

**‘That’s not data – that’s a text!’
Difficult Grammar and Real Writing**

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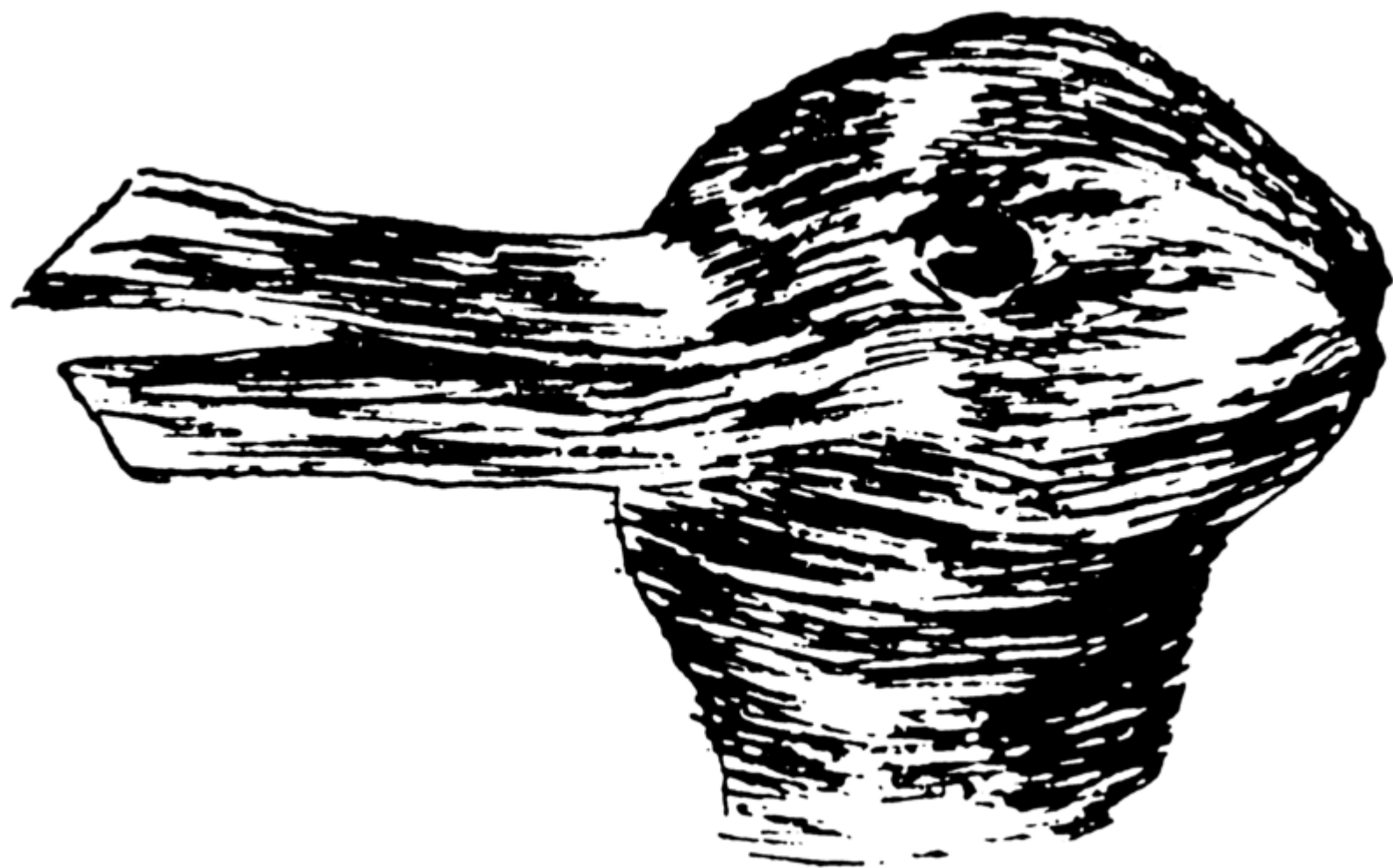
“That’s not data – that’s a text!”

data that can be
used to test
hypotheses

text that can be
interpreted
hermeneutically

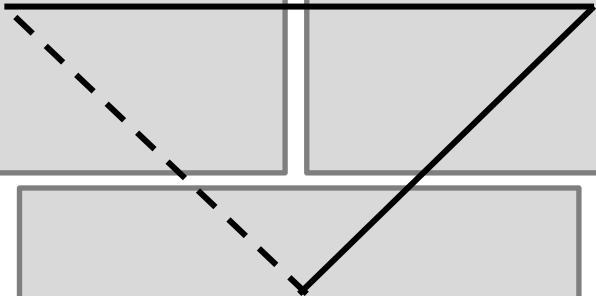






data that can be
used to test
hypotheses

text that can be
interpreted
hermeneutically



an exercise that
can be solved

This is what
they wrote...

...and this is what we
can say about it.

Difficult Grammar and Real Writing

Past Simple and Past Perfect

As Karl Rossmann, a poor boy of sixteen who had been packed off to America by his parents because a servant girl had seduced him and got herself with child by him, stood on the liner slowly entering the harbor of New York, a sudden burst of sunshine seemed to illumine the Statue of Liberty so that he saw it in a new light, although he had sighted it long before.

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Student Comments

- Well, no text is perfect.
- That happens all the time!
- You find the text doesn't fit the framework.
- You try to force it.
- I had to abandon the text I'd chosen last time.
- It tempts you to ignore things.
- It leads you to be less systematic.
- You can't teach it...

More Student Comments

- You have to ask, 'why is it doing that?'
- It can lead to extra special observations.
- It can take you to the big picture.
- You have to let the text be what it is.
- You have to let it breathe a bit.
- You might find a problem with the framework.

Transitivity

Mental Processes framing Material Processes

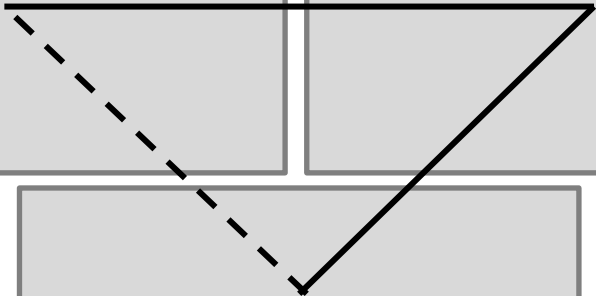
e. g. *I wanted to hit him.*

Mental Processes phrased as Relational Processes.

e.g. *He was in total despair.*

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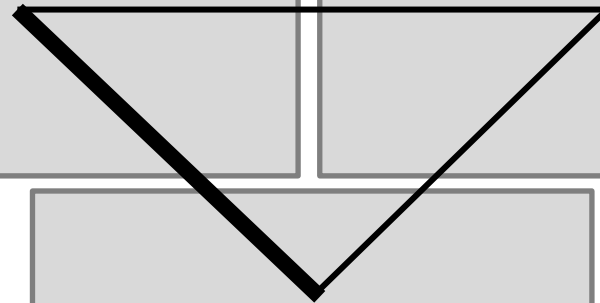
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Inverted Pyramid

A national newspaper journalist could be jailed after naming an England footballer who has taken out a private injunction. The reporter could be prosecuted after naming the player, who is alleged to have had a sexual relationship with a model, on Twitter.

Sequencing Events

A diver has been killed in a shark attack while spear fishing. The 24-year-old was left with serious cuts after he was bitten on the thigh while on the trip 153km (95 miles) north of Richards Bay on the KwaZulu-Natal coast. The victim was taken out of the water by medics in the group but declared dead at the scene. Great white and bull sharks are common in the area and members of the KZN Sharks Board will examine the diver's body to determine the breed behind the attack.

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Talking About The Future

Holidaymakers could be facing another bout of flight disruption as ash from an erupting volcano creeps towards Britain.

The threat comes after the Grímsvötn volcano exploded into life, creating a 20km-high (12 mile) plume of ash, smoke and steam.

The Met Office warned the cloud was heading towards Britain, sparking fears of a repeat of last April's disruption to air travel.

A Met Office spokeswoman said: 'If the volcano continues erupting to the same levels, the UK could be at risk of seeing some volcanic ash later this week.'

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Thoughts

- I want to teach students to ‘let the text be itself’ – to ‘let it breathe a little’.
- The issue here is that ‘real’ writing does not use forms and structures in a graded way.
- The point is really to encourage them to see the text as data, if only for a while.
- This means resisting the temptation to subject them to yet more exercises.
- It means supporting them as they research real data and then allow the data to become text again.