

Writing English is an informative, hands-on book on how to write good English texts. Through a series of basic principles and exercises the book guides you through the writing process and helps you evaluate, analyse and produce effective, well-organised, and adequately developed texts.

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Writing English

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Ikke til hjemlån

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Preface

The ability to write good texts is not a talent one is born with. It can be learned. And this book is designed to teach you.

It offers a comprehensive introduction on how to write good texts in English. It defines, illustrates and helps you practice the rhetorical patterns of effective, well-organised, and strongly developed texts. Explanations and definitions are kept simple and practical exercises are plenty. Chapter one helps you cater your texts to different audiences and purposes. Chapter two takes you through all the levels of a text; it helps you master the organisational patterns, it helps you keep your focus, link your sentences together to make a sensible flow, and it helps you economise and polish your language with a varied and precise choice of words. Chapter three introduces you to two of the most frequently used genres and their sub-genres. Chapter four guides you through the different phases of the writing process. Chapter five assists you in collecting information and writing research papers. Chapter six suggests how to write a good and effective web page.

August 2002

Vivian Lindhardsen

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Chapter 1

The Who, Why, What and How of Writing

A piece of writing is never an isolated entity. It always relates to something in 'the real world'.

- 5 We never write without an audience (even in diaries there is an audience) → the Who of writing,
we never write without a purpose → the Why of writing,
we never write without a topic or a content → the What of writing,
10 and we never write without style → the How of writing.

Purpose

In order to identify the purpose of our writing we have to ask ourselves why we are writing. Are we writing to persuade someone, to tell a story, to describe something or somebody, to argue against or for something, etc.? A text can have more than one purpose, but generally there is one main purpose.

Audience

In identifying the audience of our writing we have to ask ourselves who we are writing to. Is it someone we know? Is it one person or several people? What is the relationship between us and the audience (family members, classmates, intellectual newspaper readers, future employers, the principal of our school...), etc?

- 25 Identifying the purpose and audience is the first phase in the writing process as these two elements determine the content and the style of the text. If our purpose is to complain to an office clerk, our writing will include different contents and will be presented differently from a piece of writing in which our purpose is to remind our sister to buy coffee and sugar.

30 **Topic**

Topic concerns the contents of the writing, and we need to ask ourselves what we intend to write about. Do we include in the text our personal experience? The plot and acting of a film? A presidential election? The content is, 35 of course, closely related to the purpose of the text in that the purpose and the audience determine what content would be appropriate to include in the text. We may want to include our educational background and practical work

experience in a job application but not when writing to an office clerk to complain about bad treatment.

Style

Having determined the purpose, audience and content of a text, we must proceed to consider how the text should be written. A text whose audience is a family member and whose purpose is to convince that person that a trip to Greece will be more exciting than a trip to Norway requires a different style than a text whose purpose is to convince future employers that you are the best one for the job. When considering the style of a text, we are faced with many choices, and we must ask which style is most appropriate for the purpose, audience and contents in question. Should we be formal or informal, personal or impersonal? This choice determines vocabulary (e.g. words of Latin ('conduct', 'investigate') or Germanic ('carry out', look into')), sentence structure (e.g. simple or complex) and the way that each sentence and paragraph relate to one another.

Genre

Related to style is genre. Genre also concerns the 'how' of writing, but in a more general way. It sums up the style and concerns the overall presentation. It can be a personal letter, a job application, a list of things to do, a review, etc.

All of the above elements are indispensable in any text, and, as we saw above, they all depend on one another: purpose and audience determine contents, and those three elements determine the style (including genre) of a text.

Exercise 1

Identify the above elements (audience, purpose, topic, style and genre) of the texts below (A-C).

Exercise 2

- Without deviating from the content too much, modify text A to aim at an audience of your own age with the purpose of letting them get to know you.
- Without deviating from the content too much, modify text B to convince drug addicts to gamble instead of taking drugs.
- Without deviating from the content too much, modify text C to harshly criticise the novel.

How did you modify the samples (type of vocabulary, sentence structure, contents, etc.)?

A: Position as a teacher of English as a second language

Your ad in the Washington Post immediately caught my attention as I am very interested in teaching. I have a solid theoretical background of teaching methodology as well as practical experience in teaching English as a second language.

I received my BA. from American University, Washington, D.C. with a concentration in English and Education. After graduating college I went to Taiwan where I taught English as a Foreign Language for two years. I mainly taught conversational skills, which can be quite a challenge as Taiwanese students are not used to practising oral skills. Besides the rather strict curriculum I had to follow, I managed to develop my own teaching materials, which turned out to be quite successful. Teaching in Taiwan was a great experience as I got to know a completely different culture. It also helped me view my own culture from a different perspective.

Upon returning to the United States I accepted a position as an assistant editor with a company that publishes journals on learning and education, a job that I enjoy a lot. But now after two years of editing, I miss teaching and the close contact I used to have with students of different nationalities. In other words: I am ready to go back to teaching.

As a person I am very energetic, studious and always full of new (and sometimes crazy) ideas.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Martha Green, BA.

B: Lab Notes

Your Brain on Poker

You know the "high" that gamblers talk about when they feel an inside straight? It turns out to be more than a metaphor. In a new brain-imaging study, researchers led by Dr. Hans Breiter of Massachusetts General Hospital examined which regions of the brain became active when volunteers played a game of chance. After getting \$50, each of 12 men flicked a spinner that landed on one of three amounts of money, which they won or lost. Meanwhile, the scientists tracked the men's brain activity with functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Regions that responded to gambling wins overlapped with those that respond to cocaine. Money, in other words, excites much the same regions as a drug, they report in the journal *Neuron*. "Gambling produces a similar pattern of activity to cocaine in the cocaine addict," Breiter says. "The same set of brain regions process very

different categories of reward". Gambling addiction, then, may have the same neural basis as drug addiction. Will compulsive shopping be next? (Sharon Begley, Newsweek, June 4, 2001)

C: Dream Time 'Everything is Illuminated' by Jonathan Safran Foer

Reviewed by Marie Arana

Imagine a novel as verbally cunning as *Clockwork Orange*, as harrowing as *Painted Bird*, as exuberant and twee as *Candide*, and you have *Everything is Illuminated* – a remarkable debut by a 24-year-old native Washingtonian. For anyone who worries that American fiction has become a grim shuffle from one dysfunctional hearth to the next, this book is a tonic: a book that, despite its slenderness, straddles two centuries, rattles from here to the other side of the planet and back again, and manages to tell an old story in an original way, with equal doses of burlesque, heartbreak, earthiness and grace.

It is picaresque. The hero, like the author, is named Jonathan Safran Foer – a third-year university student, fledgling writer, Jew – who travels to the rural outposts of Ukraine equipped with little more than a faded photograph, in search of the woman who rescued his grandfather from Nazi extermination. His translator and cicerone is Alex, a young post-communist Ukrainian blowhard with a bizarre command of English and a hilarious capacity for malapropisms – a co-narrator whose bumptious prose we encounter, for the most part, in ongoing correspondence with the author. People don't sit, they "roost." His dog is Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior, a "deranged bitch." He signs his letters "Guilelessly." Through woozy accounts, we comprehend that, although he may be utterly different from Foer-the-hero, Alex is a character any of us can recognize: a pretender, a dreamer, all jargon and slogan and spin.

...
Foer assembles a cast of beguiling characters. There is the wondrous girl, Brod, named after the river that almost swallows her, who marries at 14 and conducts conjugal relations through a hole in the wall. There is her descendant, Foer's grandfather, whose gimpy arm turns out to be potent catnip to nearly every woman he encounters. There is Alex's grandfather, an endearing old coot who harbors a terrible secret about the fine line between man and monster.

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Passages of this novel were published in the *New Yorker* last year to considerable notice, and readers' appetites were whetted for the larger fare. They will not be disappointed. Rarely does a writer as young as Jonathan Foer display such virtuosity and wisdom. His prose is clever, challenging, willfully constructed to make you read it again and again. His novel is madly complex, at times confusing, overlapping, unforgiving. But read it, and you'll feel altered, chastened – seared in the fire of something new.
(Marie Arana, Sunday, April 21, 2002)

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Exercise 3

Write about your summer vacation to A: your best friend and B: as an article to be published in the Travel Section of a newspaper.
How did your two pieces of writing differ?

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Exercise 4

Keep a journal of the work you have done in this chapter.
1. Describe the activities you have done
2. Discuss whether these activities have been useful for learning how to write an English text. Give reasons.

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Chapter 2

The Structure of a Text

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We have learned that the audience, the purpose and the content of our writing determine our style, and that any variation in these factors will affect the style we adopt. This appropriateness of style is an important component of writing. Another, equally significant, property of good writing is clarity.

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Clarity is of particular concern in writing as, unlike oral communication, written communication rarely offers opportunity for immediate feedback to resolve possible obscurities and misunderstandings. Writing most often comes with delayed or no feedback, which is why the writer must go through great strengths to communicate his/her message as clearly and unambiguously as possible.

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Clarity and avoidance of ambiguity is best achieved through a well-structured text that displays unity, accuracy and one general line of thought at all levels of the text.

A text can be divided up into the following levels:

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- ◆ the global level, which concerns the entire text, the overall unity and how the individual paragraphs relate to one another,
- ◆ the paragraph level, which concerns the unity of the individual paragraphs and how the individual sentences relate to one another,
- ◆ the sentence level, which concerns the unity of the individual sentences and how the words relate to one another,
- ◆ the vocabulary level, which concerns the choice of words.

In the following each of the levels will be treated separately.

The Global Level

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To achieve a sense of unity a text is generally organised into three components: the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

The Introduction

The introduction generally introduces the main topic and main ideas of the text (no details) and typically ends with a thesis statement. The thesis statement states the main topic of the text and often presents the writer's viewpoint or position about the topic. After having read the introduction the reader will know exactly what the text is about.

Some introductions start with a hook to capture the reader's attention. This often has the form of a saying, a proverb, a quote, a question or a thought-provoking idea.

The Body

The body is the core of the text. It provides detailed support to prove the thesis of the introduction. It is usually divided up into paragraphs each of which represents a subtopic relating to the overall main topic.

Each paragraph in the body begins with a topic sentence. This sentence states

10 the main idea (subtopic) of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph provides clear, specific details to support to the subtopic stated in the topic sentence. Each paragraph represents a subtopic so a new idea requires a new paragraph. After having read the topic sentence, the reader will know exactly what the paragraph is about.

15 The body is often organised in a particular order. Text C below, for instance, is organised according to time. The body contains three paragraphs, the first one dedicated to the past, the second one to the present, and the third one to the future. The paragraphs could also be organised according to importance, with the most important topic first – or even last. There is, in fact, an infinite 20 number of possibilities of organising the body. But the most effective body is one that is organised in some way.

The Conclusion

The conclusion forms the end of the text; it sums up and rounds off the text.

25 No new ideas are taken up. Usually the conclusion has the inverted structure of the introduction. Whereas the introduction often has the internal structure of hook, general statements and thesis, the conclusion has the following internal structure: paraphrase of thesis statement and general statements (summary or analysis of the main ideas) and possibly a concluding remark.

30 In short, the introduction serves to ask a question or to state an opinion, the body serves to prove it and the conclusion serves to sum up the answer based on the evidence in the body. This is a clear and useful structure for most essays, which are expository-argumentative, but the idea is also relevant for narratives (more about different genres in chapter 3).

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Exercise 1

Identify the introductions in texts A-C below.

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Identify the general statements and the thesis statements (and the hooks, if present) in the introductions of texts A-C below.

Identify and evaluate the introductions of texts D-G below. What makes them good? What makes them bad?

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Exercise 2

Identify the bodies in texts A-C below. How do they relate to the thesis statement in the introductions?

Identify the topic sentences and the subtopics in the bodies of texts A-C below.

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Identify and evaluate the bodies of texts D-G below. What makes them good? What makes them bad?

Exercise 3

Create subtopics (3-4) for each of the main topics listed below:

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Write a topic sentence for each of your subtopics.

Topic 1: What characterises a successful person

Topic 2: The advantages of technology

Topic 3: What characterises a democracy

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Topic 4: Compare and contrast advantages to living in a big city to advantages of living in a small town

Topic 5: Reasons for and against capital punishment

Exercise 4

25

Identify the conclusions of texts A-C below and relate them to the introductions of those texts.

Identify and evaluate the conclusions of texts D-G below. What makes them good? What makes them bad?

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Exercise 5

Write the conclusion for the following (incomplete) essay, the essay question of which is: Describe America and the Americans

Introduction:

Being asked to define America and the Americans is probably one of the most difficult tasks that can be put before me. Not because I do not know anything about that mighty country but because America is huge, and the different states within the US represent different types of people and because it is a big melting pot of people with roots from all over the world, who have come to

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the US with the hope of a better life. Related to this my definition of America and the Americans will be diversity and their constant optimism and hope for something better.

Body:

5 **Topic sentence:** America's diversity is seen in all possible aspects: America represents geographic, ethnic, demographic, socio-economic, and educational differences...

Topic sentence: Americans always seem to exhibit an exceptional optimism. It is an optimism that manifests itself in a (sometimes too) strong belief in 10 their own capabilities and in a constant hope that everything is going to be better and that the next generation will have a better life than the generation before it.

Conclusion:

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A: \$ 10 mill. – Am I dreaming?

The dream of having a lot of money is one that the majority of people have. Money isn't everything, but it does provide you with a certain sense of freedom: the freedom to buy and do almost anything. If I were so lucky as to inherit \$10 mill., I would deem it appropriate to do something for myself and something for others.

Inheriting millions of dollars I would want to make my personal life easier and more exciting. Since I was a child, I have been extremely adventurous, wanting to explore the world and getting to know a variety of cultures. Now, with a bulging bank account, I could realize these dreams, visiting the Brazilian jungle, the Aborigines of Australia, testing my fear of the rough scenery in the Antarctica, etc. Those are the amazing adventures that could give me a sense of really utilizing the earth and my life. Not only can this kind of money make my life more exciting, it can also make my life easier so that I could concentrate on what I think is important in life. Instead of spending time on cleaning, cooking and other trivial house chores, I could pay someone to do these things for me and spend time on things that I thoroughly enjoy.

Now \$10 million is a lot of money and spending it all on myself exclusively would not be satisfactory. With this kind of money I would also have the ability to help other people. The most efficient way of helping other people would be to give them an opportunity to get an education. Education is not only a ticket to a successful career, it is also intellectually stimulating and gives people a chance to see the world from various perspectives.

In conclusion, I would attempt to enrich my own life and that of others. I would provide myself with a more convenient and exciting life and would give others an opportunity to improve their lives through education. It is a perfect dream, which I am sure I share with thousands of others.

B: Capital Punishment

Capital punishment is a hot issue, and one on which everybody has a standpoint. This is understandable as it concerns the moral issue of killing someone who has himself killed someone. There are, of course, both pros and cons about this issue. However, the cons outweigh the pros by far, for moral as well as practical reasons.

Morally, the question of Capital Punishment is whether to turn the other cheek or to take an eye for an eye. If a person takes the life of another person, should he himself be deprived of his own? Or should we find another non-violent way of dealing with the problem? The choice we make reflects the moral status of our nation. Some may argue that a killer should be punished by death, but if we kill the killer, we ourselves become killers and show that killing is a means of communicating and coping with problems. Surely, such savage behaviour is not ideal and therefore not something we can support.

Practically, Capital Punishment concerns the issue of how to prevent future crimes and how to protect the society of the criminals. On the surface it seems obvious that killing the murderer would prevent him from killing again and perhaps also scare other potential murderers off. Further, by killing the murderer the society can get rid of him. But, and here is a big but: can we be sure that we have the right guy? The answer is No. The world has an embarrassing high rate of innocent deaths on its conscience. This is hardly surprising as the criminals often cannot afford to hire the best lawyers to defend them in court. This is not practical, this is discriminating.

In conclusion, death penalty might have some apparent advantages, but when considering the issue in depth, it becomes clear that we cannot accept Capital Punishment. It is irrational for practical as well as for moral reasons. We have to create a society in which we send out a message of non-violence and justice.

C: Dear Mangilala,

I am so delighted that you want to write with me. I have never exchanged letters with anyone from Africa. I am sure that I will learn a lot about you

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and through you a lot about your country and your culture. Let me first tell you about me, my childhood, my present life and my dreams.

I grew up with my mom and dad in a small town an hour away from our capital. As an only child I was always eager to play with other kids, so whenever I was off from school, I would run over to a friend's house to hang out. We would play computer games, play football with other kids, go to the movies, watch TV, or just crash out and talk about girls. In my country the divorce rate is really high, but my parents have stayed together so I guess we have grown into a bit of a nuclear family.

Now I am in high school. There is no high school in my town so I take the bus every day to a high school in a town that is a bit bigger. In the Danish high school we can choose between the language line and the math line. I have chosen the language line, not because I don't like math but because I feel that learning foreign languages will be very useful. Danish is only spoken by Danes so if we want to communicate with the rest of the world, we will have to learn other languages. I really enjoy high school. We have very qualified and dedicated teachers – sometimes too dedicated in the sense that they make us do a lot of homework. High school in Denmark can be very tough as the grades we get from there are the ticket to university.

A university degree is what I hope to get. I would like to embark on communication studies or international studies. A master's degree takes about 5 years. In Denmark education is free. We don't pay tuition fees and we even get a grant from the state. It is enough to live on, but if you want to have a little fun while studying, you'll have to get a part-time job. Career isn't everything. I also have to think of establishing a family. But I am sure that I will meet someone during my studies.

Now, you know a little bit about me. Now tell me about yourself, your family and your dreams. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours,
Mike

D: My Summer Holidays

This summer I went to France and I am going to tell you about this trip. We went to France with some family friends. The trip was nice. There was no problem with the heat as we have AC in our car. We saw the Eiffel Tower, Le Louvre, and all the sights you had to see in Paris. To my big surprise the Frenchmen did not speak very good English. They hardly understood the simplest of sentences. It even was as if they didn't even want

to try. I tried with my poor French, but that was even worse as they almost seemed angry at me for trying to corrupt their language.

We stayed at very nice hotel just next to the River Seine. It is a beautiful river, but a bit overrated. I mean, I have seen rivers much more impressive than this one. So we spent most the time writing post cards at various coffee houses. We also did a lot of shopping, though I must admit that the French prices are a bit too spicy for me.

The family friends we went with were very good at French so we had perfect translations when the waiters tried to talk about us behind our backs. We could really get back at them. Sitting at coffee houses is very nice, and the weather is not too hot. It is, in fact, rather mild, although I was surprised at how cloudy it is in Paris.

After Paris we went to the Normandy. It is very different from Paris and much greener.

Too weeks in France was enough. I longed to be understood in my own language but it was a very nice trip.

E: My Summer Holiday

Vacation: a time of leisure or a time of boredom? This summer I couldn't wait to get off school and just enjoy myself, having the complete freedom to do whatever I wanted to do. After a while, though, I discovered that this freedom can turn into boredom.

The summer vacation started off with an entire week's crashing in front of the TV-set. I watched all the sit-coms and all the soaps I had missed out on. I practically knew all the characters in every soap on Channel 5. After getting a bit fed up with all the intrigues of the young, the rich and the beautiful, I switched to MTV in the hope of catching up with all the latest music videos. After a three day non-stop music video countdown I knew all the lyrics and all the dance steps of the hottest rock stars. Although hot babes are an intriguing sight, they cease to amaze me after a while and after just a week in front of the telly, I gave up to the boredom and switched to another way of killing time.

Next stop on the vacation list was to shoot baskets with the kids on the block. This was not a bad move, as the well-trimmed dancers on MTV made me feel awfully out of shape. With impressive enthusiasm I started dribbling the ball towards the basket, fighting my way through the other kids only to realise that the other kids (who were three years younger than me) could make me feel like a toddler unable to even hold a ball in his hands. Terribly disappointed at my lack of sporting skills, I withdrew to my dusty room to count the cracks in my wall. What could be more bor-

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ing? Did I really have to call up my aunt Betty to beg her to invite me for a cup of tea.

I called my aunt Betty. Surprised and completely stunned at my initiative she invited me over, offered me her best tea and home made cookies. I devoured her culinary treats while listening to her long stories about her lost love in Peru. Not that I hadn't heard her stories before – every walking soul within the radius of 10 miles had heard them at least a hundred times – but I sat quietly uttering my polite hmms, and uhus, when appropriate. How low could I go, taking the initiative to listen to her never ending stories? Was I really that bored?

I realised that the more time I had to myself the more bored I got. No fascinating images on TV could enchant me, no sports and no stories about lost love. I felt myself falling even deeper into the dungeon of boredom. I was starving for contents in my life. Was it a thirst for intellectual stimulation? All I know is that I couldn't wait to start school again.

F: Capital Punishment

Capital punishment is an issue hotly debated in the US. In Europe the countries are unanimously against it, but in the US it is often of central concern in presidential runs. In the last presidential run, however, it did not become an issue as both Gore and Bush are in favour of the death penalty.

The question of whether to have Capital Punishment or not is a very important questions as it concerns taking the life of another man. It is a difficult decision as there are both pros and cons. The arguments for death penalty is that the criminals who have committed the worst of crimes receive the ultimate punishment. An added benefit to this is that the criminal cannot commit the crime again and thus the society has got rid of him. This all sounds very good. But there are also cons. What if the accused turns out to be innocent? This might be one of the reasons why Amnesty International clearly opposes Capital Punishment. They fight for human rights and we can say that a human being has the right to live.

Capital Punishment has its pros and cons and surely it can be difficult to make the right decision.

G: Capital Punishment

There are many countries on earth. I think each country has their own laws and, also, different cultures and customs. My point is: how to treat the criminal when they kill or commit some other extremely serious crime. In some countries it is decided by law to kill the criminals. But in my opinion it is wrong.

When babies are born into this world, I don't think they know how to kill other people or how to steal things or even how to discriminate racially. Of course, they are pure when they are born. So when some criminals do bad things, when they kill other people, it could be that their parents didn't teach their children very well ... or it could be the society's fault.

Also, I think that the society should give the criminals a chance. Nobody likes to kill another person on purpose. There must be a reason. If society could give this criminal a chance, they may become a useful person.

So, in my conclusion, I want to say: I disagree with the death penalty as a punishment. We even have a love for animals. Why can't we try to have more compassion for criminals who killed unintentionally?

The Paragraph Level

Now we have captured the global level of the text and are able to structure it so that the overall message comes through in a well-organised way. We can now dig deeper into the text to look at the paragraph level. Here we look at how the paragraph is structured as well as how the individual sentences relate to one another inside the paragraph.

The first (or one of the first) sentence(s) in the paragraph is the topic sentence, a sentence that tells us what the paragraph is about. The rest of the paragraph then serves to support the general idea of the overall text, but relates specifically to the idea stated in the topic sentence. The support typically consists of examples, explanations, details, reasons, logical deductions or the like. It is important that the paragraph only treats one main sub-point. So a new topic requires a new paragraph.

Exercise 6

Examine the following paragraphs (texts H-I below). How do the paragraphs lend credence to their topic sentences?

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H: \$10 mill. – Am I dreaming?

Inheriting millions of dollars I would want to make my personal life easier and more exciting. Since I was a child, I have been extremely adventurous, wanting to explore the world and getting to know a variety of cultures. Now, with a bulging bank account, I could realise these dreams, visiting the Brazilian jungle, the Aborigines of Australia, testing my fear of the rough scenery in the Antarctica, etc. Those are the amazing adventures that could give me a sense of really utilising the earth and my life. Not only can this kind of money make my life more exciting, it can also make my life easier so that I could concentrate on what I think is important in life. Instead of spending time on cleaning, cooking and other trivial house chores, I could pay someone to do these things for me and spend time on things that I thoroughly enjoy (full text above).

I: My Summer holiday

The summer vacation started off with an entire week's crashing in front of the TV-set. I watched all the sit-coms and all the soaps I had missed out on. I practically knew all the characters in every soap on Channel 5. After getting a bit fed up with all the intrigues of the young, the rich and the beautiful, I switched to MTV in the hope of catching up with all the latest music videos. After a three day non-stop music video countdown I knew all the lyrics and all the dance steps of the hottest rock stars. Although hot babes are an intriguing sight, they cease to amaze me after a while, and after just a week in front of the telly, I gave up to the boredom and switched to another way of killing time (full text above).

Sentence Relations

In lending credence to the topic sentence the paragraph must be coherent in itself. That is the paragraph must form a coherent whole with a logic connection between the individual sentences in the paragraph. We achieve coherence by means of cohesion. Cohesion, in turn, can be said to be a set of linguistic devices used to glue sentences together to create a meaningful whole. Cohesive devices (or connectors as they are also called) help clarify for the reader how the information in the text is to be understood, how it relates to other types of information in the text. Thus cohesive devices such as 'however', 'yet', and 'nevertheless' show contrast whereas devices such as 'therefore', 'thus', 'consequently' are used when concluding or wanting to show result.

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Exercise 7

Consider the texts H-I above. Identify the cohesive devices. What type of connection is communicated?

Categorisation of Cohesive Devices

In gluing sentences together cohesive devices can be lexical as well as grammatical.

Below are some lexical categories¹:

Repetition, e.g. ‘Peter went down the street to look for his dog. Peter didn’t know where to look’.

Synonymy, e.g. ‘The boy went down the street to look for his dog. The lad didn’t know where to look’.

Subordinates, e.g. ‘Look at that dog. The Big Dane is such a huge, yet beautiful dog’.

Superordinates, e.g. ‘Look at that rose. This flower is so beautiful and so romantic’.

Referential summative, e.g. ‘He went down a one-way street going the wrong way. A truck came towards him driving at least 60 miles per hour. There was no way out. The two vehicles crashed, leaving 4 people dead and one person heavily injured. The accident was horrifying’.

Common semantic field, e.g. He broke the window. Traces of glass could be seen everywhere.

Consequential tie, e.g. ‘On September 11 the World Trade Center was subject to a serious terrorist attack. The horror and fear spread to the rest of the world.’

Causal tie, e.g. ‘On September 11 the World Trade Center was subject to a serious terrorist attack. Bin Laden’s anger with the Capitalist West was now obvious.

Below are some grammatical categories²:

Pronouns, e.g. ‘Peter went down the street to look for his dog. He didn’t know where to look’. Paul drives a blue car. Henry drives a red one’.

Identification (often expressed by the definite article), e.g. ‘Walking down the street I saw a man and a woman. The man was wearing a black suit’.

Substitution:

Verbal substitute, e.g. ‘He wanted to go to Europe. And he did’.

Clausal substitute, e.g. ‘Paul went up to New York on a business trip. So did Henry’

Conjoining:

Additive, e.g. ‘He went down the street to look for his dog. And on his way he met a good friend’.

Adversative, e.g. ‘He went down the street to look for his dog. But he didn’t find him’.

5 Causal, e.g. ‘*He was lost and totally exhausted because* he had been looking for his dog all morning.

Effectual, e.g. ‘He spent the entire day – and night – looking for his dog. He was thus very tired when he came to work the next day’.

Temporal, e.g., ‘He went everywhere to search for his dog. *First* he went downtown. *Then* he went uptown. *After* that he searched the outskirts.’

Emphasis, e.g. ‘*He went down the street to look for his dog*. He even went down every ally in the neighbourhood’

Exercise 8

15 Identify the cohesive devices in the paragraph below. Categorise them according to the categories above.

J: The teenager

20 Glen was sitting at the breakfast table reading his Sunday Paper when his 13-year-old daughter came in the door dressed in ultra tight hot pants and a see-through T-shirt. He wondered how his little girl had turned into such a cheap-looking teenager. He forced his eyes on the paper. But he couldn’t focus on the words. Right now, whatever news there was in the world was of no importance to him. The only thing that mattered was the beautiful, misunderstood princess standing in his kitchen.

Exercise 9

30 Compare the cohesive devices in the extracts of the two student essays below (paragraphs K and L). What makes one better than the other?

K: Anna (a)

35 Anna was a little girl and when she had to go to the bathroom, she always carried a torch. She also carried it when it wasn’t dark. One night when she couldn’t sleep, she went into her mother’s room. And when she saw her lying there, she...

L: Anna (b)

The bathroom was situated right next to Anna's room. When the five-year-old padded barefoot through her room to go to the toilet, she always carried a torch with her. The little girl could hardly carry this big object in her hand. Nevertheless ...

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The key to a well-structured paragraph is one that consists of a set of varied and precise cohesive devices.

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The Sentence Level

Within the sentence we need to concern ourselves with the relationship between the words and phrases. The overarching principle in English is that of end weight and of economy. Weight here has two references: syntactic weight and semantic weight. Economy refers to the art of using few words to communicate a message.

15

Syntactic Weight

Weight refers to the weight of sentence phrases. The regular word order in English is Subject – Verb – Object. It is, however, possible to deviate from this Subject – Verb – Object norm to comply with the principle of end weight. If, for instance, the subject is too heavy, i.e. if it consists of too many words, it is moved to the end of the sentence. Thus a sentence such as

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'That you are always there for me when I need you makes me happy'

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is more appropriately phrased:

'It makes me happy that you are always there for me when I need you'.

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The real Subject in this sentence is 'that you are always there for me when I need you', but because it consists of many words, it is heavy and therefore most appropriately placed at the end of the sentence. The movement of the subject leaves a slot open in the Subject position. To compensate for this, the dummy subject 'it' is inserted.

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A heavy Subject can also be split up. Thus a sentence such as

'The time when we run out of the money that we inherited will come'.

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is more appropriately phrased:

'The time will come when we run out of the money that we inherited'.

- 5 The Subject in this sentence is 'the time when we run out of the money that we inherited', but due to its heavy nature it seems imbalanced in the beginning of the sentence. Instead of moving the entire subject it is split up in two, so that the subject-looking 'the time' is placed in the Subject position and the rest of the Subject, the heavy part ('when we run out of the money that we inherited') is appropriately placed at the end.

Semantic Weight

Related to syntactic weight is semantic weight. Weight here refers to the importance of information communicated in the sentence. Importance is usually attached to new information, that is information that the addresser assumes to be new to the addressee. Thus in a sentence, such as

'The young man received a package from the king'.

- 20 the addresser assumes the addressee to know about the young man (which also the definite article testifies to), but not that he received a package from the king. Had the assumption been that the addressee knew about the king and not the young man, the king would occupy the Subject position in the beginning of the sentence, leaving the end position for the new information, the 25 semantically heavy component. The sentence would be as such:

'The king sent a package to a young man'.

What the addresser assumes to be known information can depend on several factors. It could be what was mentioned in the previous sentence, it could be what is known in the situational context (e.g. what can be seen in the speech situation), or it could be what is culturally assumed.

If one wants to attach special prominence to a piece of information in a sentence, one can frame it with the help of [it + be + the important element + a 35 relative clause] as in:

'It was Mary who bought the house'.

thus framing Mary, perhaps to clarify that it is Mary and not, say, Peter, who 40 bought the house.

Exercise 10

Improve the following sentences so that they comply with the principle of end weight.

1. That the rumours were untrue didn't bother him.
2. That you should say that is very funny.
3. To find her husband with another woman didn't surprise her.
4. The day when you have to move out will come.
5. What did the young man do? Well, a woman received the golden egg from him.

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Economy

Economy of writing refers to the ability communicate one's message with as few words as possible. To achieve this, it is often possible to reduce a sentence. Relative clauses and adverbial clauses are clauses most frequently subjected to reduction. Thus a sentence such as

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'Do you see the man who is wearing a red tie?'

can be reduced to

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'Do you see the man wearing a red tie?'

The reduction process is as follows: reduce a relative clause ('who is wearing a red tie') by deleting the relative pronoun and the auxiliary 'be').

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Exercise 11

Reduce the following sentences:

1. Do you hear the noise that is coming from that room?
2. This is the only book that is available now.
3. He is the artist who is formerly known as Prince.
4. Did you see the man who was caught in the fire.

30

Relative clauses that do not contain the auxiliary 'be' can also be reduced.

Thus a sentence such as:

35

'Do you like the guy who delivers the Sunday Paper?'

can be reduced to

'Do you like the guy delivering the Sunday Paper?'

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The process of reduction is not much different from the one above: the relative clause is reduced by deleting the relative pronoun and putting the verb in the progressive form.

Exercise 12

Reduce the following sentences:

1. I like the film which stars Julia Robert.
2. Have you seen the tall man who works across the street from us?
3. I have never seen anyone who speaks such good English.

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The reduced sentences above are examples of reduced relative clauses. Below we see the process of reducing adverbial clauses.

'After he had heard the sad news, he took his car and drove away'.

15

can be reduced to

'After hearing the sad news, he took his car and drove away'.

or even

'Hearing the sad news, he took his car and drove away'.

A similar example is reducing a sentence such as

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'He decided to pick up a dirty strategy because he was losing the election'.

can be reduced to

'Losing the election, he decided to pick up a dirty strategy'.

The process of reducing an adverbial clause is very much like that of reducing a relative clause: the Subject is deleted. If the clause contains the auxiliary 'be', this 'be' is deleted. If the clause does not contain the auxiliary 'be' the verb is put in the progressive form. Subordinators, such as 'after' or 'because' (above), can be kept in the clause or it can be deleted. If it is deleted, the function of the adverbial clause becomes, of course, less clear. Note also that the reduced adverbial clause often (but not always) occurs in the beginning of the sentence, and when it does, it has to be followed by a comma.

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Exercise 13

Reduce the following clauses:

1. After he had finished his drink, he left quietly.
2. He started going out more because he felt lonely and needed to meet other people.
3. Don't take another ice cream before you ask.
4. He felt very sad when he left his family.
5. He read a book while he was watching TV.

Of course, other types of sentences can be reduced. Another frequent example of sentence reduction is the co-ordinated clause. Thus a sentence such as

'He could walk and he could talk at the same time'.

can be reduced to

'He could walk and talk at the same time'.

Exercise 14

Economise, that is reduce, the following paragraph:

M: Peter

Peter was a man who was unwilling or perhaps unable to socialise with other people. Before he went out, he always made a big deal out of covering himself so that no one would recognise him. He always dressed in black and he always wore a big scarf that partly covered his face. One summer day when it was particularly hot he had no choice but to leave the scarf at home. He ventured out and because he was afraid to show his face, he constantly held his head down. As he walked down the street, he heard a familiar voice and he quickly ran into an alley. Peter did not want to be seen for anything in the world. The voice kept calling him and as he thought that there was no way out, he turned around to respond. His face grew soft as he realised that the voice came from an old burning flame of his...

The Vocabulary Level

At the vocabulary level the choice of words is in focus. The key to a good vocabulary is preciseness, variety³, and, as with the sentence level, economy.

In terms of making one's writing capturing, it is often also important to have a vivid vocabulary.

Preciseness and Variety

From the text below it becomes clear how important preciseness and variety is.

N: A Nice Day

I woke up and realised that it was a nice day. I put on my nice new dress as I was going out with my nice new boyfriend. When he came to pick me up, I noticed that he was dressed nicely too. He had on a nice pair of trousers and a nice shirt. He took me to a very nice restaurant in a nice neighbourhood. After a nice dinner we went out for a nice stroll down the street. After that we went to a nice bar to meet some of our nice friends. They had just bought a nice house nearby and invited us over the following weekend. Wasn't that nice of them?

The repeated use of the adjective 'nice' does not only have a boring effect, it also give the impression of a very imprecise and vague language: the word nice can be used in such a vast number of contexts and has such a broad meaning that it almost becomes empty of meaning.

Exercise 15

Replace all the 'nice'- words in the text (N) above with other adjectives to make the text more varied and more precise.

Economy

Economy is also an art that must be achieved at the vocabulary level. Often it is possible to use one word to describe the same thing that will otherwise be described by two or several words or phrases. Instead of saying

'That man has a sickly dread of public places or open spaces and he sometimes, but not always, walks around and he doesn't know where he is going, and he is very afraid that he will get lost. But what he fears the most of all is that he might bump into an other person'.

one could say, more economically:

'That man is agoraphobic and sometimes walks around with no sense of direction in fear of getting lost. But what he fears the most is bumping into someone'.

Exercise 16

Use a more economic vocabulary (and sentence structure) than is used in the passage below.

O: The Secret Life of Jim

'This is a story about a man who is called Jim. Jim lived in a small house in a small town with few houses. It seemed as if he was a quiet man that didn't say much. But fact is that he really was not that quiet after all. In the evening when it was getting dark outside, he actually transformed into something scary. Scary it was, because he transformed into a kind of a werewolf. It was a werewolf with sharp teeth. These sharp teeth were almost the same size as the kind of long teeth that a walrus has. There were some people from the neighbourhood that walked past his house one day. They were very surprised when they saw that the man who always seemed so quiet now had turned into a werewolf. They found it hard to believe their eyes, but without hesitating one of the people who lived next door grabbed his gun and with the gun he shot poor Jim'.

Vividness

Good writing often includes a good deal of vividness. Vividness includes imagery such as metaphors and similes, which are often associated with, but by no means restricted to, poetry. Vividness, however, also includes words and phrases that merely appeal to the senses. The purpose of vividness is, of course, to capture the reader's attention by having him/her imagine the situation.

Appeal to the senses

In describing a place, a person, an event or the like, one can effectively use an appeal to the senses. All senses can be appealed to: the sight, the sound, the taste, the smell, and the touch or the feel.

Consider the text below (taken from Three Pictures by Virginia Woolf). Notice how intensely the author manages to describe a simple cry in the night. Of course, her technique is not only to choose the right words, it is also to combine the words in the right way and make the sentence structure effective (here by using short, simple sentences to emphasise the chock-like feeling)

P: Three Pictures

In the middle of the night a loud cry rang through the village. Then there was a sound of something scuffling; and then dead silence. All that could be seen out of the window was the branch of a lilac tree hanging motionless and ponderous across the road. It was a hot still night. There was no

moon. The cry made everything seem ominous. Who had cried? Why had she cried? It was a woman's voice, made by some extremity of feeling almost sexless, almost expressionless. It was as if human nature had cried out against some iniquity, some inexpressible horror. There was dead silence. The stars shone perfectly steadily. The fields lay still. The trees were motionless. Yet all seemed guilty, convicted, ominous.

Imagery

10 Imagery includes onomatopoeia (forming words to imitate the sounds associated with the thing concerned, e.g. CUCKOO), personification (attributing human qualities to a non-human object, e.g. 'the dark wind speaks to my spirit'), rhythm, and many other devices. The two most widely used devices are metaphors and similes.

15 Metaphors

When employing metaphors, one describes an object, a feeling or an event in terms of another. The concept described is often abstract and is described in terms of a more concrete or tangible object. Thus an abstract concept such as love can be described in terms of the concrete object of fire, as in

20 '*My heart is burning for you*'.

Our mind can be described in terms of a machine

25 '*I cannot work any more. I am running out of steam*'.

The effect of metaphors is particularly impressive in Martin Luther King, JR's speech 'I Have a Dream'.

30 '*... one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination ...*'

Not only do the concepts segregation and discrimination become intensified with the use of the metaphors 'crippled by the manacles ... and chains', but 35 we are given an image that sends us straight back to slavery. This use of imagery shows how strong an effect metaphors can have.

Similes

Similes also blend two different concepts, but only by means of comparison.

40 If we take the abstract concept of love again and compare it to the more concrete concept of fire, we could say:

'My love is like fire'.

Or we could compare beauty with something shiny, as in

'Your eyes are like the stars in heaven'.

Many might think of imagery as devices restricted to poetry. However, we do in fact use metaphors, similes and other imagery in our daily lives. Some examples are:

Time described in terms of money as in

He's living on borrowed time.

You need to budget your time better.

Love described in terms of gambling as in

The odds are against me. There is no way she will go out with me.

He's holding all the aces.

If he plays his cards right, he can win her.

Or love described in terms of magic as in

She cast her spell over him.

He enchanted me.

Exercise 17

Write a love letter in which you include imagery.

Exercise 18

Describe a memorable event.

Exercise 19

Keep a journal of the work you have done in this chapter.

1. Describe the activities you have done
2. Discuss whether these activities have been useful for learning how to write an English text. Give reasons.

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Chapter 3

Genres

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We have so far treated texts as if they all follow the same template and are dominated by the same linguistic properties. Even though most texts more or less directly follow the structure of introduction, body and conclusion,

10 and need a variety of linguistic structures, texts are built up slightly differently and exhibit different linguistic properties. If the purpose is to tell a story, the text usually has the genre of a narrative, may have a large temporal vocabulary and grammatically focus on tense; if the purpose is to convince someone of one's standpoint, the text usually belongs to the expository-argumentative genre and may need a large repertoire of causal expressions and grammatically have a lot of different types of subordinate clauses.

In the following we will take you through the most common genres and illustrate the different templates and linguistic properties pertinent to them.

20 Narrative

The narrative is basically the telling of a story or the reporting of events. A typical template for a full narrative text is:

- ◆ background
- ◆ goal
- ◆ problem
- ◆ problem solution
- ◆ evaluation

30 Even though a narrative can deviate from this norm (the background and the evaluation, in particular, can be scattered throughout the narrative), it is still the template most widely used and dates back to old narratives and fairytales. The narrative template can be illustrated like this:

35 A: Narrative Template

Background:	Once upon a time there was a mighty king who ruled a harmonious and peaceful country. He was very proud of this
Goal:	and could never dream of changing his life or the life of his country.
Problem:	One day when relaxing quietly in his peaceful garden, a big, scary dragon suddenly appeared. The king, who was used to his peaceful life, didn't have any weapons. He got really scared and cried for help. Nobody answered. The dragon kept coming closer, and just when it was about to sink its sharp teeth into the king's throat,
Problem solution:	the clever monarch discovered a sharp branch on the ground. The king was a fast thinking man so he grabbed the branch and stabbed the dragon, who fell to the ground immediately.
Evaluation:	From that day on, the king never felt secure despite the fact that everything seemed peaceful on the surface.

Exercise 1

Why does the following story (text B) seem unfinished? In other words, what elements of the template are left out of the narrative?

B: Unfinished Narrative

When I was a little boy I lived in a small town, the nearest city being at least 4 hours away. I clearly remember my garden in which I used to play with my dog. One Tuesday afternoon after rushing home from school to play with my doggie, something strange happened. While I was playing catch with my hairy friend, my mom suddenly appeared. I knew instantly that something must have happened because she never came home until after 6 p.m. on Tuesdays. Not only that, her eyes were red and bulging. She walked slowly up to me.

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Different functions

As implied by the different elements of the narrative template, we do different things when narrating a story: not only do we report events, we also dramatise important episodes, we describe characters, etc. These different functions (or smaller ‘sub-genres’) possess different linguistic properties. Let us take each of these functions separately.

♦ Reporting events

When reporting an event, we usually report in a chronological order (although flashbacks are often seen), and thus this function of reporting exhibits temporal linguistic properties. We typically see

vocabulary: before, after, meanwhile, then, when,ago, the day after, once upon a time

grammatical properties: verb tenses (e.g. past tense and progressive tense, present perfect, past perfect).

Exercise 2

Identify the vocabulary and the grammar that characterise text B as a narrative.

Exercise 3

Explain the use of the progressive vs. the simple tense in

‘while I was playing catch with my hairy friend, my mom suddenly appeared’.

‘her eyes were red and bulging. She walked slowly up to me’.

Exercise 4

Find other words, phrases and grammatical structures that characterise narratives. With a partner, make a complete list of the linguistic structures you have found.

Exercise 5

Read through the following paragraph (text C). Identify the adverbs denoting frequency of time and determine their position.

Exercise 6

Place the adverbs of frequency (from text C) on a scale of frequency.

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C: Peter's Coffee Drinking

Peter never drank coffee even though he always had a craving for it. "I am never going to drink something that is unhealthy for me", he said. Anna, his girlfriend added, "he has never tasted it". Tea was Peter's favourite. He usually had tea in the morning, and often in the afternoon. He rarely had any hot drinks in the evening, except perhaps cocoa. He seldom had it on his own, but he sometimes had it with his daughter. Occasionally, he would pour in some brandy to really spoil himself. One evening when he had a particular craving for something hot, he...

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Exercise 7

What is the meaning of the modal verb 'would' in the sentence '*Occasionally, he would pour in some brandy to really spoil himself?*'

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Exercise 8

Modify the following text to vary the temporal conjunction 'when'.

D: The Spider

Yesterday when I came home from school, I went into the kitchen. When I opened the kitchen door the handle fell off. When I tried to put it back on, I couldn't find the screws. I got down on my knees and while I was looking for the screws, I saw something strange moving very slowly. When I went nearer to check it out, it hurried under the cupboard. I took a broom to get it out. When it finally got out, I saw that it was a black spider with a broken leg.

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Exercise 9

Reorder the following sentences so that they occur in a logical order. Then write a paragraph combining these sentences into a whole, using an appropriate temporal vocabulary.

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I brushed my teeth

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I woke up this morning

I read the paper

It was good news

I had breakfast

I saw the morning TV show

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I climbed into bed again
I answered the phone
I heard the phone ring
I could take the day off

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◆ Dramatising an episode

In telling a story, one often tries to make it more vivid by dramatising a situation in the narrative.

The structures typically used for this purpose are dialogues and dramatic present.

Dramatic present

The dramatic present is merely the reporting of a past event by the use of the present tense. An example of this is in the following text on coming to America. To help create the dramatic, living picture of the immigrants' coming to America, not only the present tense is used, but it is accompanied by very simple, active sentences.

E: Ellis Island

March 27, 1907. A ship bringing newcomers to America steams slowly into New York Harbor. People spill out onto the ship's deck. They push. They shove. They laugh. They point. They crane their necks for a still better look. Fathers lift their small children into the air so they can see the spectacular sight. Looming before them stands the Statue of Liberty. In her hand she holds high the torch of freedom. Some passengers burst into tears at the sight. Some freeze in complete silence, as if in prayer. Others sing happily in the language of their own country. At last they are in America.

(Ellis Island, New Hope in a New Land, William Jay Jacobs, Charles Schribner's Sons, N.Y. 1990)

Dialogue

The 'problem' or the 'problem solution' of the narrative template is often dramatised by inserting dialogues. In dialogues the reader gets a chance to experience the characters in action. Not only does this give him/her an opportunity to create his/her own views and opinions of the characters, but it also lets him/her in on the spoken language.

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The most important thing to remember about dialogues is that they have to be realistic. Among other things this means that a happy seven-year-old girl has to speak like a happy seven-year-old girl; and a 40-year-old stressed businessman has to speak like a 40-year-old stressed businessman. The vocabulary and the grammar, in other words, reflect the characters and help them come alive.

The basic elements of a dialogue are direct speech and reporting verb phrases.

In the following text an episode is dramatised with the help of a dialogue

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F: At the Party

"Why do you always have to get so drunk when we are out. Are a couple of drinks not enough for you to socialise? ", Maria yelled "Socialise?", Tom shouted, "that is it. We always socialise with your friends, not mine".

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"Keep your voice down", Maria whispered, "people can hear you". "The only thing that you are ever concerned about is what people think. I pity you. Or rather, I pity myself for having married someone whose purpose in life is to get socially acceptable", Tom grumbled as he left the room.

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Exercise 10

Identify the reporting verbs in text F. Find other reporting verbs.

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Exercise 11

Write down a description of the characters in text G below.

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G: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf

George: I really don't know, Martha...

Martha: Well, think!

George: I'm tired, dear ... it's late ... and besides ...

Martha: I don't know what you're so tired about ... you haven't *done* anything all day; you didn't have any classes, or anything....

George: Well, I'm tired... If your father didn't set up these goddamn Saturday night orgies all the time...

Martha: Well, that's too bad for you, George...

George [grumbling]: Well, that's how it is, anyway.

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Martha: You didn't do anything; you never do anything; you never mix. You just sit around and talk.

George: What do you want me to do? Do you want me to act like you? Do you want me to go around all night braying at everybody, the way you do?

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Martha: [braying]: I DON'T BRAY!

George: [softly]: All right ... you don't bray.

Martha [hurt]: I don't *bray*.

George: All right. I said you didn't bray.

10
Martha [pouting]: Make me a drink.

George: What?

Martha [still softly]: I said, make me a drink.

George [moving to the portable bar]: Well, I don't suppose a nightcap'd kill either one of us...

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Martha: A nightcap! Are you kidding? We've got guests.

George [disbelieving]: We've got what?

Martha: Guests. GUESTS.

George: GUESTS!

Martha: Yes ... guests ... people ... We've got guests coming over.

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(Edward Albee: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?)

◆ Point of View

When narrating a story, one has to make up one's mind about perspective, i.e. from whose point of view the story is being told. There are at least the following possibilities:

1st person narrative

In a 1st person narrative the narrator puts her-/himself in one of the characters' positions and tells the story or describes the scene from this person's perspective. The personal pronoun used for this perspective is the 1st person singular. Text H is an example of this:

H: The Circuit

I woke up early that morning and lay in bed, looking at the stars and savoring the thought of not going to work and of starting sixth grade for the first time that year. Since I could not sleep, I decided to get up and join Papá and Roberto at breakfast. I sat at the table across from Roberto, but

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I kept my head down. I did not want to look up and face him. I knew he was sad. He was not going to school today.

(Francisco Jiménez: The Circuit)

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3rd person narrative

In a 3rd person narrative the narrator is a spectator rather than a participant as is the case with the 1st person narrative. A person can be more or less knowledgeable about the other characters:

An omniscient narrator knows everything about all the characters, what they say, what they think, what they feel, etc. Text J is an example of this:

J: La Puerta

Every afternoon Sinesio's muffled knock on their two-room shack was answered by Faustina, his wife. She would unlatch the door and return to iron more shirts and dresses of people who could afford the luxury. When thunder clapped, a frightened Faustina would quickly pull the electric cord, believing it would attract lighting. Then she would occupy herself with preparing dinner. Their three children would not arrive home for another hour.

On this day Sinesio laid down his tattered lunch bag, a lottery ticket and his week's wages on the oily tablecloth. Faustina threw a glance at the lottery ticket.

Sinesio's silent arrival always angered Faustina so she glared back at the lottery ticket, "Throwing money away! Buying paper dreams! We can't afford dreams, and you buy them!"

Sinesio ignored her anger. From the table, he picked up a letter, smelled it, studied the U.S. stamp, and with the emphatic opening of the envelope sat down at the table and slowly read aloud the letter from his brother Aurelio as the rain beat against the half tin, half wooden rooftop.

(José Antonio Burciaga: La Puerta)

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A restrictive narrator is somewhere in between the 1st person narrative and an omniscient narrative: like the 1st person narrative the narrator knows everything about one character: what she says, hears, thinks feels, etc, but still as a kind of spectator as the story is told from a 3rd person's perspective. Text K is an example of this:

K: City of Glass

It had been more than five years now. He did not think about his son very much anymore, and only recently he had removed the photograph of his wife from the wall. Every once in a while, he would suddenly feel what it had been like to hold the three-year-old boy in his arms – but that was not exactly thinking, nor was it even remembering. It was a physical sensation, an imprint of the past that had been left in his body, and he had no control over it. These moments came less often now, and for the most part it seemed as though things had begun to change for him. He no longer wished to be dead. At the same time, it cannot be said that he was glad to be alive.

(Paul Auster: City of Glass)

15 An objective narrator, however, only hears and sees what the characters are doing. S/he does not know about their feelings and objectives. Very often this type of narration is packed with dialogues. It requires a tremendous amount of skill to write successfully from an objective narrator's perspective as everything the characters say and do must make up trustworthy characters. Hemingway, in particular, was skilled in this:

L: Indian Camp

Nick's father ordered some water to be put on the stove, and while it was heating he spoke to Nick.

"This lady is going to have a baby, Nick", he said.

"I know," said Nick.

"You don't know," said his father. "Listen to me. What she is going through is called being in labor. The baby wants to be born and she wants it to be born. All her muscles are trying to get the baby born. That is what is happening when she screams."

"I see," Nick said.

Just then the woman cried out.

"Oh, Daddy, can't you give her something to make her stop screaming?"

Asked Nick.

"No. I haven't any anaesthetic," his father said. "But her screams are not important. I don't hear them because they are not important."

The husband in the upper bunk rolled over against the wall.

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The woman in the kitchen motioned to the doctor that the water was hot. Nick's father went into the kitchen and poured about half of the water out of the big kettle into a basin.
(Ernest Hemmingway: Indian Camp)

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Exercise 12

Turn text G into a narrative.

Exercise 13

Turn text H into a dialogue.

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♦ Describing Characters, Places, Things, etc.

Related to dramatising an episode, when describing characters, places, or things, it is inviting for the reader to be able to make his own judgements about the characters, places and things in a narrative. Thus a description such as

'Mary is lonely'

is a rather finished judgement, something that the reader simply has to accept. 20 A description such as

'Mary sat in the big armchair watching the rain beat against the dark window. She had been sitting there now for days without speaking to anyone',

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however, not only gives the reader a fuller picture, but lets him/her decide what state the character is in. It may not be difficult to see that Mary is lonely, but the latter description gives the reader more freedom to think on his/her own.

In describing it is very effective to appeal to the senses. As was touched on in chapter 2 on vocabulary, this is done by imagery (metaphors, similes, personification, etc.). 30

Exercise 14

Rewrite the following sentences to improve the descriptive character of them.

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1. The flower was beautiful.
2. The girl was happy.
3. The movie was boring.
4. The book was interesting.
5. The man was unattractive.

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Exercise 15

Write about a memorable event or experience in your life. This might be an exciting trip, a strange dream, a happy event, a sad event, or an embarrassing moment.

5 Expository-Argumentative Writing

Expository-argumentative writing is a piece of writing in which the author expresses her/his view or reasoned opinion about a topic or expresses her/his solution to some kind of problem. Her/his job is to convince her/his reader that the view or opinion expressed is a valid one. The stand must be stated clearly and must be backed up by evidence, in the form of examples, explanations, facts, reasoning, comparisons and contrasts, or the like.

A classical template for structuring a piece of expository-argumentative writing is:

- ♦ introduction
- ♦ explanation of the case under consideration
- 15 ♦ outline of the argument
- ♦ proof
- ♦ refutation
- ♦ conclusion

20 This typical expository-argumentative template can be illustrated like this (a student essay on cloning):

M: Expository-argumentative Template

25	Introduction/ explanation of the case under consideration	Due to highly developed technology and science research genetic engineering has reached far. One of the most recent discoveries is the technique of cloning living creatures. The world seems divided as to the advantages and drawbacks of this technological and biological advancement. Despite the fear that this advancement has evoked in many people, it is, in fact, for the good of human kind.
30		Charles Darwin has always been admired for his theory on 'The Survival of the Fittest', i.e. only the strongest and most adaptable creatures survive. Now genetic engineering has made it possible to clone an animal. It is a fantastic achievement, and it is a natural continuation of Darwin's theories.
35	Outline of argument	
40		

Proof	With cloning we will be able to produce only the best animals. If, for instance, we clone only the healthiest and strongest cows, we will avoid all the serious diseases, which can make us (who eat cow's meat) terribly sick. Not only would the meat be healthier and without diseases, it will also be cheaper: with the ability of cloning we can mass produce the strong cows and won't have to wait for the best calves to grow up. And, as we know, with mass production come cheap goods.	5 10 15 20 25 30
Refutation	Some people say that cloning is to tamper too much with nature. But there is nothing to fear. Every time technology or science has invented something new, people get scared – and for no reason. With the introduction of artificial insemination many feared the outcome, but now that it has existed for some years people have begun to accept it as everybody's right if they cannot produce children naturally. Artificial insemination is an example of biological control and so is cloning. As a matter of fact, cloning is merely a natural continuation of artificial insemination.	10 15 20 25
Conclusion	Even though cloning might seem like we are gaining too much control over our ecological system. This fear can be refuted on the basis of the fears we have had of technological advancements in the past. Look on the bright side of life.	30

As with the narrative genre, the expository-argumentative genre is very flexible – in fact even more flexible than the narrative, and the classical template outlined above is by no means the only possible one. The refutation of opposing views, for instance, is often placed before the proof. Another example is the zig-zag structure in which the author's view and the opposing view are contrasted for each piece of evidence stated in the proof section. One-sided

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arguments are also possible. This is when the author concentrates on his/her own line of argument exclusively and does not view the issue at hand from another perspective. Taking in only one view, these one-sided arguments are often considered less refined and less open-minded.

- 5 What is important, however, is that one actually attempts to prove one's point instead of merely stating things.

Exercise 16

What is wrong with the following 'proofs'? Improve them.

- 10 1. The reason why I admire Tony Blair is that he is really impressive.
2. I think that it is a bad idea to have Capital Punishment because Capital Punishment is punishment by death.

Different Functions

- 15 This variety of possibilities for presenting one's argument (exemplifying, contrasting, etc.) reflects different functions (or sub-genres) within this expository-argumentative genre. Each of these functions are represented by different linguistic structures. We will treat some of these functions below.

◆ Exemplifying and Explaining

The act of exemplifying serves to illustrate with the help of examples. The act of explaining helps put something in simpler terms. Some examples of the linguistic structures appropriate for such acts are:

- 25 Exemplifying: e.g., for instance, for example, as we see in, take..., to exemplify, we see this exemplified in, this is seen in, to mention but a few, to illustrate this

Explaining: i.e., that is, take..., in other words, to put it more simple

Exercise 17

Find other linguistic structures relevant for the acts of explaining and exemplifying.

Exercise 18

Explain and/or exemplify how you could make your mother happy.

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♦ Comparing and Contrasting

The act of comparing and contrasting is often used when similarities and differences need to be pointed out. Some examples of the linguistic structures needed for such acts are:

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Showing similarities: by comparison, like, as, similarly, similar to, likewise, too, also, take after, equally, in the same way, in the same fashion, both ... and, either ... or, neither ... nor, not only ... but also, resemble,

Showing differences: but, although, on the other hand, unlike, still, yet, however, on the contrary, conversely, contrary to, though, even though, whereas, different from, more than, less than, fewer than

Exercise 19

Rewrite the following sentences by using other linguistic structures than the 15 word 'but'.

1. She is very nice, but very shy.
2. He ran down the street, but he didn't catch his train.
3. Henry is a skilled worker, but Bob is also a skilled worker.
4. He really tried to understand what the teacher was saying, but he didn't. 20
5. She is beautiful but very selfish.
6. Many people believe that we learn by imitation, but fact is that we create rules in our heads that we test when interacting with other people.

When comparing and contrasting things or concepts, one will often need to 25 express to what extent such two items (or more) are similar or to what extent they are different. To meet this need, relevant vocabulary could be:

quite, considerably, slightly, to a great extent, hardly, completely, scarcely, a lot, somewhat; 30

exactly, about, precisely, more or less, virtually, nearly, practically, almost,

They are useful in sentences such as 'they are practically alike'. 35

Exercise 20

For each of two groups of degree words above (quite..., exactly...), list them according to degree of intensity.

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Exercise 21

'Like' and 'alike' can be used to compare two (or more) things, concepts, places or people that are similar, but the two words are used differently. A parallel case can be seen with the phrases 'unlike' and 'not alike'. Read through 5 the sentences below to determine how these words are used.

1. Learning a foreign language is not exactly like learning one's mother tongue.
2. The two situations are alike.
3. I don't believe that situation A is like situation B
- 10 4. Well, can't you see that situation A and situation B are like each other?
5. Situation A is like situation B in all aspects, and situation B is like situation A in all aspects. Therefore we can conclude that situation A and B are alike.
6. Well, situation A is unlike situation B in quite a number of aspects, which is 15 why we can conclude that situation A and situation B are not alike.

Exercise 22

Rewrite the following text to vary the vocabulary of similarity.

20 N: Denmark and Sweden

Denmark and Sweden are nearly the same. Both countries are monarchies. The languages are nearly the same: a lot of the words are nearly the same. Also, the sentence structures in the two languages are nearly the same. Also, both countries are in Scandinavia, and the two countries have nearly 25 the same social structure and nearly the same basic ideas and values. People living in the two countries nearly look the same: a lot of people are tall and blond. Not everybody, of course, but you will find a much higher percentage of tall blonds in those two countries than in other countries around the world.

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Exercise 23

Your parents are debating whether to go hiking in Norway or sunbathing in Spain. Help them make up their minds by giving them your opinion of what 35 they should do.

Exercise 24

Compare the Danish electoral system to the British electoral system.

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◆ Giving Reasons

Another important step in proving one's point is to give reasons. To this a relation is often established between (at least) two concepts so that one gives reason for the other, or one is the cause and the other is the effect. Some linguistic expressions characteristic of giving reasons are:

affect, cause, as a consequence, has the effect of, depends on, A leads to B, because, since, as, the reason being, which is why on account of, on the grounds to

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Exercise 25

Find other linguistic structures that describe a cause-reason relationship.

Exercise 26

Modify the following sentences to vary the vocabulary of giving reasons (in other words: find alternative expressions for 'because').

1. I am against Capital Punishment because it is morally wrong.
2. He is in a very bad mood because he had a fight with his wife last night.
3. I am very tired because I worked late last night.
4. I really liked the book because I could identify with the main character.
5. His essay is boring because he doesn't have a varied vocabulary.

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Exercise 27

Explain the causes and effects of poverty.

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◆ Conceding

When arguing a point, one often concedes an opposing point of view, i.e. one admits that an opposing view is true. The purpose is often to avoid being accused of being one-sided. Some linguistic expressions used in concessions are:

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although, even though, true that..., though, albeit,

Exercise 28

Find other linguistic expressions effective for conceding.

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Exercise 29

Argue that you are pro-choice (for abortion) and concede aspects of the opposing view, pro-life (against abortion) OR argue that you are pro-life and concede aspects of pro-choice.

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◆ Modifying

Besides the reasoning, the comparing, the contrasting, etc., one often needs to modify what one claims. Two examples of such modifications are emphasising and generalising.

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Emphasising

The act of emphasising is used when there is a need to stress or underline a point. Some examples of linguistic structures pertinent to emphasising are:

- 10 in fact, indeed, certainly, clearly, of course

Exercise 30

Find other linguistic structures that emphasise a point.

Exercise 31

Insert 'emphasisers' in the sentences from exercise 26 above.

Generalising

The act of generalising is used where there is a need to express that what one claims holds for the majority of cases. Some examples of linguistic structures pertinent to generalising are:

generally speaking, in general, overall, for the most part, usually, typically

Exercise 32

Find other linguistic structures used for generalising.

Exercise 33

Insert 'generalisers' in the sentences from exercise 26 above.

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◆ Listing

One often has a need to list more than one piece of statement or argumentation. To this need, linguistic means such as the following are available:

- 35 moreover, furthermore, first, second, third, first of all, then, next finally, also, in addition, besides

Exercise 34

Find other linguistic structures used for listing.

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Exercise 35

List your advice to a fellow student on how to exercise good studying habits.

♦ Concluding

Having argued one's claims, one needs to conclude the argument (or arguments). This is done in the concluding paragraph, but often also at the end of each argument. The linguistic means available for such an act are:

then, in conclusion, as a result, thus, consequently, so therefore, hence

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Exercise 36

Find other linguistic structures relevant for concluding.

Exercise 37

Make conclusions relevant for the following statements:

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1. John is fat and no wonder: he eats a lot of junk food.
2. Bill is lazy and received lousy marks in school.
3. Even though Anna and Henry love each other dearly, their fights have been escalating lately.

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♦ Summing up

In the concluding paragraph one often also sums up one's arguments. For this linguistic means such as these can be used:

in short, to sum up, all in all, summa summarum

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Exercise 38

Sum up the advice you gave your fellow student (exercise 35) on how to exercise good studying habits.

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Exercise 39

Write an expository-argumentative essay answering the follow question: Euthanasia – are you for or against?

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Exercise 40

Keep a journal of the work you have done in this chapter.

1. Describe the activities you have done.
2. Discuss whether these activities have been useful for learning how to write an English text. Give reasons.

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Chapter 4

The Writing Process

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There is not one single recipe for writing a text. Many good writers have different ways of venturing on their writing. However, few writers would claim that they sit down and start writing from beginning to end. Most writers try to structure their text inside their heads or on a piece of paper (or on the computer) before embarking on the actual writing. They structure their ideas as they think of the audience and the overall purpose of the text. They write and they rewrite until they give the text the final touch.

15 A common writing process consists of the following phases:

- ♦ Phase 1: getting ideas
- ♦ Phase 2: organising the ideas
- ♦ Phase 3: writing a rough draft
- ♦ Phase 4: revising
- ♦ Phase 5: editing
- ♦ Phase 6: publishing

Opposed to common belief writing need not be a purely personal matter. It is possible to co-operate with others in practically all phases of the writing.

25 Let us take each phase of the writing process one by one. For the exercises that follow, we strongly recommend that you work with each other and seek advice from one another (also when it is not explicitly stated).

Phase 1: Getting Ideas

30 In order to get ideas to write a text, one must think of its audience and its purpose. As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this book, these two factors determine the content of what is to be written about. Ideas can be obtained in several different ways. The following are typical examples:

35 Observe (people, their behaviour, etc), interview people, read (researching library, internet, etc), brain-storming, all of which can be done with other people. Write down any words or phrases, questions, facts, ideas and associations that come to your mind. Let your mind wander freely. Don't worry about the spelling. If you cannot think of the word in English, write it in your native language.

Exercise 1

Brainstorm on the following ideas to a text. First plot down your ideas individually, then compare and discuss with a partner or a group.

1. Imagine you need to call upon your fellow students to participate in a demonstration against abortion (perhaps in the form of a flyer, an article or the like). 5
2. Imagine you need to inform young Americans about the Danish political system.
3. Imagine you need to write a newspaper article about Madonna. Consider your audience (does it consist of teenagers, of children or of adults?). 10

How did you get your ideas?

Did it help to compare ideas with others? How?

Phase 2: Organising Ideas

As a step towards organising the full text it is useful to organise the ideas from the idea bank obtained by brainstorming. This can be done by grouping the items from the idea bank under a few broad headings. In grouping the ideas, it is often easy to reduce the list by deleting repeated or superfluous items. 15

Exercise 2

Consider the following idea bank on ‘Living in a Big City vs. Living in a Small Town’. Organise them into smaller groups each with a broad heading.

City: Cinema, universities, people, busy, crowded, job opportunities, education, universities, cafés, tall buildings, shopping, cars, difficult to find parking, 25 tourists, anonymous, crime, different types of people, fun, exciting, things to do, fashion, cool, hip, small space, expensive housing, stress, colourful, theatres, things to do, concerts, museums, lectures, in the middle of things.

Town: peace and quiet, rest, community, everybody knows everybody, friendly neighbours, garden, big house, inexpensive housing, trees, forest, boring, 30 lots of space for kids, safe for kids, less crime, restoration for the soul, open spaces, less people.

After grouping the ideas it is time to organise the groupings into a structure (or outline) of the full text. The idea groups can be organised in a variety of 35 ways – often determined by audience and purpose of the text in question. They can be organised in chronological order, in thematic order, in order of importance, or any other logical order.

Exercise 3

Consider the following texts (A-B) and determine how they are organised.

A: Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. 5
But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate – we can not consecrate – we can not hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. 10
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B: Student Essay on Exercise

The paradox of exercise. Few people enjoy doing it, even fewer people look forward to doing it, yet exercise is one of the best gifts you can give yourself: it improves your physical health, your mental health, and as some would argue, your social health.

Exercise undoubtedly improves your physical health. Exercising a little bit every day, for instance by walking or biking instead of taking the car keeps your heart going and your blood pressure down. If you add to this some more intense physical exercise a couple of times a week, e.g. running, jogging or aerobics, you are even in a better shape. Such exercises are important for preventing cardiovascular diseases such as high blood pressure, blood clots and even heart attacks. Weightlifting in the gym is also not a bad idea, as it keeps the bones strong. Strengthening the bones is particularly important when you are getting older as weak bones grow fragile with time. 25
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The physical well-being that comes with exercise has the advantageous side effect of improving your mental health. Feeling better physically affects the mind. With plenty of exercise you feel less stressed, you feel relaxed, you feel you have accomplished something, you feel that you have pushed yourself and pulled yourself together to do something, you feel you look better and you just feel generally good about yourself. And the irony about exercise is that you feel less tired after having done some sweating.

It may sound crazy, but exercise can also improve your social health. If you go to the gym, you meet other people doing the same thing as you, having the same interests as you. Some say that it is much nicer and more relaxing to meet someone at the gym than in a bar. Another rationale behind the perhaps far-fetched idea that exercise improves your social health is that when you exercise, you look better, you feel better, and because of this you have more of a desire to meet and spend time with other people. Exercise is the key to your general health: the physical, the mental and the social aspects of your health are stimulated with the help of a little exercise. Even though it can be difficult to pull oneself together to do something, do it. Believe me, you'll feel better.

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Introduction:

Body: Earn more money

More opportunities to practice what one enjoys to do

More prestige

5 Conclusion:

2. Title: My life

Introduction:

Body: Past

10 Conclusion: Present

Future

Exercise 6

15 Write drafts to the outlines in exercise 4.

Phase 4: Revising

Revising is a continuous process in which you improve your paper more and more after each revision. Here you check the logic and clarity of your ideas

20 as well as their effective and correct expression. Thus, this is not the phase in which you edit for grammatical impurities (this comes in the editing phase).

Rather, this is a phase which involves extensive addition, deletion, and re-ordering of whole sentences or even paragraphs. In this phase of the writing process it is very important that you work with a partner. Some people work

25 from a revision checklist⁴ when revising. Such a checklist usually consists of (at least) the following items:

- ◆ Is the overall message, the audience and the purpose clear?
- ◆ Check the introduction. Is it clear and specific? If you departed from your original goal when you were writing, you will need either to revise the introduction so that it accurately sums up the ideas and information contained in your essay, or you will need to remove any unrelated sections – or revise them so that they are relevant to your introduction.
- ◆ Look at the body paragraphs to see if they need strengthening. Are they unified – with one clear message? Are they coherent? Well developed? Well structured? Do the points support your topic sentences and your introduction? Do they contribute to the overall message?
- ◆ Consider your conclusion. Does it relate to your introduction? Does it sum up your arguments?

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Exercise 4

Organise the brainstorming ideas you came up with in exercise 1 or the idea bank from exercise 2 to make a complete outline.

First organise the ideas individually, then compare and discuss with a partner 25 or a group.

Did it help to compare ideas with others? How/why?

Phase 3: Writing the Rough Draft

When writing the first draft of the text, one's major task is to fill in the blanks 30 of the outline obtained in phase 2 (the organising). The organisational outline served as the skeleton and now we start putting in the meat. At this point there is no need to worry about sentence length and complexity or word choice. All you really want to do in this phase is to keep your momentum. You will do all the cosmetics later.

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Exercise 5

Write drafts based on the following outlines:

1. Title: The Value of Education

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- ◆ Look over your sentences. Are they effective? Interesting? Are there any sentences that might be added or deleted or relocated? Is the logic between the sentences clear?

Fellow students can tell you whether you are getting your points across and 5 maybe even advise you on how to communicate more effectively.

Exercise 7

Revise the following draft (text C). You can use the checklist above.

C: Student essay ‘Is it important to know English in Today’s world’.

Denmark is a very small country, with a language that almost only the people, there are born here understands. It’s very importend to be able to speak other languages, if you want to speak with people around the world. I speak English every day, I think it’s easier to speak with people in English, than in Danish.

I don’t think that any of the classes, at this school are involved in any kind of exchange projects, but I think, that it could be funny to try.

We have computers at the school, but I don’t know, if we can speak with other countris, but I shall try to find out.

I always speak English, when I’m out travelling, even if I’m in Germany, because I am not so good in Germany. I think that it’s importend to every man on earth to be able to speak a world wide language.

I know that English is required in my futuring job, which is been an actor.

It takes about 4 years to become an actor in Denmark, so when I turn 21 I move from Denmark to Canada. My good friends lives in Québec, and my friend’s mother don’t mind having another young girl in her house.

It’s very importend for me to know how to communicate in English, while a lot of my friends at home are from England. My friend don’t speak so good Danish either, though her father is a Dane.

I think that English is a very useful language, while a lot of countries speaks it, you can travel to almost any country in the world, and speak with the people there by speaking English. You can go see a film in the cinema, without looking at the subtitles all the time.

If you are having a school project, you can get a lot of informations in English via the Internet.

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Bad sides two, by speaking so much English – for example – one day I had to translate a Danish text into German, I wrote it in the evening and the next morning in class, I found out that it was written in English. I love speaking English, and if I was God I would demand, that every human being on earth, should have the right of being able to speak in English if he or she wanted to speak in English.

Exercise 8

10 Revise the drafts from exercise 6. Alternatively revise a fellow student’s draft.

Phase 5: Editing

This is where you polish your language. Check sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, grammar, choice of words, and the like. Pay attention to redundancies in the vocabulary or sentence structure, repetitions and too little variation.

Some people use a check list when editing. As writers will be at different stages of their written competence in English, it is highly recommendable to 20 create a personal list. Among other things, a check list ought to include such items as:

- ◆ Are the sentences too long?
- ◆ Do the sentences contain one and only one main point?
- ◆ Are the verb tenses consistent?
- ◆ Does the word order help clarify the meaning? For instance, are subject and verb as close to each other as possible?
- ◆ Are there unnecessary words and phrases?
- ◆ Are there too many repetitions?
- ◆ Is there enough variation in vocabulary and sentence structure?

30 You can also use Word2000’s spell and grammar check. However, don’t trust it blindly.

Exercise 9

35 Edit the revised drafts from exercises 7 and 8.

Exercise 10

Edit the following student essay (texts E).

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E: Student essay ‘Write a letter to welcome an exchange student to your school’.

Welcome to our school

Dear friend,

My name is Hanne and I would like to tell you a little bit about my country. It is a small country with not so many people in it. The country is a kingdom but we have a queen. A very nice queen. Her name is Margaret and she has two sons. One's name is Frederik and the other's name is Joachim. It is Frederik there is going to be king one day because he is the oldest.

The capital of this country is Copenhagen and that is where I am living. Well, not in the center of Copenhagen but a little bit outside it, a place named Rødvore.

I go to school in Rødvore, a town outside Copenhagen. The school I go to is very nice. We have many pupils and the teachers are nice most of the time. I don't like my math teacher because he is very strict. But maybe not so strict as the teachers you have. In Denmark we are a free country and the teachers must not hit the pupils. That is good, I am agree with that. We make a lot of noise in the lessons because sometimes it is boring to go to school. I like English because I like the games we play. We play not all the time, we also learn new words. I like to speak English so I can write to you and people from other countries. This is nice.

We have long holidays and school finishes at 2 o'clock. After school I am together with my friends who are very nice. We listen to music and go to the shopping center to look. It is nice but we not always buy things, we most of the time look. That is nice.

I would like to hear something about your country. Is it nice too.

Friendly greetings,

Hanne

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Exercise 12:

Keep a journal of the work you have done in this chapter.

1. Describe the activities you have done.

2. Discuss whether these activities have been useful for learning how to write an English text. Give reasons.

Phase 6: Publishing

In the publishing phase you consider the lay-out of your essay, possible illustrations, etc. Everything, of course, appropriate to the purpose and audience of your text.

Exercise 11:

Suggest lay-outs for your revised texts of exercise 9.

Write down your own ideas first, then consult a partner.

Did it help to work with a partner. Why/why not?

Chapter 5

Writing a Research Paper

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In further education one or more research papers is required to fulfil the education. It may be an essay on a novel or a play, a bibliographical study, a research on a historical event, or any other type of research or project paper. Forming a research paper demands the ability to gather information, develop, organise and describe ideas, and, of course, to write well. This competence goes beyond academic life and expands into the future life of most people, whether in business or in governmental institutions.

Most of what has been mentioned in the previous chapters on writing a paper holds for writing a research paper – keeping in mind aspects such as the purpose, the audience, the appropriate style, clarity, preciseness, economy and variety as well as going through the process of getting ideas, drafting, revising, editing, etc. A research paper, however, differs from a regular, short text in terms of how to get ideas and how to document your sources. Whereas writing a regular text calls for information, knowledge and attitudes you already possess, a research paper requires you to find out what other people have said about your subject. Along with doing this research of what other people have said comes the duty of documenting your sources. Thus we can say that writing a research paper requires the following two elements:

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- ◆ Conducting research
- ◆ Writing the paper

Conducting Research

When conducting research, you will need to find out what other people have said about your topic. The reason for this is that you can use such sources to prove or argue your point. Also, you can give your readers a possibility to read more about your topic⁵. Hence, when using your sources you should use them to support your claims. You must, however, be careful not to let them control you. You are after all the one who is communicating a message. This does not mean, of course, that you should ignore any text that contradicts your claims, but it means that you should only use sources that relate to your argument so that your message shines through clearly and unambiguously.

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Finding Sources

Some of the most obvious places to look for your sources are the Internet and the library. The Internet contains a lot of recent information. However, as the information on the Net does not go through publishing companies or any other type of censorship, you have to be extremely critical and sceptical concerning the validity of your source. Also, unless you are a very skilled Internet navigator, browsing the Net can seem very overwhelming with little organisational help. Information in the library, however, not only goes through a publishing process, but is very well structured. You will find sections reserved for reference materials such as encyclopaedias, handbooks and governmental documents as well as for books and periodicals. Books usually give you the overview and background knowledge needed in the beginning of your research. It is important to have a good solid background knowledge to see where your specialised topic and theme fit in. Periodicals, on the other hand, contain more recent and detailed information and are useful when you need to dig deeper into your topic. To get an overview of the materials available in or through the library, you can use its catalogues. The catalogues are generally organised according to names of authors, titles of works and subject headings.

After your visit to the library you may realise that some of your sources are so essential to you paper that you need to buy them. Owning books gives you the freedom to write comments in them, and you don't have to return them if other students are looking to borrow them. However, buying books can be costly, so to avoid wasting money you should find out as much as possible about your source to assess whether it is necessary to buy it.

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Selecting Materials

Many books may seem interesting and relevant to your paper. However, time rarely permits you to scrutinise all the books you find. A good strategy for selecting relevant sources is to skim the table of contents, the introduction and the bibliography. Not only can the bibliography give you an idea of what type of information the book contains, it can also direct you to sources you might not otherwise think of.

Exercise 1

Imagine that your field of interest is American action films and that your thesis is that American action films focus on the plot at the expense of character development. Now look through the chapters of the books below and decide which chapters you ought to read.

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Book 1: American Movies
Chapter one: Romance
Chapter two: Drama
Chapter three: Horror
Chapter four: Comedy
Chapter five: New Trends

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Book 2: Character Development
Chapter one: Famous Characters in Fiction
Chapter two: The Make Up of a Character
Chapter three: Funny Characters
Chapter four: Serious Characters
Chapter five: Character or Caricature?

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Taking Notes

When skimming through your sources it is useful to take notes. A simple and systematic way of organising your note taking is to use note cards. Make note cards with subject heading on top corresponding to a preliminary jot outline of your paper. Besides the heading your note card ought to include the following three elements: the name of the source, page number and the note itself. Detailed information about your source is important for when or if you need to consult the source again for further scrutiny and for your bibliography. The note you write could be a very brief summary of what the source deals with, but can also be a quotation. If you own the source, you can even use post-it notes as markers. This makes it easier to locate the essential passages.

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Using Sources

Having decided which sources to use in your paper you can choose between summarising and quoting. Quoting means copying your source verbatim. Summarising means giving a brief account of the main contents of your source, leaving out the details. You would quote a source when you feel you cannot express it more concisely yourself, otherwise you would summarise. For many students it often happens that they get so impressed by their source that they feel they cannot express it better themselves. It is, however, important to keep the number of quotations at a minimum. Too many quotations will prevent your own writing and your own message to shine through clearly. Remember that your message should be the predominant one and that the summaries and the quotations merely serve as a support for your claims.

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Quotations as well as summaries need introduction. This is often done by reporting verbs. A most obvious one is the verb 'said'. However, a repeated use of this verb becomes monotonous, so vary it with verbs such as

- 5 acknowledge, argue, claim, disclose, imply, mention, point out, show, suggest, etc.

Short quotations (up to four lines) can be included directly in your text (surrounded by quotation marks). If they are longer they should be indented and 10 often with shorter spacing or in a smaller font.

A: Short Quotation

Many theorists have attempted to define and demarcate the field of psychology. Rathus (1990) defines it as 'the scientific study of behavior and mental processes'. Other theorists prefer ...

B: Long Quotation

In his preface to Don Quixote Cervantes reveals the paradox of his storytelling: his attempt is to tell a story as plainly as it is, but still with the conscious knowledge that he could make his audience believe a lie:

You may depend upon my bare word, reader, without any further security, that I could wish this offspring of my brain were as ingenious, sprightly, and accomplished as yourself could desire; but the mischief of it is, nature will have its course: every production must resemble its author, and my barren and unpolished understanding can produce nothing but what is very dull, very impertinent, and extravagant beyond imagination.

(Cervantes: Don Quixote, p. 1. Wordsworth Classics. Hertfordshire. 1993)

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Remember to write at least the name and year of your source. Information on publishing company and place (and other relevant information), however, must be included in your bibliography.

Exercise 2

Imagine that your field of interest is sports and psychology and that your thesis is that athletes can use cognitive strategies to enhance performance. You have found the following passage in a relevant book.

Summarise the passage below and quote a smaller passage from it.

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C: Positive Visualisation

Like many other performers, Menhardt was also shown how to use the technique of positive visualisation. He envisioned himself going through the motions in a critical game situation. He pictured blocking the crowd out of his mind and focusing on the ball. He moved fluidly toward the ball as if in a trance – as if he and the performance were one – and booted the ball flawlessly through the posts.

And after his new combination of athletic, behavioral, and cognitive training, Menhardt returned to the team and made a last-second 54-yard goal against North Carolina State. He gave Penn State the winning margin: 9–6. That season he went on to convert 14 field goals in 20 attempts and all of his 28 kicks after touchdowns.

Menhardt was now engaging in what sports psychologists refer to as “peak performances.” In their review of the literature, Browne and Maloney (1984) found that such performances are characterized by intense concentration; ability to screen out the crowd and, when appropriate, the competitors (successful field-goal kickers and quarterbacks do not usually “hear footsteps” or focus on the opposition’s defenders rushing in); a sense of power and control over the situation; lack of pain and fatigue; and the sense that time has slowed down, as if the performance is being carried out in slow motion. They report that they can “see” the ball very well and that when they are at their peak, even fast balls seem to linger in the air as they come across the plate – so that to them, a fast ball might not seem very swift at all.

(Rathus, Spencer, A. Psychology, Fourth Edition, pp. 676-677. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Orlando, USA. 1990.)

You need to include the following information about each of the sources:

- ◆ Name of the author(s). Last name first, followed by first name or first name initial(s) – if there is more than one author, the first name of these authors or their first name initials are written before their last names. If your source is written by a lot of authors, you can write the name of the first author and write et al. for the rest of the authors. Some books are written by several authors but with an editor in charge of the compilation of contributions. In this case you write the name of the editor followed by the abbreviation “ed.”.
- ◆ Article or book name. If you have used only a chapter of a book or an article in a journal, you write the name of the chapter/article followed by the name of the book/the name of the journal. The name of the book/article is usually underlined or written in italics.
- ◆ Publisher
- ◆ City of publication
- ◆ Pages
- ◆ Date/year

The following are examples of how to document a source. As you can see, there are different ways of including the information needed (e.g. putting the year after the author or in the back, using italics or underlining, etc.). You must, however, remember to be consistent in your choice.

Schmidt, R. W. And Richards, J. C. (1980). ‘Speech acts and second language learning’, *Applied Linguistics*, 1/2, 129-157.

Hymes, D. H. (1972). ‘On communicative competence’, in Pride, J. B. And Holmes, J. (eds.), *Sociolinguistics*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bode, S. et al. Listening In and Speaking Out: Advanced, New York: Longman. 1981

The following abbreviations may be useful in documenting your sources:

Ed.	editor, edition, edited by
Et al.	et alii, and others
Ibid.	ibidem, in the same place
Il., illus.	illustration, illustrated by
Loc.cit.	loco citato, in the place cited
n.d.	no date given
p., pp.	Page, pages
passim	in different sections of the text; no page or pages cited
vo., vols.	volumes

Writing the Paper

Your sources will provide you with the necessary information to back up your paper. However, it is a very bad idea to wait for all your research to be done before you start writing your paper. If you put out the writing process until all the research has been done, you'll end up procrastinating your entire paper⁵ because you can always find sources relevant to your paper. You may feel that you need to read more and more and end up with a massive amount of materials, and finally it will seem too overwhelming to embark on a paper. The best cure against procrastination is to let the research and the writing run parallel.

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The writing process for a research paper could be:

- Phase 1: Getting Ideas
- Phase 2: Narrowing down your topic and organising your ideas
- Phase 3: Making a preliminary jot outline
- Phase 4: Thesis
- Phase 5: Intensive research
- Phase 6: Formal outline and thesis check
- Phase 7: Writing a rough draft
- Phase 8: Revising
- Phase 9: Editing
- Phase 10: Publishing

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Phase 1: Getting Ideas

Sometimes your instructor will give you a theme or a choice of themes to²⁵ choose from. Other times you will have to define your own theme (with assistance from your instructor). Start with brainstorming. You can use some of the strategies mentioned in chapter 4. You can also try starters like the following

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- 1. During this education/this course a central concern/an interesting focus has been ...
- 2. In jobs relevant to this education, knowledge about these areas may be important...
- 3. The society/certain groups of people may benefit from knowing...³⁵

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Exercise 3

Brainstorm with one of the starters above.

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Phase 2: Narrowing Down your Topic and Organising your Ideas

After the brainstorming you need to narrow down and organise your topic. Again, you can use the strategies mentioned in chapter 4. If you still have⁵ problems narrowing down your topic, you can make a preliminary visit to the library and make a few note cards (see above on taking notes). Organise the note cards in piles according to topics. The pile with the highest number of note cards will be your topic, as this will be an indication that this is the topic you are most interested in ... or at least this is the topic you have been most successful finding relevant materials for.

Phase 3: Making a Preliminary Jot Outline

Having found your main topic, you need to identify your subtopics for it. Again, you can use the strategies mentioned in chapter 4. If you still have¹⁵ problems organising your ideas, take your library note cards corresponding to your main topic and try to organise them into smaller piles. Make headlines for each of the piles. This will be your preliminary jot outline.

Phase 4: Thesis

Based on your preliminary jot outline, try to narrow your ideas down to a single thesis. A thesis is like the thesis statement mentioned in chapter 2. It must be specific and unambiguous, stating your view on your topic or your intention to find the answer to one main question. Remember that your view on your topic should not be based on your personal, emotional opinion or²⁵ some intuition, but that you must communicate a view that has emerged on logical grounds.

Exercise 4

Evaluate the following theses. What makes them good? What makes them³⁰ bad? If you feel they are bad, improve them.

- 1. Some people prefer living in the country where the houses are cheaper, the pace is slower and the people spend more time with their neighbours. Other people prefer the fast city life, enjoy isolation and don't mind living in small apartments.
- 2. I think that motivation is an important factor in the learning process.
- 3. In this paper I am going to write about female characters on film.

Phase 5: Intensive Research

Having a preliminary jot outline as well as a preliminary thesis make up a⁴⁰ good guide for your library research. It helps you focus and structure your

research. However, don't let your jot outline be too cemented as you might get inspired by ideas from your research.

Make note cards corresponding to your preliminary jot outline. Start your research as mentioned above

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Phase 6: Formal Outline and Thesis Check

Shortly after your trip to your library you should try to make a formal outline. This will relate to your jot outline, but having done some intensive research, it may look slightly different. You may also need to revise your thesis.

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Phase 7: Writing a Rough Draft

Start off with the introduction. Even though you are likely to change it at a larger stage (when revising) it is useful to attempt at one already now. A preliminary introduction helps you focus your paper. An introduction must include your thesis, and every sentence, every paragraph in the rest of your paper must relate to your thesis. After the introduction you embark on your body taking a starting point in your formal outline. It usually seems more manageable to treat each subtopic one by one. Remember, however, that even though you may feel strongly for your topic, your arguments must be based on logic not on personal, emotional views or experiences. See also chapter 2 on how to structure a paper.

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Phase 8: Revising

A long research paper requires several revisions. The revision procedures are the same as the ones mentioned in chapter 4, but since it is a long paper and 25 since you have visited the library several times, have been inspired by new ideas and probably changed your thesis a bit, you may need to take extra care that everything in your paper contributes to your thesis. As with a short paper, it is always a good idea to have someone look through your paper, among other things to check that your arguments seem logical and that your chapters 30 and paragraphs relate to your thesis.

Phase 9: Editing

The procedures for editing will be the same as those mentioned in chapter 4. Again, it must be stressed that peer correcting is a good idea.

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Phase 10: Publishing

The procedure for publishing will be the same as the one mentioned in chapter 4. When you have spent a lot of time on a long paper, you probably don't

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have the energy to think of the lay-out. It is nevertheless important to hand in a paper that looks well-organised and that does not disturb the eye.

Supervisor

5 Most students will have a supervisor for their paper. If you have one, use her/him. You must, however, respect the fact that your supervisor may be busy and may not be able to meet with you as much as you want. Thus it is important to get as much out of your meetings as possible. You must work before the meeting, during the meeting, and after the meeting.

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10 **Before the meeting:** Always bring concrete ideas to the meeting (even if it is a virtual meeting), preferably something in writing, and, preferably, send it in advance. You can ask your supervisor to go through some of your materials; not the entire paper, but the important bits, where you may have questions, 15 insecurities, etc.

15 **During the meeting:** At your first meeting, you must tell about your ideas for a thesis, methods, concepts, ideas, empirical research, and come up with a preliminary jot outline. Your supervisor can then comment on this. This will 20 give you something concrete to go on with until you meet again.

20 **After the meeting:** Shortly after your meeting with your supervisor's comments fresh in memory, you should put something down in writing. It will give you a sense of accomplishing something.

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Exercise 5:

Keep a journal of the work you have done in this chapter.

1. Describe the activities you have done
2. Discuss whether these activities have been useful for learning how to write 30 a research paper. Give reasons.

Chapter 6

Writing a Web Site

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With the increasing number of Internet users, more and more people feel the need to put up a web site to reach their audience. If you want your site to stand the competition for the web readers, you must not only master the technical skills required to put up a site, but you also need to know the genre of web writing. This chapter will in no way teach you the technicalities behind constructing a web-site, but it will try to give you some ideas as to how to write a site that does not scare your potential users away.

How does the Web Site Differ from the Printed Text?

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The basic rules for writing a web site are the same as those for writing a printed text. In both cases you need to take a starting point in your audience and make the reading process as easy and smooth as possible. However, the audience of a web site may be slightly different from the audience of a printed text. Whether or not the audience is the same, the reading process employed when confronted with a web site is different from that employed when reading a printed text. Such differences often need to be reflected in the writing.

Audience

Even though you have little chance of predicting exactly who will read your site (the reader may hit it through a search engine instead of purposely going to it), one thing is for sure: The web-site reader is very demanding. Having thousands of other potentially relevant sites just a mouse click away, the web reader is ready to leave your site if it doesn't immediately attract his/her attention. When the reader finally hits your page, s/he will not read it from beginning to end, but will make excessive use of reading strategies such as scanning and skimming. S/he will navigate through your site as s/he pleases, may not even see all your pages of your site and may not even hit your front page first. It follows from the web reader's infinite navigation possibilities that a site needs to be well-structured. And it follows from his/her lack of patience that your site must be catchy, brief, and easy to understand. These basic 'rules' will be treated below.

"Basic rules"

◆ **Your site needs to be catchy.** It must catch your reader's attention and interest. Not only do you have to serve the readers that intentionally reach

your page, you may also want to keep the readers who happen to reach your site through a search engine. Many web site writers try to lure their readers with flashy graphics and cool sounds. Excessive use of such tools may, however, have the effect of scaring the reader away. If, for instance, it takes a long time for your page to appear, the reader may lose his/her patience and jump to another page instead. Another reason for not overdoing your graphics and sound effects is that they may take away the attention from your text. Such tools should not be discarded altogether, but they should be kept at a moderate level and used only to support your message. As far as the text goes, it may be tempting to use slogans, especially as there are rarely sufficient space for carefully built up arguments. However, slogans appear degrading and disrespectful to a lot of readers, as such expressions do not appeal to one's intelligence (you can, instead, use short, clear, and logic arguments. If possible, you can make links to your sources). If excessive use of visual and auditory effects and of slogans is not advisable, how can we capture the reader? Besides using appropriate sound and graphics, you can use an effective hook (e.g. a provocative statement, a rhetorical question or the like). Some experts (e.g. Killian, 1999) also suggest a you-attitude, replacing expressions such as '*we provide an infinite number of choices*' with '*you have an infinite number of choices*' giving the reader the sense that you see the world from his/her perspective.

◆ **Your text needs to be brief.** As is the case with the printed text, economy is important on the web-site, perhaps even more important due to the web reader's infamous impatience (and to the ideal of constructing self-contained pages – see below). Anything not essential to your message should be discarded. This goes for paragraphs, sentences and even words. Thus a phrase such as '*decide*' is more appropriate than the phrase '*make a decision*'.

◆ **Your site needs to be clear.** It must be unambiguous and easy to understand. This means a simple and straight-forward use of the language – the web reader does not have time to figure out elaborate metaphors and complex sentences. Clarity also means coherence, i.e. being consistent and keeping the focus. Finally clarity means providing a good overview, which leads us to the next basic rule: a good structure.

◆ **Your site needs a good structure.** The fact that your reader can navigate through your site as s/he pleases does not mean that you don't have to consider the structure and navigational possibilities of your site. On the contrary, perhaps precisely because of this infinite number of possibilities, it is necessary to provide a strong sense of structure. If the reader does not immediately

get a sense of orientation, s/he will feel lost and thus tempted to leave your site. On the front page, you should provide some background information about your site, perhaps a table of contents and some information on how it is organised. If your web site is large and complex, you may want to provide links to a site map, a directory, and even a search engine within your site. You must provide links to your main pages (subsections), preferably with blurbs. A blurb is a brief description of your link, e.g.

News and Events press releases, calendars, web casts.

You may even want to make links to the blurbs themselves. Many web readers may not hit your front page when they go to your site, so you will need to provide links to your front page from every single page in your site. In fact, you should provide links to your most important pages (subsections) from each page, preferably in a side bar. In this way your reader won't have to go back to your front page each time s/he wants to navigate. The fact that your reader can enter your site through any page, that s/he may not go through all your pages and that you cannot predict his/her navigation routes makes it extremely important that each page of your web-site forms a unified whole; each page must be self-contained, coherent, and with a definite focus.

◆ **Your site needs an appropriate layout.** What adds to a good structure or overview is a good layout on the screen: the final basic rule. Related to the discussion of visual and auditory aids (1st basic rule above), the layout must be appropriate, must support your message, and, finally, must aid the reader in the navigational chaos s/he has embarked upon. Killian (1999) suggests that, if possible, narrow down your message so that it fits a regular screen size. This prevents the reader from having to scroll down. If it is impossible to squeeze your message down to screen size and you feel the need to have a long document on your page, you should provide internal links. Make your page legible. Killian (1999) suggests the use of 10-14 font, a column about half the width of the screen, a line no more than approximately 10 words (otherwise it will be difficult for the reader to find the beginning of the next line), and no more than 100 words per screen page. Do not use too much cosmetics. Restrict the use of italics, boldface, capital letters, etc. Do not use underlining as this is reserved for links. As mentioned in the 1st basic rule, too much cosmetics takes away the focus of the text.

As a last note, your site must have a sense of purpose. Is it purely informational, showing your reader that you exist? Or do you want your reader to take action? If this is the case, you must make it clear what kind of action you want

your reader to take. Should s/he e-mail you, join an organisation, subscribe to a journal...?

Exercise 1

- 5 Turn this printed text into an appropriate web page. The underlying purpose of the text is to attract new students.

A: Welcome to Shorwell Community College

10 Since 1924 Shorwell Community College has helped people get an education. We have educated teachers, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, you name it. We offer Bachelor's degree programs, Master's degree programs, and Ph.D. programs. We also have a lot of international exchange programs. Shorwell Community College is perfectly situated in green surroundings by the beautiful Shorwell Woods. You can go hiking, biking or jogging breathing the fresh air. Also, Shorwell Village is worth mentioning. It is a quaint little village with cosy shops and cafes.

15 Shorwell Community College has highly qualified instructors in all educational areas. All faculty members hold a Master's Degree or a Ph.D. and have published several articles in highly acclaimed, international journals.

20 Shorwell Community College administrative staff members are always willing to help new students and will gladly answer any question concerning application procedures, enrolment procedures, financial aid or any other issue concerning the college. Our phone number is 202-934 1245. Or just stop by the office. We are open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every weekday.

Exercise 2

- 25 30 Keep a journal of the work you have done in this chapter.
1. Describe the activities you have done
 2. Discuss whether these activities have been useful for learning how to write a good web page. Give reasons.

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Explanation of Terms

Accuracy: Precise and correct use of language.

Adjective: (Word class) Word denoting an attribute of a noun or a pronoun, e.g. ‘the girl is beautiful’.

Adverb: (Word class) Adverbs describe verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or whole sentences. They denote time, place, manner, degree, circumstance, cause, etc., e.g. ‘She rarely said a word’. ‘He held out his hand shyly’.

Adverbial clause: Clause denoting time, place, manner, circumstance, cause, etc., e.g. He was mad because his wife came home late’.

Audience: Receiver of message.

Auxiliary verb: Verb with a grammatical function, e.g. forming tenses, moods, voices, e.g. ‘has jumped’.

Blurb: Additional information about a computer link.

Body: Main part of a text. It treats the particular topic in depth, explains it in detail, presents arguments, etc.

Brainstorming: 1st step in the writing process. Here all associations are written down at random.

Clausal substitute: A cohesive device/connector connecting two sentences by substituting a word (typically ‘so’) for an entire sentence, e.g. “Paul went up to New York on a business trip. So did Henry”.

Clause: Structure that contains (at least) a verb.

Conjoining: Act of combining words, phrases, or sentences.

Conjunction: (Word class) Word joining words, phrases or sentences, e.g. ‘and’, ‘or’.

Coherence: The unity and consistence of a text or a piece of a text.

Cohesion: Strategy used to obtain coherence; what is used to glue sentences together in a text.

Conclusion: Part of the text that sums up the topic and often relates it to ‘the real world’.

Connector: Cohesive device used to glue clauses or sentences together.

Dialogue: Conversation.

Dramatic present: The reporting of a past event by the use of a verb in the present tense.

Dummy subject: The word ‘it’ occupying a Subject position without being the actual Subject, e.g. “It makes me happy that you are always there for me when I need you”.

Edit: Proof read for vocabulary use and grammatical impurities.

Expository-argumentative: A piece of writing in which the author expresses her/his view or reasoned opinion about a topic or expresses her/his solution to some kind of problem.

Figurative language: Words used in an imaginative, ornate or symbolic way, e.g. metaphors (‘you are the sunshine of my life’).

Genre: Category of literary form marked by a distinctive style. The narrative genre is, for instance, marked by temporal expressions: the expository-argumentative genre is often characterised by causal expressions such as ‘because’, ‘if ... then’. Job applications, recipes, lists of things to do, etc. are also genres each with a distinctive style.

Global level: Level that concerns the entire text, the overall unity and how the individual paragraphs relate to one another.

Grading adverbs: Adverbs denoting degree, e.g. ‘very’, ‘extremely’.

Hook: Part of a text’s introduction. The hook serves to capture the reader’s attention. It often has the form of a saying, a proverb, a quote or a thought-provoking idea.

Imagery: Using vivid or figurative language to create pictures in the minds of the reader/hearer, e.g. metaphors (‘You are the sunshine of my life’) and similes (‘Your eyes are shining as brightly as the stars’).

Introduction: First part of a text. It serves to introduce the topic treated in the text.

Linguistics: Science of language

Logbook: A diary; a regularly kept record of one’s performance and progress.

Metaphor: Type of figurative language in which an abstract concept is described in terms of concrete objects or terms, e.g. ‘you are the cream of my coffee’.

Modal verb: An auxiliary verb expressing the mood of another verb. A modal verb denotes necessity, possibility, contingency, permission, and the like, e.g. ‘may’, ‘must’, ‘can’.

Narrative: The genre of telling or reporting an event.

Narrator: The person telling a story.

1st Person narrative: Narration in which the narrator is a participant in the story. The story is told from the 1st person’s (‘I’ or ‘we’) point of view.

3rd Person narrative: Narration in which the narrator is a spectator rather than a participant as is the case with the 1st person narrative. The story is told from the 3rd person’s (‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, or ‘they’) point of view.

Objective narrator: A narrator who only hears and sees what the characters are doing. S/he does not know about their feelings and objectives.

Omniscient narrator: A narrator who knows everything about all the characters, what they say, what they think, what they feel, etc.

Onomatopoeia: A poetic device in which words are formed to imitate the sounds associated with the thing concerned, e.g. ‘to hiss’.

Past perfect: A verb tense, composed of ‘had’ + past participle, e.g. ‘had eaten’.

Personification: A poetic device in which non-human objects are represented in human form, e.g. ‘The dark wind speaks to my spirit’.

Point of view: Perspective from which a story is told, e.g. 1st person point of view.

Present perfect: A verb tense, composed of ‘has’/‘have’ + past participle, e.g. ‘has eaten’.

Progressive tense: (Also called continuous tense) A verb tense that expresses action that continues over a period of time, e.g. ‘to be eating’.

Pronoun: Word used in place of a noun or a noun phrase, e.g. ‘I’, ‘them’, ‘someone’, ‘who’.

Punctuation: Putting commas, stops, colons, etc. in a text.

Referential summative: A cohesive device that refers to a previous sentence or set of words by means of just a phrase, e.g. ‘He went down a one way street going the wrong way. *A truck came towards him driving at least 60 miles per hour. There was no way out. The two vehicles crashed, leaving 4 people dead and one person heavily injured. The accident* was horrifying’.

Relative clause: a clause that relates to a phrase in another clause, e.g. ‘I like the man who lives in this house’.

Relative pronoun: A pronoun that relates to a phrase in another clause, e.g. ‘I like the man who lives in this house’.

Reporting verb: Verb that indicates the manner in which something is/was reported, e.g. ‘say’, ‘whisper’, ‘scream’.

Revise: Re-examine a text with the purpose of improving it, e.g. improving the arguments and the coherence of a text.

Rhythm: Pattern produced by stressed and unstressed syllables.

Semantic field: A field in which words/phrases share features of meaning, e.g. He broke the *window*. Traces of *glass* could be seen everywhere.

Semantic weight: The weight or importance of information in a sentence. Importance is usually attached to new information, that is information that the addresser assumes to be new to the addressee.

Semantics: Branch of linguistics that deals with meaning of words and sentences.

Sentence reduction: The process of reducing a sentence. The sentence ‘*After he heard the sad news, he took his car and drove away*’ can, for instance, be

reduced to ‘*After hearing the sad news, he took his car and drove away*’ by deleting the subject and putting the verb in the progressive form.

Sentence relations: How sentences relate to one another by means of coherence (meaning relation) and cohesion (linguistic relation). Thus the two sentences ‘He is generally a very happy man’ and ‘However, when it comes to losing a poker game, happiness is replaced by disappointment and sorrow’ are related by means of contrast (coherence, meaning relation) and by means of the word ‘however’ (cohesion, linguistic relation).

Sentence structure: Syntax; how words are arranged in a sentence.

Simile: A poetic device which blends two different concepts by means of comparison, e.g. ‘your eyes are like the stars’.

Style: The how of writing; the choice of words, how to combine words to form sentences and how to combine sentences to form a text. For instance, using words of Latin origin (e.g. ‘investigate’) reflects a more formal style than words of Germanic origin (e.g. ‘look into’).

Sub-genre: The functions within a genre, e.g. reporting and dramatising are sub-genres of the narrative.

Subject: Word/word phrase in a sentence that indicates who or what undergoes or performs an action or is in a state, e.g. ‘the girl walks to school every day’.

Subordinate clause: Clause that functions as a subject, object or adverbial, e.g. ‘you will get an ice-cream if you behave well’.

Subordinator: Conjunction introducing a subordinate clause. e.g. ‘you will get an ice-cream if you behave well’.

Synonyms: Words with similar meaning, e.g. ‘cheap’ and ‘inexpensive’.

Syntactic weight: Weight referring to the weight of sentence phrases. In the following two sentences a) ‘*That you are always here for me when I need you makes me happy*’ and b) ‘*It makes me happy that you are always there for me when I need you*’ the subject ‘*that you are always there for me when I need you*’ carries a lot of weight (a lot of words). English operates according to the principle of end-weight. Sentence b) is therefore more appropriate than sentence a).

Syntax: Sentence structure; how words are arranged in a sentence.

Template: Pattern or guide for writing according to a particular genre.

Temporal conjunction: Conjunction denoting time, e.g. ‘when’.

Temporal vocabulary: Words/phrases denoting time.

Tense: Time expressed through verb phrases, e.g. ‘had chosen’ (past perfect) refers to an event in the past relative to another event in the past.

Thesis: Statement or proposed theory presented to be supported by arguments.

Thesis statement: Part of the introduction of a text. The statement that states the main topic of the text and often gives the writer's viewpoint or position about the topic.

Topic sentence: One of the first sentences in a paragraph. This sentence states the main idea of the paragraph, the subtopic. The rest of the paragraph provides clear, specific details to support the subtopic stated in the topic sentence.

Verb: (Word class) word indicating an action, a state or an event, e.g. 'he writes books for a living'.

Verbal substitute: A cohesive device substituting a phrase or a clause by a verb, e.g. 'He wanted to go to Europe. And he did'.

Vividness: Describing concepts and actions in a lively way.

Vocabulary: Repertoire of words at the command of a particular person or a group of people.

Word order: The order in which words are arranged in a sentence.

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Notes

¹ This list is by no means exhaustive.
Many of the terms are taken from
Van Ek, Jan A. og N. J. Robat. *The
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² This list is by no means exhaustive.
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Student's Grammar of English*. Basil
Blackwell. Oxford. 1984.

³ Variety and preciseness is, of
course, not only relevant at the vo-
cabulary level. It is important at all
levels, but it is most obvious at the
vocabulary level.

⁴ Often it is a good idea to construct
the list yourself or with the partner
you are working with.

⁵ A lot of examiners also use the
sources to check that you have used
them correctly.

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Writing English