

Title:

Understanding and Writing the Essay

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Open-Learning Centre
The Department of Translation**



**Understanding and Writing the
Essay**

213

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Introduction

Writing and Understanding the Academic Essay, first edition, is a textbook/workbook for intermediate to advanced students of Translation at the Open-Learning Centre, Damascus University. The book aims to teach the conventions of the paragraph (briefly) and the essay in small steps, proceeding from the smallest components to different types of essays. The book is process-oriented; it also uses clear models of paragraphs and essays designed for students. The models have been acquired, with proper acknowledgment, from different sources: online material, reading comprehension books, magazines, and newspapers. The models feature current and general academic topics relevant to the students' interests. This was done with the purpose of familiarising the student with different methods of organisation, styles, as well as introducing issues of heated debate and concern in the current times.

The book is divided into two parts: the first part includes an introduction to the paragraph and cohesive devices. The tutor

should assess the students' background information and knowledge of the paragraph in order to decide whether to go through this introductory unit briefly or to work on it in depth. The first part also includes an introduction to the essay. The tutor should give this unit as much time as it takes to ensure the students understand the conventions of the essay before moving on to the next units. All subsequent units tackle the different kinds of essays, and are therefore closely related to the basic rules and conventions of the essay in general.

The second part of the book is divided into seven units, each dealing with one kind of the essay: the descriptive essay, the process essay, the comparison and contrast essay, the classification essay, the narrative, the cause and effect essay, and the argumentative essay. Each unit is made up of an introduction and definition of the kind of essay, a section on the methods and styles of organisation, and finally a section on the linking words normally used in a certain kind of essay. This is followed by model essay(s) with discussion questions; it is recommended that reading, analysing the essays, and answering the discussion questions be done in pairs or in small groups for better interaction and participation

in class discussion. The final part of each unit is the exercises: an essay is followed by a number of questions for the students to answer, and a writing assignment. It is suggested that the students be given the assignment to do at home, and bring it to class in the next meeting to do the editor's checklist, in pairs or in a group.

Model essays are followed by exercises to reinforce each lesson or unit. A writing assignment, at the end of each unit, is followed by an Editing Checklist. The students could be asked to work in pairs and exchange their assignments and books. Each student in a pair marks the other student's work and writes comments and suggestions in that student's book. Another method is to ask a student to read the essay aloud to the group as a whole, and then elicit answers and comments orally by referring to the checklist questions. This activity aims at reminding the student at the end of each unit of the final major points to keep in mind, and to give them a chance to put this into practice. The writing assignments' topics are only suggestions. The teacher should keep an eye open for interesting topics from current events, and change the assignments accordingly.

Since the book aims to develop the students' writing skills and their understanding of the conventions and structure of the essay, introducing the cohesive devices is a must. The introductory unit familiarises the reader with the types of cohesive devices and their uses in general, while the subsequent units dealing with the different types of essays highlight the linking words appropriate to use in each particular kind.

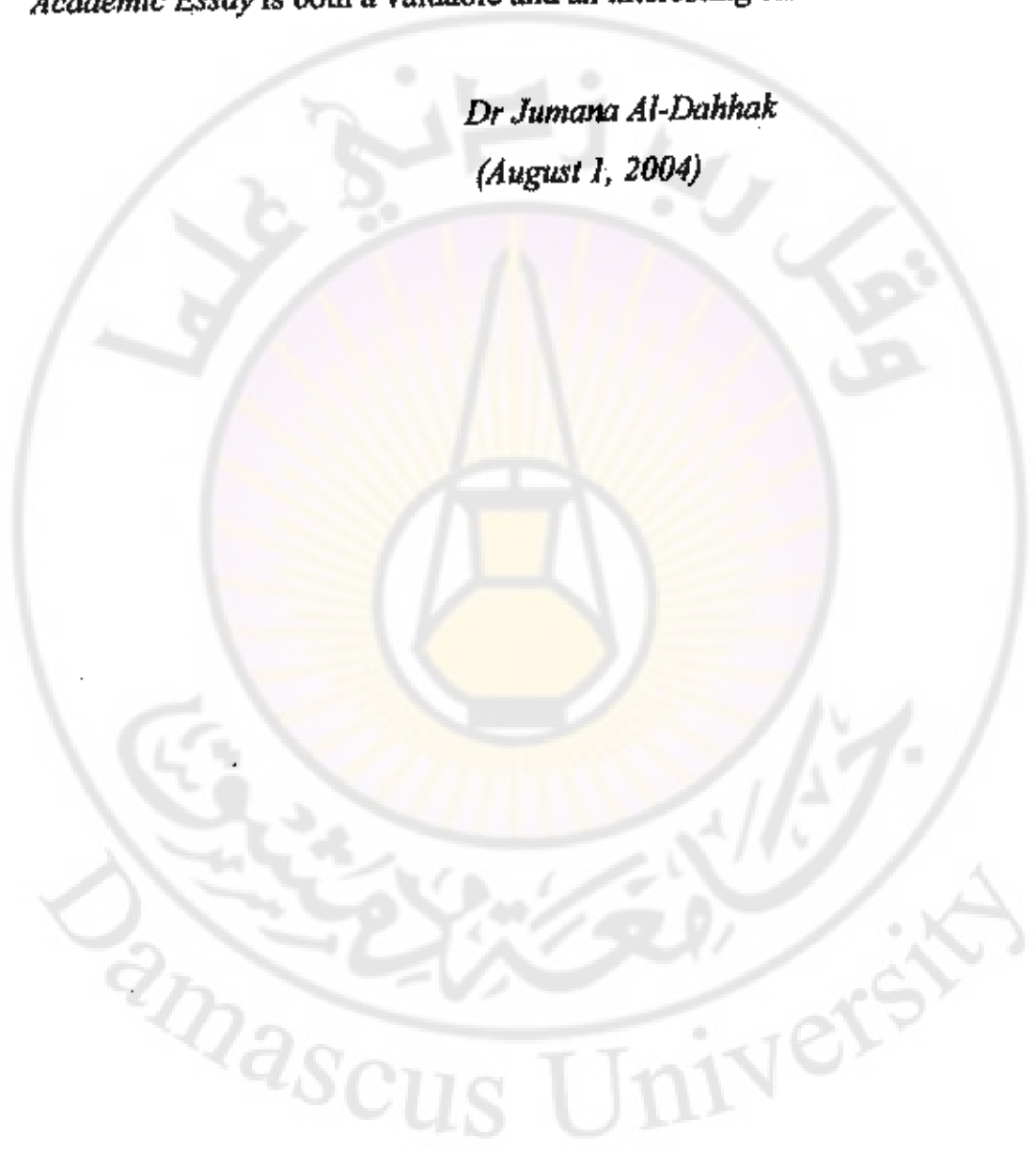
Other features of the book include two appendices offering a comprehensive chart of cohesive devices, and punctuation rules with examples and a survey of the common problems. The students could be referred to each of the appendices by the tutor when working on the activities in the book or when discussing these conventions.

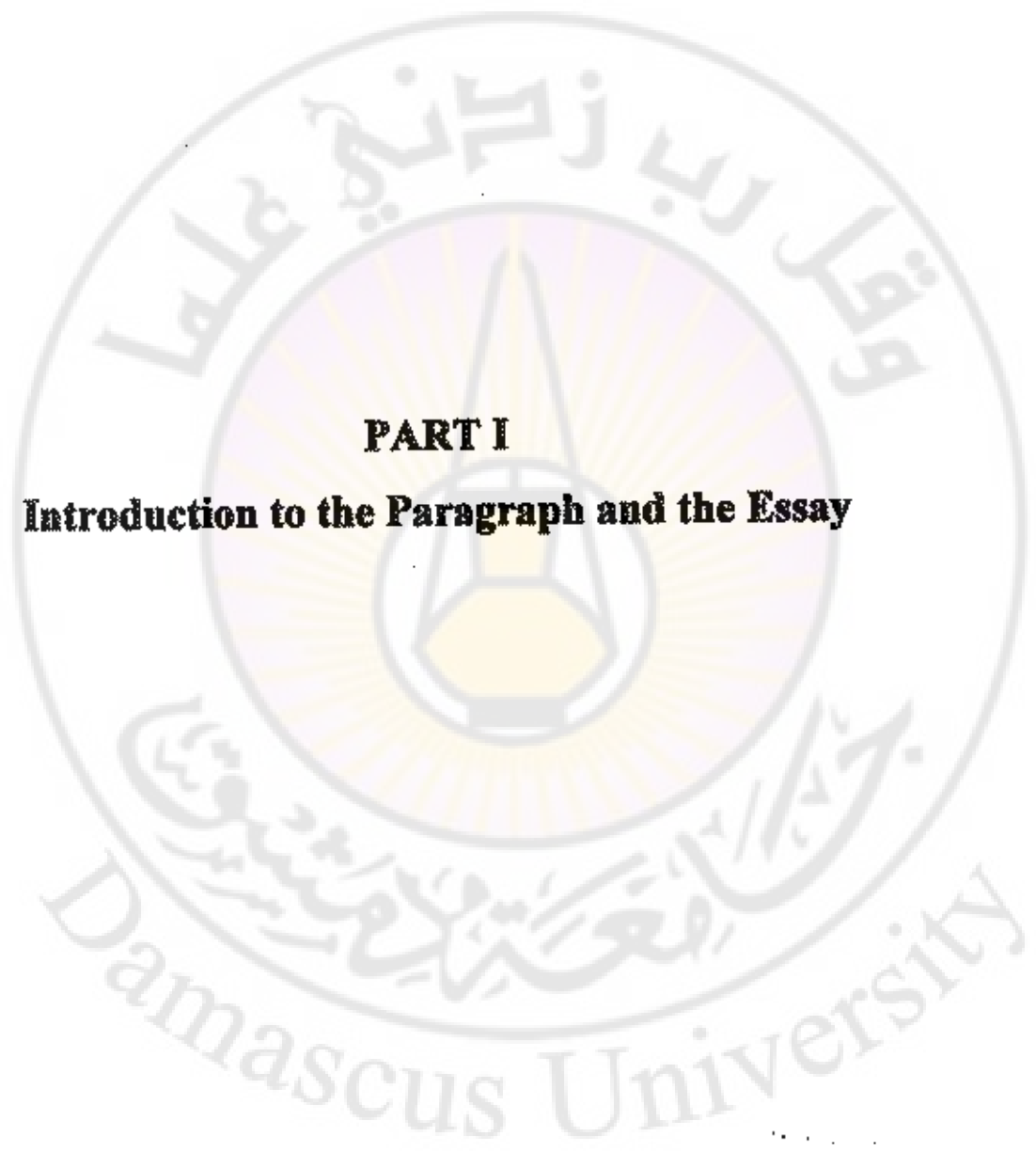
Finally, most of what the book offers and analyses is applicable to other kinds of writing, like business English. By acquiring the skills of writing, learning the basics of essay writing, cohesive devices, and punctuation, the students will improve their ability to read and comprehend various

topics, and to write well organised essays. It is hoped that the students' experience with *Writing and Understanding the Academic Essay* is both a valuable and an interesting one.

Dr Jumana Al-Dahhak

(August 1, 2004)





PART I

Introduction to the Paragraph and the Essay

Unit One:

Introduction to the Paragraph

- **What is a paragraph?**

A paragraph is a group of related and coherently presented sentences to develop one main idea which we call the topic of the paragraph. A paragraph is normally marked by indenting the first word from the left-hand margin or by leaving extra space above and below the paragraph, and each sentence follows the previous one directly (see the model paragraph on page 19).

- **The Organisation of Paragraphs:**

Paragraphs have similar patterns of organisation. A paragraph often states the main idea in a topic sentence followed by the body of the paragraph which develops the main idea by giving further details, and finally a concluding sentence restates the topic sentence. One important feature of a good paragraph is

that all sentences should be coherent and relevant to the argument. Now let us examine in detail these components of the paragraph.

A) The Topic Sentence

This is the most important sentence in a paragraph because it introduces the main idea of the paragraph. It is therefore the most general statement of the paragraph. The topic sentence is a complete sentence. It is usually, but not always, the first sentence of the paragraph because it aims to give a clear idea of what the paragraph is about. A good one consists of two parts: the topic and the controlling idea. The *topic* is the subject of the paragraph, or what the paragraph is mainly about. The *controlling idea* is the main point, opinion, feeling or view that the writer has of the subject. It therefore limits or controls the subject and narrows it down to the aspect explored in the paragraph.

An example of a topic sentence is:

Smoking is harmful to your health.
↓ ↓
Topic Controlling idea

A paragraph starting with this topic sentence should reveal and prove how smoking is hazardous to one's health.

B) The Body (Support)

In order to support and develop the topic sentence, a writer may resort to using:

a) *statistics or facts,*

b) *examples,*

or c) *personal experience.*

Generally speaking, there are two types of supporting sentences: major supporting sentences, and minor supporting sentences. The *major supporting sentences* are the main details that directly develop the topic sentence. The *minor supporting sentences* offer further details, or perhaps examples, of the major supporting sentences. In other words, the topic sentence is the most general statement, the major supporting sentences are less general, and the minor supporting sentences are the least general.

C) The Concluding Sentence

This is the final sentence in a paragraph. It usually restates the topic sentence; that is, it expresses it in other words. The concluding sentence could also summarise the paragraph, though this is less common than the first way. Not all paragraphs end with concluding sentences, yet this is the ideal way of finishing off a certain discussion since it reinforces the ideas in the reader's mind.

Now for a better understanding of the paragraph and its structure and organisation, read the model paragraph below and notice the illustration on each of the components.

Model Paragraph

Topic
sentence

Smoking is harmful to your health. [Several

[body

years ago, a United States government study was released that linked the intake of tar and nicotine, found in cigarettes, with the development of cancer in laboratory animals. The evidence was so overwhelming that the United States government required cigarette manufacturers to put a warning on the outside of each package of cigarettes, which says, "Warning: The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is hazardous to your health." Aside from the most serious and dreaded disease, cancer, cigarette smoking also can aggravate or promote other health problems. For example, smoking can increase the discomfort for people with asthma. It can give one a "smoker's cough" and contribute to bronchitis. Finally, recent studies have shown that cigarette smokers are more susceptible to common colds and flu.] Whether you get a small insignificant cold or the major killer, cancer, smoking cigarettes is hazardous.

Concluding
sentence

As you notice from the above paragraph, it consists of a topic sentence, the body, and a concluding sentence, each indicated in the left-hand margin of the page.

The topic sentence includes an attitude, namely that smoking is hazardous. The sentences following it are coherent and they develop the topic sentence by offering statistics or facts derived from the American study and its findings; and by giving examples of diseases like cancer, cold, and other health problems. And finally a concluding statement restates the topic sentence by referring again and concisely to the hazards of smoking on human health.

The diagram below offers a more detailed analysis of the paragraph structure: the supporting sentences are classified as major and minor accordingly.

Topic sentence:

- ▶ Smoking is harmful to your health.

Major Supporting Sentence:

- ▶ Several years ago, a United States ... laboratory animals.

Minor Supporting Sentence:

- ▶ The evidence was so overwhelming ... to your health."

Major Supporting Sentence:

- ▶ Aside from the most ... other health problems.

Minor Supporting Sentence:

- ▶ For example, smoking ... with asthma.

Minor Supporting Sentence:

- ▶ It can give one ... contribute to bronchitis.

Minor Supporting Sentence:

- ▶ Finally, recent studies ... common colds and flu.

Concluding Sentence:

- ▶ Whether you get ... cigarettes is hazardous.

As the diagram shows, there is no strict and definite number of major supporting sentences and minor supporting sentences. Sometimes you might not have minor supporting sentences for the major ones. It all depends on the flow of the argument. What you need to keep in mind, though, is that a major supporting sentence usually explains and illuminates the topic sentence, while the minor supporting sentence, which develops the major supporting sentence, is more specific.

The image features a large, faint watermark of the Damascus University logo. The logo is circular and contains a central emblem of a lantern or oil lamp with rays emanating from it. Below the emblem is the university's name in Arabic calligraphy, and at the bottom of the circle, the name "Damascus University" is written in English.

Damascus University

▶ **Exercises:**

1. *Study the following topic sentences. Underline the topic and circle the controlling idea in each.*

- a. Economic activities are a threat to the environment.
- b. Having a car gives one a sense of freedom.
- c. My first day at school was joyful.
- d. The violence on television can affect children's emotional well being.
- e. Traditional Western family relationships have changed greatly in the last thirty years.

2. *Read the following weak topic sentences. Rewrite each one to make it a better one: you could narrow down the topic to make the sentence more specific.*

- a. A Mitsubishi is a Japanese car.
-

- b. Damascus is the capital of Syria.
-

c. Drinking coffee is bad.

d. Damascus is a big draw for tourists.

3. Read the following topic sentences. Write restatement concluding sentences for each.

a. Physical exercise is good for a person's mental health.

b. Working mothers find themselves pressured by duties outside and inside the house.

c. Recent methods of reducing air pollution are showing some positive results.

4. Read the paragraph "Preparing to Travel" below. Produce an outline of the paragraph showing major and minor supporting sentences. Part of the outline is done for you. You need to continue it.

Preparing to Travel¹

Traveling to a foreign city can be fun, but it requires some planning besides getting a passport. First, you should buy a phrase book and learn a few key phrases in the foreign language. Using these phrases demonstrates a willingness to learn about the people who live in the foreign city. Second, read about the city beforehand and read about what places in it you'd like to see. Get a feeling for it and for its weather so that you can pack appropriate clothes. Next, check your camera. Make sure that it is in good working order, and that you have lots of films. Finally, get yourself a good pair of walking shoes and break them in for a month before you leave. In short, taking a few precautions before you leave can make your trip to a foreign city more enjoyable.

¹ Adapted from Cynthia A. Boardman and Jia Frydenberg, *Writing to Communicate*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 2002), p. 38.

Topic Sentence: *Traveling to a foreign city can be fun, but it requires some planning besides getting a passport.*

Major Supporting Sentence:

First, you should ... foreign language.

..... Supporting Sentence:

Using these phrases ... foreign city.

..... Supporting Sentence:

Second, read ... like to see.

..... Supporting Sentence:

Get a feeling for ... appropriate clothes.

..... Supporting Sentence:

Next, check your camera.

..... Supporting Sentence:

Make sure that ... of films.

..... Sentence:

Finally, get yourself ... before you leave.

..... Sentence:

In short, taking ... city more enjoyable.

Cohesive Devices:

Linking words are the means of establishing cohesion in a piece of writing. They make the piece stand as a text by connecting the sentences in it. There are several types of linking devices: coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and transitions. Below is a brief description of each type. For a chart showing the most common linking words and their kinds, see Appendix 1 on page 227.

a) Coordinating Conjunctions:

Before explaining what a coordinating conjunction is, it is essential that you have an idea of what an independent clause means. An *independent clause* is a group of words containing at least a subject and a verb that can stand alone as a sentence.

Sentence (Independent clause): It was raining heavily.

Not a sentence (dependent clause): When it started raining.

The second piece cannot stand alone as a sentence; the meaning is incomplete.

A coordinating conjunction is used to combine two independent clauses and the resulting sentence is called a *compound sentence*. The coordinating conjunction would therefore be preceded by a comma. It is easy to remember coordinating conjunctions by remembering the words:

FAN BOYS:

F= for A=and N=nor

B=but O=or Y=yet S=so

Example: It was raining heavily, *so* we took a cab.

When the coordinating conjunction is not followed by an independent clause, no comma follows, and the sentence is considered a simple sentence:

Example: She rushed to the airport *but* couldn't get there in time to catch her flight.

In this sentence no comma is needed because 'but' is followed by a dependent clause (there is no subject), and therefore no comma is needed.

Example: We can't go out, *nor* can we stay home.

Notice that when we use *nor* in this way, we must use question word order after it.

b) Subordinating Conjunctions:

These are conjunctions that precede dependent clauses and link them with independent clauses to form *complex sentences*. The clauses determine what type of subordinating conjunction to use. There are mainly two types of dependent clauses: adverbial clauses and adjective clauses.

i. Adverbial Clauses:

An adverbial clause is a dependent clause preceded by a subordinating conjunction, and functions as an adverb. Adverbs typically answer the questions: *when? where? or why?* in a sentence.

Example: *When I arrived at the railway station, the train had already left.*

The subordinating conjunction 'when' is used to show the time link between the two clauses in this sentence.

There are several types of subordinating conjunctions used in adverbial clauses. Following are some of them:

<i>Function</i>	<i>Subordinator</i>
Time	After, as, before, since, when...
Causation	Because, since...
Place	Where, wherever..
Contrast	Although, even though, whereas...
Condition	If, unless...

More subordinating conjunctions can be found in Appendix 1 on page 227.

A comma is used only when the dependent clause begins a sentence. Consider the following examples:

Correct use:

Because he was sixty-five, he was forced to retire.

Wrong use:

He was forced to retire, ***because he was sixty-five.***

It is wrong to use a comma when the subordinator introduces a dependent clause ending a sentence, as in the above example.

ii. Relative (Adjective) Clauses:

An adjective is used to modify a noun by supplying details about it. The pronoun starting the dependent clause serves to relate the details given in the clause to the pronoun it attempts to modify. For example:

I need to buy my friend a present ***that is nice and reasonable in price.***

The dependent clause here is related to the noun it modifies, 'present', by the pronoun 'that', so we call it a ***relative pronoun*** and the clause is a ***relative clause***. It is also called an ***adjective clause*** because it describes a noun.

Relative pronouns are: *that* and *which* (for things), and *who, that, whom* (for people).

In order to punctuate relative clauses correctly, the importance of the meaning given should be established first. Look at the following two sentences:

- *My mother, who has been teaching Arabic for 30 years, has finally retired.*
- *My English teacher who taught me in my first schooling years is the reason why I like English.*

In the first sentence, the information is not essential to identify the noun. If the relative clause is omitted, the noun would still be identified since one has one mother only. Whereas in the second sentence, omitting the relative clause would confuse the reader as it is not known which English teacher the speaker is referring to here. In sum, when the identity or definition of the noun described is impossible to know without the relative clause, no commas are needed. Commas serve to mark the sentence as

unessential, exactly like we do in parentheses.

c) Transitions:

Transitions are linking words that serve to connect independent sentences. Transitions can appear at the beginning of a sentence, in the middle, or at the end. Wherever they appear, they are set off from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Example:

A tourist coming to visit Damascus would find so many attractions. *For example*, the Umayyad Mosque is a masterpiece of Islamic architecture.

Or: The Umayyad Mosque, *for example*, is a masterpiece of Islamic architecture.

Or: The Umayyad Mosque is a masterpiece of Islamic architecture, *for example*.

Notice that in all three usages, beginning, middle or end of sentence, a comma, or commas when in the middle, separate the transitional word from the rest of the sentence.

► **Exercises:**

1. *Combine the following pairs of sentences with an appropriate coordinating conjunction. Make sure to use a comma between the sentences. For some sentences, more than one correct answer is possible.*

a. I was overloaded with work. I didn't go to the party.

b. You can watch a movie at night. You can listen to music at night.

c. My brother loves to celebrate when he passes his exams. He is far too busy to celebrate it this year.

d. The roses in the garden are dying. They are not getting enough water.

e. My photograph is not particularly good. It is not too bad to use for the passport.

2. *Combine the following pairs of sentences by making one an adverbial clause. Vary the position of the adverbial clause and use a comma when necessary.*

a. The 17th of April is Syria's Day of Independence.
We do not have to go to work.

b. Fireworks are always used for celebrations on New Year's Eve. I do not like them.

c. There will be too many people in the world. People keep having babies.

d. I was on the phone. My friend came for a visit.

3. *Combine the following pairs of sentences by making one of them an adjective clause. Make sure to place it immediately after the noun it modifies and use commas if needed.*

a. I went to visit an old friend of mine. My friend is in hospital.

b. We all went to the airport to receive my brother. He has been studying abroad for four years.

c. My mother is fond of classical music. My mother is going to a concert tomorrow evening.

d. We all celebrated Jane's birthday in a restaurant. It was the only place we could all meet freely.

4. *Connect the following pairs of sentences by using a suitable transitional word. Use appropriate punctuation marks.*

a. Egypt has many kinds of attractions for tourists.
There are the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Royal Cemetery, and many other historical sites.

b. He had drunk too much last night. He woke up this morning with a hangover.

c. It is dry in Syria in the summer. It is wet in the summer in India.

d. If you want to have a good holiday, you could go away with friends. You need to come back home by the end of next week.

5. Look for the cohesive devices in the paragraph title 'Preparing to Travel', on page 25 above. Underline any coordinating conjunctions; circle subordinators; and box transitional words. Notice the use of comma.

Writing Assignment:

Write a well organized, cohesive paragraph on your first day in college. Was it up to your expectations? Did you enjoy it? And why not?

When you finish writing the paragraph, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her paragraph. Use the Peer Editing Checklist. Write down any comments you have in the appropriate spaces.

Peer Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor's Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you particularly like about this paragraph?	
Layout	
2. Does the paragraph have the right format (indentation, margins...etc)?	
Structure and Organization	
3. Is there a clear topic sentence? Does it have a controlling idea?	
4. What kind of concrete support is used?	
5. Is there a concluding sentence? Is it marked off properly?	
6. Do all the sentences support and develop the topic sentence?	
7. Does the paragraph have coherence?	

Sentence structure	
8. Are there any vague or unclear sentences? Correct them.	
Grammar and Punctuation	
9. Are there any errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation?	



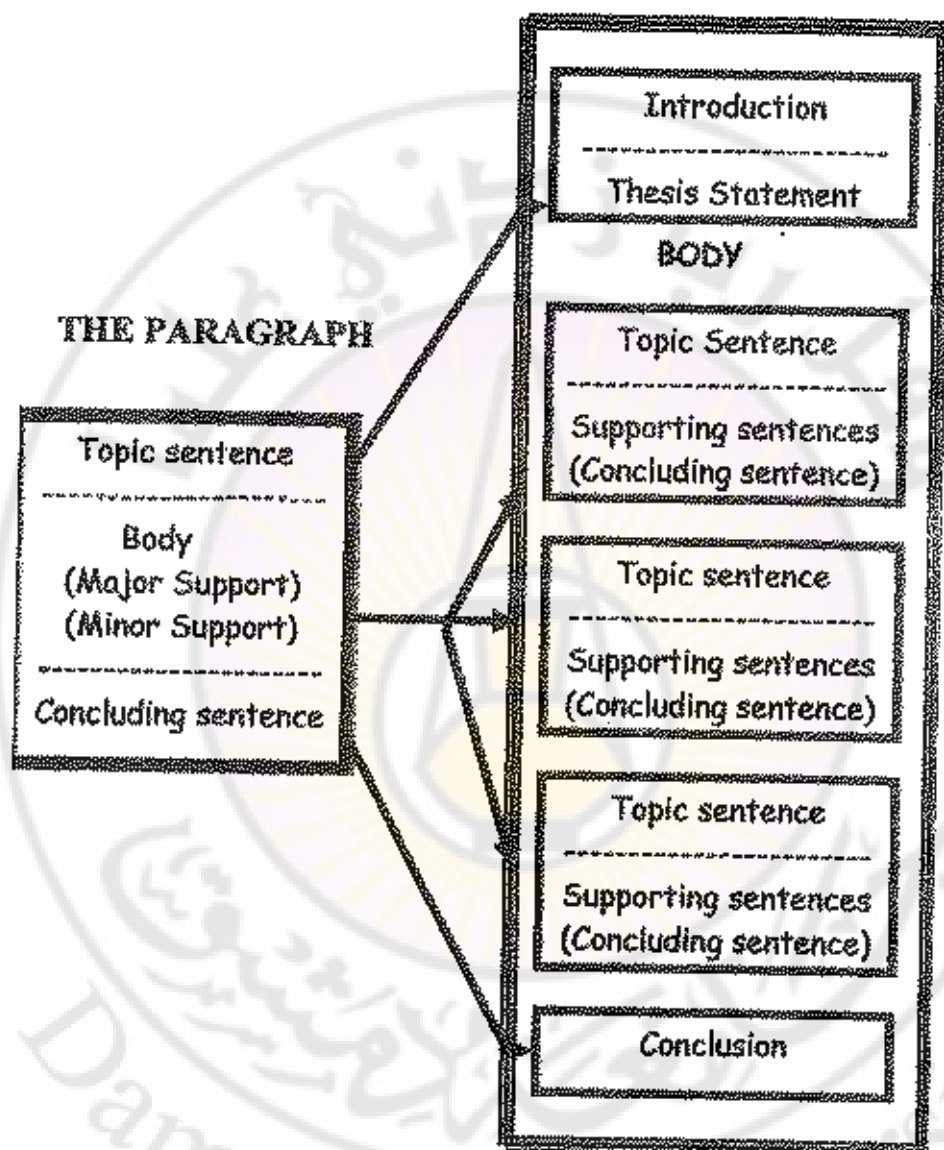
Unit Two:

From Paragraph to Essay

As you have learned in Unit One, a paragraph is a group of coherent sentences developing one main topic. It consists of three parts: the topic sentence, the body (supporting sentences), and the concluding sentence.

The essay can best be described as an extended paragraph. It has the same structure of the paragraph in that it develops one main topic, and consists of three main parts which correspond to those in the paragraph: an introductory paragraph, the body which is made up of paragraph(s) to develop and support the main topic, and a concluding paragraph. Before we move on to discuss each of the essay parts, look at the diagram below. It is meant to give you an idea of the parallel structure of the paragraph and the essay.

THE ESSAY



The Thesis Statement:

The essay has one main topic to discuss and develop. This is expressed in a sentence called the *thesis statement*. As you notice from the above diagram, the thesis statement in the essay is similar to the topic sentence in the paragraph, although the thesis statement is broader as it gives a sense of the topic for the whole essay. Usually, but not always, the thesis statement appears last in the introduction.

• Topic and Controlling Idea

Like the topic sentence in the paragraph, a thesis statement has two main parts: the topic and the controlling idea. The *topic* is the subject of the essay. The *controlling idea* is the writer's attitude or opinion about the topic.

Example:

City living is hazardous to a person's health.

↓
Topic

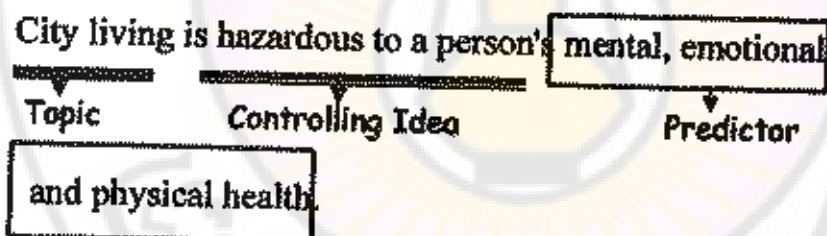
↓
Controlling Idea

Notice that 'city living' is the broad subject of the essay, while 'hazardous to a person's health' is the specific idea that the writer aims to develop in the course of the essay. The

writer of this essay would, therefore, discuss the hazardous consequences of living in the city on man's well being in general.

- **Predictor**

In some essays, you might find more clues in the thesis statement as to the flow of the argument and the content of the essay. This is done through inserting a predictor. The *predictor* is the part which tells the reader how many body paragraphs the essay includes and their main topics. If we want to add a predictor to the example thesis statement above, it would be as follows:



The above thesis statement lists the three kinds of health problems a person might suffer from when living in the city: mental, emotional, and psychological ones. The writer here chooses to tell the reader of the order and content of the

body paragraphs. In other words, this essay consists of three body paragraphs corresponding to each of the problems listed in the thesis statement, and the paragraphs would follow the same order adopted in the thesis statement. So, the predictor, as the name suggests, helps the reader predict the structure and content of the essay they are about to read.

- **Rules for the Thesis Statement**

A good thesis statement should follow certain rules:

1. A thesis statement should be expressed in a *complete sentence*.

Not a thesis statement: Children using the internet.

Thesis statement: Children using the internet should be monitored by their parents.

2. A thesis statement should be a *statement* and not a question.

Not a thesis statement: Can big business pose a threat to the environment?

Thesis statement: Big business can pose a threat to the environment.

3. A thesis statement should not simply announce the topic of the essay; it should *state the controlling idea*, namely give an opinion or attitude.

Not a thesis statement: In this essay, I am going to compare living in the city to living in the countryside.

A thesis statement: Living in the countryside is healthier than living in the city.

4. A thesis statement should not express a fact; it should express *an opinion or attitude*. A thesis statement is a statement that needs to be proved and should, therefore, be a sentence that one might disagree with. A fact, on the other hand, needs no support and no one would disagree with it. One cannot therefore discuss a fact in an essay.

Not a thesis statement: I have a younger sister.

Thesis statement: My sister and I have many things in common.

5. A thesis statement should have one controlling idea. If there is more than one, the essay could lack unity and coherence.

Not a thesis statement: Studying abroad is a challenging experience, and I have found that living on campus is the best way to mix with people from different cultures.

Thesis statement: Studying abroad is a challenging experience.

▶ **Exercises:**

Study the following statements carefully. Check the sentences that are thesis statements. If a sentence is not a thesis statement, write the number(s) of the thesis statement rule(s) it violates in the space provided in front of it. Then rewrite it to make it a thesis statement.

_____ 1. My fear of heights.

_____ 2. The effects of depleted uranium on health are serious.

_____ 3. London is the largest city in the United Kingdom.

_____ 4. Are personal computers helpful?

_____ 5. The advantages of work-study programmes
outweigh the disadvantages.

_____ 6. This essay is about air pollution.

_____ 7. Learning English is a challenging experience,
and English is also a world language.

_____ 8. Smoking should be prohibited in restaurants.

The Introduction:

This is the first paragraph in an essay. Without an introductory paragraph, the essay starts too abruptly. So, the introduction serves to introduce the topic of the essay. Also the introduction indicates how the topic is going to be developed and discussed. This is done by referring to the method of organization: cause/ effect, comparison and/or contrast, classification, argument, narration...etc. Finally, the introduction should attempt to attract the readers' attention. There are many ways for a writer to get the readers' attention; some of the common introduction types are:¹

A. Anecdote:

An anecdote is a brief story. It is easy to capture the reader's attention by providing a story in the introduction, either a personal one or an invented story, to introduce the topic in an inviting manner. Model paragraph 1 below is an example of an anecdotal introduction.

¹ The introduction types and model paragraphs are adapted from Cynthia A. Boardman and Jo Frydenberg, *Writing to communicate*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 2002), pp. 78-80.

Model Paragraph 1

A relative of mine was a good student until his parents got divorced. Immediately after this, the parents were too busy solving their financial and property problems to notice how their child was becoming a more withdrawn character. It seems the child had a strong need to feel loved again, and he wanted to have a sense of belonging. He got involved with a gang that introduced him to the world of narcotics and drugs. The parents did not notice the deterioration in their child's emotional and physical state until he was rushed to hospital of an overdose. I am convinced that *family breakdown is one cause of teenage drug addiction.*

B. Interesting Facts or Statistics:

In order to start an essay with facts or statistics, one should be familiar with the topic and with common knowledge in that particular area of debate in the essay.

This is a common method when writing to specialized readers or when doing a scholarly piece of work.

Model paragraph 2 below is an example of a statistical introduction.

Model Paragraph 2

In the United States, the estimated number of gangs is 5,000, with a total of 250,000 members. Around 7 percent of the members are teenagers. One of the many disruptive forms of behaviour adopted by these gangs is drug addiction. Why do many teenagers get involved in such harmful and criminal activities? In my opinion, *family breakdown is one cause of teenage drug addiction.*

C. Historical Introduction:

Some writers prefer to enlighten their readers about the history of a certain problem or issue. This is meant to give a general overview of the topic.

Model paragraph 3 below is an example of a historical introduction.

Model Paragraph 3

The history of gangs in the United States dates back to the last century. Gang formation started in the big East Coast cities. They were mainly made up of people belonging to the same ethnic group who were keen on protecting their neighborhood. The aim of such gangs is no longer that of protection; it is more to do with practicing prohibited or criminal activities like drug addiction. I strongly believe that *family breakdown is one cause of teenage drug addiction.*

D. General to Specific

This is perhaps the most common type of introductory paragraphs. It is also called "Funnel" because, like a funnel which is wide at the top and narrow at the bottom, it proceeds from general statements to reach the more specific thesis statement near the end of the paragraph. One should, however, avoid starting out too generally in order not to deviate from the main topic, and in order to keep the introduction relevant.

Model paragraph 4 below is an example of a funnel, or general-to-specific introduction.

Model paragraph 4

The American society is a difficult society to grow in. It is particularly difficult for teenagers who could be involved in many kinds of trouble with school, dating, and gangs. One of the worst troubles teenagers could find themselves in is drug addiction. Why do teenagers approach drugs? I think that family *breakdown is one cause of teenage drug addiction.*

▶ **Exercises:**

Study the introductory paragraph below. Evaluate it by answering the prompts provided below it.

The world is faced with many crises, not the least of which are the various forms of pollution. And of these, perhaps the most devastating is air pollution. Air pollution threatens to turn the earth into a place where it is difficult to lead a normal life. But who is responsible for destroying the earth? The responsibility for polluting the air lies with citizens, large industries, and governments.

a. Is this a coherent paragraph? How?

b. How many topics are introduced here? Specify.

c. What type of an introduction is this?

d. How is the main idea developed?

e. Find and locate the thesis statement. Then underline the topic, circle the controlling idea and, box the predictor, if any.



The Body Paragraphs:

Body paragraphs in an essay serve to develop the thesis statement by illustrating, explaining, discussing or proving the thesis statement and giving examples. There is no specific number for body paragraphs in one essay, but normally a student's essay would include two to four body paragraphs. The number has a lot to do with the topic discussed and the issues tackled. Each of the body paragraphs develops *one aspect of the main topic*. So, in an essay where the thesis statement reads as follows:

The economic activities of mankind are increasingly polluting the air, water, and soil.

we would expect the essay to consist of three paragraphs, as the predictor in this thesis statement makes clear. Each of the body paragraphs would deal with one of the aspects mentioned in the predictor. The first body paragraph would concentrate on economic activities' contribution to air pollution; the second on water pollution; and the final body paragraph would revolve around soil pollution. The body

paragraphs would, furthermore, appear in the same order these aspects are enlisted in the thesis statement.

As you have learned in Unit One, the structure of a paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting sentences (both major and minor support) and a concluding sentence. But in the case of body paragraphs in an essay, they may or may not have concluding sentences. Also, when the thesis statement has a predictor which clearly indicates the order and topics of paragraphs, a body paragraph could start, or end, with a sentence called *Bridge* which serves as a link with the previous paragraph, exactly like a bridge links the banks of a river, for example. Following the bridge sentence comes the topic sentence. In general, the body paragraphs should all echo and develop the thesis statement, thus showing unity and coherence.

Read the following model essay. Then answer the questions below the essay.

Model Essay 1

Greenpeace: Defender of the Environment²

The Greenpeace Foundation is an organization of ordinary people and scientists from around the world who are active in efforts to expose and find solutions for global environmental problems. The organization was started in the early 1970s in an effort to defend human, animal and plant life. Greenpeace has had steady, if small, successes in decreasing whale hunting, saving old forests, and cutting down on the toxic pollution of our air and water.

Greenpeace works hard to protect the quality of our oceans and their populations of fish, mammals, and vegetation. The year 2000 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization's fight to keep many whale populations from becoming extinct. Since 1975, when a Greenpeace ship confronted a soviet whaling ship off the coast of California, Greenpeace activists have regularly positioned themselves between the whale and the hunting boat to protect the whale. These small protests have proven successful in that the whale population is again slowly

² From Cynthia A. Boardman and Jia Frydenberg, *Writing to Communicate*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 2002), pp. 98-99.

increasing. This very personal type of protest has been successful for Greenpeace elsewhere as well.

Ancient forests, according to Greenpeace, are forest areas that are relatively undisturbed by human activity. By 1999, more than 80 percent of the world's original ancient forests had been destroyed. An example of such an ancient forest is the Great Bear Rain Forest, which covers western Canada. This forest was mainly damaged by a logging method called clear-cutting, which means that every single tree in a large area is cut down at the same time. Clear-cutting in the Great Bear Rain Forest has caused the population of grizzly bears to almost disappear, and it has reduced the populations of salmon in the rivers by two-thirds. Greenpeace members put themselves between the trees and the tree cutters. They experienced a victory on August 26, 1999, when the US company Home Depot, a major buyer of wood from the Great Bear Rain Forest, announced that it would stop selling wood producers from rain forests. Although this was only a small step in the process of protecting the forests we have left, it was still a significant event.

However, the major threat to vegetation, animals, and people is now neither hunting nor cutting. It is the

extremely toxic chemicals that our industrial society releases into both air and water. Greenpeace has helped local people in affected areas to protest against companies that produce such pollution. One small victory happened in Louisiana in the late 1990s. For three years the Japanese plastics company Shintech had tried to establish PVC factories next to schools and homes in the small town of Convent, Louisiana. PVC is a common type of plastic used in everything from children's toys to kitchen containers. PVC itself is safe, but the manufacturing of it gives off a waste product called dioxin, which is an extremely toxic chemical. With the help of Greenpeace, the citizens of Convent won their battle in September of 1998, when Shintech withdrew its plans to build the factories.

In conclusion, each victory gives us hope, but they are indeed small when contrasted with the problems we face. Even so, Greenpeace activists fight on, and their efforts in preventing whale hunting, protecting ancient forests, and limiting the use of dangerous chemicals are showing some positive effects. Because of Greenpeace, the world will be a little safer for our children and our children's children.

▶ **Exercises:**

1. *How many topics does the introduction include?*

2. *What kind of introduction is this? Give evidence.*

3. *Locate the thesis statement. Then underline the topic, circle the controlling idea, and box the predictor, if any.*

4. *How many body paragraphs can you find in this essay?*

5. *Do the body paragraphs show coherence and unity? How?*

6. *Look at paragraph number 4. What is the first sentence? Is it a topic sentence or a bridge? Explain.*

7. *Below is part of an outline for paragraph two. Fill in the outline with the missing parts.*

Topic sentence: *Greenpeace works... and vegetation.*

Major Supporting Sentence: *The year 2000 ... becoming extinct.*

..... Supporting Sentence: *Since 1975... the whale.*

..... Sentence: *These small ... slowly increasing.*

Bridge:

8. *What kind of evidence does the writer use in the body paragraphs to prove the main topic, namely the successes of Greenpeace in protecting the environment?*

.....
.....

The Concluding Paragraph:

This is the last paragraph of the essay. It is sometimes, but not necessarily, signaled by transitions like: in short, in conclusion, to conclude, finally, etc. It plays the vital role of wrapping up the discussion and giving the reader the logical conclusion. It is also important because it should give the reader a clear idea of what the main point of the essay was.

Although it is up to the writer to choose the way to round up the argument, there are three standard ways to conclude an essay:

a. Summary:

This is the common method of restating the main topics of the essay. This should be brief, bearing in mind that the reader has already read the essay and grasped the ideas. This way is meant, then, to remind the reader, rather than inform them, of the main ideas.

b. Restatement:

Another way of concluding the discussion is a restatement of the thesis statement. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, it is preferable that the writer restate the thesis

statement in different words from those used in the introduction.

c. Final Comment:

This is the method normally associated with one of the above ways when concluding an essay. After summarizing the main points, or restating the thesis statement, the conclusion informs the reader of the writer's thoughts. This is a more effective way than leaving the reader to ponder the issue alone.

One crucial point to bear in mind when concluding an essay is to avoid coming up with any new idea. New ideas could be discussed in body paragraphs, but never in a conclusion.

▶ **Exercises:**

Go back to the essay "Greenpeace: Defenders of the Environment" on page 59. Read the conclusion again, and answer the questions below.

1. Can you find a summary of the main topics in the conclusion? Explain.

-
2. Is there a restatement of the thesis statement? Explain.

-
3. Does the writer inform us of his final thoughts? Explain.

-
4. Having answered the first three questions, what kind of conclusion is this?

-
5. Do you consider it a good conclusion? Why?

Writing Assignment:

At the end of Unit One, you were required to write a short paragraph on your first day in college. Expand the paragraph into a well organized essay. You could refer to the diagram comparing the paragraph with the essay (page 42) to help you do this.

When you finish writing your essay, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her essay. Use the Peer Editing Checklist below as a guide.

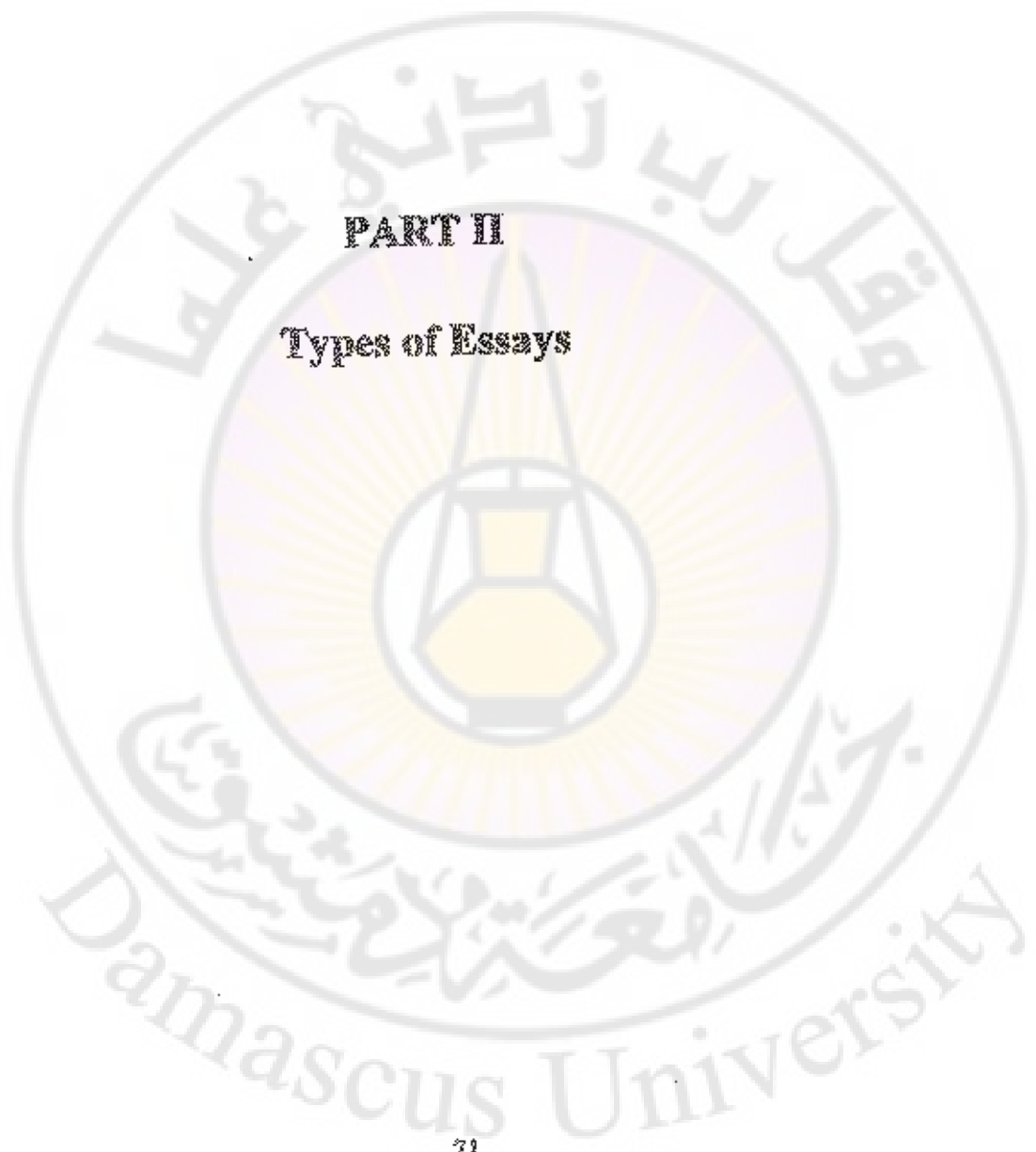
Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you like about the essay?	
Layout	
2. Is the layout correct? (examine indentation of paragraphs, margins and spacing)	
Structure	
3. Does the essay have an introduction, a body and a conclusion?	

4. Does the essay have a clear thesis statement?	
Organization	
5. Does the introduction give background information?	
6. Is the introduction attractive?	
7. Does each body paragraph have a clearly stated topic sentence?	
8. Does each body paragraph have sufficient supporting details (facts, examples...)?	
9. Do the paragraphs have unity and coherence?	

10. Does the conclusion restate the thesis, give a summary, or offer final thoughts and comments?	
Sentence structure	
11. Are there vague or unclear sentences?	
Grammar and Punctuation	
12. Are there any grammatical mistakes?	
13. Are there any punctuation problems?	





PART II

Types of Essays

Unit One:

The Descriptive Essay

As the name suggests, the purpose of a descriptive essay is to describe a person, place, or thing. Good description is clear, coherent, and, most importantly, specific. The writer of a descriptive essay is encouraged to use vivid detail to draw a precise mental picture of what is being written about for the reader. The author may accomplish this by using imaginative language, interesting comparisons, and images that appeal to the senses (sights, sounds, smells, touch, taste). In other words, one should not attempt to tell the reader how someone or something is unusual, strange, pretty, or amazing; a writer should aim to *show* this by making the reader realize the distinct or special qualities of the object described.

Descriptive essays use concrete sensory description to make a point about an object, person, or place. In order to make you point and convince your readers, details of the five senses are essential. This would add vitality and life to the portrait you are drawing.

Read the following two sentences:

- The car is a red beautiful vehicle.
- The blood-colored Lamborghini slumbered in the car park. Its rounded fenders hung over the tires like drooping eyelids.

Notice that the first sentence simply *tells* you that the car is red and beautiful. It's a general, almost superficial description. The second sentence, on the other hand, *shows* you how and why the car is beautiful. It makes you attempt to visualize the car. The language used here is figurative; a simile is used to draw the similarity between the car and a human being.

- **The Method of Organisation**

When describing an object, the most logical way to organize descriptive details is in *spatial order*. In other words, the central issue when describing an object for the reader is the space where the object is located. Even when describing people or animals, you could start by establishing the scene and then presenting details in a spatial order. You could, for example, arrange the

descriptive details from top to bottom, left to right, nearest to farthest and the like.

The introduction to the descriptive essay would, therefore, introduce the object, person or thing, described. An attractive, inviting description does the trick of tempting the reader to read through and to taste the excitement, revulsion, anger, enthusiasm, joy, or any other feeling you might choose to include at the beginning. The introduction would ideally, therefore, give the reader a feel of your own feeling for or against something or someone.

The thesis statement is, as you learned from Unit Two, the most specific sentence in the introduction. In the descriptive essay it should capture the reason for choosing a certain object to describe. Consider, for example, the following thesis statement to an essay by a nurse describing a typical day of work.

It was a typical morning in the emergency room of the hospital: quiet, but with an underlying vibration waiting to explode.

Notice the vivid language used to describe the day which would tempt the reader to read on and find out what kind of underlying vibration there was. The thesis statement here captures the aspect the writer wants to explore: the seemingly quiet but eventful day.

The body paragraphs in a descriptive essay lead on from the thesis statement and introduce the reader to the described object. The number of paragraphs is determined by the aspects a writer aims to explore. Each paragraph should be devoted to one, painting a portrait in the most vivid language possible. A writer should always bear in mind that the essay has to create a world for the reader to imagine.

The concluding paragraph restates the main idea of the essay, stressing the aspect the writer attempted to clarify and illuminate.

* Transitional Signals:

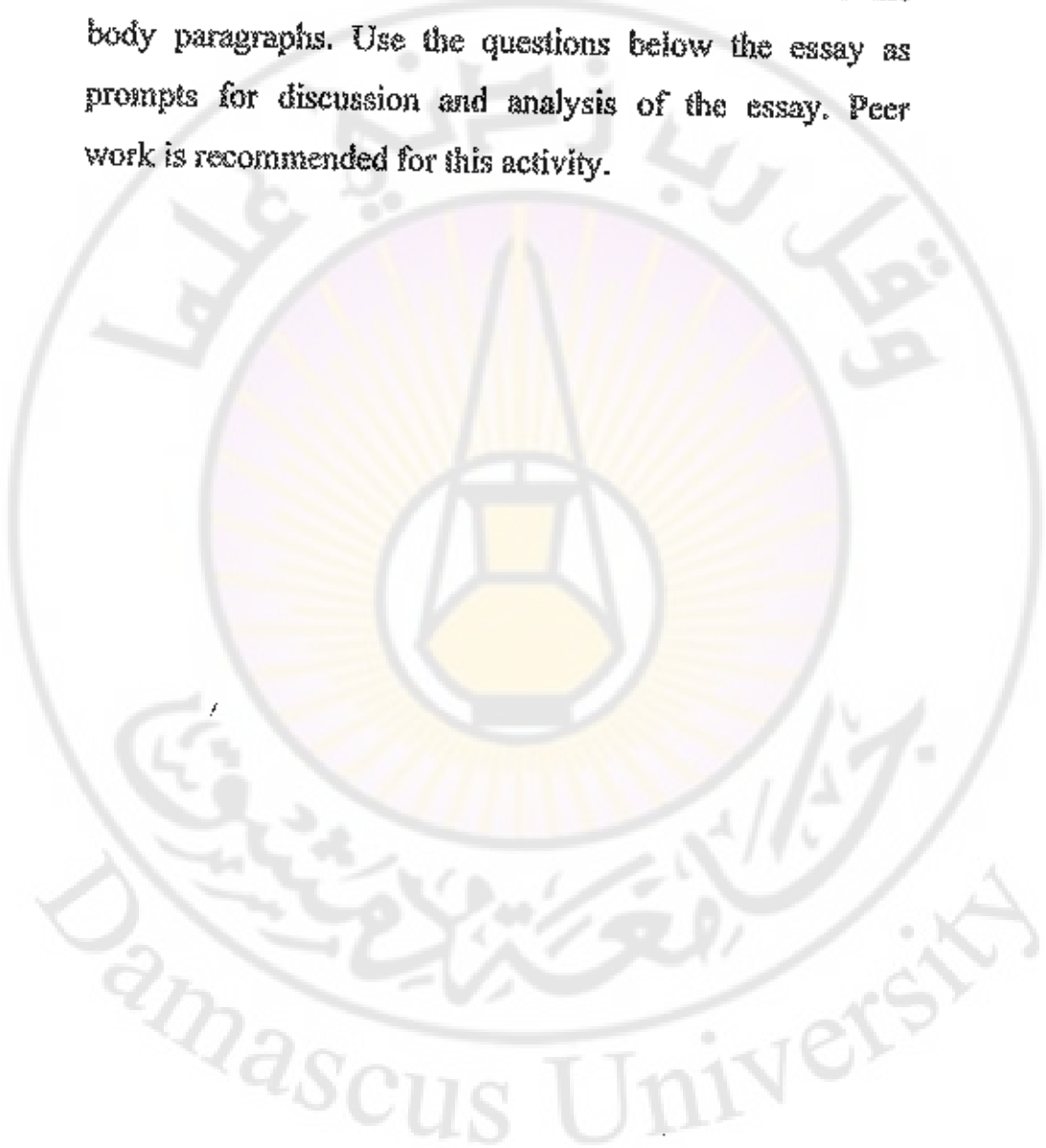
To describe objects in space, a writer uses adjectives, modifiers, and transitional signals that suit the subject of the essay. Some of the most common expressions for

showing spatial relationships are:

Over	beneath	behind
above	far away	in the rear
at the top	farther away	in front of
in the middle	beyond	within
in the centre	inside	outside
at the bottom	on the inside	on the outside
in the front	farther inside	to the north
in the back	under	around
next to	on the left	close by
on one side	on the right	nearby
to the right	to the left	beside
on the side		

The above signals are used to describe the location of the object described, or even the object itself in terms of shape and movement. Other specific words used in descriptions are modifiers (adjectives mainly).

Read the model descriptive essay below. This is an essay written by Max Rodriguez describing his hometown. Consider the link between the thesis statement and the body paragraphs. Use the questions below the essay as prompts for discussion and analysis of the essay. Peer work is recommended for this activity.



Model Essay

The Beauty of My Town¹

I come from a small town called Coban, far from Guatemala City, with a population of about 2,000 people, mostly of Mayan Indian descent. The beauty of green villages and mountains and the spiritual culture of the Mayan Indians are preserved almost intact from the region of their birth.

In the morning when I am there, I enjoy the cool mountain breezes and the pure golden sunlight as a refreshing counterpoint to the endless ticking of the clock. When I leave my house, the first things that strike my sense are the smell of fragrant wildflowers and the sight of Mayan Indians riding their horses up the mountain on the way to work. In the afternoon, I walk along the woodland trails amid the tall trees and the singing of the innumerable birds, exchanging endless greetings with the Mayans passing by. Then I wander along the river, where the clear blue water running serenely down the mountains never fails to make me yearn for an evening swim.

¹ From Alan Meyers, *Composing with Confidence*, 5th edn (USA: Longman, 2000), pp. 154-5.

On Saturdays, I visit the local plaza and drink in the sights and sounds of Indians wearing and selling their traditional costumes and artifacts made with clay by hand, a phenomenon almost antique to the town. On Sunday mornings the plaza looks quiet and almost deserted because virtually the entire population is in church. But by noon of the same day, the village square is alive with flocks of brightly costumed children at play under the tolerant eyes of their parents and elder siblings, while on the main stage of the *zocalo* (the town square), the *marimbas* (the national instrument of Guatemala) are casting their magical spell while people of all ages dance and sing around them, and I enjoy such savory appetizers as Guatemalan tamales and *atole de elote* (the delicious corn soup for which the Mayan are renowned through the world).

As the magnificent evening sunset filters slowly down through the magically changing blues and greens of the mountain rivers, I reflect once more on the inestimable treasures of spiritual beauty with which our humble people have been blessed.

Discussion Questions:

1. *What is main topic in this essay? Is this stated clearly? Where?*

2. *What aspects of the experience described does the thesis statement highlight? Specify.*

3. *How do the body paragraphs contribute to the description? Explain.*

4. *Notice the combined description of place and lifestyle. What transitional signals does the writer use in this respect? Underline them in the body paragraphs.*

5. *What function does the conclusion have in this essay? Specify.*



Exercises

Read the following essay, and then answer the questions below.

A Carnival Ride

By: Elisabeth McCarthy

I have always been fascinated by carnival rides. It amazes me that average, ordinary people eagerly trade in the serenity of the ground for the chance to be tossed through the air like vegetables in a food processor. It amazes me that at some time in history someone thought that people would enjoy this, and that person invented what must have been the first of these terrifying machines. For me, it is precisely the thrill and excitement of having survived the ride that keeps me coming back for more.

My first experience with a carnival ride was a Ferris wheel at a local fair. Looking at that looming monstrosity spinning the life out of its sardine-caged occupants, I was dumbstruck. It was huge, smoky, noisy and not a little intimidating. Ever since that initial impression became fossilized in my imagination many years ago; these rides have

reminded me of mythical beasts, amazing dinosaurs carrying off their screaming passengers like sacrificial virgins. Even the droning sound of their engines brings to mind the great roar of a fire-breathing dragon with smoke spewing from its exhaust-pipe nostrils.

The first ride on one of these fantastic beasts gave me an instant rush of adrenaline. As the death-defying ride started, a lump in my throat pulsed like a dislodged heart ready to walk the plank. As the ride gained speed, the resistance to gravity built up against my body until I was unable to move. An almost imperceptible pause as the wheel reached the top of its climb allowed my body to relax in a brief state of normalcy. Then there was an assault of stomach-turning weightlessness as the machine continued its rotation and I descended back toward the earth. A cymbal-like crash vibrated through the air as the wheel reached bottom, and much to my surprise I began to rise again.

Each new rotation gave me more confidence in the churning machine. Every ascent left me elated that I had survived the previous death-defying fall. When another nerve-racking climb failed to follow the last exhilarating descent and the ride was over, I knew I was hooked. Physically and

emotionally drained, I followed my fellow passengers down the clanging metal steps to reach the safety of my former footing. I had been spared, but only to have the opportunity to ride again.

My fascination with these fantastic flights is deeply engrained in my soul. A trip on the wonderful Ferris wheel never fails to thrill me. Although I am becoming older and have less time, or less inclination, to play, the child-like thrill I have on a Ferris wheel continues with each and every ride.

Questions:

1. *What sentence states the main idea of the essay?*

2. *What kind of introduction does the writer start with? Is it an effective start to the essay?*

3. *What method of organization does the writer use? Describe in details.*

4. *How many body paragraphs does the essay include? Are they coherent? How?*

5. *What do the body paragraphs describe?*

6. *The writer uses the senses to describe the scene. Give examples of this sensory description.*

7. *What kind of vocabulary does the writer use in paragraph two to describe the ride machine?*

8. *Look at the third and fourth paragraphs of the essay. Notice that the writer is describing the actual ride, namely an action. What transitional signals does she use to help her draw the scene? Underline them.*

Writing Assignment:

Describe a place of great natural beauty to an out-of-town friend. Be specific and follow the conventions of the descriptive essay you learnt in this unit.

When you finish writing your essay, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her essay. Use the Peer Editing Checklist below as a guide.

Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you like about the essay?	
Layout	
2. Is the layout correct? (examine indentation of paragraphs, margins and spacing)	
Structure	
3. Does the essay have an introduction, a body and a conclusion?	
4. Does the essay have a clear thesis statement?	

Organization	
5. Does the introduction give background information?	
6. Is the introduction attractive?	
7. Does each body paragraph have a clearly stated topic sentence?	
8. Does each body paragraph have sufficient supporting details?	
9. Does the conclusion restate the thesis, give a summary, or offer final thoughts and comments?	
10. Do the paragraphs have unity and coherence?	

11. Is the description vivid and lively?	
Sentence structure	
12. Are there vague or unclear sentences?	
Grammar and Punctuation	
13. Are there any grammatical mistakes?	
14. Are there any punctuation problems?	



Unit Two

The Process Essay

As the name suggests, a *Process* essay describes a process. In this type of essay, the writer aims to tell the reader how to do something, like baking a cake, or how something has been done, like the process of *evaporation*; in other words, the aim is either to instruct and direct, or to analyse and explain. One has to bear in mind the kind of audience addressed, and whether they have any clue as to the process described. This helps the writer decide what to include and what to leave out.

- **Method of Organisation**

Since the process essay describes the steps followed for doing something, or to achieve a certain end, it is important that they be discussed *sequentially*, i.e., in the same order they take place. Unlike the chronological order which describes past narratives mainly, sequential order describes the sequence of past, present, or future processes. For example, a writer is giving the reader the recipe for

making a cake; it would be ruinous to describe the steps in any order other than the sequential order. In this particular case, you cannot tell the reader to add in the flour with the egg and sugar mixture, for example, before describing the first step of beating the eggs.

It is also vital to *mention all the steps* of the process described. Leaving one step out could result in preventing the reader from following the essay and recreating the process. In the cake recipe essay mentioned above, the writer cannot obviously ignore any result as this would result in the reader not being able to prepare the cake successfully.

Another key element to remember when writing a process essay is to illustrate any strange or perhaps scientific terms that the reader might be unfamiliar with. This should not take the writer long, as this is embedded in the essay itself.

The introduction to a process essay has the familiar function of introducing the topic. The writer should, however, add some few clarifying remarks, like describing why a certain process is described, and in what situation.

For example, when starting an essay with 'Preparing a birthday cake for a loved one is not at all difficult', the reader realises that the aim of this essay is to show how a cake can be made and to prove that it is not a difficult task.

The actual description of the process starts in the body paragraphs. If the writer feels that there are certain terms or precautions that the reader should be aware of before starting the process, this could take place in the first body paragraph. Someone preparing a cake, for example, would be given the ingredients and any remarks in the first body paragraphs. The body paragraphs could then be divided in accordance with the steps of the process. The major steps would then be devoted each to one paragraph: in the first step of the cake preparation essay, the reader would be directed to prepare the baking tin and to start beating the eggs and adding in the sugar; the next step would be that of folding in the flour and any flavours, and the final step would be that of pouring the mixture in the tin and baking it. It is the writer's entire decision to divide the body paragraphs into as many or as few a number as possible. The requirements of an essay could entail certain number.

The topic sentences for each of the body paragraphs are implied and not necessarily stated clearly.

The concluding paragraph states the results of the process briefly, giving a sense of completion to the essay.

* **Transitional signals:**

The sequential order, as clarified above, means that the writer starts with the first step in the process and proceeds in time until the last step in the process. This entails that transitional words should indicate that one step has been completed and another one will begin. Some common transitional words used in process essays are listed below:

Linking Words of Time	
Immediately following,	After a few hours,
Initially,	Afterwards,
In the end,	At last
In the future,	At the same time,
In the meantime,	Before
In the meanwhile,	Before this,
Last, Last but not least, Lastly,	Currently,
Later,	During
Meanwhile,	Eventually,
Next, Soon after,	Finally,
Previously,	First, Second, Third, etc.
Simultaneously,	First of all,
Subsequently,	Formerly
Then,	Immediately before,

Below are two model process essays: one offering an analysis of a process, and the second directing the reader to follow the steps of a process. Notice the difference in developing the main topic in each essay.

Model Essay 1

How to Make a Sponge Cake

My children love sponge cakes. They don't only like the taste; they enjoy the process of making a cake. Naturally, they get to make a cake in the vacation when they don't have any homework to do. I do not consider this a waste of time because children learn responsibility and creativity when making a cake. Any mother can guide her children when making a cake. In fact, making a sponge cake is not difficult at all if you follow these easy steps.

First, you need to assemble the ingredients and the equipment. You'll need eggs, white sugar, self-raising flour, lemon zest, vanilla, and butter. You also need a large bowl to mix the ingredients in, an electric whisk, or a wooden spoon, and an 8 inch round cake tin. Once you have these items, you can start making your cake.

Second, butter the cake tin and leave it aside. Beat 4 eggs with the electric whisk for one minute, or until they are smooth and bubbly. Mix in 1 1/4 cup of white sugar and keep stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Add the vanilla to the mixture and stir. Next, fold in the self-raising flour. At

this stage you cannot stir briskly or you would release the air and thus cause the cake to go down once in the oven. Simply add the flour gradually and fold it in. Finally, add the aromatic lemon zest for a tangy taste.

After you have mixed all ingredients together, bring the baking tin and pour the mixture in. Try to pour it in the middle, and it will spread out. Place in a medium heat oven. Leave it for 45 minutes or until it springs to the touch. Do not open the oven at all before at least half an hour has passed. This would cause the cake to go down. Take the cake tin out, and leave to cool for about 5 to 10 minutes, then get it out and place it on a wire rack to cool thoroughly. When it is cool enough, cut it into pieces. The final step is easy: eat a piece and enjoy it.

As you can see, a sponge cake is very easy to make. All you need is to follow the steps and you will have a wonderful sponge cake to enjoy. Well, if the children are making it, then they are the ones to enjoy, and you will have to clear all the mess!

Discussion Questions:

1. *What does the above essay discuss? Where is this stated?*

2. *Does the thesis statement make the topic clear to the reader?*

3. *How many steps are mentioned? Is there anything missing?*

4. *What is the function of the first body paragraph?*

5. *What method of organization does the writer follow? Explain.*

6. *Underline the linking words used in the body paragraphs. What type are they?*

Model Essay 2

A Process of Digestion

The digestive process is important in maintaining the lives of living organisms and in providing them with needed energy. Groups of organs, such as the mouth, esophagus, stomach, and intestines, work together to perform this complex task. Digestion is the process of breaking down food from large molecules into small ones to make it easier for absorption. The three major steps involved in the digestive process are ingestion, digestion, and absorption.

Ingestion, which occurs in the mouth, is the first step of the digestive process. After food enters the mouth, the teeth chew it. Saliva, which is produced by the salivary glands, plays a major role in breaking down the food into smaller pieces. These small pieces travel to the stomach through the esophagus.

In the stomach, the second step of the digestive process begins. When the chewed food reaches the bottom of the esophagus, a valve lets the food enter the stomach. Contraction of the stomach wall mixes the food. Acidic gastric juices, which are secreted by the gastric glands in the

stomach, help in mixing the food and in turning it into a partial liquid so it will have the ability to move into the small intestine. In the small intestine, enzymes are secreted, and digestion is completed.

The last step in the digestive process is absorption. Absorption takes place in the small intestine. The wall of the small intestine is lined with small, finger like projections called villi. Small molecules of food are absorbed by the huge number of villi. Some of these absorbed molecules enter the bloodstream to be distributed throughout the whole body.

In conclusion, the digestive process involves three major steps: ingestion, digestion, and absorption. Ingestion, which occurs in the mouth, helps to increase the surface area of the food particles and prepares them for digestion. In the stomach, digestion begins, and it continues until it reaches the small intestine, where absorption takes place. The digestive process maintains organisms' lives by providing them with energy needed for different functions.

Discussion Questions:

1. *What is the function of the introduction? Is it effective?*

2. *Break down the thesis statement into the basic parts it consists of.*

3. *Which kind of a process essay is this? Why?*

4. *On what basis does the writer divide the body paragraphs?*

5. *Do you think the conclusion is effective and needed? Why?*



Exercises

Read the process essay below and answer the questions underneath it.

The Process of an Essay

By Maria Cabeza

Do you know how to write an essay? Writing an essay could be easy or hard. Some students cannot do it well and that is why they hate it. If you do not know how to write an essay, there are three basic steps that you could follow: discovering a topic, supporting the thesis, and editing the essay. Through these steps, you can write an effective and clear essay.

First of all, you need to get some information and materials to discover a thesis and a topic sentence. For example, you can use prewriting, which can be freewriting, making a list, and questioning. The freewriting technique is to help you write sentences or phrases without worrying about spelling or grammar mistakes. Freewriting is a good way to overcome mental blocks about writing. Another helpful technique is making a list, also known as brainstorming. You start writing ideas and details that relate to your subject.

Brainstorming can help you put the ideas in chronological order. Questioning is also a good method to find ideas and details. For example, asking yourself questions like why? when? who? and how? can be an effective way of getting yourself to think about specific topics.

Secondly, the next step is supporting the thesis. Usually, you need three supporting paragraphs and those can be the body parts of the essay. You should organize adequate and specific details. Supporting paragraphs consist of concrete evidence such as giving examples, getting direct quotes, and personal experiences. Each one has the importance of making the essay clearer. Now you have an outline of the essay. Then you arrange an introductory and concluding paragraph based on the thesis. On the other hand, using opposing ideas or questions in the introduction is one way to make the essay more interesting, because it gets the interest of the reader

Finally, you should edit your essay for its contents and style. It is as important as prewriting, outlining, and drafting. By editing, you can make sure whether your paper is unified, supported, and well organized. It involves rewriting the paper to make it clearer and stronger. Also, revising, which is

included in editing, helps you correct errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Of course, it is very helpful to use a dictionary to do the revising and editing. After the editing, you can finally type your essay to make it complete.

In conclusion, if you ask yourself how to write an essay, it is important to follow a process to develop an essay. This process consists of discovering a topic, supporting the thesis, and editing the essay. Discovering a topic includes freewriting, making a list, and questioning. Supporting the thesis also includes giving examples, getting direct quotes, and discovering personal experiences. Editing the essay likewise involves rewriting the essay to make it clearer and stronger. Will you be more worried about writing an essay?

Questions:

1. *What is the main topic of this essay?*

2. *Does the thesis statement give a clear idea of the main topic of the essay? Specify by analyzing it.*

3. *The writer begins and ends her essay with a question. Why do you think she resorted to this method? Was it effective?*

4. *How does the writer group the steps of the process in the body paragraphs? Examine them to find the principle.*

5. *What type of a process essay is this? Explain.*

6. Are the techniques of writing mentioned in the first body paragraph sequential? If not, what order do they have?

7. Locate the topic sentences for each of the body paragraphs. Are they stated clearly?

8. What type of conclusion does this essay have? Is it effective?

9. If you were to make some changes to this essay, what would you change?

Writing Assignment:

Write your recipe for happiness in this rapidly changing world. Remember this is a process essay in which you need to provide the steps as you think necessary.

When you finish writing your essay, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her essay. Use the Peer Editing Checklist below as a guide.

Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you like about the essay?	
Layout	
2. Is the layout correct? (examine indentation of paragraphs, margins and spacing)	
Structure	
3. Does the essay have an introduction, a body and a conclusion?	
4. Does the essay have a clear thesis statement?	

Organization	
5. Does the introduction alert the reader to the importance of the topic?	
6. Is the introduction attractive?	
7. Do the body paragraphs list the steps clearly?	
8. Does each body paragraph have sufficient supporting details (facts, examples...)?	
9. Do the paragraphs have unity and coherence?	
10. Does the conclusion restate the thesis, give a summary, or offer final thoughts and comments?	

Sentence structure	
11. Are there vague or unclear sentences?	
Grammar and Punctuation	
12. Are there any grammatical mistakes?	
13. Are there any punctuation problems?	



Unit Three

The Comparison and Contrast Essay

Comparing and contrasting things is a mental process that we apply in our daily lives. We always make choices: what to eat, what to buy, what to study. So we consider similarities and differences for any choice we make. The purpose of a *comparison* is to show how people, places, animals, ideas, concepts, or any other things are similar, and the purpose of a *contrast* is to show how these are different. For example, if you wanted to buy a piece of clothing, you'd compare it to another piece that you'd seen in another shop, trying to establish which is a better deal and choice. Since the purpose of a comparison and contrast essay is to list the similarities and differences between two or more objects, it could have many elements or ideas to mention and thus becomes rather complex. Good organization of ideas is then essential to a clear argument, for the ultimate purpose of a comparison and contrast essay is to explain or persuade the audience.

The first step to writing a good comparison and contrast essay is to list the similarities and contrasts that you would like to examine in your essay. Draw two columns for each of the persons, objects, or concepts you are comparing and contrasting. For example, if you were asked to compare and contrast two of your friends, you could choose the elements of age, looks, shape, temper, attitude, intelligence, lifestyle, and so on. But this is not feasible for an academic essay of 300 words, for example. What you need to do then is decide on certain issues you'd like to compare and contrast. Establish what your argument is: are you trying to show the difference in temper, in attitude, in lifestyles? Is your purpose to reveal how your friends deal with you? How supportive they are? In other words, limit the number of ideas to compare and contrast in your essay as this would make the essay clearer and easier to organize.

• **Method and Patterns of Organization**

One thing to remember about a comparison and contrast essay is to give fair and equal treatment to the comparison and the contrast.

There are three basic patterns for organizing a comparison and contrast essay. You would notice that they all have the same ideas, though arranged differently.

1) Basic Block Style

In this style, you list all the similarities between the two objects of your essay in one body paragraph, and in the second body paragraph you list all the differences between them, or vice versa.

The Internet and Print

Introductory Paragraph

Thesis Statement

Body Paragraph 1: Differences between the Internet and Print

- Expenses
- Speed in finding the sought for information

Body Paragraph 2: Similarities between the Internet and Print

- Good sources of information
- Entertainment tools

Concluding Paragraph

2) Block Comparison Style

In this style, you also have two body paragraphs with exactly the same ideas on both objects of comparison. They should be discussed in exactly the same order in both paragraphs. One of the problems with this pattern is that the reader might forget in the second paragraph the points in the first paragraph. Therefore, the writer should aim in the second paragraph to show how the aspects compare with those in paragraph one.

Introductory Paragraph

Thesis Statement

Body Paragraph 1: The internet

- Expenses
- Speed in finding information
- A good source of information
- An entertainment tool

Body Paragraph 2: Print compared with Internet

- Expenses: print more costly
- Speed in finding information: internet speedier
- A good source of information: both of them
- An entertainment tool: both, though internet is more entertaining.

Concluding Paragraph

3) Point-by-Point Comparison Style

In this last style, you have several body paragraphs. This has to do with the number of points of comparison you have in this essay. The topic sentence for each body paragraph states the point of comparison, and the body develops it in terms of both objects.

Introductory Paragraph

Thesis Statement

Body Paragraph 1: First point of comparison

- Expenses of internet and print

Body Paragraph 2: Second point of comparison

- Speed in finding information

Body Paragraph 3: Third point of comparison

- A good source of information

Body Paragraph 4: Fourth point of comparison

- Entertainment tool

Concluding Paragraph

• Transitional Signals

i. Comparison:

Linking words used for comparisons are of various types: transitions, conjunctions, prepositional phrases and others. The table below lists some of the common comparison linking words. More can be found in Appendix 1, page 227.

Conjunctions				
Transitions	coordinating	subordinating	Others	Paired conjunctions
similarly	and... too	as	just like	both... and
likewise		just as	the same	not only...but also
also			alike	neither...nor
too			similar to	
in the same way			the same as	
			equal	
			equally	

ii. Contrast:

Linking devices used to show the differences between two or more things are similar in type to those used to show similarities, with the exclusion of paired conjunctions. See the table below for a list of some of the common contrast words.

Conjunctions			
Transitions	Coordinating	Subordinating	Others
On the other hand	but	although	different from
In contrast	yet	even though	unlike
However		while	
		whereas	

Examples:

1. Damascus is a big draw for tourists. *Likewise*, Aleppo is famous for its historical and tourist sites.
2. *Unlike* print, the internet is faster and less costly.
3. The crowdedness of cities makes living there an emotional burden. *In contrast*, the countryside is a quiet place, and living there is a relaxing experience.
4. *Not only* is it hot today, *but also* humid.
5. *As* is the case any new experience, my first day at work was rather awkward.

Read the following model essays and use the questions below for analysis. Peer or group work is recommended for this activity.

Model Essay 1:

East versus West

Early in my nursing career, I had the opportunity to work under two extremely different charge nurses. Dolly "West" and Betty "East", as they were jokingly called, ruled the third floor for over twenty-five years. Both ladies are retired now and, I understand, immensely happy to be relieved of their duties and responsibilities. I would venture a guess that this is the first time they have ever agreed on anything.

Betty was a strict, no-nonsense commander, who ruled her department with an iron hand. She went strictly by the book, and heaven help you if you deviated. Temperatures and blood pressures were done at 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.; baths were given between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Laughter in Betty's department was infrequent; the mood, somber; and the work, done with an assembly-line precision. Orders were initiated as fast as they were written, and the desk was always clear and devoid of any unnecessary clutter or papers. Betty "East's" department was referred to as the "Eastern Militarized Zone".

And then there was Dolly, dear Dolly "West". I always perceived a "Dolly" to be someone who was air-headed,

scatter brained and disorganized; and Dolly "West" was the personification of my perceptions. Her department was chaotic, confused and undisciplined. It was a beehive of activity with nothing getting accomplished. Her desk always looked like it had a miniature "Leaning Tower of Pisa" on it, so high were charts stacked. Her favorite reasons for leaving work undone were: one, "I only have two hands;" and, two, "That's why there are two other shifts". During a crisis, we could always count on her to leave and go to the ladies' room. The biggest part of her day was spent in the break room, pouring coffee for anyone she could collar. When she did -- and this was rare -- make it into a patient's room -- was usually to check out a newspaper item that "Sissy" (her sister) had just told her about during their daily half-hour telephone conversation. Her staff was anxious, harried, over-worked, exasperated and disgruntled. Her department was referred to as "Dingbat Dolly's".

Ironically, the physical appearance of these women was diametrically opposed to their attitudes and work habits. Betty was always disheveled. Her uniforms were rumpled and grayish white or yellowed. Her glasses were always smudged

and falling down on her nose, and her nurse's cap was plopped precariously on a head of hair that was stringy and unkept. In contrast, Dolly was neat as a pin. Her uniforms were always crisp and white; her hair, cut short and neatly combed. And her cap never moved an inch on her head. She was forever polishing her glasses with those little paper wipes, and they always sparkled crystal clean.

I worked for Betty for three months and Dolly for ten years. Betty polished my organizational skills and increased my efficiency and accuracy in completing assignments. She taught me how to recognize and set priorities and stick to them. On the other hand, Dolly was responsible for the birth of my ulcer, my first gray hairs, and the death of my love affair with the nursing profession. She burned me up, and she burned me out. She aggravated me, and she frustrated me. She taught me to exercise self control and self discipline that I never dreamed I possessed. Betty taught me nursing; and Dolly, about myself. Between them, Betty "East" and Dolly "West" contributed to my growth as a professional and as a person. I don't regret my experience with either lady.

Discussion Questions:

1. *How does the writer introduce her topic? What does she mention in the introduction?*

2. *Analyse the thesis statement. Is it at all clear and does it reflect the main topic of the essay? How?*

3. *Skim the body paragraphs quickly. Does this essay list mostly similarities, mostly contrasts, or both similarities and contrasts between the nurses?*

4. *How is the body of the essay divided? What does each paragraph have to do with?*

5. *What organization style(s) does this essay follow? Was it a good choice? Why?*

6. How does the writer support her description of each nurse? Give evidence from the essay.

7. Diagram the third body paragraph into topic sentence, major and minor support.

Topic Sentence: _____

Support: _____

8. What is particular about the concluding paragraph to this essay? Do you find it offers a good ending?

9. Write a summary of the similarities and contrasts between Dolly and Betty.

10. Underline any linking words showing comparison and contrast in the essay above.



Model Essay 2:

Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King¹

Two twentieth-century leaders who have continued to influence non-violent social protest movements internationally are Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Of different races and cultures, born on opposite sides of the world in nations vastly different in wealth and technology, these two men shared the philosophy of non-violent, but direct, action and expended their lives in pursuit of peaceful solutions to social inequities. An examination of their lives, consequently, reveals both similarities and differences in their family backgrounds, and ideology.

Gandhi's and King's family backgrounds show similarities and differences. Gandhi was a Hindi of the Baniyu (Trading) Caste; his father, nevertheless, was chief minister of the small state of Kutchiawad. Gandhi broke with the traditions of his family and went to study law in England at the age of 19, where he had his first

¹ Adapted from Mestrice Inthoof and Herman Hudson, *From Paragraph to Essay* (London: Longman, 1975), pp. 31-33.

contact with western culture. While he read and studied the Bible with interest, he became more deeply convinced of the logicity and profundity of the Hindi religion. King was an Afro-American born into a family of Christian ministers. His father was the pastor of a church which his father-in-law had founded many years before. Unlike Gandhi, King decided to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and study for the ministry. It was only after studying the philosophic word of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and finally Gandhi, that he began to formulate his own philosophy, which was similar in many respects to Gandhi's. Early environment, family tradition, and study of both Gandhi and King, at some points similar but at most points different, shaped their characters and formed their expectations for their societies and their people.

Both Gandhi and King believed that their aims could be achieved through non-violent means. They held a common ideology of non-violence. This common ideology of non-violence was not to be understood as a failure to act. It should be understood as direct resistance which is grounded in love, force or *agraha*. Gandhi said

men must resist the evil that men do by refusing to obey man-made law which contradicted a higher moral law. He often reminded them that blood would have to flow before the Indians attained their ends, but he said the blood must be *their* blood, not the oppressors. King cried out, 'I hope no one has to die as a result of our struggle ... but if anyone has to die, let it be me'. King reminded Afro-Americans that they must love their enemies even if it means suffering and death. Similarities in the ideologies of the two men are most apparent since Gandhi was one of the major influences in the development of King's philosophy.

Both Gandhi and King were highly respected leaders, whose philosophies were articulated so clearly that they continue to influence contemporary thought and social movement. Their family backgrounds and their belief in the dignity and worth of the individual led them to lives of non-violent resistance and final martyrdom. But even a superficial examination of their lives reveals differences as well as similarities in their backgrounds and in the development of their influential ideologies.

Discussion Questions

1. *Study the introduction to this essay. How effective is it?
Does it list any elements not discussed in the essay?*

2. *Locate the thesis statement. Does it state the main topic clearly? Is there a predictor? And what does it help?*

3. *Do the body paragraphs develop the thesis statement?
How?*

4. *Does the essay state mostly similarities, differences, or
both?*

5. *Examine the language of the essay: does the writer use linking devices, comparative forms, or none?*

6. *With your colleague, discuss the structure of this essay. What organisation style does it follow? Analyse the body paragraphs to prove your answer.*

7. *What kind of conclusion is the last paragraph? What effect does it have on the reader?*



Exercises:

Gender Differences²

The "battle of the sexes" started with Adam and Eve, and it will probably continue forever. The opinion that men are superior to women has long been accepted in many cultures, but the feminist movement is trying to change this view. Feminists claim that boys and girls are exactly equal at birth but become unequal because of the way they are treated by society. However, recent research contradicts the view that males and females are innately alike.

Without a doubt, societal influences both inside and outside the family cause many differences to develop. Inside the family, boys learn to be men by watching and copying their fathers, and girls learn to be women by watching and copying their mothers. Outside the family, boys who play with dolls after a certain age receive disapproval, as do girls who continue to play with Ninja Turtles (although the pressure may not be quite as strong on girls).

² From Alice Oslima and Ann Hogue, *Introduction to Academic Writing*, 2nd ed (Syria: Longman Group, 2003), pp. 200-1.

However, not all differences are caused by societal influences. Some are due to differences in the physiology of the brain. For example, more men than women are left-handed, which means that the right side of men's brains is dominant because the right side of the brain controls the left side of the body. Right-brain people generally have better reasoning abilities, whereas left-brain people generally have better verbal skills.

In fact, girls are better at language than the boys. For both men and women, the language centre is on the left side of the brain. However, girls not only begin speaking earlier than boys, but they also speak more clearly and develop larger vocabularies. In contrast, more boys than girls stutter and have trouble learning to read. Boys' difficulty with language may be the result of their right-brain dominance.

In addition, men and women have different spatial abilities. For example, men are better at turning three-dimensional objects in their heads. That's why they can read maps more easily than women. Women often have to turn a map around in order to know which direction to go, whereas men can do it in their heads. On the other hand, women

excel at other spatial tasks such as remembering the location of objects in a random pattern. That's why women are better than men at finding misplaced car keys and eyeglasses.

While it is clear that some differences are rooted in the physiology of the brain, it is equally clear that other differences are not. For example, boys, and girls are equal in math ability until about seventh grade. Then girls start to fall behind, perhaps because math teachers encourage boys more. Furthermore, there are many exceptions to these general patterns. Just as some women are good at abstract algebra, some men become skilled poets and public speakers.

Although continuing research will yield further information about gender differences, it will never resolve the battle between the sexes. However, it should help the next time he gets lost in the family car while following her map-reading directions, and the next time she has to look for his misplaced car keys.

Questions

1. *Underline the thesis statement. What does it suggest the essay would deal with?*

2. *What does the essay list: the similarities or the differences between boys and girls? For what purpose? (This should be stated in the introduction)*

3. *What method of organization does this essay follow? Give evidence.*

4. *Write down the main topics for each of the body paragraphs. The first one is done for you.*

1. societal differences

5. *How does the writer establish the linguistic structure of comparison: by use of comparatives, linking words, or implicitly? Give examples.*

6. *Look at the second body paragraph. What is the topic sentence? Is it the first or the second? Explain.*

7. *Examine the structure of body paragraphs to determine the kind of concrete evidence the writer uses to verify and prove the proposed gender differences or characteristics (statistical, historical, examples, life experience).*

8. *How does the final paragraph end the essay?*

Writing Assignment:

The world is rapidly changing. Compare the way your parents lived a few decades ago to the way you live today. You are free to decide which aspects to focus on: houses, lifestyle, social activities...etc. Be systematic: choose a method of organization from those mentioned above and follow it.

When you finish writing your essay, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her essay. Use the Peer Editing Checklist below as a guide.

Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you like about the essay?	
Layout	
2. Is the layout correct? (examine indentation of paragraphs, margins and spacing)	
Structure	
3. Does the essay have an introduction, a body and a conclusion?	

4. Does the essay have a clear thesis statement?	
Organization	
5. Is the introduction a good start for a comparison and contrast essay?	
6. Does each body paragraph have a clearly stated topic sentence?	
7. Does each body paragraph have sufficient supporting details (facts, examples...)?	
8. Do the paragraphs have unity and coherence?	

9. What method of organization does the essay follow? (choose from the styles offered in the unit above)	
10. Does the conclusion restate the thesis, give a summary, or offer final thoughts and comments?	
Sentence structure	
11. Are there vague or unclear sentences?	
Grammar and Punctuation	
12. Are there any grammatical mistakes?	
13. Are there any punctuation problems?	

Unit Four

The Classification Essay

When analyzing a subject, we tend to break it down into smaller parts to study; this is much easier than examining the subject in its broad whole form. For example, if we want to examine the term 'student', it would be confusing to examine it as such. Dividing it, however, would be a better policy. Students could be classified as hard working, lazy, or indifferent. They could also be males or females; those who learn by memorization, and others who rely on their analytic skills, etc.

This is precisely what a classification essay is about. In a classification essay, a writer organizes, or sorts, things into categories, segments, methods, types or kinds according to a single principle of division. A writer takes a subject like kinds of students, divides it into related sub-topics, and discusses each one individually. Classification is, thus, a common activity that is especially helpful in organizing large groups of

ideas into smaller, recognizable divisions that can be given distinct names or titles and then described in detail.

From the above mentioned definition, we could trace three steps to follow when writing a classification essay:

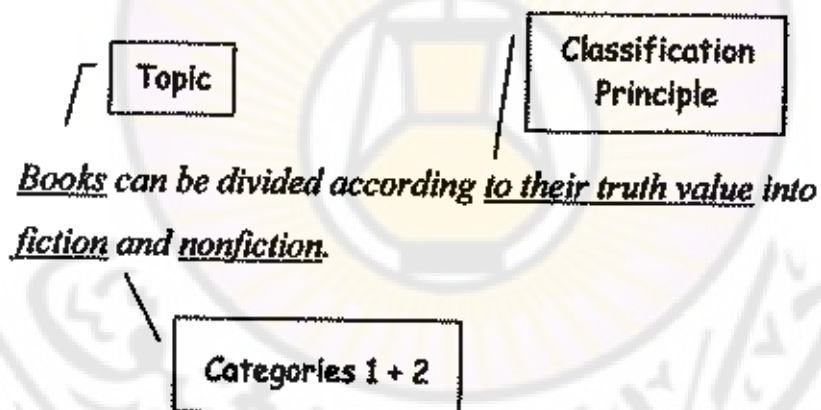
1. **Determine the categories:** You need here to be thorough, neither discussing too many categories, nor too few ones. For example, if you are examining the different attractions Damascus enjoys, you may refer to religious sites and natural scenery. But you cannot possibly leave out historical sites as these are perhaps the most important feature of Damascus, being the oldest populated capital of the world. Similarly, if your topic is drivers, and your classification principle is the attention and care they show, you could examine careless, careful, and overly careful drivers, but it would be unwise to include males or females as this would blur the discussion and cause the reader to be confused.
2. **Apply a single classification principle:** Once you have decided on the categories of your topic, make sure that

they fit into the same classification principle. The *classification principle* is how you divide or sort the groups. Do not apply more than one classification principle as this would result in other categories which cannot be developed logically and fully in a short piece of writing like the essay. For example, when you are examining the types of teachers according to the classification principle of academic qualification, you would divide them into those with BA's, those with master's degree, and those with PhD's. You shouldn't include another classification principle, like efficiency, as you would have to include other categories such as hard working and careless teachers.

- 3. Discuss each category individually and support it with examples:** You should also give equal attention to each category by giving the same number of examples for each. The most important category, however, could be discussed last and given more space and elaboration.

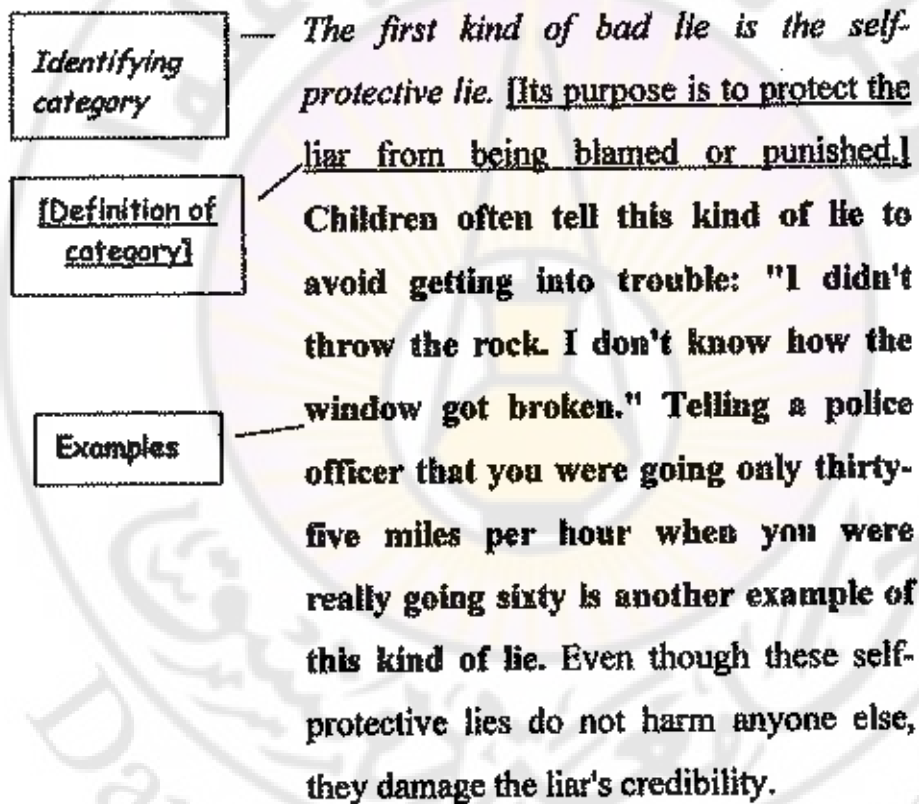
- **The Structure of the Classification Essay:**

The introduction to a classification essay should identify the topic and state why it is worthy of discussion. It should be easy to follow and informative. At the same time, it should be interesting and inviting; if a reader gets bored at the introduction stage, there may be the risk of him/her not finishing the essay. The thesis statement to a classification essay should also be clear, stating the subject of classification, the classification principle and the categories. Below is an example:



Following the introduction, you need to develop each of the categories you divided your topic into separately. When discussing a certain category, you could start by identifying the category or stating it. Then you describe or define the

category by stating the common characteristics of members of this particular group. Next, you give examples to illustrate the characteristics. One or two examples would be fine. Below is an example of a body paragraph taken from an essay on kinds of bad lies.



As you can see from the above example, the logical development of the body paragraph helps the reader

understand the category discussed, particularly when drawing on the examples provided.

The concluding paragraph would, as is the norm with all conclusions, summarise the categories, restate the thesis statement, and/or give the writer's thoughts on the subject and its importance.

- **Linking and Transitional words**

A classification essay, as you have learnt from the above definition and analysis, follows the order of introducing and defining each of the different categories of a certain subject, followed by examples to illustrate each, and comparison statements. In this sense, the transitional devices and linking words used in this kind of essay can be grouped under linking words of sequence, example, and comparison/ contrast. The table below lists some of the most common linking words used in classification essays.

Function	linking words
Sequence	First, second, third, next, finally, last
Illustration	In other words, that means, namely, that is, this is, this means/ does not mean
Example	As an example, for example, for instance, to illustrate, such as
Comparison/contrast	Unlike, contrary to, like, similar to..

Read the following model essay and answer the discussion questions below it. Peer or group work is recommended for more benefit.

Model Essay

Shades of Character

By Michelle Watson

Anyone who has spent time with or around children will notice that each one has a special personality all of their own. Children, like adults, have different traits that make up their personalities. Experts have researched this phenomenon in detail and classified children into different categories. Three categories are agreed upon by most experts; these have been named "flexible," "fearful," and "feisty."

The first personality type is called flexible. This is the most common of the three types, with about 40% of all children falling in this category. These children usually handle feelings of anger and disappointment by reacting mildly. This does not mean that they do not feel mad or disappointed; they just choose to react mildly. These actions mean the flexible child is easy to take care of and be around. Flexible children are subtle in their need for attention. Rather than yelling and demanding it, for example, they will slowly and politely let their caregiver know about the need. If they do not get the attention right away, they "seldom make a fuss." They patiently wait, but they still make it known that they

need the attention. Since these are well-behaved children, the caregiver needs to make sure the child is getting the attention they need.

The next temperament is the fearful type. These are the more quiet and shy children. This makes up about 15 percent of children. They adapt slowly to new environments and take longer than flexible children when warming up to things. When presented with a new environment, fearful children often cling to something or someone familiar. Whether it be the main caregiver or a material object such as a blanket, the fearful child will cling to it until they feel comfortable with the new situation. This can result in a deep attachment of the child to a particular caregiver or object. Fearful children may also withdraw when pushed into a new situation too quickly, for instance, or when other children are jumping into a new project or situation they are not comfortable with. These children may tend to play alone rather than with a group. In dealing with fearful children, caregivers find they need more attention than flexible children. One of the most effective techniques is just taking it slow and helping the child become more comfortable with the surroundings.

The third temperament type is called feisty. About "10 percent" of children fit into this category. A feisty child expresses their opinions in a very intense way. Whether they are happy or mad, everyone around them will know how they feel. These children remain active most of the time, and this causes them to be very aggressive. Unlike flexible children, feisty children are irregular in their napping and feeding times, but they do not adapt well to changes in their routines. Anything out of the ordinary could send them into some type of fit. Feisty children also tend to be very sensitive to their surrounding environment. As a result, they may have strong reactions to their surroundings. When dealing with feisty children, the caregiver should know strategies that receive positive results when different situations arise. The caretaker could begin by recognizing and empathizing with the feelings of the feisty child and placing firm limits on any unacceptable behavior. This response lets the child know that both his/her desire for the toy and feelings of anger when denied the toy are acceptable to the caregiver. At the same time, the caregiver should clearly communicate to the child that expressing anger through hurtful or disruptive behavior is not

acceptable. The child will probably need time to experience his or her emotions and settle down. Then offer an alternative toy or activity that may interest the child, who is then given time to consider the new choice and to accept or reject it.

Generally speaking, children can be divided into three groups, but caregivers must not forget that each child is an individual. Children may have the traits of all three of the personality groups, but they are categorized into the one they are most like. Whatever their temperament, children need to be treated according to their individual needs. When these needs are met appropriately, the child will be happier, and those around the child will feel better also. Knowing the general personality types and how to react to them will help to make the caregiver's job much easier and aid in the relief of unnecessary stress.

Discussion Questions

1. *Examine the introduction to the above essay. Does it appeal to you? Justify your answer.*

2. *Find the thesis statement, analyse it to show whether it is effective. Does it fit the requirements of a thesis statement for a classification essay?*

3. *What is the subject of classification?*

4. *How many categories is the subject of classification divided into?*

5. *How many classification principles can you find? State it/them.*

6. How does the writer organize the essay? Give evidence by examining the body paragraphs and what each tackles.

7. Look at the first body paragraph. What is the structure of this paragraph? In other words, how does the writer explain the first category? Discuss with a colleague.

8. What type of a conclusion is the last paragraph? Is this the best type for this kind of essay? If not, what alternatives do you have?

9. Examine the linking words used in this essay and underline them. Do you find many? What does the writer rely on to link the sentences?

10. In your own words, give a short summary of the essay of about five lines. (Students exchange sheets and mark them, noting any linguistic or structural problems).






Exercises

Read the essay below and answer the questions.

Rehabilitative Therapies

By Rebecca Patton

When many people hear the word "therapy," they think of something that has caused a problem and has to be fixed. In most cases, that is true. Most people think the problem may be an injury that has to be rehabilitated or an extreme mental problem where the person needs serious help. However, therapy does not always deal with injured or mentally troubled people. Three types of therapy that help a wide range of people with their problems are physical, occupational, and speech therapies.

Physical therapy is the one that deals mostly with injuries and their rehabilitation. According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, "Physical therapists provide services that help restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients

suffering from injuries or disease". Disabling conditions such as lower-back pain, cerebral palsy, arthritis, heart disease, and fractures, as well as physical injuries, are among the cases physical therapists often evaluate and treat. This therapy often includes strength-building exercises. Therapists in this field work on the person's flexibility, endurance, strength, balance, and coordination. Most therapy is done in specializing clinics or hospitals by a licensed physical therapist who has a bachelor's degree ("Physical").

The other type of therapy that may deal with some injuries is occupational therapy. Enhancing fine motor skills is the focus of this therapy. Occupational therapists set a goal for their patients which enables them to have more "independent, productive, and satisfying lives" by teaching them how to perform daily functions without the aid of others. Some of these functions may include eating, getting dressed, or using the bathroom. Exercises that improve balance, coordination, trunk control, dexterity, and basic muscle movement are used towards a person's road to an easier lifestyle. Occupational therapists work mainly with people who have disabilities. These may include people with spinal cord injuries, cerebral

palsy, muscular dystrophy, or people who have had a stroke ("Occupational").

Speech therapy is usually grouped with the other two but does not involve as much physical injury. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists help people who have speech and hearing defects. They identify the problem, then use tests to further evaluate it. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists also try to improve the speech and hearing defect by treating the patient. These therapists also treat patients with communication, voice, or swallowing problems. The person's problem may be a result of hearing loss, brain deterioration, stroke, or mental retardation. Speech therapists help a person with pronunciation of words, making sounds, or pitch control. For those who are hearing impaired, therapists may teach them sign language to help them better communicate with others. A great deal of this type of therapy takes place in specializing clinics while some takes place in schools, teaching children how to relate to others. All licensed speech therapists are required to have a master's degree to practice therapy ("Speech").

These three types of therapy – physical, occupational, and

speech – are just a few that are offered to those with disabilities or injuries. Even though these are totally different in their realm of patients, problems, and solutions, the main goal of each therapist is to work with the patient to help them recover and live an easier lifestyle. Some people cannot fully recover, but all the help they can receive is a step forward. The job market for these services is continually growing as more and more people are beginning to need these treatments and services. These therapies have been very beneficial to an abundance of people over the years. The outlook for therapists in these fields looks good as employment is expected to increase at a rate faster than average through 2008.

Questions

1. *How does the writer introduce her topic in the first paragraph? Is it effective? How?*

2. *Break the thesis statement down into its components, and explain how well or otherwise it introduces the reader to the main topic of the essay.*

3. *Is the development of the main topic logical and smooth? Explain.*

4. *What is the subject classified in this essay? What is the classification principle?*

5. *How many categories are there in this essay? How are they discussed and illustrated?*

6. *Examine the structure of the second body paragraph. How does the writer state the category? What are the next steps she follows in this paragraph?*

7. *Compare the three body paragraphs in terms of structure and development of idea. How does the writer arrange them? When you read the second body paragraph, can you tell this is the second body paragraph? How?*

8. *What kind of conclusion does the writer use? Is it a good ending to the discussion?*

9. *What kind of linking words are used here? Give examples.*

10. Do you think the transition from one idea to another should necessarily be marked by a linking word? What do you find in this essay?

Writing Assignment:

Classify the students in your class, or the teachers teaching you. Develop your essay by giving examples of each type, or elaborating on the characteristics of each type by being specific.

When you finish writing your essay, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her essay. Use the Peer Editing Checklist below as a guide.

Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you like about the essay?	
Layout	
2. Is the layout correct? (examine indentation of paragraphs, margins and spacing)	
Structure	
3. Does the essay have an introduction, a body and a conclusion?	
4. Does the essay have a clear thesis statement?	

Organization	
5. Does the introduction define the term or object classified?	
6. Does each body paragraph have a clearly stated topic sentence?	
7. Does each body paragraph have sufficient supporting details (examples...)?	
8. Does the conclusion restate the thesis, give a summary, or offer final thoughts and comments?	
9. Do the paragraphs have unity and coherence?	

10. What method of organization does the essay follow? Is it suitable for the subject	
Sentence structure	
11. Are there vague or unclear sentences?	
Grammar and Punctuation	
12. Are there any grammatical mistakes?	
13. Are there any punctuation problems?	

Unit Five

The Narrative Essay

A narrative essay simply tells a narrative or a story which focuses on an event or a series of events. Think of fairy tales, short stories, novels, or movies. These are all called *fictional*, namely telling stories that are not real or *factual*. On the other hand, a story about something that happened to you, your family, or your friends is *factual*, because it is something that happened in real life. Both kinds are narratives because they tell stories.

A narrative does not *tell* how a certain character feels; it *shows* it through detail and vivid verbs and modifiers. But a narrative essay is not only about giving an interesting story that keeps the reader's attention focussed; it should have a point or a thesis to develop. It is through the story being told that a writer tries to make the reader focus on a certain point. For example, an essay could narrate an event that changed the way a certain person views life. The story is thus used to reveal the importance and influence of a certain event on the character.

• Organisation and Structure of the Narrative Essay

A narrative essay is similar to a story in the elements it is comprised of: character, setting, plot, point of view, and dialogue. A narrative essay, therefore, could be told in the *first-person point of view*, namely the writer telling a personal story, or in the *third-person point of view*, a he or she event. Since the writer attempts to engage the reader's attention, interesting details and vivid language are necessary. Instead of telling the reader how something looks, the writer could recreate the object by describing it in lively language, offering concrete, sensory details. Another way of keeping the reader engaged in the story is by inserting some pieces of *dialogue*. This would give a sense of realism to the story. It would make the reader feel close to the characters, hearing their voices and getting to know how they feel or think through their own words and expressions. The dialogue also makes the narrative lively.

In order to produce a good narrative, a writer has to establish the *setting*. By setting we refer to the environment, to the time and place of a certain event. It serves to keep the reader informed of the details, and also to establish a kind of link between the character and the reader.

Plot is an integral part to any story, and thus it is important to consider when writing a narrative essay. By plot we refer to the line of action, how the events are narrated or told and the stages of the action: usually we have a point in a story when things get complicated and tension is aroused. This is what we call *climax*. Following this is the *resolution* of the problem and end of the story. For example, if a narrative essay tells the story of bereavement after the death of someone close, the climax could be the stage when the bereaved person refused to go on with life and perhaps fell ill. The resolution would be the end of this stage and the bereaved person going back to enjoy life and accept the death of the dear person.

Unlike descriptive writing which organizes details in space (see Unit One in Part II), narrative writing proceeds in time sequence. In other words, a *chronological order* is usually followed when narrating a story, starting at a certain point in the past and proceeding to the present, thus telling the events in the order they occurred. However, it is possible to alter this norm by using other methods of narration, the most popular of which is *flashback*: starting in the present and going back in time to the beginning of the incident.

The thesis statement to a narrative essay could be the first sentence or the last sentence of the introduction. In it the writer states the point of the narrative or story told. For example,

When my best friend died in a horrible car accident, I thought that my heart would be broken forever.

This thesis statement prepares the reader for the story of the best friend's death. But it also alerts the reader to the point for narrating the story: the effect it had on the speaker.

The story should have an introduction that clearly indicates what kind of narrative essay it is (an event or recurring activity, a personal experience, or an observation), and it should have a conclusion that makes a point.

▪ **Linking Words of Narration**

As you have learnt from the different kinds of essays discussed above, linking words are not always specific to a certain kind. So in a comparison and contrast essay, you could find linking words of example, or of consequence. This applies to the narrative essay as well. But since the

chronological order is the main rule, the most common linking words used in narratives are those that show time. The table below lists some of these.

Function	linking word
Consecutive time	After, after a while, afterwards, and then, an hour (a day, a week) later, finally, first (second, third), later (on), next, soon, the next day (week, year)
Same time	As soon as, at that moment, during, immediately, meanwhile, suddenly, when, while
Specific time	In October, in 1983, on January 9, at noon, at 8.30

Read the model essay below and answer the discussion questions, preferably with a colleague or in a group.

Model Essay

Two Different Peas in a Pod

By L. Lazarescu

My sister and I are so different. She is really loud and obnoxious every where she goes, but that does not make us so different because I can be obnoxious too. My sister basically does not have any respect for other people. I am not that way. She really has no regard for others around her. She does what she wants, when she wants, and how she wants, and she doesn't really care who is affected by her actions. I tend to be more diplomatic. When it comes to dealing with my sister, that seems to always be my downfall; whenever she needs something, she calls me, and I am always there for her.

At the end of last term, she called me to come over to her apartment to help her with her finals. That doesn't sound so unreasonable does it—my sister calling me to ask me for help with her finals? It wouldn't have been either, if I wouldn't have had *my* finals to study for, and if *she* wouldn't have waited until at nine o'clock in the evening the night before the exam. But that is how she operates, and I, being the diplomatic sap that I am, drove twenty miles to her house to help her study.

We studied until two o'clock in the morning, and I finally told her that I had to go. She thanked me, and when I got home about three, my husband asked me why I always leave to go help her whenever she calls. I told him that I felt bad for her, and I wanted her to pass her exam. I did. I wanted her to succeed. Last term I was taking 20 credit hours, I have a family, I have three small children, and I barely have time to study on my own, but I didn't want to see her fail. Besides, I thought that if I help her, then she may someday return the favor. I was wrong.

My sister passed her math exam, and I passed my classes. All was well. One afternoon, my husband and I had an emergency appointment that we had to attend, and I needed someone to baby-sit my five year old for about two hours. I called my sister and asked her if she was busy because we had a very important meeting to attend to with our attorney, and I wanted to know if she could baby-sit for about two hours. She said, "no problem."

I told her that I would pay her, and we would be there at 3:30 because our appointment was at 3:45. I also told her that it was very important that we didn't miss the appointment,

and if she didn't want to do it, then she needed to let me know. She said, "no problem."

I could have called someone else, but she lives in the same town that we had to go to. We arrived at 3:20. My sister was not at home. I was not worried because she lives just minutes away from a fast food restaurant, and I thought that maybe she went to pick up something to eat. We waited until 3:35; she did not arrive. I called her on her cell phone, but she would not answer it. By that time it was 3:43. I called my attorney to tell him that we would be a little late. He informed me that if we were more than ten minutes late, then the people that we were meeting with would have to reschedule three months later.

Luckily, my mom was home, and I was able to drop my daughter off with her. We made it to our appointment with two minutes to spare. At ten minutes after four, my sister called and left a message on my cell phone. She said, "I went to McDonald's to get something to eat. I was really hungry."

I was so mad. Her house is two blocks from McDonalds. It takes five minutes to get there if you are hobbling on crutches, and she was driving her car. She does

not live in a large metropolis where the traffic is insane. There are a total of nine stoplights in her town, only one of which she had to drive through. She made a commitment to me, and she let me down, and she did it not because she was hungry, she did it because she felt like it. She simply changed her mind and didn't want to baby sit. It was not the first time that she had made a commitment and backed out. The only difference between this time and all the other times was that this time, I've had enough.

Now my sister and I are not that much different from one another. She has no regard for my feelings, and I have no regard for hers. I have learned a lot from her. I have learned that sometimes it is okay to tell people no when they ask you to do something. There is still one thing that makes us different: I actually have respect for other people—other people that is, except for her.

Discussion Questions:

1. Having read the essay, which is the thesis statement: the first sentence or the last sentence of the introduction? Why?

2. Is the introductory paragraph suitable for a narrative? What function does it have in this particular essay?

3. Which paragraph states the point for narrating the incident with the sister: the introduction or the conclusion? What is this point?

4. How does the writer make the narration interesting in terms of language and description? Give evidence.

5. You have learnt that the narrative essay usually has the elements of the story. Below are these elements. What you have to do is explain how each functions in the above essay giving an example. The 'dialogue' element is done for you.

A. Point of view:

B. Setting:

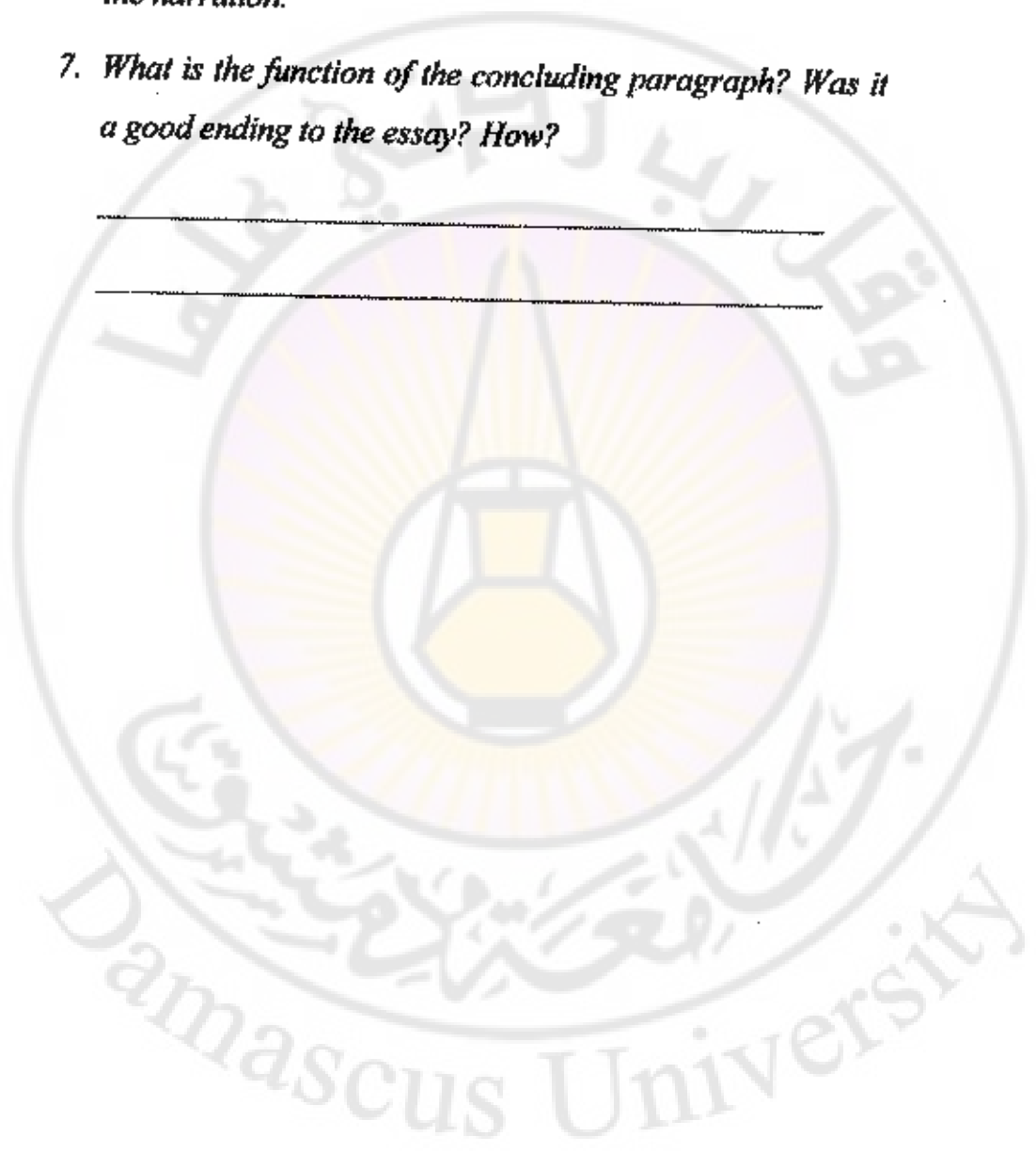
C. Dialogue:

Used briefly in the essay to make it more lively and to create a sense of immediacy. Example: Paragraphs 4 and 5: the sister's reply to the speaker's questions are reported.

D. Plot (Order of events, climax and resolution)

6. *What linking words does the writer use to add cohesion to the essay? Underline the linking words of time used in the narration.*

7. *What is the function of the concluding paragraph? Was it a good ending to the essay? How?*





Exercises:

Read the following essay then answer the questions below.

Learning to swim

Anonymous

Learning something new can be a scary experience. One of the hardest things I've ever had to do was learn how to swim. I was always afraid of the water, but I decided that swimming was an important skill that I should learn. I also thought it would be good exercise and help me to become physically stronger. What I didn't realize was that learning to swim would also make me a more confident person.

New situations always make me a bit nervous, and my first swimming lesson was no exception. After I changed into my bathing suit in the locker room, I stood timidly by the side of the pool waiting for the teacher and other students to show up. After a couple of minutes the teacher came over. She smiled and introduced herself, and two more students joined us. Although they were both older than me, they didn't seem to be embarrassed about not knowing how to swim. I began to feel more at ease.

We got into the pool, and the teacher had us put on brightly colored water wings to help us stay afloat. One of the other students, May, had already taken the beginning class once before, so she took a kickboard and went splashing off by herself. The other student, Jerry, and I were told to hold on to the side of the pool and shown how to kick for the breaststroke. One by one, the teacher had us hold on to a kickboard while she pulled it through the water and we kicked. Pretty soon Jerry was off doing this by himself, traveling at a fast clip across the short end of the pool.

Things were not quite that easy for me, but the teacher was very patient. After a few more weeks, when I seemed to have caught on with my legs, she taught me the arm strokes. Now I had two things to concentrate on, my arms and my legs. I felt hopelessly uncoordinated. Sooner than I imagined, however, things began to feel "right" and I was able to swim! It was a wonderful free feeling - like flying, maybe - to be able to shoot across the water.

Learning to swim was not easy for me, but in the end my persistence paid off. Not only did I learn how to swim and to conquer my fear of the water, but I also learned something about learning. Now when I am faced with a new situation

I am not so nervous. I may feel uncomfortable to begin with, but I know that as I practice being in that situation and as my skills get better, I will feel more and more comfortable. It is a wonderful, free feeling when you achieve a goal you have set for yourself.

Questions:

1. *Locate the thesis statement to the essay. What does it tell you about the topic?*

2. *The introductory paragraph should make clear what type of narrative the essay would deal with. Does the introduction fulfill this goal? Explain.*

3. *How does the writer describe her fear and the teacher's patience? Give examples of the words and vocabulary used and explain their function.*

4. *Is the essay well organized? Explain the structure of the essay starting with the function of the introduction and how the body paragraphs develop the main idea. Refer to the order of events.*

5. *What is the point of view of this essay? Is this suitable to the kind of narrative told?*

6. *What is the point the writer is trying to make through narrating this experience? Where can you find this?*

7. *Do you think the division of the essay into paragraphs was logical? How?*

8. *Underline the linking words of time used in the essay. Notice their use.*

Writing Assignment:

Tell a story of a dangerous or embarrassing experience that happened to you or to someone else. Follow the conventions of a narrative essay by using lively language and details. Make the story interesting and divide the paragraphs in accordance with the events narrated.

When you finish writing your essay, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her essay. Use the Peer Editing Checklist below as a guide.

Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you like about the essay?	
Layout	
2. Is the layout correct? (examine indentation of paragraphs, margins and spacing)	
Structure	
3. Does the essay have an introduction, a body and a conclusion?	

4. Does the essay have a clear thesis statement that states the point for telling the story?	
Organization	
5. Is the introduction interesting and attractive?	
6. Does the essay include dialogue? Was it effective?	
7. Does the essay state the setting?	
8. Does the action reach the stage of climax and resolution?	
9. What point of view does the essay adopt?	

9. What order does the narrative follow (chronological, flashback, or otherwise)?	
11. What type of conclusion does the essay have?	
12. Does the essay have unity and coherence?	
Sentence structure	
13. Are there vague or unclear sentences?	
Grammar and Punctuation	
14. Are there any grammatical mistakes?	
15. Are there any punctuation problems?	

Unit Six

The Cause and Effect Essay

A cause and effect essay is different from a narrative or descriptive essay in that the tone should be more reasonable and the presentation factual and believable. The tone should be professional and objective, rather than personal as in the narrative essay. We tend to analyse the causes and/or effects of a certain event in our daily lives. When we, for example, think of the causes of air pollution, we do this in order to better understand the problem and to know how to deal with it and avoid, or at least control, it. The analysis of the effects is also necessary to realize how dangerous the problem is and the far reaching effects it has on human health, earth, quality of air we breathe...etc.

It is not necessary, however, to attempt to investigate the causes and effects of a certain problem, a cultural practice or a scientific principle in one essay. This can be done, of course, following certain organization methods which will be

discussed shortly. But it is also possible to write a causal essay or an effect essay. Obviously this is much easier than combining both causes and effects in an essay.

A cause and effect essay starts by defining the problem, phenomenon, or practice to be analysed. The writer must insure that the reader understand what is being discussed and be given a thorough background. The degree of explanation has to do with how complex the issue analysed is. If it is simple, it could be explained in the introduction. But if it is a complex concept or issue, the writer might need to explain it in one paragraph following the introduction in order to give more details.

The thesis statement serves to highlight the focus of the essay, namely the causes and/or effects of the problem. The thesis statement could, though this is not a must, state the causes and effects briefly. One important feature of the thesis statement to a cause and effect essay is that it should be reasonable, objective, and logical. Compare the examples below:

- 1. It's obvious that the changes in our weather patterns are due to industry's refusal to control their pollution. These business people have bought and paid for the decision makers.*
- 2. The changes in our weather patterns could certainly be due to a number of factors, in particular, the heavy pollution created by our industry and the confusing and contradictory information given by industrial lobbyists on the one hand and environmentalists on the other.*

The first example insults the reader's intelligence by 'it's obvious', and also deviates from reasonable thinking by accusing businessmen of buying the decision makers. This could be true, but you might find people who do not agree with this. The second example, on the other hand, is more professional and states the point logically, without resorting to groundless accusations.

- **Structure and Organisation of the Cause-Effect Essay**

A cause and effect essay would, certainly, follow a *causal* order. The issue analysed is examined in terms of causes which would logically lead to certain effects. The introduction, as mentioned above, offers a definition of the problem, which is followed by the causes and/or effects. There are different organisation methods depending on how related the causes or effects are. The most common organisation styles are given below.

- ▶ **Block Organisation**

Block organization means to group the causes and/or effects in paragraphs which would make them similar to building blocks. When the essay analyses the causes and effects of a problem and follows block organization, the shape of the essay would be as the diagram below shows. An example topic and thesis statement are used in all diagrams to highlight the difference between one method and another.

Block Organization for a Cause and Effect Essay

Introductory Paragraph

Thesis statement: *While air pollution can be caused by individuals, governments, or industries, the long-term results threaten each of those groups.*

Body Paragraph 1

Cause 1: Individuals are careless in their everyday behaviour.

Cause 2: Governments do not decree and implement strict air pollution legislation.

Cause 3: Big industries do not have filtration mechanisms.

Body Paragraph 2

Effect 1: Air pollution causes deteriorating health conditions for all individuals.

Effect 2: Governments would have to install costly filtration systems everywhere to make the air breathable.

Effect 3: Big industries would find it difficult to market the products in heavily polluted areas.

Conclusion

The above organization style is used, as you can see, when the essay discusses both causes and effects of a problem. The first body paragraph groups the causes of air pollution, and the second body paragraph groups its effects. Below are the organizations methods used when the essay discusses either the causes or the effects alone.

Block Organization for a Cause Essay

Introductory Paragraph

Thesis statement: *Air pollution can be caused by individuals, governments, or industries.*

Body Paragraph 1

Cause 1: Individuals are careless in their everyday behaviour.

Body Paragraph 2

Cause 2: Governments do not decree and implement strict air pollution legislation.

Body Paragraph 3

Cause 3: Big industries do not have filtration mechanisms.

Conclusion

On the other hand, if the essay were to discuss the effects of the air pollution problem, the style would be as follows.

Block Organization for an Effect Essay

Introductory Paragraph

Thesis statement: *Air pollution has far reaching effects on individuals, governments, and industries.*

Body Paragraph 1

Effect 1: *Air pollution causes deteriorating health conditions for all individuals.*

Body Paragraph 2

Effect 2: *Governments would have to install costly filtration systems everywhere to make the air*

Body Paragraph 3

Effect 3: *Big industries would find it difficult to market the products in heavily polluted areas.*

Conclusion

An ideal approach to an essay which discusses either the causes or the effects would be to talk briefly about the causes when the essay tackles the effects, and to mention the effects in the introduction when the rest of the essay deals with the causes. So the introduction would present the other side to the coin, as the saying goes. If, for example, we take the essay stating the effects of air pollution, an ideal introduction would go as follows.

The world is faced with many crises, not the least of which are the various forms of pollution. And of these, perhaps the most devastating is air pollution. The causes of air pollution seem to stem from the carelessness of individuals, governments, and big industries. The underlying cause for carelessness and lax regulations in all three groups has to do with money. Without strict controls on polluters, today's inconvenience will be tomorrow's crises. Air pollution has far reaching effects on individuals, governments, and industries.

Notice that this introduction draws the reader's attention to the causes of air pollution, while it tackles in depth the effects of this problem.

The paragraphs in an essay dealing with the causes or effects could be arranged according to more than one order. One common principle is the *order of familiarity* starting with the obvious cause or effect to the less obvious ones. Another way to arrange the paragraphs is to follow the *order of interest*, starting with the less interesting cause/effect and proceeding to the most interesting one(s). This would tempt the reader to read through. And finally there is the *order of importance*, with the most important cause/effect coming last. When an essay follows the order of importance, it is said to have a *climax organization*.

► Chain Organisation

This other type of organization is only used when the essay tackles both causes and effects. Unlike the block organization where the causes and effects are grouped in different paragraphs, the chain organization method links each cause with its immediate effect in one paragraph. This is the ideal approach when there is a close link between certain causes and effects. The diagram below illustrates this style.

Chain Organisation for a Cause and Effect Essay

Introductory Paragraph

Thesis statement: *While air pollution can be caused by individuals, governments, or industries, the long-term results threaten each of those groups.*

Body Paragraph 1

Cause 1: Individuals are careless in their everyday behaviour.

Effect 1: Air pollution causes deteriorating health conditions for all individuals.

Body Paragraph 2

Cause 2: Governments do not decree and implement strict air pollution legislation.

Effect 2: Governments would have to install costly filtration systems everywhere to make the air breathable

Body Paragraph 3

Cause 3: Big industries do not have filtration mechanisms.

Effect 3: Big industries would find it difficult to market the products in heavily polluted areas.

Conclusion

• **Linking Words of Cause and Effect**

The linking devices could be divided into those used to show the cause of a certain problem or phenomenon, and those used to indicate the consequences. Below is a table showing the most common of these.

Function	Transitions	Conjunctions		Prepositions
		Subordinating	Coordinating	
Cause		Because Since As Now that	for	Because of Due to
Effect	as a result consequently therefore as a - consequence hence thus for this reason		So	

Read the model essay below and work with a colleague or in a group to think of the discussion questions.

Model Essay

The Desired Look: Nothing but Bones

By Rebecca Patton

It seems like every little girl dreams of becoming a model. They want to be thin and pretty like the models they see on television and in magazines. Often the desire becomes an obsession and young girls see “thinness” as being a needed characteristic. For most girls, the teenage years are spent trying to acquire this look. Females are trying diets and are exercising like it is a competition to see who can lose the most weight the quickest. The obsession of many young girls over their appearance or weight has led to a growing number of people who have developed an eating disorder to try to deal with their lack of self-esteem or other related problems.

Eating disorders are a serious health problem. Personal Counseling & Resources says that eating disorders “are characterized by a focus on body shape, weight, fat, food, and perfectionism and by feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem.” Three of the most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating or

compulsive eating disorder. According to *Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders*, a person with anorexia “refuses to maintain normal body weight for age and height” and “weighs 85 percent or less than what is expected for age and height.” A person diagnosed with bulimia has several ways of getting rid of the calories such as binge eating, vomiting, laxative misuse, exercising, or fasting. The person might have a normal weight for their age and height unless anorexia is present. The signs of a compulsive eater include eating meals frequently, rapidly, and secretly. This person might also snack and nibble all day long. The compulsive eater tends to have a history of diet failures and may be depressed or obese.

There are many reasons that can contribute to the cause of eating disorders. One of the main reasons seems to be the obsession over every little pound a person is wearing. Sometimes low self-esteem or depression from any number of causes can usher in the eating disorder. Other times compulsive exercising can help shed the pounds but leave the enthused unhealthy looking.

There are other possible causes to this widely known health problem. The media bestows a great deal of beauty and

thinness on television and magazines that are viewed by many people daily. Everyone has the desire to look like the actors and actresses do but, in reality, it just will not happen for most of us. Abuse, whether it be physical, emotional, or sexual, can also contribute to the development of an eating disorder. Such abuse to victims can leave them with a lack of trust and low self-esteem. An unfavorable relationship a person has with others is also a contributing factor to disordered eating habits. The world is so competitive that any mention from parents, siblings, peers, significant others, or co-workers about a person's weight or appearance can lead to the onset of an eating disorder.

There really is no single reason that a person acquires an eating disorder. Many factors are considered when making a diagnosis for a person with this problem. Causes like the ones mentioned above play such an important role in eating disorders. Is it really so important that in order to look like the super models people are willing to give up food and starve themselves to death for a little satisfaction on the outside? The look of a person on the inside is what really matters.

Discussion Questions:

1. Find the thesis statement. Does it state the main topic of the essay clearly?

2. What is the function of paragraph two? Do you think this is necessary for the essay?

3. What does the essay discuss: the causes or effects of eating disorders?

4. What does the introduction state: the causes or the effects of the problem? Is this unusual?

5. Examine the organization method. Which style does it adopt? Explain

6. How does the writer arrange the causes of the problem? What is the order used? Do you think this is the best possible choice? If not, what would you suggest?

7. Can you find linking words for cause or effect in this essay? If yes, underline them. If no, what method does the writer follow to make the essay cohesive?



Exercises

Read the following essay then answer the questions below.

Rebels¹

The anthropologist Margaret Mead is well known for her studies of adolescents in various societies, particularly primitive ones. She believes that the transition from child to adult does not always have to be a difficult one. Nevertheless, it seems to be full of problems in many western societies. In the United States, for example, going through the teenage years is challenging for both teenagers and their parents. We can take comfort, however, in the fact that there are many reasons that teenagers rebel against their parents and in the fact that there are also positive effects.

Probably the most primitive reason for teenage rebelliousness is physical in nature. At about the beginning of adolescence, children are undergoing profound hormonal changes as their bodies go through puberty. Their bodies are telling them that they are no longer children, and yet their parents are still treating them as children. Psychologically,

¹ From Cynthia A. Boardman and Jia Frydenberg, *Writing to Communicate*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 2002), pp. 135-6.

they need to distance themselves from their parents to establish themselves as adults, and this psychological distance is accompanied by physical distance. At the same time, teenagers want to become more like their friends, so everything that has to do with their parents must be avoided. In fact, often parents represent "the establishment" and, in the extreme, all the evil that it has created in the world.

There do seem to be benefits to this difficult time, however. While teenagers are going through this rebellious period, they are also learning to think for themselves and to evaluate the world around them. They are becoming socialized and independent from their families. They are forming relationships outside the family, which is very important if they are going to survive as individuals. The experimentation of this period is also important as long as it is not taken to extremes. By experimenting, teenagers gain experience and the confidence that comes with it. Ultimately, the teenager reaches adulthood with the social and psychological strength it takes to become a productive member of society.

In conclusion, despite the difficulty and awkwardness of adolescence, it is a necessary step in creating

responsible, thinking adults. In addition, while teenagers and parents alike may not think that they will get through it, most do. In fact, they are usually better and stronger people because of it.

Questions:

1. Find the thesis statement, analyse it and evaluate it.

2. What kind of introduction do we have here? Does it introduce the topic in a good way?

3. What does the essay discuss: the causes or the effects of adolescent rebelliousness? Circle any causes, and box any effects.

4. What pattern of organization does the essay follow? Explain.

5. *Is the essay well organized? What makes it so?*

6. *What kind of evidence does the writer use to support the thesis?*

7. *Examine the two body paragraphs. Are there any linking words of cause and effect used? Underline them.*

8. *What kind of conclusion does the writer use to end the essay?*

Writing Assignment:

Imagine you were writing a paper to a magazine. Discuss the effect unprepared or unmotivated students have on their colleagues and the class.

When you finish writing your essay, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her essay. Use the Peer Editing Checklist below as a guide.

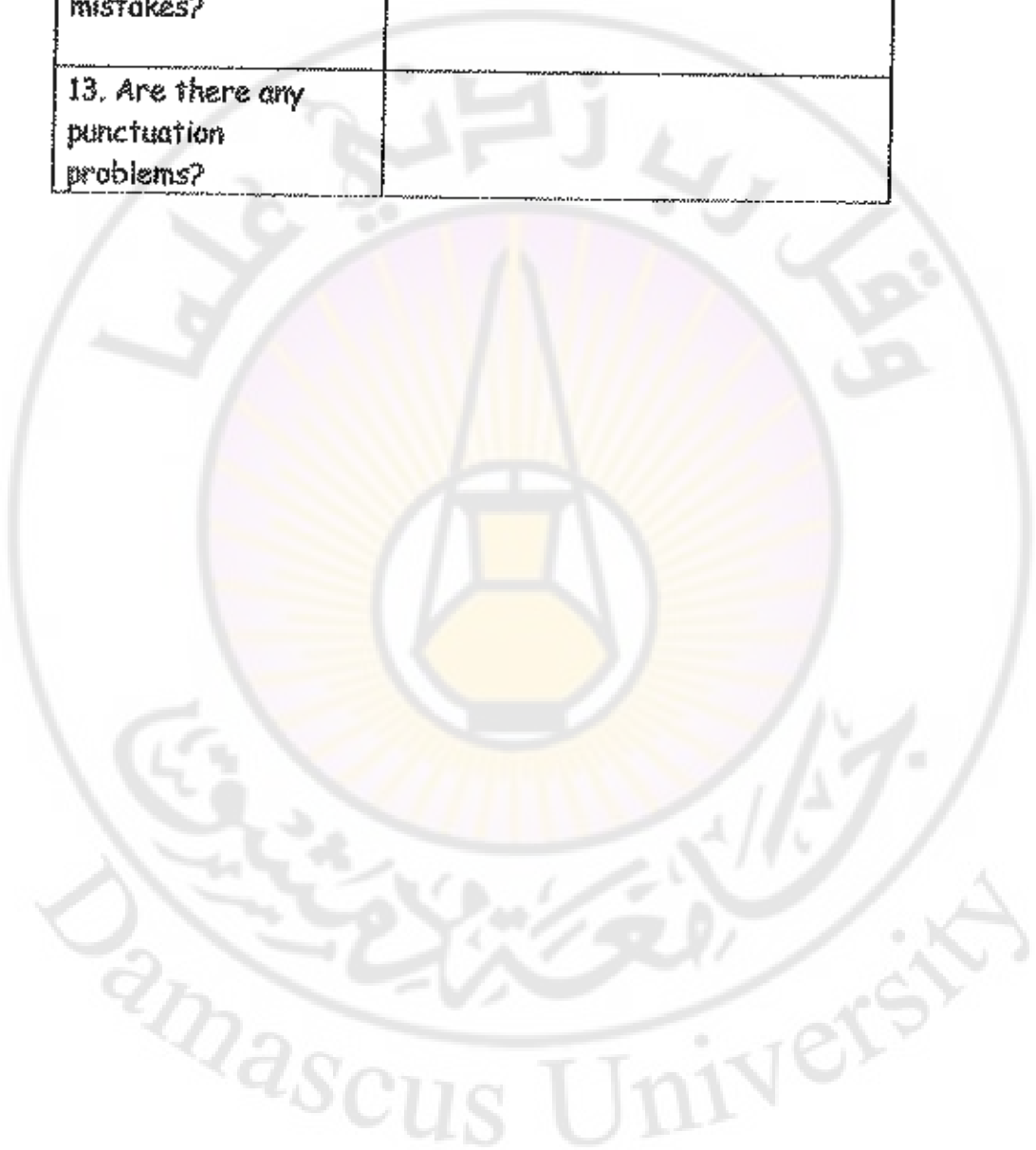
Damascus University

Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you like about the essay?	
Layout	
2. Is the layout correct? (examine indentation of paragraphs, margins and spacing)	
Structure	
3. Does the essay have an introduction, a body and a conclusion?	
4. Does the essay have a clear thesis statement?	
Organization	
5. Is this a cause and/or effect essay? Does the introduction indicate this?	

6. Does each body paragraph have a clearly stated topic sentence?	
7. Does each body paragraph have sufficient supporting details (examples...)?	
8. Do the paragraphs have unity and coherence?	
9. Does the conclusion restate the thesis, give a summary, or offer final thoughts and comments?	
10. What method of organization does the essay follow? Is it suitable for the subject?	
Sentence structure	
11. Are there vague or unclear sentences?	

Grammar and Punctuation	
12. Are there any grammatical mistakes?	
13. Are there any punctuation problems?	



Unit Seven

The Argumentative Essay

As the name suggests, an argumentative essay is one where the writer defends his/her point of view against an opposing one. The aim of an argumentative essay is, then, to persuade the audience that your idea or opinion is the right one. In order to do this, the writer should adopt a logical and reasonable mode of thinking, giving substantial evidence for the issue argued for or against.

Argumentation is not an easy skill to acquire. It is therefore imperative that, when selecting the topic of an argumentative essay, the writer choose a topic that s/he knows well and has read a lot about. The point would have to be defended by means of statistical figures and the words of an authority on the issue. Otherwise, the writer would find that this could possibly be a losing battle where the audience simply do not agree or at least are not convinced that this is reasonable and logical thinking.

The subject for an argumentative essay should be arguable. You cannot, for example, argue for or against facts like: 'putting an end to wars would make the world a more peaceful place to live in'.

The thesis statement has to be argumentative. It should show an opinion, or a stance, not simply a central point to be analysed or discussed. When saying for example, "my first year at college was traumatic", the statement has a central point which is "traumatic", but it is not a persuasive or argumentative one. As we said above, by the argumentative essay the writer attempts to change the reader's opinion. It is not advisable to use the 'I' pronoun in the argumentative thesis statement as this would render it rather subjective and weak. Compare the two thesis statements below:

- *I will argue that mercy killing is wrong.*
- *Mercy killing, or euthanasia, is an act that should be completely prohibited because taking one's life is not a matter of personal freedom.*

Notice that the first statement is argumentative, yet it is vague and subjective. The second thesis statement declares the

writer's attitude and addresses the issue of mercy killing more objectively, giving the reason for the call to stop it.

• Organisation of the Argumentative Essay

The argumentative essay starts with an introduction that introduces and explains the issue or case. It is also important to define any difficult terms that the reader might not be familiar with. If, for example, the writer is arguing against euthanasia, the introduction should familiarize the reader with the term by means of defining it.

The body could be divided into several paragraphs in order to prove the point. Following the introduction, the writer normally gives reasons and support for the thesis. This helps the writer prove the point and make a case that the reader may be persuaded with. A good way to offer logical thinking and persuasive writing is to use statistics, figures and also to cite an authority experienced or familiar with the issue discussed.

The argumentative essay normally debates a controversial or a contentious issue. It is therefore imperative that the writer know counterarguments and refute them, i.e. prove they are wrong. This makes the writer's stance stronger and gives more

credibility to his/ her writing. For example, if an essay argues against euthanasia, the writer could refer to the opponents by saying:

Those who think that allowing the mortally ill patient to take his life is the only possible way to relieve him of his pain totally miss the point. No one can predict the future, even the near future, of medical advances and innovations. How could those people think that a cure for a certain patient's case cannot be discovered just hours after he is allowed to take his life?

In order to refute the opponent's argument, the writer has to state it first then refute it by giving the counterargument. If the opponent, however, has a valid point, the writer has to concede this and refer to it in the essay. It is useless to try to pretend that the other party has nothing valid or right. For example,

Although it is true that some patients could be in a state of coma, lying helpless and painfully for years, the potential for change in terms of medicine still exists.

The writer here accepts the point of the opponent and takes it as valid, but at the same time offers a counter point.

The conclusion would finally summarise the points and make a demand for some action. This is what distinguishes the argumentative essay from the previous kinds: there is a plan for action or change suggested at the end.

• **Linking Words of Argumentation**

As explained above, the argumentative essay debates an issue by means of more than one method: the writer cites an authority, offers reasons and support by means of statistics and examples, refutes counterarguments, and adopts logical thinking which leads from A to B and on to C. Accordingly, the linking words used should reflect these complex relationships between sentences; they are of various types depending on where they are used. The table below lists examples of the most common linking words used in argumentative essays. (For more details, see Appendix 1, page 227).

Function	Linking word
To concede a certain point	Of course, surely, naturally, to be sure, no doubt..
To predict results or consequences	Therefore, consequently, as a consequence, thus, as a result.
To cite an authority	According to, as ...says (argues, demonstrates, shows..)

Read the model essay below, taken from John Krutch's *The Great Chain of Life*, and think of the discussion questions (peer work or group activity recommended).

Model Essay

Killing for Sport

It wouldn't be quite true to say that "some of my best friends are hunters." Still, I do number among my respected acquaintances some who not only kill for the sake of killing but count it among their keenest pleasures. And I can think of no better illustration of the fact that men may be separated at some point by a fathomless abyss yet share elsewhere much common ground. To me, it is inconceivable that anyone can think an animal more interesting dead than alive. I can also easily prove, to my own satisfaction, that killing "for sport" is the perfect type of pure evil for which metaphysicians have sometimes fought.

Most wicked deeds are done because the doer proposes some good for himself. The liar lies to gain some end; the swindler and the thief want things which, if honestly got, might be good in themselves. Even the murderer is usually removing some impediment to normal desires. Though all of these are selfish or unscrupulous, their deeds are not gratuitously evil. But the killer for sport seems to have no

an excusable motive. He seems merely to prefer death to life, darkness to light. He seems to get nothing other than the satisfaction of saying: "something which wanted to live is dead. Because I can bring terror and agony, I assure myself that I have power. Because of me, there is that much less vitality, consciousness and perhaps joy in the universe. I am the spirit that denies." When a man wantonly destroys one of the works of man, we call him "Vandal." When he wantonly destroys one of the works of God, we call him "Sportsman."

The hunter-for-food may be as wicked and as misguided as vegetarians sometimes say, but he does not kill for the sake of killing. The ranchers and the farmers who exterminate all living things not immediately profitable to them may sometimes be working against their own best interests; but whether they are or not, they hope to achieve some supposed good by the exterminations.

If to do evil, not in the hope of gain but for evil's sake, involves the deepest guilt by which man can be stained, then killing for killing's sake is a terrifying phenomenon and as strong a proof as we could have of the "reality of evil" with which present-day theologians are again concerned.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the thesis statement? Is it an argumentative one which declares the writer's stance clearly?

2. The introduction is not statistical. Do you think the writer managed to introduce the topic in an inviting and interesting way? If yes, what evidence do you find in the introduction to prove this?

3. What is the function of paragraph two in the argument? In other words, what stage(s) of the argument does it provide? Read it carefully and discuss it with a colleague to determine the purpose of the writer.

4. What is the function of paragraph three? Does the writer offer his reasons for arguing against this kind of hunting?

5. *Is the conclusion effective? Does it round up the topic elegantly and cleverly? Explain.*

6. *Were you convinced by the writer's argument? If yes, what made his argument logical and persuasive? If not, what are the weaknesses in the argument? (The question is open for discussion in group or in class as a whole).*

7. *What linking words does the writer use in the essay, if any? Underline them.*



Exercises:

Read the following argumentative essay and answer the questions below.

Is Cloning Ethical and Should it be Pursued?

By Akudo Ejelonu

Is cloning ethical and should it be pursued? Cloning is the method of producing a baby that has the identical genes to one person. In February 1997, embryologist Ian Wilmut and his colleagues at Roslin Institute in Scotland announced "that they cloned a sheep named Dolly from the udder cells of a ewe." The announcement of Dolly's birth attracted enormous press interest, perhaps because Dolly drew attention to the theoretical possibility of cloning humans. This revelation also shocked the entire world and politicians immediately proposed bans on human cloning. The House of Representatives and the Senate drafted bills to completely ban human cloning and President Clinton established a National Bioethics Advisory Commission to address the science and ethics of human cloning. The government's decision is a

contentious issue because they are concerned about the use of cloning being abuse, even though cloning can be used for medical benefits.

People have conflicting views of the government's actions and they have proved to be controversial. The federal government should have regulated human cloning instead of banning it. There are significant benefits that can result from the technologies of cloning. Bypass of infertility is one of the most promising benefits. Fifteen percent of Americans suffer from infertility, much of which cannot be cured by current medicine. "Infertility is caused by genetic defects, injuries to the reproductive organs, congenital defects and exposure to toxic substances and radiation." Cloning offers infertile people the chance to raise and love their own genetic children. "The Supreme Court has ruled that every American has a constitutional right to "bear or beget" children, and to make reproductive decisions without government interference. This includes the right of infertile couples to use sophisticated medical technologies like cloning." This is ironic because the government officials have recently banned cloning and for many Americans cloning exercises their right to reproduce.

But the government has taken this right away from them. There are limits on government control over who gets born. Americans have a constitutional right to have their own children, but infertile Americans are barred from having children. In this legal system, the fact that infertile people are prohibited from having children by cloning is unfair and unjust.

Cloning technology can lead to the use of cloned organs for the purpose of transplants. Therapeutic cloning would involve growing replacement organs (heart, liver, pancreas, skin, etc) from a sample of a person's DNA. The goal of therapeutic cloning is to produce a healthy copy of a sick person's tissue or organ for transplant. If the process of therapeutic cloning using embryos is successful then perfectly matched, replacement organs could become freely available to sick and dying people. This technique would be better than relying on organ transplants from other people. The supply of organs will be unlimited, so there would be no waiting lists. The possible examples of therapeutic cloning might include the use of liver cells to repair a damaged organ. Cloning is an important part of therapeutic technology because it would

allow the creation of perfect-match tissue. At the moment, if you have a transplant, your body will try to reject the donated cells because it sees them as foreign. Doctors remedy this immune response by prescribing anti-rejection drugs that patients must take. But through therapeutic cloning patients will not have to take anti-rejection drugs. They would be derived from the patient him/herself and the immune system would recognize the cells as the bodies own.

Many ethical arguments against human cloning are caused by misconceptions. Many people think that clones will have the same characteristics/personalities as the person from which they were cloned. Though the clone and the individual that they were cloned from have the same genes, their characteristics and personalities are different. People think that clone will be both physically and behaviorally identical to its donor, this is not true because though cloning will be probably identical physically, our environment constantly shapes our behavior and psychology. Someone who will try to clone a future Hitler might instead produce a modestly talented musician.

Scientific advances bring social changes that many people will not be able to accept. As with any

scientific or technological advance, the most important question that needs to be asked is whether or not the gains outweigh the potential losses. Will human cloning become a brave new step in fighting disease and improving the quality of life, or will it lead to dehumanization and a new genetic underclass? One of the goals of science is to revolutionize the world for the benefits of mankind and this could be achieved by cloning. Cloning should be only done if it does not cause any physical or mental harm to humans. No matter what governments do to prevent human cloning, and no matter what position is taken on the issue, it is hard to ignore the reality that cloning will someday be the way of life.

Cloning for research could open the door to the development of cures of medical needs like diabetes and stroke. Cloning technology is a reality, for better or for worse, and it will not go away. If we ban the use of this technology now, we will not be prepared to deal with this eventuality. If we utilize this technology and become familiar with it and set up international laws and guidelines for its utilization, however, we will be better prepared for the misuses that will eventually plague us. Cloning is a tool that can be good or bad

according to the way it is put into use. A great caution should be exercised as we proceed into the new frontier.

Questions:

1. *Read the introduction carefully and decide how the writer introduces his topic and provides the readers with necessary information (what kind of information)?*

2. *What is the thesis statement? Is it argumentative? How good is it?*

3. *What stage of the argument is paragraph two? Read the topic sentence to be able to decide what the writer is doing to persuade the readers.*

4. *What is the example used by the writer in paragraph two to prove that cloning should not be banned?*

5. *What evidence does the writer resort to in order to prove his point in paragraph two?*

6. *Why does the writer enclose some sentences in inverted commas? Does this make you believe him? Why?*

7. *What does the writer aim to do in paragraph three of the essay? In other words, what steps does he take to persuade the readers?*

8. *What stages of the argument are paragraphs four and five of the essay? What is the writer doing to prove his point?*

9. *The writer uses many examples in his essay. Is this a point of weakness or strength? Justify your answer.*

10. How does the writer end the essay? What is special about this conclusion?

11. Were you convinced by the writer's argument? If yes, what was his point of strength? If not, what was his weakness?

12. If you were to argue against the writer, what reasons or evidence would you provide?

13. Go through the essay and underline any linking words you find. What are the main types that the writer uses?



Writing Assignment:

Choose a policy or practice that you disagree with and feel to be wrong. This could be practiced at home, at college, the organization you work for, or in society at large. Argue against this practice persuasively. Do not just criticize it; propose a way to end or change this practice.

When you finish writing your essay, exchange with a colleague and mark his/her essay. Use the Peer Editing Checklist below as a guide.

Editing Checklist

	Peer Editor Comments
General Overview	
1. What did you like about the essay?	
Layout	
2. Is the layout correct? (examine indentation of paragraphs, margins and spacing)	
Structure	
3. Does the essay have an introduction, a body and a conclusion?	
4. Does the essay have a clear thesis statement which states a stance?	

Organization

5. Does the introduction define the term or object argued for or against?

6. Does each body paragraph have a clearly stated topic sentence?

7. Does each body paragraph have sufficient supporting details (examples, facts, citing an authority)?

8. What stages of the argument does the essay follow (refuting counterarguments, stating the reasons for arguing against the practice, suggesting changes...)?

9. Do the paragraphs have unity and coherence?	
10. Does the conclusion suggest an action plan?	
11. Were you convinced by the writer's view? What is strong/ weak about the essay?	
Sentence structure	
12. Are there vague or unclear sentences?	
Grammar and Punctuation	
13. Are there any grammatical mistakes?	
14. Are there any punctuation problems?	

Appendix 1

Common Linking Words

<i>Meaning/ Function</i>	<i>Transitions</i>	<i>Conjunctions</i>		<i>Others (Adjectives, Verbs and Prepositions)</i>
		<i>coordinators</i>	<i>subordinators</i>	
<u>Addition</u>	also besides furthermore in addition moreover too	and nor		another in addition to an additional
<u>Comparison (similarity)</u>	also likewise similarly too in the same way	and both... and not only... but also neither ... nor	as just as	as ... as like/ alike just like similar to be alike be similar

Meaning/ Function	Transitions	Conjunctions		Others (Adjectives, Verbs, and Prepositions)
		Coordinators	subordinators	
<u>Contrast & Opposite Ideas or Unexpected Results</u>	however in contrast instead in/by comparison nevertheless nonetheless on the other hand on the contrary still	but yet	although even though though whereas while	despite in spite of compared to/ with be different (from) be unlike differ from
<u>Example</u>	for example for instance			such as like an example of
<u>Emphasis</u>	in fact indeed			
<u>Explanation & Restatement</u>	indeed that is in other words			

<u>Meaning</u> <u>Function</u>	<u>Transitions</u>	<u>Conjunctions</u>		<u>Other</u> <u>(Adjectives</u> <u>Verbs and</u> <u>Prepositions)</u>
		<u>coordinators</u>	<u>subordinators</u>	
<u>Alternatives</u>	otherwise	or	if unless	
<u>Order of</u> <u>importance</u>	above all first and foremost more/most importantly significantly primarily			a more important
<u>Effect or</u> <u>Result</u>	Accordingly As a result As a consequence Consequently Hence, thus Therefore	So		result in cause have an effect on affect the cause of the reason for

Meaning/ Function	Transitions	Conjunctions		Others (Adjectives, Verbs, and Prepositions)
		coordinators	subordinators	
<u>Cause or Reason</u>		for	because since as	due to because of the effect of as a result of as a consequence of
<u>Chronological Order</u>	first, second, etc. then, next now, then soon, last, finally, meanwhile, gradually, after that, since then		after as as soon as before since until when while	the first, the second the next, the last, the final, before lunch after the war Since 19-

Meaning/ Function	Transitions	Conjunctions		Others (Adjectives, Verbs, and Prepositions)
		coordinators	subordinators	
<u>Conclusion</u>	all in all in brief in conclusion in short in summary indeed			it is clear that... we can see that... the evidence suggests that... these examples show that...

Appendix 2

Reviewing Punctuation Rules: Commas and Semicolons

Using Commas

1. With coordinating conjunctions:

When a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses, a comma is used immediately before the conjunction.

- (An independent clause is a group of words that contain at least a subject and a verb and that can stand alone).

Examples:

- It is an ideal day for picnics, but I'm too overworked to go out.

Notice: When the sentence following the coordinating conjunction does not contain a subject, i.e., it is

a dependent clause, no comma is needed.

Example: I woke up late and couldn't catch the 8.00 bus to work.

In this case the conjunction combines the verbs and not clauses.

2. With Transitions

A comma is used to separate a transition from the rest of the sentence, no matter where it appears. Notice the different positions of transitions and commas in the following examples.

Example:

- It is an ideal day for picnics. **However**, I'm too overworked to go out.
- It is an ideal day for picnics. I'm too overworked, **however**, to go out.
- It is an ideal day for picnics. I'm too overworked to go out, **however**.

3. With Adverbial clauses:

A comma is used after an adverbial clause preceding the subject of an independent clause. However, if the adverbial clause comes after the independent clause, no comma is used.

Examples:

- **Because I am overworked, I cannot go out for a picnic.**
- **I cannot go out for a picnic because I am overworked.**

4. In Lists:

Commas are used to separate three or more items in a list. The comma before the conjunction *and* at the end of the list is optional.

Example:

- **I have studied English because I like it, it is a world language, and because I want to teach it.**
- **We've had eggs, cereals, milk and jam for breakfast.**

Using Semicolons

Semicolons are used between two independent clauses which are closely related in meaning. A transition joining two independent clauses could be preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.

Examples:

- I have no choice but to stay indoors; the weather is terrible.
- The weather is terrible; therefore, I have no choice but to stay indoors.

Punctuation Problems

1. Fragments:

A fragment is a phrase or part of a sentence which is incomplete and cannot stand alone. For a certain part to stand alone, it has to contain at least a subject and a verb.

Students sometimes make mistakes by putting a period at the end of the fragment, considering it a sentence. There are four kinds of fragments:

A. A dependent clause:

Examples: ~~Because~~ I am overworked.

Since the weather is bad.

B. A phrase without a verb with a tense.

Examples: He gone to work.

We going to a party.

C. A phrase without a subject.

Examples: Went to college yesterday.

Been to the States.

D. A noun phrase without a verb

Examples: A long-haul flight.

A highly educated person.

The way to avoid these problems in punctuation could be either of the following ways:

1. Do not use a dependent clause alone. Attach it to an independent clause.

Examples:

- Because I am overworked, I cannot go out for a picnic.
- Since the weather is bad, we can play cards indoors.

2. Change the verb form to include a tense.

Examples:

- He has gone to work.
- We are going to a party.

3. Add a subject.

Examples:

- I went to college yesterday.
- He has been to the States.

4. Add a verb and decide if the noun phrase is a subject or an object.

Examples:

- A long-haul flight makes me sick.
- Our professor is a highly educated person.

2. Run-on Sentences

A run-on sentence occurs when two independent clauses follow each other without punctuation. Run-ons could be separated and punctuated properly.

Example:

I was exhausted after the many lectures I had yesterday so I took a taxi and came home I had a light meal read the newspaper as usual but I was so sleepy so I couldn't finish reading the paper and I fell asleep.

Correction:

I was exhausted after the many lectures I had yesterday, so I took a taxi and came home. I had a light meal, read the newspaper, and listened to classical music. However, I was so sleepy, so I couldn't finish reading the paper, and I fell asleep.

3. Comma Splices

A comma splice occurs when a comma is used between two independent clauses.

Example: I went to the airport at 4.00 pm to receive my brother, the plane was late.

In order to correct the above sentence, either of the following could be done:

1. Use a full stop rather than the comma.

I went to the airport at 4.00 pm to receive my brother. The plane was late.

2. Use a semicolon instead of the comma.

I went to the airport at 4.00 pm to receive my brother; the plane was late.

3. Join the independent clauses by a coordinating conjunction.

I went to the airport at 4.00 pm to receive my brother, but the plane was late.

4. Use a subordinating conjunction to turn one of the clauses into a dependent one, and use proper punctuation.

Although I went to the airport at 4.00 pm to receive my brother, the plane was late.

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