

Nelson English Usage

Digital resources for the Australian Curriculum

So you want to be a commentator?

1 Watch a 2-minute segment of a major sporting broadcast on television. You might choose Australian Rules, Rugby League or Union, cricket, netball, tennis or even an Olympic event. Listen to the commentator(s) analysing each moment of the game or event, play by play.

Suggested websites for streaming video

- [AFL match replays](#)
- [NRL videos](#)
- [CATV video](#)
- [Tennis Australia video](#)
- [ANZ Championship – Trans Tasman Netball League](#)

2 Make a list of sport-specific vocabulary terms used by the commentator during the segment.

3 Choose five terms from your list and define them in two or fewer sentences.

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4 Watch the same segment again, and take notes on both the commentator's speech and what actually occurs on-screen. You should consider things like emphasis, inflection, pace, point of view, tense, volume, rhythm, use of tautologies, cliches, alliteration, metaphors and similes.

5 Briefly summarise the content of the segment, considering occurrences such as:

- antagonism between competitors
- dummy-spits
- performances of particular players
- injuries
- marks and tackles
- penalties
- record-breaking
- scoring
- time-on/time-off

Try to refer to players by name, or, at the least, by number, and be clear about team names.

6 Rewatch the segment, and compare your summary to the commentary as you go. Then, rewrite your summary as a commentary below.

7 Submit your commentary for teacher feedback.

Teacher's comments

8 Revise your commentary according to teacher feedback, and then break into groups of three to record your commentaries. One person should perform the commentary, one person should ensure that the segment is playing, muted, at the same time, and a third person should be recording the audio. This will take at least two full classes for all three group members to take turns recording their commentary satisfactorily. You may need to edit your script as you go to suit pronunciation, emphasis and pacing.

9 Submit the recording as an MP3 file to your teacher, along with the full script you recorded.

Questions

1 When writing your script, who did you imagine as your audience? Do you think you wrote it from the point-of-view of someone who knows the sport, or as someone who needs to be introduced to the sport?

2 How would a different audience have changed what you wrote and performed?

3 Did you find any particular part of the task more challenging than the rest?

4 When recording the script, what was your experience in terms of pacing, emphasis and pronunciation? Was it hard to keep up with the action on screen, or hard to slow down for it?

5 When listening to the original commentary, did you notice any grammatical errors, clichés, tautologies, double negatives or wordiness? Did this impact upon the effectiveness of the commentary?

6 Who do you think was the intended audience of the original commentary?

7 In the original commentary, were there any terms or generalities that a novice would have found difficult to understand? Did you have difficulty understanding any parts of the original commentary?