WRITING DEVELOPMENT

McCarthyism, 1950-54

16. Measuring Importance I – Modifiers of Importance

Many GCSE students, asked to compare the importance of an event or development, will simply list its results, as though their importance is self-evident.

It is not: you have to list the results, say *how important* you believe each to be, *and then explain* why/how you judge it important/unimportant.

For this, you will need to use modifiers of importance such as:

> **considerably, hugely, indispensably, particularly, profoundly, greatly**
> **to some degree, moderately, generally**
> **inconsequential, lesser, limited, little, minor, slight, some**

Say I have been asked to write the essay: 'How greatly were people in America affected by McCarthyism?', and the first group I wish to consider are the Hollywood 10. I plan the paragraph as follows:

- **Basic sentence**: They were ruined.
- **Modifier**: totally
- **Explanation of Effect**: they were fired, fined, imprisoned, blacklisted; some had to go to Europe.
- **Proving information**: 300 more actors, screenwriters, artists, civil rights activists, scientists and celebrities were accused and blacklisted

And I might write my first paragraph thus:

> The first group of people affected by McCarthyism were the Hollywood ten. They were totally ruined – fired, fined, imprisoned, blacklisted; some had to go to Europe, others never worked again. There followed 300 more actors, screenwriters, artists, civil rights activists, scientists and celebrities, who HUAC accused, tried and blacklisted.

1. Consider the following table, which lists two other targets of the McCarthy Scare. Fill the gaps, so as to plan what you would write for those groups in society:

Group	Modifier	Explanation of effect	Proving information
Lavender Scare	*profoundly*	→ dismissed → Executive Order 10450 → gay community terrorised	………………….
private citizens, public employees and organizations.	…………	………………….	………………….