Top Tips for writing well: The 5 'Ps'

Purposeful
- Before you start writing, decide **who** you are writing for
- What is the text's key **purpose**?
- What **message** are you trying to put across?

Powerful
- Decide what is the most important and least important information – this will help you structure your text
- Start with a hook:
  - Use an amazing/ attention-grabbing fact
  - The phrase 'Did you know' is a useful way to start – it suggests to the reader that the fact is worth knowing
  - Does it pass the 'Hey' test? i.e. you should be able to put 'Hey!' in front of the first sentence e.g. 'Hey! This hoard of Roman coins is the largest ever found in Norfolk'
- Cut the clichés – use language that is engaging and vivid to 'show' not 'tell'
- Be accurate
- Don't leave the best till last

Punchy
- Keep text as short as possible – look out for waffle, repetition of facts or ideas, detail you could put elsewhere
- Don't start sentences with the same phrase or word e.g. However, This, That
- Keep text as simple as possible:
  - Avoid jargon – use simple language and plain English e.g. 'upside-down' instead of 'inverted', 'everyday' instead of 'daily basis'
  - Keep punctuation to a minimum
  - Don't start sentences with words that end with 'ing'
- Use the active rather than passive voice wherever possible:
  - Usually makes text easier to read
  - Makes text more immediate and lively
  - Usually gives you more information – active verbs show you **who** did **what** to **whom** e.g. British newspapers were prevented from showing the full extent of the Blitz [passive]
    Government censors prevented British newspapers from showing the full extent of the Blitz [active]
- Use short sentences as these impart information clearly. However, for variety, use some longer sentences to help your text flow. Combining sentences can also save words.
- Keep your paragraphs pithy with one point per paragraph.

Personal
- Think about tone – a more informal/ conversational tone is likely to be more engaging
- Address your audience directly by asking questions e.g. 'How has television changed since you started watching it?'

Back to purposeful:
- Once you've finished your text, test it against your original purpose and message
- Read it aloud
- Get others to check it