

These tasks will help you prepare a piece of writing to enter the Orwell Youth Prize, on the theme  
**'Coming Up for Air: Writing the Climate Crisis'**



## Lesson 5 – Choose Your Form

Now that you have chosen a topic you want to write about – and done some reading or research about it – you need to choose a form.

For the Orwell Youth Prize, you can write in any form you want and that can seem a bit daunting at first. You can use our [Guide to Form](#) to help you choose.

And the following three exercises will help you.

### 1. **Recognise the different forms.**

Read the eight openings below and see if you can match each one to the correct form.

**Circle the letter** of the form you think it is in the column on the right – and then check the table of answers on page 4 to see whether you were right. There are two examples of each, as follows:

- A. Poetry
- B. Drama
- C. Journalism
- D. Fiction

No.	quote	Form
1	As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.	A B C D
2	One of those no-neck monsters hit me with a hot buttered biscuit so I have t' change!	A B C D
3	Dawn. And as the sun breaks through the piercing chill of night on the plain outside Korem, it lights up a biblical famine – now, in the twentieth century.	A B C D
4	What happens to a dream deferred? / Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?	A B C D
5	In hospital, Covid-19 has largely become a disease of the unvaccinated. The man in his 20s who had always watched what he ate, worked out in the gym, was too healthy to ever catch Covid badly. The 48-year-old who never got round to making the appointment.	A B C D
6	It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.	A B C D
7	Dusk, deserted road, and suddenly / I was a goat. To be truthful, it took / two minutes, though it seemed sudden, / for the horns to pop out of my skull ...	A B C D
8	She says St Barnabas would send out his dog to lick her and when he did she'd feel an icy cold wave all up an' down her.	A B C D

2. Which form best suits your topic?

Now think about how you respond to the reading you have done. For each of 1-4 below, circle the letter beside the statement that most closely fits how you feel. Then count how many of each letter you have chosen. This should give you an idea which way you are tending. Even if you have one each of A-D, just thinking about it will help you decide.

1)

A	I feel intense, personal emotion on this topic
B	I can hear two characters arguing about this topic
C	A neutral, balanced tone and approach are ideal for this topic
D	I could best explore this topic through characters and perspectives other than my own
E	The most effective way to explore this topic would be to make it interactive, as in the games I enjoy

2)

A	What I feel about the topic is complicated, difficult to put into words
B	This topic can be explored through people making speeches
C	This topic would benefit from dispassionate analysis
D	This topic could be explored through the actions and thoughts of one main character
E	This topic raises the typical gaming challenge of making choices and decisions

3)

A	The sounds and rhythms of the language of this topic are interesting, suggestive, provocative
B	I want to explore this topic through action and speech rather than description
C	This topic will be well served by precise factual information
D	This topic might be best explored through imagining a world different from the 'real' world – or the world we're in now
E	I have a strong sense of how I want an audience to feel as they navigate the challenges of this topic

4)

A	As I think about the topic, images and associations occur to me
B	I imagine this topic being played out in one or two scenes
C	I want to know more this topic after further research and explain it to others
D	I can imagine a key event or turning point on which I could centre my writing
E	I want my audience to help shape the narrative themselves – and for me to provide different options for the direction of a story on this topic

Check the next page to see which form might be best for you, based on your answers!

Mainly As: try Poetry  
Mainly Bs: try Drama  
Mainly Cs: try Journalism  
Mainly Ds: try Fiction  
Mainly Es: try Game Design

### 3. Try out two forms

Check the answers to Task 1: Recognise the form (next page).

Using the examples in the table as a guide, write the openings to two pieces, in two different forms of your choice. Then show them to someone in your class, a friend or family member.

KEY QUESTIONS: Did they recognise which form you were writing in? Did they think it was effective?

DECISION Which form do you now wish to write in? When you have decided, you are ready to plan and draft your entry to the Prize.

(Next page for the answers – and examples of each form.)

1	As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.	D	<i>Metamorphosis</i> by Franz Kafka (1915)
2	One of those no-neck monsters hit me with a hot buttered biscuit so I have t' change!	B	<i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> by Tennessee Williams (1976)
3	Dawn. And as the sun breaks through the piercing chill of night on the plain outside Korem, it lights up a biblical famine – now, in the twentieth century.	C	BBC News broadcast report by Michael Buerk (1984)
4	What happens to a dream deferred? / Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?	A	'Harlem' by Langston Hughes (1951)
5	In hospital, Covid-19 has largely become a disease of the unvaccinated. The man in his 20s who had always watched what he ate, worked out in the gym, was too healthy to ever catch Covid badly. The 48-year-old who never got round to making the appointment.	C	Guardian opinion piece – anonymous (2021)
6	It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.	D	<i>1984</i> by George Orwell (1949)
7	Dusk, deserted road, and suddenly / I was a goat. To be truthful, it took / two minutes, though it seemed sudden, / for the horns to pop out of my skull ...	A	'Goat' by Jo Shapcott (1998?)
8	She says St Barnabas would send out his dog to lick her and when he did she'd feel an icy cold wave all up an' down her.	B	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams (1947)