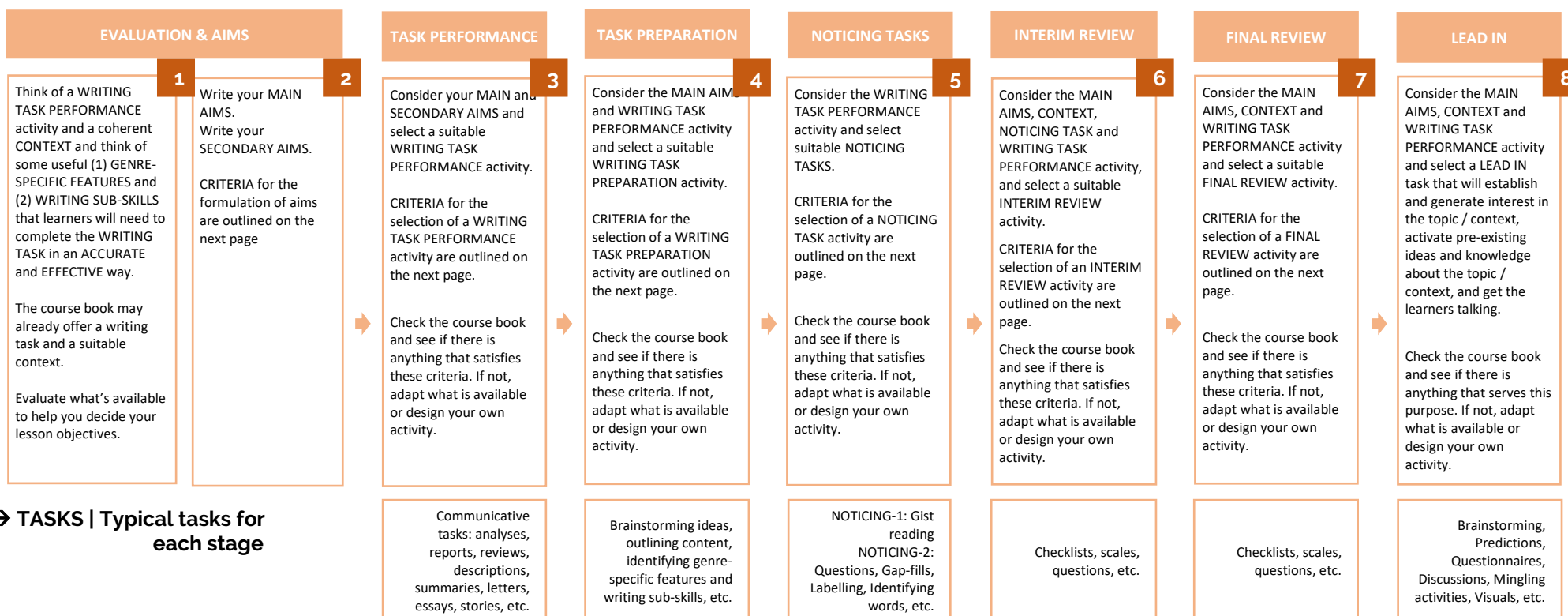
Planning a WRITING lesson using a TASK-BASED approach| THE PLANNING PROCESS

A task-based approach to language teaching is an approach that places the emphasis on communicative activities (i.e. tasks) whose focus is primarily on meaning and communicative effectiveness. In a task-based lesson, learners are required to complete communicative tasks without much language control from the teacher as long as they are effective in completing the task. For a writing lesson, it's also useful to consider a process-genre approach to writing: this approach promotes (1) the analysis of typical features of a specific genre (e.g. content, organization, language, etc.) and (2) a writing process based on brainstorming, drafting, editing, re-drafting, proofreading and publishing. This has the potential of not only raising awareness of the purpose, conventions and effect of a specific genre, but also promoting the development of useful writing habits.

→ LESSON STAGES | Sequence for the delivery



→ LESSON PLANNING STEPS | Recommended sequence for planning



→ TASKS | Typical tasks for each stage

Step 1 – EVALUATION

Think of a WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity and a coherent CONTEXT (e.g. writing a postcard from a holiday, writing a letter of complaint about a faulty item, writing a film review, etc.) and think of some useful (1) GENRE-SPECIFIC FEATURES and (2) WRITING SUB-SKILLS that learners will need to complete the WRITING TASK in an ACCURATE and EFFECTIVE way. The course book may already offer a writing task and a suitable context. Many course books also support writing tasks with a MODEL TEXT: this may contain useful examples of genre-specific features and writing skills which learners are encouraged to analyze and notice. Evaluate what's available to help you decide your lesson objectives.

Let's imagine that the course book offers a WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity and a suitable CONTEXT, and a MODEL TEXT which I have already evaluated. I have enough to start writing my aims.

Step 2 – AIMS

Write your MAIN AIMS. Make sure you clearly state the WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity and its corresponding COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME, the CONTEXT and the GENRE-SPECIFIC FEATURES and WRITING-SUB-SKILLS which you intend to emphasize.

E.g. To better enable learners to write a letter of complaint (WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity) requesting a compensation (COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME) for a damaged item bought online (CONTEXT) by raising awareness of:

(1) GENRE-SPECIFIC FEATURES such as:

- *content and organization (e.g. Paragraphed: statement of purpose > description of problem, demand)*
- *vocabulary and functional language (e.g. I am writing to... / damaged, scratched, out of order, highly dissatisfied, etc. / I expect... / Etc.)*
- *style (e.g. Formal)*

(2) WRITING SUB-SKILLS such as:

- *writing process (e.g. brainstorming, outlining, drafting, reviewing, publishing and evaluating)*
- *accurate grammar (e.g. simple past, passive voice)*
- *correct spelling*

Write your SECONDARY AIMS. Consider the nature of the WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity and decide what additional skill(s) (DIFFERENT from WRITING SKILLS) language learners will need to be able to successfully perform the task.

E.g. To enhance reading skills by promoting reading for gist in the context of a letter of complaint about a faulty item bought online.

Step 3 - TASK PERFORMANCE

Consider your MAIN and SECONDARY AIMS and select a suitable WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity. A purposeful WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity should (1) have a clear COMMUNICATIVE OUTCOME, (2) place the emphasis on both the OUTCOME and the PROCESS of writing (as opposed to the use of pre-selected language items), (3) have a specific AUDIENCE, (4) be sufficiently GENERATIVE (i.e. require learners to PRODUCE a meaningful message – NOT REPLICATE a model), (5) be AUTHENTIC and relate to REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS, (6) offer a suitable level of COGNITIVE and LINGUISTIC CHALLENGE. Check the course book and see if there is anything that satisfies these criteria. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

E.g. The course book offers a writing task in which learners are required to write a letter of complaint about a faulty item (the item can be chosen by the learners) bought online at a popular auction website. The letter should be addressed to the seller of the item. Learners are required to ask for a refund or exchange. The task is purposeful and meets the criteria. I will use it as it is. I will ask the learners to write a FINAL DRAFT of the letter, PROOFREAD it and PUBLISH it.

Step 4 - TASK PREPARATION

Consider the MAIN AIMS and WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity and select a suitable WRITING TASK PREPARATION activity. A purposeful WRITING TASK PREPARATION activity will allow learners to: (1) understand the OBJECTIVE of the WRITING TASK and the AUDIENCE, (2) brainstorm INFORMATION, IDEAS, CONCEPTS, etc. needed during for the WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE, (3) outline / sketch the sections of the WRITING PERFORMANCE TASK activity (often by taking notes), (4) write a FIRST DRAFT. Check the course book and see if there is anything that satisfies these criteria. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

E.g. The course doesn't offer a WRITING TASK PREPARATION activity. I need to design my own activity. I will distribute a worksheet with separate sections clearly signposted with the following headings: Who are you writing to? / Why are you writing this letter? / What's the problem? / What do you want the company to do? Learners will be required to write short notes only. After this I will distribute a blank worksheet where learners can write their first draft.

Step 5 - NOTICING TASK(s)

Consider the MAIN and SECONDARY AIMS and the WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity, and select useful NOTICING TASKS. A purposeful NOTICING TASK is often made of written text (i.e. a model text) and should be divided into two smaller tasks: a first task designed to establish the CONTEXT of the model text and IDEAS for the WRITING TASK (this is usually realized via GIST reading); a second task designed to RAISE AWARENESS of useful GENRE-SPECIFIC FEATURES and WRITING SUB-SKILLS employed by the writer. Check the course book and see if there is anything that satisfies these criteria. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

E.g. The course book offers a reading activity in which learners are required to identify the different sections of the letter and some useful expressions used by the writer. It partially matches my AIMS. I will use it as it is, but I will need to design (1) a first GIST task in which I will ask the learners to quickly read the model letter and think about what the company will do in response to the complaint, (2) a second reading task in which I will ask learners to (a) match pre-selected sections of a letter of complaint (i.e. Why he is writing > What the problem is > What he wants) to their corresponding sections in the model letter, (b) underline two useful adjectives the writer used to describe the problem, (c) one expression the writer used to start the letter and one expression the writer used to make a demand, and (3) a final reflection activity to decide if the letter sounds FORMAL or INFORMAL and why. This will ensure the NOTICING TASK is aligned with the first objectives of my MAIN AIMS (i.e. raising awareness of GENRE-SPECIFIC FEATURES).

Step 6 - INTERIM REVIEW (optional but desirable)

Consider the MAIN AIMS, CONTEXT, NOTICING TASK(s) and WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity, and select a suitable INTERIM REVIEW activity. A useful INTERIM REVIEW activity will allow learners to REVIEW the FIRST DRAFT and EVALUATE its ACCURACY in relation to GENRE-SPECIFIC FEATURES and WRITING SUB-SKILLS, and raise awareness of ways to upgrade it. Check the course book and see if there is anything that serves this purpose. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

E.g. The course book doesn't offer an INTERIM REVIEW activity. I will design my own. I will ask learners to swap their writings and give them a worksheet with a checklist which they can use to review each other's work. The checklist will encourage them to consider the following and make relevant notes: Is it clear who the writer is writing to? - Are there clear sections outlining 'Why he/she is writing', 'What the problem is', 'What he/she wants' - Are Simple Past verbs correct? Underline incorrect ones - Is the spelling correct? Underline incorrect words. After this, letters and checklists are returned to the original writers. This will enable learners to receive some feedback on their FIRST DRAFT. This will ensure my lesson is aligned with the second objectives of my MAIN AIMS (i.e. raising awareness of WRITING SUB-SKILLS).

Step 7 - FINAL REVIEW

Consider the MAIN AIMS, CONTEXT and WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity and select a suitable FINAL REVIEW activity. A purposeful FINAL REVIEW activity will allow learners to REVIEW the FINAL writing PRODUCTION and EVALUATE its COMMUNICATIVE EFFECTIVENESS (i.e. the effect that the writing production has on its audience). Check the course book and see if there is anything that satisfies these criteria. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

E.g. The course book doesn't offer a FINAL REVIEW activity. I will design my own. I will ask learners to display their writing productions on the whiteboard and ask them to review them in pairs. I will ask them to add a star symbol next to the writing productions they think will have the desired effect on the audience. I can write on the whiteboard: 'Which letter will definitely make the seller exchange or refund the item? Why? - Finally, I will wrap up the lesson by asking learners to discuss the following questions: What do you think you improved the most today? What would like to further improve?

Step 8 - LEAD IN

Consider the MAIN AIMS, CONTEXT and WRITING TASK PERFORMANCE activity and select a LEAD IN task that will establish and generate interest in the topic / context, activate pre-existing ideas and knowledge about the topic / context, and get the learners talking. Check the course book and see if there is anything that serves this purpose. If not, adapt what is available or design your own activity.

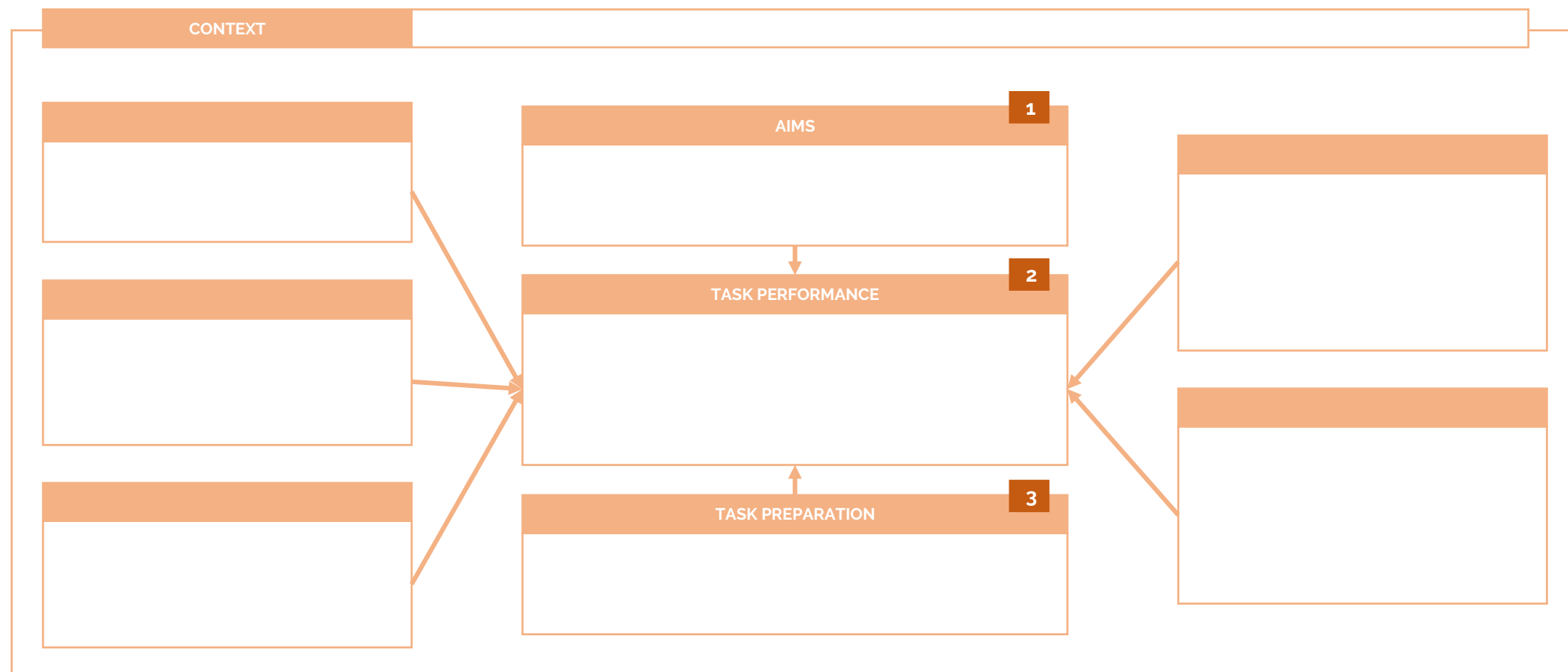
E.g. The course book offers a suitable LEAD IN. There's a picture of the logo of a popular online auction website and the following questions: Do you know this website? Have you ever bought a product online? What can go wrong when buying a product online?. I will use it as it is.

This is the end of the process. By starting our planning process with the formulation of AIMS and the TASK PERFORMANCE activity, we ensure that all other activities are coherent with and focused on the production of the intended OUTCOMES. However, **the DELIVERY will follow the recommended framework sequence: LEAD IN > NOTICING TASK(s) > TASK PREPARATION (Brainstorming + First draft) > INTERIM REVIEW (Accuracy) > TASK PERFORMANCE (Final draft + Publishing) > FINAL REVIEW (Effectiveness)**

THIS PROCESS is a RECOMMENDATION. As long as you start your plan with the MAIN AIMS and the TASK PERFORMANCE activity, you can follow ANY SEQUENCE. The important is not to lose sight of the lesson CONTEXT, OBJECTIVE(S) and OUTCOME(S) and build all the activities in such a way that they purposefully and coherently support each other.

PRODUCTIVE SKILLS TBL WRITING | LESSON SKETCH

PLANNING PROCESS: start with AIMS, OUTCOMES & CONTEXT and the TASK PERFORMANCE activity. Plan the other activities in relation to these. Add/remove stages as needed.



DELIVERY SEQUENCE

