Writing task 2, lesson 2: Introductions

In the video lesson I explained my techniques for writing short, fast and effective introductions.

Now I want to highlight some of the good vocabulary in my introductions. Fill the gaps below with the word or phrase that I used. The answers are on page 2.

1. Discussion

People have different views about the effectiveness of group study _____ _____ _____ working alone. While there are some benefits to studying independently, I believe that group work is usually more _____.

2. Opinion

It is sometimes argued that high school students should be made to do some work in their local communities. I completely agree that this kind of _____ would be a good idea.

It is sometimes argued that high school students should be made to do some work in their local communities. In my opinion, it would be wrong to _____ teenagers to do any kind of _____ work.

It is sometimes argued that high school students should be made to do some work in their local communities. While I disagree with the idea of making such programmes compulsory, I do believe that _____ community service could benefit young people.

3. Problem and solution

It is true that punishments do not always _____ criminals _____ committing more crimes. There are various reasons why offenders repeatedly _____ _____ _____, but governments could certainly take steps to address this issue.

4. Two-part question

Work plays a _____ _____ in our lives, and we would all like to feel _____ professionally. While a variety of factors may lead to job satisfaction, it would be unrealistic to expect everyone to be happy at work.

Correct answers:

1. as opposed to
2. productive
3. scheme
4. force
5. unsalaried
6. voluntary
7. deter
8. from
9. break the law
10. central role
11. fulfilled

Writing task 2, lesson 3: Main paragraphs

In the video lesson I explained how to write two types of main body paragraph. This worksheet will focus on linking words and topic vocabulary.

1. Linking words

Here are the two paragraphs from the video lesson:

There are several reasons why I would argue against having compulsory community service for secondary school students. Firstly, the school curriculum is already full with important academic subjects, such as maths, science and languages. For example, I remember having an extremely busy timetable when I was at high school, and it would not have been possible to add to it. Secondly, students' performance in other subjects would be affected if valuable study time were taken by charity work or neighbourhood improvement schemes. Finally, I believe that teenage students would be reluctant to take part in any programme of obligatory work, and this could lead to poor motivation and even bad behaviour.

On the other hand, the opportunity to do voluntary community service could be extremely positive for high school students. By making these programmes optional, schools would ensure that only motivated students took part. These young people would gain valuable experience in an adult working environment, which could help to build their self confidence and enhance their skills. Having such experience and skills on their CVs could greatly improve school leavers' career prospects. For example, a period of voluntary work experience might impress a university admissions officer or a future employer.

Notes:

- Linking words do not help you to get a higher vocabulary score, but they do help your 'coherence and cohesion' score (organisation).
- You won't improve your score by using 'difficult' linking words. It ***isn't*** more difficult to use "first and foremost" instead of "firstly".
- If both main paragraphs contain three ideas, try not to use "firstly, secondly, finally" twice. In the first paragraph above, we could change "Firstly" to "One reason is that..." and we could change "Secondly" to "Furthermore".
- The words highlighted in blue all act as 'linking words' to connect ideas in different sentences, and to hold the paragraphs together.
- The words highlighted in red are examples of paraphrasing. The theme of 'students' is expressed in a variety of ways, and this also helps to link the ideas and hold the paragraphs together.

2. Topic vocabulary

Fill the gaps below with the words that I used in the video lesson. The answers are on page 3.

Firstly, secondly, finally

There are several reasons why I would argue against having compulsory community service for secondary school students. Firstly, the school _____ is already full with important _____ subjects, such as maths, science and languages. For example, I remember having an extremely busy _____ when I was at high school, and it would not have been possible to add to it. Secondly, students' _____ in other subjects would be affected if valuable study time were taken by charity work or _____ improvement schemes. Finally, I believe that teenage students would be _____ to take part in any programme of obligatory work, and this could lead to poor _____ and even bad behaviour.

Idea, explain, example

On the other hand, the _____ to do voluntary community service could be extremely positive for high school students. By making these programmes _____, schools would ensure that only motivated students took part. These young people would _____ valuable experience in an adult working _____, which could help to build their self confidence and _____ their skills. Having such experience and skills on their CVs could greatly improve school leavers' career _____. For example, a period of voluntary work experience might impress a university _____ officer or a future employer.

‘Firstly, secondly, finally’ answers:

1. curriculum
2. academic
3. timetable
4. performance
5. neighbourhood
6. reluctant
7. motivation

‘Idea, explain, example’ answers:

1. opportunity
2. optional
3. gain
4. environment
5. enhance
6. prospects
7. admissions

Writing task 2, lesson 4: Conclusions

In the video lesson I explained my technique for writing one-sentence conclusions.

Paraphrasing is the key skill to focus on if you want to become better at writing conclusions in the way that I suggest.

To highlight some examples of the paraphrasing that I used in the lesson, I've left gaps in the questions, introductions and conclusions below. Fill each gap with the word that I used in the video. Correct answers can be found on page 3.

1. Discussion question

In many cities the use of video _____ in public places is being increased in order to reduce crime, but some people believe that these measures restrict our individual freedom.
Do the benefits of increased security outweigh the drawbacks?

Introduction

It is true that video _____ has become commonplace in many cities in recent years. While I understand that critics may see this as an invasion of privacy, I believe that there are more benefits than drawbacks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would argue that the advantages of using video _____ _____ in public places do outweigh the disadvantages.

2. Opinion question

Families who send their children to private schools should not be _____ _____ _____ taxes that support the state education system.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Introduction

Some people believe that parents of children who attend private schools should not _____ _____ _____ to state schools through taxes. Personally, I completely disagree with this view.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I do not believe that any _____ _____ should be made for people who choose private education.

3. Problem and solution question

In the developed world, average life expectancy is increasing.
What problems will this cause for individuals and society? Suggest some measures
that could be taken to _____ the impact of ageing populations.

Introduction

It is true that people in industrialised nations can expect to live longer than ever before.
Although there will undoubtedly be some negative consequences of this trend, societies
can take steps to _____ these potential problems.

Conclusion

In conclusion, various measures can be taken to _____ the problems that are certain to
arise as the populations of countries grow older.

4. Two-part question

There are many different types of music in the world today.
Why do we need music? Is the traditional music of a country more important than
the international music that is heard everywhere nowadays?

Introduction

It is true that a rich variety of musical styles can be found around the world. Music is a
_____ part of all human _____ for a range of reasons, and I would argue that traditional
music is more important than modern, international music.

Conclusion

In conclusion, music is a _____ part of human _____ , and I believe that traditional music
should be given more importance than international music.

Answers

1. cameras

2. surveillance

3. security systems

4. required to pay

5. need to contribute

6. financial concessions

7. reduce

8. mitigate

9. tackle

10. vital

11. cultures

12. necessary

13. existence

Writing task 2, lesson 6: Opinion essay

Here's the question and the full essay that you saw in the lesson:

The money spent by governments on space programmes would be better spent on vital public services such as schools and hospitals.
To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Governments in some countries spend large amounts of money on space exploration programmes. I completely agree with the idea that these are a waste of money, and that the funds should be allocated to public services.

There are several reasons why space programmes should be abandoned. Firstly, it is extremely expensive to train scientists and other staff involved with space missions, and facilities and equipment also come at a huge cost to the government. Secondly, these programmes do not benefit normal people in our daily lives; they are simply vanity projects for politicians. Finally, many missions to space fail completely, and the smallest technological error can cost astronauts their lives. The Challenger space shuttle disaster showed us that space travel is extremely dangerous, and in my opinion it is not worth the risk.

I believe that the money from space programmes should go to vital public services instead. It is much cheaper to train doctors, teachers, police and other public service workers than it is to train astronauts or the scientists and engineers who work on space exploration projects. Furthermore, public servants do jobs that have a positive impact on every member of society. For example, we all use schools, hospitals and roads, and we all need the security that the police provide. If governments reallocated the money spent on space travel and research, many thousands of people could be lifted out of poverty or given a better quality of life.

In conclusion, my view is that governments should spend money on services that benefit all members of society, and it is wrong to waste resources on projects that do not improve our everyday lives.

(275 words, band 9)

Analyse the essay by completing the following tasks:

1. Count the sentences in each paragraph. Did I use my normal approach, writing 2 sentences for the introduction, 5 sentences for each main paragraph and 1 sentence for the conclusion?
2. Highlight the linking words in each main paragraph. Which method did I use in each one: 'firstly, secondly, finally' or 'idea, explain, example'?
3. Underline the good vocabulary that I mentioned at the end of the video lesson.

Answers:

1. I did use my normal approach: 2 sentences, 5 sentences, 5 sentences, 1 sentence.
2. Linking in paragraph 2: firstly, secondly, finally, and, these, they
   Linking in paragraph 3: furthermore, for example, and
   Paragraph 2 has a 'firstly, secondly, finally' structure because we had 3 separate ideas.
   Paragraph 3 contains one main idea, so we explained it in detail and gave an example.
3. See the video lesson.

Writing task 2, lesson 7: Discussion essay

Here's the question and the full essay that you saw in the lesson:

Some people think that a sense of competition in children should be encouraged. Others believe that children who are taught to co-operate rather than compete become more useful adults.
Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

People have different views about whether children should be taught to be competitive or co-operative. While a spirit of competition can sometimes be useful in life, I believe that the ability to co-operate is more important.

On the one hand, competition can be a great source of motivation for children. When teachers use games or prizes to introduce an element of competitiveness into lessons, it can encourage children to work harder to outdo the other pupils in the class. This kind of healthy rivalry may help to build children's self confidence, while pushing them to work independently and progress more quickly. When these children leave school, their confidence and determination will help them in competitive situations such as job interviews. It can therefore be argued that competition should be encouraged in order to prepare children for adult life.

On the other hand, it is perhaps even more important to prepare children for the many aspects of adult life that require co-operation. In the workplace, adults are expected to work in teams, follow instructions given by their superiors, or supervise and support the more junior members of staff. Team collaboration skills are much more useful than a competitive determination to win. This is the attitude that I believe schools should foster in young people. Instead of promoting the idea that people are either winners or losers, teachers could show children that they gain more from working together.

In conclusion, I can understand why people might want to encourage competitiveness in children, but it seems to me that a co-operative attitude is much more desirable in adult life.

(270 words, band 9)

Analyse the essay by completing the following tasks:

1. Count the sentences in each paragraph. Did I use my normal approach, writing 2 sentences for the introduction, 5 sentences for each main paragraph and 1 sentence for the conclusion?

2. Highlight the linking words in each main paragraph. Which method did I use in each one: 'firstly, secondly, finally' or 'idea, explain, example'?

3. Underline the good vocabulary that I mentioned at the end of the video lesson.

Answers:

1. I did use my normal approach: 2 sentences, 5 sentences, 5 sentences, 1 sentence.

2. Linking in paragraph 2: on the one hand, this kind of, while, these, therefore
   Linking in paragraph 3: on the other hand, this, instead of
   Both paragraphs develop one main idea: idea, explain, (example)

3. See the video lesson.

Writing task 2, lesson 8: Problem and solution essay

Here's the question and the full essay that you saw in the lesson:

In many countries schools have severe problems with student behaviour.
What do you think are the causes of this?
What solutions can you suggest?

It is true that the behaviour of school pupils in some parts of the world has been getting worse in recent years. There are a variety of possible reasons for this, but steps can definitely be taken to tackle the problem.

In my opinion, three main factors are to blame for the way young people behave at school nowadays. Firstly, modern parents tend to be too lenient or permissive. Many children become accustomed to getting whatever they want, and they find it difficult to accept the demands of teachers or the limits imposed on them by school rules. Secondly, if teachers cannot control their students, there must be an issue with the quality of classroom management training or support within schools. Finally, children are influenced by the behaviour of celebrities, many of whom set the example that success can be achieved without finishing school.

Student behaviour can certainly be improved. I believe that the change must start with parents, who need to be persuaded that it is important to set firm rules for their children. When children misbehave or break the rules, parents should use reasonable punishments to demonstrate that actions have consequences. Also, schools could play an important role in training both teachers and parents to use effective disciplinary techniques, and in improving the communication between both groups. At the same time, famous people, such as musicians and football players, need to understand the responsibility that they have to act as role models to children.

In conclusion, schools will continue to face discipline problems unless parents, teachers and public figures set clear rules and demonstrate the right behaviour themselves.

(270 words, band 9)

Analyse the essay by completing the following tasks:

1. Count the sentences in each paragraph. Did I use my normal approach, writing two sentences for the introduction, five sentences for each main paragraph and one sentence for the conclusion?

2. Highlight the linking words in each main paragraph. Which method did I use in each one: 'firstly, secondly, finally' or 'idea, explain, example'?

3. Underline the good vocabulary that I mentioned at the end of the video lesson.

Answers:

1. I did use my normal approach: 2 sentences, 5 sentences, 5 sentences, 1 sentence.

2. Linking in paragraph 2: firstly, secondly, finally, and
   Linking in paragraph 3: start with, also, at the same time, who, and
   Both paragraphs have a "firstly, secondly, finally" structure with three separate ideas.

3. See the video lesson.

Writing task 2, lesson 9: Two-part essay

Here's the question and the full essay that you saw in the lesson:

News editors decide what to broadcast on television and what to print in newspapers. What factors do you think influence these decisions? Do we become used to bad news, and would it be better if more good news was reported?

It is true that editors have to make difficult decisions about which news stories they broadcast or publish, and their choices are no doubt influenced by a variety of factors. In my opinion, we are exposed to too much bad news, and I would welcome a greater emphasis on good news.

Editors face a range of considerations when deciding what news stories to focus on. Firstly, I imagine that they have to consider whether viewers or readers will be interested enough to choose their television channel or their newspaper over competing providers. Secondly, news editors have a responsibility to inform the public about important events and issues, and they should therefore prioritise stories that are in the public interest. Finally, editors are probably under some pressure from the owners who employ them. For example, a newspaper owner might have particular political views that he or she wants to promote.

It seems to me that people do become accustomed to negative news. We are exposed on a daily basis to stories about war, crime, natural disasters and tragic human suffering around the world. I believe that such repeated exposure gradually desensitises people, and we become more cynical about the world and more sceptical that we can do anything to change it. I would prefer to see more positive news stories, such as reports of the work of medical staff after a natural disaster, or the kindness of volunteers who help in their communities. This kind of news might inspire us all to lead better lives.

In conclusion, it must be extremely difficult for editors to choose which news stories to present, but I would like to see a more positive approach to this vital public service.

(285 words, band 9)

Analyse the essay by completing the following tasks:

1. Count the sentences in each paragraph. Did I use my normal approach, writing two sentences for the introduction, five sentences for each main paragraph and one sentence for the conclusion?

2. Paragraph 2 is a typical "Firstly, Secondly, Finally" paragraph.
   But how did I structure paragraph 3?

3. Underline the good vocabulary that I mentioned at the end of the video lesson.

Answers:

1. I did use my normal approach: 2 sentences, 5 sentences, 5 sentences, 1 sentence.

2. Paragraph 3 is structured like this: **topic, example, result, alternative, result**

    I start with a topic sentence about bad news. I then give examples of bad news stories in the second sentence. In the third sentence, I explain the result or effects that this bad news has on people. I then explain the alternative to bad news (positive news), and finally I suggest the result or effect that this might have.

3. See the video lesson.