

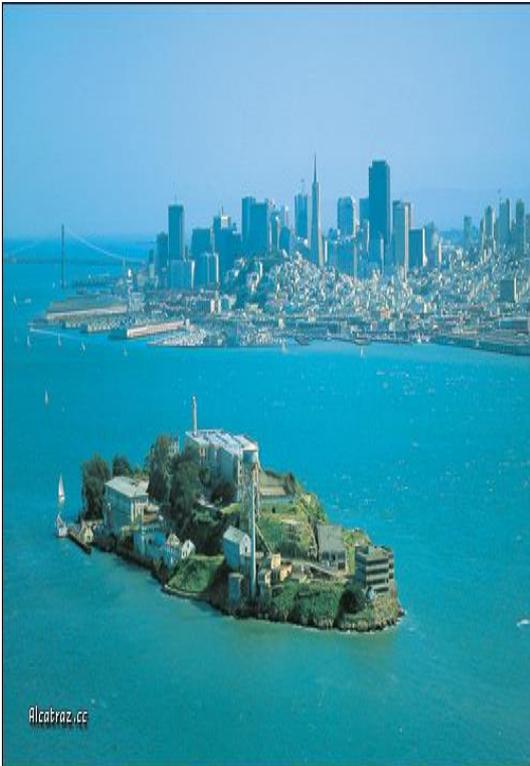
# ALCATRAZ

## S2 Home

## Learning



# The Big Picture



jotter/on paper.

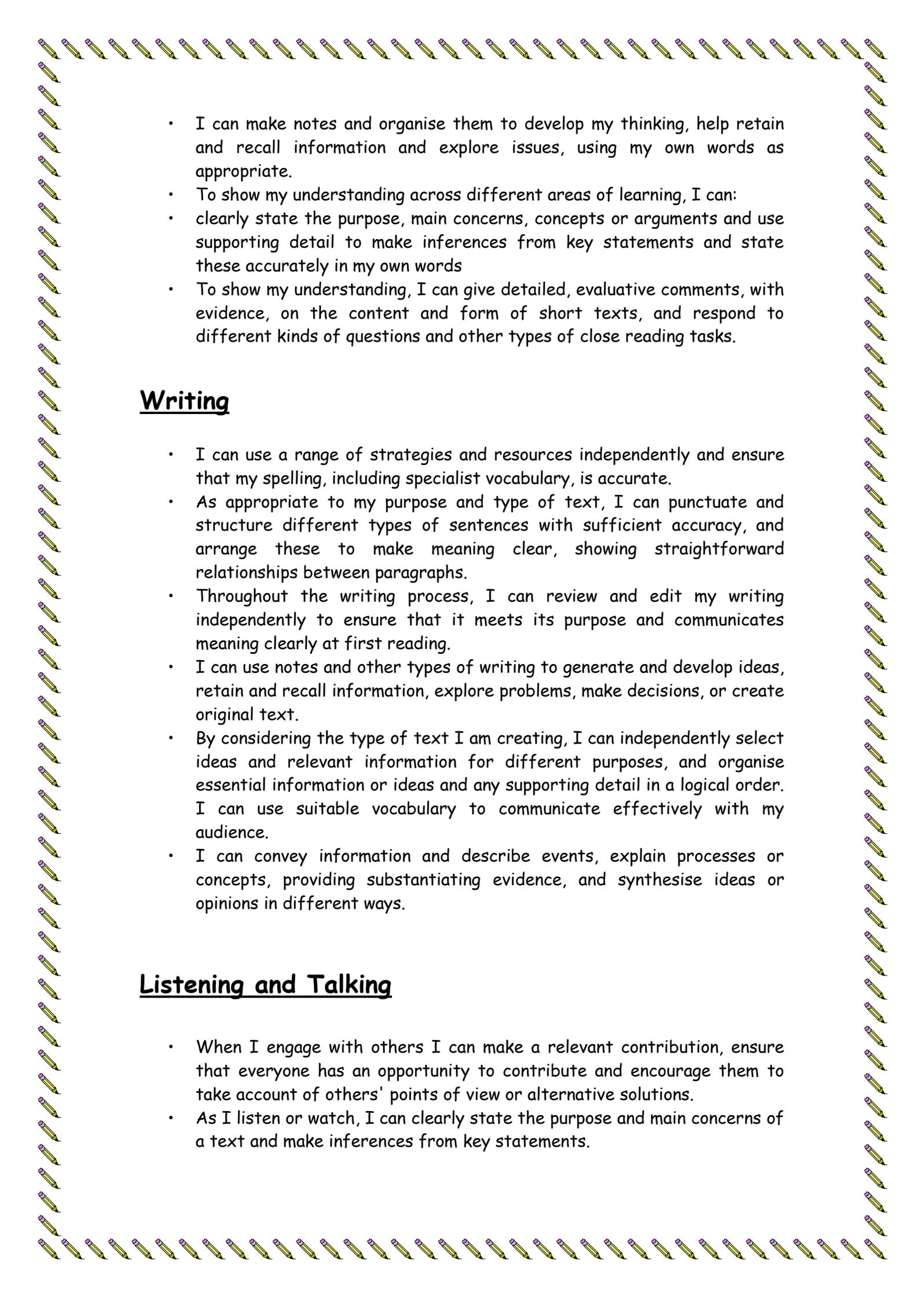
- On your own, you will read and work through this unit on 'Alcatraz.'
- Once the unit is completed, you will have a lot of information on Alcatraz and you will be asked to write a report on this topic and a piece of imaginative writing.
- You will receive the unit in two parts - this is part one which you should aim to complete over the next two weeks.
- You can write your answers in this booklet or in your

## Skills

During this unit you will develop your skills in Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking.

### Reading

- Before and as I read, I can apply strategies and use resources independently to help me find the information I need.
- Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select, sort, summarise, link and use information from different sources.

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- I can make notes and organise them to develop my thinking, help retain and recall information and explore issues, using my own words as appropriate.
  - To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can:
  - clearly state the purpose, main concerns, concepts or arguments and use supporting detail to make inferences from key statements and state these accurately in my own words
  - To show my understanding, I can give detailed, evaluative comments, with evidence, on the content and form of short texts, and respond to different kinds of questions and other types of close reading tasks.

## Writing

- I can use a range of strategies and resources independently and ensure that my spelling, including specialist vocabulary, is accurate.
- As appropriate to my purpose and type of text, I can punctuate and structure different types of sentences with sufficient accuracy, and arrange these to make meaning clear, showing straightforward relationships between paragraphs.
- Throughout the writing process, I can review and edit my writing independently to ensure that it meets its purpose and communicates meaning clearly at first reading.
- I can use notes and other types of writing to generate and develop ideas, retain and recall information, explore problems, make decisions, or create original text.
- By considering the type of text I am creating, I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, and organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order. I can use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience.
- I can convey information and describe events, explain processes or concepts, providing substantiating evidence, and synthesise ideas or opinions in different ways.

## Listening and Talking

- When I engage with others I can make a relevant contribution, ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and encourage them to take account of others' points of view or alternative solutions.
- As I listen or watch, I can clearly state the purpose and main concerns of a text and make inferences from key statements.

- As I listen or watch, I can make notes and organise these to develop thinking, help retain and recall information, explore issues and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate.

## The History of Alcatraz

Link to CfE:

- ✓ *Before and as I read, I can apply strategies and use resources independently to help me find the information I need.*
- ✓ *To show my understanding, I can give detailed, evaluative comments, with evidence, on the content and form of short texts, and respond to different kinds of questions and other types of close reading tasks. E*

### Task:

*Read the following passage about Alcatraz's history. Then answer the following questions in as much detail as possible because they will help you with your final report.*

Isolated in the San Francisco Bay, this little island has earned its nickname "The Rock". The name Alcatraz is the English version of the Spanish word 'Alcatrazes', meaning "pelican". The explorer Juan Manuel de Ayala gave the island its name because of all the pelicans he saw roosting there. The United States military was the island's first long-term resident, setting up a fortress in the 1850's during the California Gold Rush to protect the area's riches from foreign invasion. The fortress also housed military prisoners. In 1909 the Army built a new military prison that was in use for 24 years. After this the prison was given to the Department of Justice. It opened as a civilian prison in 1934 and was used to hold the country's most hardened criminals. One of the most famous

inmates was the "Birdman of Alcatraz", a multiple-murderer who wrote books about birds.

### Glossary

*Resident: A person who lives in a particular place.*

*Military: Relating to soldiers, the armed forces or war.*

*Californian Gold Rush: This occurred in the nineteenth century when people started to find gold in California. A lot of people rushed to California in the search for gold.*

*Civilian: A person who is not a member of the armed forces.*

*Fortress: A strengthened building for defense, such as a castle.*

### Questions

1. What is the nickname given to Alcatraz?
2. What does the word 'Alcatraz' mean?
3. Who first used the island and why?
4. What type of prisoners was held on Alcatraz at first?
5. How long did it last as a military prison?
6. What was it used for after this?
7. When did it open as a civilian prison?
8. What was the name of one of the most famous prisoners?
9. How did he get his name?



## The Inmates

### Link to CfE:

- ✓ Before and as I read, I can apply strategies and use resources independently to help me find the information I need.
- ✓ To show my understanding, I can give detailed, evaluative comments, with evidence, on the content and form of short texts, and respond to different kinds of questions and other types of close reading tasks.
- ✓ I can make notes and organise them to develop my thinking, help retain and recall information and explore issues, using my own words as appropriate.

## Task:

Read the passage about the inmates.

Inmates who arrived at Alcatraz were driven in a small van to the top of the hill. They were processed in the basement area and given all their basic amenities and a brief shower. When Al Capone arrived on the island, he made some attempts to disobey the rules. He had previously been held in a prison in Atlanta and had enjoyed the power that he had there. He had prison guards working for him and had a lot of influence over other prisoners. When Capone first arrived he tried to show off



to other inmates by asking the prison warden stupid questions, making smug comments and grinning. Later he tried to bribe the prison warden but he refused to get involved. Eventually Capone realized that the warden could not be bribed and he accepted the regime. He spent four and a half years on Alcatraz and had a variety of jobs. He got into a fight with another inmate in the recreation yard and was placed in isolation for eight days. While Capone was working in the prison basement, an inmate who was standing in line waiting for a hair cut, exchanged words with him and then stabbed him with a pair of shears. Capone was admitted to the prison hospital and released a few days later. Another gangster who spent a long time on Alcatraz was George "Machine Gun" Kelly. He arrived on Alcatraz in 1934. He quietly served 17 years on Alcatraz before being transferred to another prison.

### Glossary

Inmates: *the prisoners*

Processed: *prepared*

Amenities: *things that add to the pleasure or comfort of something.*

Regime: *the system of power*

You need to find out the following information:

1. What happened when they arrived at Alcatraz?
2. What was the name of one of the most famous inmates?
3. How did he behave when he first arrived on Alcatraz?
4. Describe some of the 'disagreements' he had while on Alcatraz.

# Task:

Read the information below about some of the most well known inmates of Alcatraz. Put the information in this table into sentences in your jotter to add to your notes.

Name of Inmate	Crime Committed
Robert Stroud known as "the Birdman of Alcatraz".	
George Kelly known as "George Machine Gun Kelly".	
Floyd Hamilton	
Alvin Karpis	
Al Capone	
Lloyd Barkdoll	

Harvey Bailey	
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## The Birdman of Alcatraz

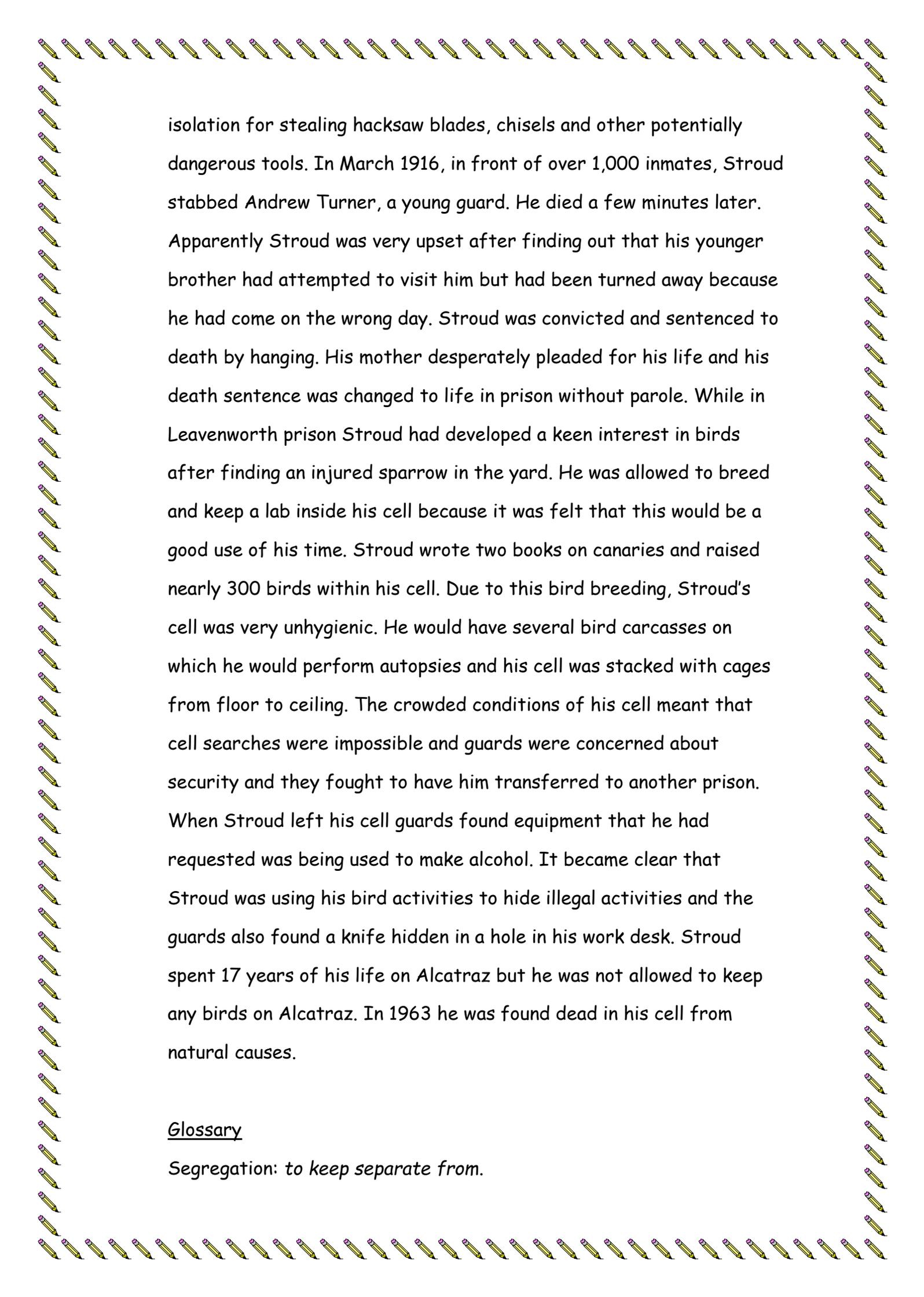
### Link to CfE:

- ✓ Before and as I read, I can apply strategies and use resources independently to help me find the information I need.
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## Task:

(1) Read the passage about The Birdman of Alcatraz.

Other than Al Capone, Alcatraz's most written about inmate was a 52-year-old Robert Stroud. Stroud was one of the few inmates placed directly into Alcatraz' Segregation Unit when he was transferred there from Leavenworth Prison. Stroud spent 17 years on Alcatraz and was never introduced to most of the other inmates. In 1909 the then 18-year-old Stroud shot and killed a bartender. For this killing Stroud was convicted and in 1911 was sent to McNeil Island, a prison in Washington. Stroud was considered a difficult prisoner to manage. In November 1911, he stabbed a hospital worker who he thought had reported him for trying to get drugs. After this Stroud was transferred to Leavenworth Prison. Stroud now 22 became a disciplinary problem for the staff at Leavenworth. He spent time in



isolation for stealing hacksaw blades, chisels and other potentially dangerous tools. In March 1916, in front of over 1,000 inmates, Stroud stabbed Andrew Turner, a young guard. He died a few minutes later. Apparently Stroud was very upset after finding out that his younger brother had attempted to visit him but had been turned away because he had come on the wrong day. Stroud was convicted and sentenced to death by hanging. His mother desperately pleaded for his life and his death sentence was changed to life in prison without parole. While in Leavenworth prison Stroud had developed a keen interest in birds after finding an injured sparrow in the yard. He was allowed to breed and keep a lab inside his cell because it was felt that this would be a good use of his time. Stroud wrote two books on canaries and raised nearly 300 birds within his cell. Due to this bird breeding, Stroud's cell was very unhygienic. He would have several bird carcasses on which he would perform autopsies and his cell was stacked with cages from floor to ceiling. The crowded conditions of his cell meant that cell searches were impossible and guards were concerned about security and they fought to have him transferred to another prison. When Stroud left his cell guards found equipment that he had requested was being used to make alcohol. It became clear that Stroud was using his bird activities to hide illegal activities and the guards also found a knife hidden in a hole in his work desk. Stroud spent 17 years of his life on Alcatraz but he was not allowed to keep any birds on Alcatraz. In 1963 he was found dead in his cell from natural causes.

### Glossary

Segregation: *to keep separate from.*

*Disciplinary: This comes from the word discipline that means having order and rules.*

*Parole: the early release of a prisoner on a promise of good behaviour.*

*Breed: to produce offspring*

*Lab: short for laboratory. A place where experiments are carried out.*

*Unhygienic: not very clean.*

*Carcasses: The dead body of an animal.*

*Autopsies: An inspection and dissection of a body after death, often to determine the cause of death.*

You need to find out the following:

- (2) How long did Robert Stroud, known as "The Birdman of Alcatraz" spend on the island?
- (3) What was the first crime that he committed?
- (4) What age was he when he committed his first crime?
- (5) When Stroud was in Leavenworth prison what problems did he cause?
- (6) Why was Stroud not hanged?
- (7) How did he get his name as the Birdman of Alcatraz?
- (8) Describe what his cell looked like.
- (9) When was he transferred to Alcatraz?
- (10) What illegal activities did Stroud get up to?
- (11) How long did he spend on Alcatraz?
- (12) When and how did he die?

# The Cells

## Link to CfE:

- ✓ Before and as I read, I can apply strategies and use resources independently to help me find the information I need.
- ✓ To show my understanding, I can give detailed, evaluative comments, with evidence, on the content and form of short texts, and respond to different kinds of questions and other types of close reading tasks.

## Task:

Read the following passage about the cells on Alcatraz.



Each cell in the main prison area was 5 feet by 9 feet. Cells contained a small sink with cold running water, a small bed and a toilet. There were 336 cells in Blocks B and C, the main prison cells.

There were also 36 segregation cells and 6 solitary confinement cells in Block D. The cells in Block A were only used a few times for short-term inmates who needed to be kept apart from the rest of the inmates. There was a single strip cell that was also known as the "Oriental". This was a steel cell with no toilet or sink, just a small hole in the floor. Inmates were placed in the cell without clothing and were given restricted diets. The cell had a set of bars through which food



was passed. The solid steel outer door remained closed, leaving the inmate in total darkness. A sleeping mattress was allowed during the night, but was taken away at dawn. Inmates were usually only held here for one or two days at a time. The Hole was a similar type of cell. Al Capone was in the Hole 3 times during his time on Alcatraz due to his behaviour.

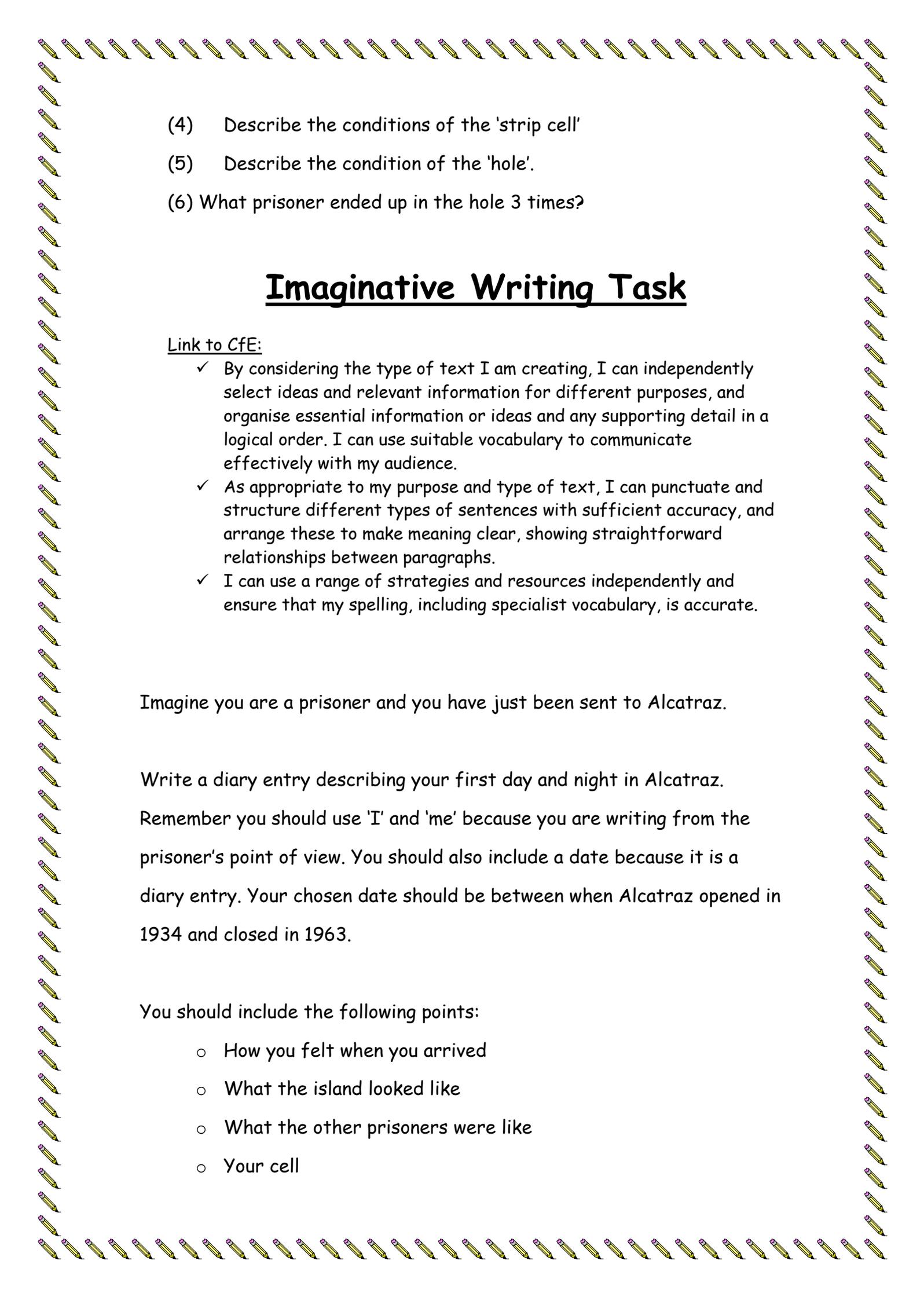
There were several of these types of cells and they were kept as a severe punishment for prisoners. Mattresses were again taken away during the day and prisoners existed on bread and water. Like the strip cells, these cells were also in complete darkness but prisoners could spend as long as 19 days in these conditions. Sometimes prisoners emerged from these cells close to insanity and ended up in the prison hospital. There were even worse places than the hole. Underneath Alcatraz were the dungeons. Here prisoners were totally isolated and the rest of the prisoners could not hear their screams. In the dungeons prisoners were chained to the walls and they received only two cups of water and one slice of bread every day. They were stripped of their clothing and their dignity as guards chained them to the wall in a standing position from six in the morning to late at night. Only then were they given a blanket to sleep in.

### Glossary

*Solitary Confinement: When a prisoner is kept in a cell by themselves.*

You need to find out the following:

- (1) The size of the cells on Alcatraz
- (2) How many cells were there in Blocks B and C in Alcatraz?
- (3) What did each of the main cells contain?

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- (4) Describe the conditions of the 'strip cell'
  - (5) Describe the condition of the 'hole'.
  - (6) What prisoner ended up in the hole 3 times?

## Imaginative Writing Task

### Link to CfE:

- ✓ By considering the type of text I am creating, I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, and organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order. I can use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience.
- ✓ As appropriate to my purpose and type of text, I can punctuate and structure different types of sentences with sufficient accuracy, and arrange these to make meaning clear, showing straightforward relationships between paragraphs.
- ✓ I can use a range of strategies and resources independently and ensure that my spelling, including specialist vocabulary, is accurate.

Imagine you are a prisoner and you have just been sent to Alcatraz.

Write a diary entry describing your first day and night in Alcatraz.

Remember you should use 'I' and 'me' because you are writing from the prisoner's point of view. You should also include a date because it is a diary entry. Your chosen date should be between when Alcatraz opened in 1934 and closed in 1963.

You should include the following points:

- How you felt when you arrived
- What the island looked like
- What the other prisoners were like
- Your cell

- Your first meal
- How you feel about being in Alcatraz
- Your first night
- The future that lies ahead of you

You can use the following line to get you started

*Dear Diary,*

*I arrived on Alcatraz today. I was terrified because I had heard so many awful stories about it...*

Below is a word bank to help you.

How you felt when you arrived: scared, worried, anxious, terrified...

What the island looked like: isolated, big, secure...

What the other prisoners were like:  
Tough, frightening, violent, mean...

What your cell looked like: small, tiny, claustrophobic, cold, basic...

What your first meal was like: tasteless, plain, horrible, small portion...

Your first night: long, sleepless, cold, uncomfortable...

How you feel about your future: depressed, hopeless, long...

