

WRITING DEVELOPMENT

RULE #1: If anything I say on this page conflicts with what your teachers have told you, I am wrong, and they are right.

Homesteaders Problems and Solutions

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 great were the problems facing Homesteaders on the Plains?’, and the first problem I wish to consider is social isolation. I plan the paragraph as follows:

- **Basic sentence:** *They were socially isolated.*
- **Modifier:** major
- **Explanation of Effect:** No doctors or midwives → deaths; shut up in winter/ no social life → loneliness
- **Proving information:** Many women gave up their plots and moved into town

And I can write my first paragraph thus:

One major problem facing the early Homesteaders was that they were socially isolated. Being cut off from doctors or midwives led to unnecessary deaths, especially in childbirth. Moreover, shut up in winter as well as isolated, they were profoundly lonely and ‘longed for Spring’. Many women eventually gave up their plot and moved into town.

1. Use the following grid to plan what you would write for these other problems facing Homesteaders:

Result	Modifier	Explanation of effect	Proving information
Outlaws & bushwackers	Rival settlers, Bandits Vigilante cattlemen, some early lawmen
Lack of wood		→ no wood for fires or building
Indigenous Renegades	<i>limited</i>	Mrs Alderdice ... though, as a %age, few settlers were killed by Indigenous attacks
Disease	The death rate, especially from diphtheria, was high